

**TOWN OF TALLULAH FALLS  
STATE OF GEORGIA  
REGULAR COUNCIL MEETING  
via Webex Video Conference  
April 9, 6:00 PM  
MINUTES**

The virtual meeting for April 9, 2020 of the Town Council of Tallulah Falls, Georgia was called to order at 6:15 PM by Mayor Mike Early. A simultaneous live-stream view of the meeting was available through YouTube and the link <https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCRFUIRrJfmxYTNt-ye4QA/featured> had been previously circulated to the media and citizens through e-mail notification.

**PARTICIPANTS WERE:**

Mayor Mike Early  
Councilperson Joey Fountain  
Councilperson Deb Goatcher  
Mayor Pro tem Larry Hamilton  
Councilperson Craig Weatherly  
Town Clerk Linda Lapeyrouse  
Town Attorney Warren Tillery

Mayor Early started the meeting by requesting a moment of silence.

**Mayor Pro tem Hamilton made a motion to table the meeting until further notice. Councilperson Fountain seconded the motion. Mayor Early stated that we can't let this stop us from having meetings and slow us down from doing our work. Mayor Pro tem Hamilton indicated he is not saying we can't take it up at a later date, but he wanted more public participation. Councilperson Weatherly suggested that they move forward with the meeting and work out any kinks. Councilperson Goatcher suggested that they have a trial run tonight. Mayor Pro tem Hamilton stated that he did not see anything that has that much urgency to it and he didn't think they needed to take any action. Citizens are concerned that they can't participate in person. The motion failed with a tie vote. Mayor Pro tem Hamilton and Councilperson Fountain voted to table the meeting. Councilpersons Weatherly and Goatcher voted against tabling the meeting. Mayor Early broke the tie and voted to continue the meeting.**

**A motion was made by Councilperson Goatcher to adopt the agenda as presented. The motion was seconded by Councilperson Weatherly. Mayor Pro tem Hamilton asked to strike the water proposal from the agenda. The motion to adopt the agenda as presented passed with Councilpersons Weatherly and Goatcher voting aye, Hamilton and Fountain voting nay and Mayor Early breaking the tie.**

A Resolution recognizing and memorializing emergency conditions that necessitate holding meetings by video conferencing was introduced and explained by Attorney Tillery. This Resolution will also authorize any subordinate Authorities, Boards, or Commissions of the Town to use teleconferencing to hold their meetings as well. **A motion was made by Councilperson Goatcher to approve the Resolution as presented. The motion was seconded by Councilperson Weatherly and unanimously approved.**

The Consent Agenda included minutes of the Council Meeting March 12, 2020 and reports from Water, Police, Fire, Finance and DDA. Copies are attached hereto and made a part hereof.

**A motion was made by Councilperson Weatherly to approve the items on the consent agenda. The motion was seconded by Councilperson Goatcher and unanimously approved.**

## **REPORTS:**

**Attorney Report** – Attorney Tillery stated that he would offer any work that they have already done for other clients, to the extent helpful, for anyone to use. He further reported that the SDS Mediation ended at an impasse with no agreement. Either they will have more mediation or ask the court to resolve it.

## **NEW BUSINESS:**

Mayor Early introduced a proposed Ordinance to establish rules and regulations governing certain uses for public properties owned or maintained by the Town of Tallulah Falls and to provide for “in kind” utilities and wear and tear on such properties. **A motion was made by Councilperson Weatherly to approve the Ordinance changing the approval process to go through Council for all applications. The motion was seconded by Councilperson Goatcher.** Mayor Pro tem Hamilton objected to the ordinance not going through the Planning and Zoning Commission for their recommendation. Mayor Early stated it was not a zoning ordinance, and Attorney Tillery helped explain which ordinances go before Planning and Zoning and which ones are outside of their limited authority. Zoning ordinances apply to private property. Public property was excluded from the camping ordinance that was passed last year. In the instance of public property, the property owner is the Town. The Council is able to give that authority for use of public property, or it can delegate it to the Mayor. In this case, the Ordinance was drafted to delegate that authority to the Mayor with notice to the Council. The Council would then approve or deny the request at the next Council meeting. It can be amended to have the Council make all necessary decisions, but the Council would have to be willing to meet each time there was a decision to be made. Mayor Pro tem Hamilton stated that it should be in the hands of the Council. We have a Weak Mayor System and the Council governs the Town. Attorney Tillery stated it was certainly in the purview of the Council, but that the Council has the ability, but not the requirement, to delegate certain duties to the Mayor. Mayor Pro tem Hamilton said there are 400+ camp sites within three miles of Tallulah Falls and we are discussing if we want to allow someone to camp behind City Hall. Councilperson Goatcher asked if it could be by invitation only. Attorney Tillery responded no. Attorney Tillery was instructed to modify the ordinance to require Council approval and a 30-day advance application period. Councilperson Weatherly said that he would like to read it once amended and would like to see it tabled until next month. Mayor Early stated that the Verdinos may want to come back in June and the ordinance could be finalized next month. Councilperson Fountain asked what the time limit was and what goes along with it... free rein of City Hall? Attorney Tillery stated that the Ordinance allows 90 days at a time with a maximum of 180 per year with a mandatory two-week rest period between any stays. Mayor Early responded that the Verdinos did not have a key to City Hall this time, but Gary is a firefighter and would have access through the fire department just like all other firefighters but no access to locked offices. They were not given a key to the back door this time, but before they were doing more work inside City Hall. Councilperson Goatcher asked if we needed and wanted volunteers. She is not sure why they would come back with some of the comments that have been made. **A motion to table the ordinance and make the changes discussed was made by Councilperson Weatherly. The motion was seconded by Councilperson Goatcher and unanimously approved.**

Mayor Early reported reaching out to American Water Services, Inc. for a proposal after our water tanks had been allowed to run dry three different times in the last year. Mayor Early reported recently trying to check a tank level and found that the locks had been changed. The proposal is month to month and is

less money for comparable service. Councilperson Weatherly stated that there is cost and service to consider. Cheaper is not always better and he wanted to check with some of their other clients. Councilperson Weatherly said he would like to table the proposal and take more time to study the service side of it. Councilperson Goatcher said that things are stable right now, but they are just doing their due diligence to see if we are getting the most service for our money. Mayor Pro tem Hamilton said he would like to compare each proposal side by side and wants to look at it in detail before making any decision. Mayor Early said he wanted to bring it up but was not trying to force a decision. **A motion to table the proposal for water services was made by Councilperson Fountain. The motion was seconded by Mayor Pro tem Hamilton and unanimously approved.**

**MAYOR'S COMMENTS:**

Mayor Early said that he did not have any comments. He hoped that as online meeting services continue to open up and address security issues, there will be more public participation that can be incorporated into the meeting. The YouTube video link will be left up indefinitely or until otherwise directed by Council.

**There being no other business before the Council, a motion was made by Mayor Pro tem Hamilton to adjourn the meeting. The motion was seconded by Councilperson Fountain and unanimously approved.**

The meeting adjourned at 7:22 PM.

  
Linda Lapeyrouse, Town Clerk