



**Regular Meeting of the Mayor and City Council  
City of Ball Ground, Georgia  
Ball Ground City Hall ~ 7:00 P.M.**

**MINUTES  
September 14, 2023**

**Item 1: Meeting Called to Order by Mayor Rick Roberts**

**Council Members Present:** Scott Barnes, Vicki Benefield, Annette Homiller and Dennis Nelson

**Council Member Kristine Rogers absent.**

**Staff Present:** Donna England, Chris Luly, Bryon Reeves, Darrell Caudill, Eric Wilmarth and Karen Jordan

**Recognize Veteran of the Month – Carl Popham**

**Item 2: Pledge of Allegiance - Led by Carl Popham, Veteran of the Month**

**Item 3: Approve Agenda**

**Council Member Benefield put forth a motion, Seconded by Council Member Homiller, to approve the meeting agenda as submitted.**

**Motion Unanimously Approved.**

**Item 4: Appearances/Public Comments**

**Stephanie Joyner, Executive Director Cherokee County Historical Society appeared before the mayor and city council to thank them for their commitment to preserve Ball Ground. She also extended her congratulations to the City on receiving the 2023 History Cherokee Historic Preservation Award for the efforts that have been made to preserve the Roberts Lake Dam.**

**Item 5: Announcements/Informational Items**

**Upcoming events**

- **September 16 – Recycling Event at Community Center**
- **Oct 7 – Ball Ground Rocks Festival in City Park**
- **October 28 – Spooktacular in the Botanical Garden**
- **November 11 – Veterans Day Ceremony**
- **December 1 – Annual Christmas Parade**

**Item 6: Consider Approval of Minutes: August 10, 2023**

**Council Member Nelson put forth a motion, Seconded by Council Member Homiller to approve the minutes of August 10, 2023 as submitted in writing by the City Clerk.**

**Motion Unanimously Approved.**

**Item 7: Old Business**

a) **Consider Second Reading of Hotel Motel Tax Ordinance**

Council Member Barnes put forth a motion, Seconded by Council Member Homiller to approve the second reading of the Hotel Motel Tax Ordinance. All revenue will be collected under this tax shall be allocated in accordance with the requirements in O.C.G.A 48-13-51(a)(3) and shall become effective January 1, 2024.

**Motion Unanimously Approved.**

**Item 8: New Business**

- a) **Consider the De-annexation Petition - 1355 Ball Ground Road.**  
Identified as all that tract or parcel of land lying and being in Land Lots 86, 87, 131, and 159 of the 3<sup>rd</sup> District, 2<sup>nd</sup> Section of Cherokee County. The property is currently zoned AG and should remain AG in the County.

Council Member Homiller put forth a motion, Second by Council Member Barnes to honor the request of Alan & Julie Box to deannex 55.75 +/- acres identified as all that tract or parcel of land lying and being in Land Lots 86, 87, 131, and 159 of the 3<sup>rd</sup> District, 2<sup>nd</sup> Section of Cherokee County. This shall become effective on the 1<sup>st</sup> Day of October 2023.

**Motion Unanimously Approved.**

- b) **Consider 2023 American Rescue Plan Budget**

City Manager Wilmarth explaining that the funds received from the LMIG Grant and a refund of \$330,000. in ARP dollars from Cherokee County will be reallocated to reimburse the 2023 ARP Plan Budget for funds spend previously out of this account for the Howell Bridge Round-A-Bound Project as well as identified projects.

Council Member Nelson put forth a motion, Seconded by Council Member Benefield to approve the 2023 American Rescue Plan Budget as submitted.

**Motion Unanimously Approved.**

- c) **Consider Amendment to Schedule of Fees to Include Hotel/Motel Tax**

Council Member Benefield put forth a motion, Seconded by Council Member Homiller, to amend the schedule of fees to include the following:

**Short Term Rental Application Fee - \$250.00**

**Short Term Yearly Renewal Fee - \$100.00**

**Vending Machine Application and Permit Fee - \$250.00**

**Motion Unanimously Approved.**

- d) **Consider First Reading of Ordinance to Establish Standards for Vending Machines**

Council Member Barnes put forth a motion, Seconded by Council Member Nelson to approve the first reading of an Ordinance to Establish Standards for vending machines, promote safe and healthy practices for vending machines,

minimize adverse effects of vending machines on surrounding properties, and preserve the character of historic districts and residential areas.

**Motion Unanimously Approved.**

**Item 9: City Manager Comments**

Chief Reeves presented the mayor and council with a written report of the department's activity for the period ended August 31, 2023.

City Manager Wilmarth presented the mayor and council with an unaudited report of account balances and statement of revenue and expenditures for the month ended August 31, 2023. The report showed cash on deposit totaling \$2,437,089.54.

It was reported that earlier today Mauldin and Jenkins, CPAs and Advisors completed their onsite work for the 2022-2023 Financial Audit of city funds. Mayor Roberts and others commended Donna and her staff for their work in preparing for the annual audit.

Within the next 30-45 days the City will make available for use the Our Town App. The app will provide information regarding the City, dining, shopping, events, etc. There is a free app for users.

The Georgia Secretary of State has approved our request for a service mark for our slogan, Historic Past....Bright Future.

City Manager Wilmarth provided updates on several projects around the city. The Northridge Road paving project is complete.

The Environmental Protection Division requires yearly testing of water systems to monitor lead and copper levels at the consumers' taps. The testing for this year is complete and the results show we are incompliant with EPD regulations.

The Calvin Farmer Park Playground Project has begun and should be complete in thirty days.

The Georgia Department of Transportation has completed the engineering study for the SR 372 Spur and is currently preparing a Project Framework Agreement (PFA) to be signed by the mayor and Cherokee County. This is a 3.2-million-dollar project that is being funded by grants from the Atlanta Regional Commission.

Residents affected by the Mountain Brook Sidewalk Project will be asked in the coming weeks to provide construction and installation easements.

It is anticipated that the extension to the Roberts Lake Trail will be completed and open to the public on or about October 30<sup>th</sup>.

**Item 10: Mayor Roberts**

Mayor Roberts made comments in reference to the deterioration of Hwy 5, the traffic jam caused by the oversized load that recently passed through downtown and possibly landscaping the area at exit 27. He stated he would like to meet with GDOT officials to discuss his concerns about these matters.

Mayor Roberts noted that he along with Council Members Barnes, Benefield and Homiller recently attended Downtown Development Training held in Canton. He encouraged others to attend the training when possible. He stated the training provided a better understanding of the role of the DDA and how to set one up.

**Item 11: Council Comments**

Council Member Barnes spoke of the many positive comments he received from those attending the concert in the park last weekend.

Council Member Benefield reported that plans are underway for the 2023 Veterans Day Ceremony. It will be held on Saturday, November 11<sup>th</sup> beginning at 11AM. The public is invited to attend.

Council Member Nelson encouraged residents to submit their nominations for Veteran of the Month.

Council Member Homiller announced that the Ball Ground Garden Club is sponsoring the Scarecrow Contest downtown and is partnering with the City to bring back Spooktacular in the Garden this year. The event will be held on Saturday, October 28 from 1:00 PM – 4:00 PM.

**Item 12: Public Comments - None**

**Item 14: Executive Session (If Needed)**

**Item 15: Adjourn**

There being no further business for consideration a motion was duly made and seconded to adjourn.

Respectfully submitted by:  
Karen L. Jordan  
City Clerk