



**CITY OF WALESKA
COUNCIL MEETING MINUTES
January 27, 2025**

Present: Mary Helen Lamb, Mayor
Peter Brown, Councilmember
Logan Patrick, Councilmember
Dennis Cochran, Pro Tem
Kim Kirsch, City Clerk/Manager
Chris Lumpkin, Water Maintenance
John Meier, City Attorney
Lamar Rogers – Turnipseed Engineers

Absent: Eddie Blackwell – Councilmember
Michael Greene – Councilmember
Kristi Bosch - Councilmember

Item 1: Call to Order

Mayor Mary Helen Lamb called the meeting to order, with a quorum present.

Item 2: Pledge of Allegiance/Innovation

Mayor Lamb led the Pledge to the Flag

Item 3: Five Minute Public Hearing

- Mr. Jesse Holtzclaw and Mr. Clay Edmondson came before the council to ask for an estimate of the cost to have city water available to them at their home located at 560 Cantrell Ln. Attorney Mr. Meier suggested they go to the city's website and look at the minutes of July 8th, 2024.

Item 4: Consideration to Approve Regular Council Meeting Minutes January 6, 2025

Mayor Mary Helen Lamb asked for a motion to approve the Regular Council Minutes for January 6, 2025. A motion was made by Councilmember Cochran, seconded by Councilmember Patrick, and approved by all members present.

Item 5: Chris Hazzard with Murphy CPA Group – review audit for 6-30-2024

Mr. Hazzard thanked mayor and all of council along with Mrs. Bracken for their assistance and patience with the 2024 audit process. The audit was submitted

on December 31st, 2024, which is the deadline for submittal. Mr. Hazzard did a quick review of the audit and informed the mayor and council that the City of Waleska is in good standing and in compliance. Mr. Hazzard stated the city's financial strength is strong, there was an increase in infrastructure from \$6.7mm to \$7mm, charges for services were up and expenses were down, and the general revenue was up slightly. There were no issues other than what is expected of a smaller city with a smaller staff. In an ideal world all duties that are required to run a city would be separated. However, in a small city some employees must double up so to speak for all tasks to be completed in a timely manner. Mr. Hazzard stated he and Mrs. Bracken discussed this and the way she now has payroll structured in the budget the city is in compliance.

Item 6: Tacie Jo Bracken – update on amended budget, update on ARPA and SLFRF unobligated funds deadline, present audit

- Mrs. Bracken did a quick update of the ARPA and SLFRF funds. Those funds have been moved to remain in compliance. Mrs. Bracken consulted with city engineer Mr. Rogers on how those funds should be spent. There is a very small amount left in the ARPA bank account which is interest earned. That amount will be moved over to the water fund or general fund to zero out that balance.
- Mrs. Bracken informed the council that we have a couple of small savings accounts from several years back. One is for \$10,500.00 at Regions Bank. The other is \$2,500.00 at United Community Bank. Mrs. Bracken asked the council if it would be okay for her to move those funds to the general fund account. Mr. Cochran remembers the reason for those accounts was to have a small “emergency fund”. It was decided to bring this topic back to the next council meeting so all members can vote on it.
- Mrs. Bracken reviewed the amended budget for the council. She discussed how payroll has now been structured due to the audit review. Mrs. Bracken stated that Patsy, Robyn, and Chris receive 50% of their payroll from the general fund and 50% from the water fund. Kelly receives 50% of her salary from the sanitation fund and 50% from the water fund. Kim receives 45% from the general fund, 45% from the water fund and 10% from the sanitation fund. This is acceptable by audit standards. The city may do one more amended budget before the physical year ends.
- The topic of the 5% increase in water rates was brought up by Mrs. Bracken. Her thought is better to make small increases as opposed to a large increase. The standard rate increase now is 2.9% so the discussion was to do a 3% rate increase. Mrs. Kirsch was asked by Attorney Mr. Meier to contact Cherokee County and the City of Canton to see if they are going to increase our rates anytime soon. Mrs. Kirsch will do some research and bring this back to the council at the second February meeting as she will be out of town for the next council meeting.

Item 7: Discuss Personal Policy – sick time and vacation time

- Mrs. Bracken wanted to clarify sick and vacation time as it appears the minutes, and employee handbook state different amounts. For the vacation everyone agreed the employee handbook is correct in that employees receive 5 vacation days for 3 months – 1 year of employment, 10 days for 1-5 years of employment, and 15 days for 6 years or more of employment. The question was the accrual rate for sick time. One recourse states an employee can roll over/accrue 472 hours, the employee handbook states an employee will accrue at the rate of 80 hours per calendar year. In January 2024 all vacation and sick time was reset in order to balance. Mrs. Bracken is asking for final clarification on the accrual amounts from the council. Mr. Patrick suggested bringing this up at the next council meeting so that everyone on the council would have a chance to debate and make a motion.

Item 8: Discuss HB581

Mrs. Kirsch opened discussion for HB581. Mrs. Smith reached out to several other cities in the area and most told her they had decided to opt in. Mr. Cochran was concerned about how this will affect a smaller city like Waleska. Mrs. Kirsch reviewed some information she recently received from a local municipality. She stated that there is a negotiation of a FLOST to recoup funds that would be lost from the cap through an additional sales tax, similar to SPLOST. Everyone would pay that because it would be a sales tax. Simply put the house bill is to cap off the assessed values of properties to keep property taxes from increasing dramatically from inflation. The cap will be close to 3% (estimate). After much discussion it was decided that the City of Waleska will opt in for HB581. A motion was made by Councilmember Cochran, seconded by Councilmember Brown, and approved by all members present.

Item 9: Review council meeting dates for July

Mrs. Kirsch addressed the original approved dates for the July council meetings. Normally the meetings are on Monday, however the dates on the original schedule reflect the July dates being in Tuesday. The council agreed to move those original approved dates from July to July 7th and July 21st.

Item 10: Water System Report

- Mr. Rogers presented the council with the electronic GIS map he has been working on. He reviewed some of the features available with the online map, and how to navigate the link. This map will be very useful for Mr. Lumpkin out in the field doing repairs and research. Mr. Lumpkin will do a little research into the items given to him by Mr. Rogers so that the map will be complete and accurate.
- Mr. Lumpkin suggested to the council that we need to look at Ammons Road water line. This was put in some time back by a homeowner. Mr. Lumpkin is suggesting the city take over that line at this point. There will be further discussion at the next meeting.

Item 11: City Manager's Report

- Mrs. Kirsch updated the council on several items including: the submittal of the approved firearms ordinance to municode which will take several weeks before that is uploaded to the website. The issue of parking on Bartow Street was addressed by the Cherokee County Marshals office a few weeks ago. There was an individual caught parking on the sidewalk, the Marshall had a brief discussion with the individual, and pointed out the sign that says, "no parking". The agreement the council agreed to with Kendall Supply to allow the antenna to be placed on the Silver Creek water tank was completed and signed by the mayor.
- Mrs. Kirsch notified the council that there are a few businesses in the city that have not paid for their business license. Those funds and renewal applications were due December 31st, 2024. Mrs. Kirsch has made phone calls and sent letters. She will keep the council informed of the status of these businesses.
- Mrs. Kirsch updated the council on all past due property tax owners. The council notified Mrs. Kirsch that a couple of the homeowners on this list have passed away. Attorney Mr. Meier instructed Mrs. Kirsch to contact Cherokee County Probate Court to see if the probate estate is open and find out who the executor is and let Mr. Meier know. He will then take care of things on his side.
- Mrs. Kirsch updated the council that a couple of businesses in the city had paid for their Beer and Wine sales but not their Sunday Sales. Mrs. Kirsch has made several phone calls and sent letters. She will reach out to them and tell them to pay by February 7th or they can no longer sale alcohol on Sunday. She will update the council at the second meeting in February.
- Mrs. Kirsch with the help of Mr. Lumpkin and Mr. Rogers discussed the water loss report. Mrs. Kirsch provided the council with a spreadsheet that included: meters reading zero, vacant properties, irrigation meters, and development meters. These numbers were taken from the reads for November 2024, December 2024, and January 2024. The staff is trying to drill down on where the loss is. With one vendor alone the city spent \$163,000.00 on repairs/leaks for 2024. For the month of January, the unbilled jumped up to 5,718,605 million gallons. When compared to January 2024 that number is comparable per Kendall Supply who provides the program the city uses for meter reading.
- Mrs. Kirsch notified the council that Kevin with Kendall Supply will be here tomorrow to do an audit of Reinhardt University campus with Mr. Lumpkin. There will be an update at the next council meeting as to what they find as far as what meters are reading or not reading.
- Mrs. Kirsch asked the council if they would consider letting the city use Diamond Maps. This is an online, cloud-based system that would cost the city \$40.00/month with unlimited users. Mrs. Kirsch has researched the company, watched several training videos, and called

them. The city could upload Mr. Rogers' GIS map to this system. The advantage to this would be that as Mr. Lumpkin makes changes throughout the year he can log in or have another staff member log in and make the changes as we go. It would be another useful tool to help with the water issues of the city. Mr. Cochran suggested we wait until Mr. Lumpkin has completed a few of the tasks Mr. Rogers gave him to fine tune the online GIS map from Turnipseed Engineering and then upload a clean version to Diamond Maps.

Item 12: City Attorney's Report

- Mr. Meier reviewed the annexation for the 75-acre parcel on Cable Road – 50 home sites. The city needs an IGA with Cherokee County for maintenance of the section of Cable Road within city limits.
- No update on the petition for annexation for 6.37 acres with TIG Custom Homes. The council questioned why this has taken so long. It was decided that since they will not return calls or letters to Mr. Meier that Mr. Lumpkin and Mrs. Kirsch will go out to the property and try and speak with someone that can sign the deed properly. They will update the council at the second meeting in February.

Item 13: Mayor's Report

- None

Item 14: Council Remarks

- None

Item 15: Adjourn Regular Council Meeting

APPROVED THIS 3rd DAY OF February, 2025.



Mary Helen Lamb, Mayor

Attest:



Kim Kirsch, City Clerk