



City of Walthourville



Sarah B. Hayes, Mayor

Elected Officials

Mitchell Boston
Patrick Underwood
Bridgette Kelly
Luciria L. Lovette
Robert (Bob) Dodd

City Administration

Nicolas Maxwell, Fire Chief
Christopher Reed, Police Chief
Dave Martin, Public Works Adm.
Patrick Golphin, Water Supervisor
Luke R. Moses, City Attorney

Mayor and Council Meeting Agenda **September 10, 2024 @ 6:00 PM**

I.	Call to Order	Mayor Sarah B. Hayes
II.	Roll Call	City of Walthourville
III.	Invocation	Appointee
IV.	Pledge of Allegiance	In Unison
V.	Approval of Agenda	Councilmembers
VI.	Approval of Minutes	Councilmembers
	August 27, 2024 Regular Meeting Minutes	
	August 27, 2024 Executive Session Minutes	
VII.	Presentation(s)	
VIII.	Agenda Items:	Mayor and Council
	1. LCPC	Ms. Lori Parks
	Variance 2024-050-W.	
	2. City of Walthourville	Councilman Mitchell Boston
	Privatization of Sanitation Awarding of Contract.	
	3. City of Walthourville	Councilman Patrick Underwood
	2025 Millage.	
IX.	Department Reports	City of Walthourville
X.	Citizens Comments	Walthourville Citizen
XI.	Council Comments	Elected Officials
XII.	Mayor Comments	Mayor Sarah B. Hayes
XIII.	Executive Session	None
XIV.	Adjournment	Councilmembers

If an Executive Session is needed, it will be called for (1) Litigation, (2) Personnel or (3) Real Estate.

All Meeting are held at the Walthourville Police Department and are open to the Public.

City of Walthourville
Mayor and Council Meeting Minutes
September 10, 2024 @ 6:00 PM
Walthourville Police Department

- I. Call to Order: The meeting was called to order at 6:00 PM by Mayor Sarah B. Hayes.
- II. Roll Call: The roll was called by Kara Jackson with the following members present:

Mayor Sarah B. Hayes
Councilman Mitchell Boston
Councilwoman Bridgette Kelly

Mayor Pro Tem Luciria L. Lovette
Councilman Patrick Underwood
Councilman Robert Dodd

The attendance of the Council constituted a quorum.

City Attorney Luke R. Moses was in attendance.

- III. Invocation: The invocation was given by Councilman Patrick Underwood.
- IV. The Pledge of Allegiance was recited in unison.
- V. Adoption of City Council Agenda: The motion to approve was made by Councilwoman Kelly and the second was provided by Councilman Boston.
Vote: 5-0 Motion Carried.
- VI. Adoption of City Council Regular Meeting Minutes from August 27, 2024. The motion to approve was made by Councilman Boston and the second was provided by Councilman Dodd.
Vote 4-1 Motion Carried.
Mayor Pro Tem Lovette Opposed.

Adoption of City Council Executive Meeting Minutes from August 27th, 2024. The motion to approve was made by Councilwoman Kelly and the second was provided by Councilman Boston.

Vote 4-1 Motion Carried.
Mayor Pro Tem Lovette Opposed.

- VII. Agenda Items:
 1. LCPC
Variance 2024-050-W
Mr. Tillman was asking for a variance for a 1-foot setback to reduce the required side yard setback of 5 feet to 4 feet for an accessory building. His neighbor, Mr. Young, does not oppose the variance. Mr. Tillman was not aware he needed a permit. Mayor Hayes asked if Mr. Tillman was present and if there were any questions. Councilman Boston stated that if there were no safety concerns, he sees no issues. Mayor Pro Tem Lovette asked if there would be any future issues if Mr. Young moves. Mrs. Parks said

no as he is still within his property line. Mrs Parks also states nothing disturbs anyone else's property line. The motion to approve was made by Councilman Boston and the second was provided by Councilman Underwood.

Vote 5-0 Motion Carried Unanimously.

2. City of Walthourville

Councilman Mitchell Boston

Privatization of Sanitation Awarding of Contract.

Councilman Boston started his comments with a speech that he had typed up. Boston stated that moving forward is crucial to maintaining the city's services efficiently after reviewing the available options. Councilman Boston suggested the City proceeds with Atlantic Waste. Councilman Dodd asked if customers would have the option to opt out of bulk to which Councilman Boston, "stated yes." Councilman Boston stated the representative from Atlantic Waste was present. The representative Mr. Sam Sullivan stated he would like to hire the city's CDL drivers. Councilman Dodd, "asked if the days would stay the same and Mr. Sullivan stated he would like to. Councilman Boston asked when he would get with City Hall and Mr. Sullivan stated hopefully by December 1st. everything would be worked out. Councilman Dodd asked, "if this would keep the trash from being interrupted and Mr. Sullivan stated yes." Councilwoman Kelly asked, "how long would the length of the contract be for?" Mr. Sullivan replied, 5 years.

Councilman Dodd asked how complaints would come in and Mr. Sullivan stated that they could call the company. Councilman Dodd asked, "what the price is on an additional can?" Mr. Sullivan stated it is \$15 per can. Councilman Dodd also asked about holidays to which Sullivan replied they don't operate on Christmas or Thanksgiving. Mr. Sullivan also stated that prior to them taking over they will put flyers on carts or even information in the paper. Attorney Moses asked, "how to opt out of bulk? Mr. Sullivan stated it is all very doable. Councilman Dodd asked about a possible open enrollment for bulk to which Mr. Sullivan stated it is doable. Councilman Boston asked how many vehicles would be dedicated to the route to which Mr. Sullivan stated maybe 2 and a half trucks. Mayor Pro Tem Lovette asked about keeping the drivers and Mr. Sullivan stated he would like to start them in the city and gradually within 3 months have them start from the home offices which are in Pooler and Statesboro. Mr. Sullivan stated there is plenty of room for the CDL drivers to grow with the company. He added they have 401k and other benefits and there is not a lot of turn over. Councilman Boston made the motion to move forward with Atlantic Waste and the second was given by Councilman Underwood.

Vote 3-2 Motion Carried.

Councilwoman Kelly and Mayor Pro Tem Lovette Opposed.

3. City of Walthourville
2025 Millage

Councilman Patrick Underwood

Councilman Underwood also started his comments with a speech that he had typed up. It stated he ran for city council to get Walthourville in a better financial place. It also stated there is no millage rate in place and that the unpopular subject is avoided. The letter stated he is not trying to get in day-to-day operations. It also stated that it was time for the Mayor to have the conversation with the Tax Commissioner. The longer the wait, the worse the City will be to not have this in place.

Mayor Hayes stated she has had numerous talks with the Tax Commissioner and was told to set a percentage and unfortunately the tax commissioner passed away (The Late Mr. Virgil Jones). Mayor Hayes stated she has been back there 3 times. Mayor Hayes stated the CPA's will be present on the 19th. Mayor Hayes will present her thoughts then on a city tax at \$265/year on a citizen. She also stated that she was told by County Administrator, Mr. Joey Brown that until the new commissioner will be sworn in, in January 2025 and there is no action they can take place until he is sworn in. Nevertheless, Mayor Hayes wants the CPAs to come in and discuss what they looked at and they have already done the past audits and she thanked Councilman Underwood for his comments.

Mayor Pro Tem Lovette stated she wanted to make a comment. "With the millage rate we just started the fire fee, fee and the water increase now we are going to do this all over again. My concern is we never had a forensic audit to determine if in fact where all of our funds are going so, I would recommend a forensic audit before we implement this millage rate." Councilman Underwood stated he agrees with her about the forensic audit but he was just thinking about the future and the millage wouldn't go in effect until 2026. Mayor Pro Tem Lovette asked, "were they just talking about the millage rate or implementing it because the citizens need to know?" Councilman Underwood stated we would need to have 3 meetings with the citizens first, but this wouldn't go into effect until 2026.

Mayor Hayes stated in terms of the forensic audit there will be a forensic audit, and she has had discussions on how to get it done without it costing the city. There was also a question of doing a forensic audit before completing the needed audits but that could jeopardize those audits, and she didn't want that to happen. The Mayor added there will be a forensic audit once the audits are done. Mayor Hayes and Mayor Pro Tem Lovette had an exchange of words. Mayor Pro Tem Lovette asked, " how are we doing this without deciding what we have, and we may not have to implement a millage rate?" Mayor Hayes stated she just wants to make sure the city is covered so we can have what we need.

Councilman Boston gave the following statements, "the popular opinion is the audit and the City needs revenue to run. At this point it seems that the subject matters who we pay at GMA have said directly that we must cut expenses and raise revenue, and it doesn't seem to be resonating. We offer the amenities and services of a large city, police, fire and public works. The revenue that comes from the water bills cannot sustain the General Fund. It is designed to support the water department. The main issue that many citizens complain about is water and the revenue that's supposed to go into that infrastructure is going everywhere else. You can not debate math. The water department is supposed to support the water. We must raise revenue and that is through taxes. So, we either must decide what's going to get cut or raise revenue or a combination of both."

Mayor Hayes stated, " she agreed but would like us to listen to the advice given by the city CPA's." Councilman Boston stated, "we cannot operate out of emotion. Mayor Pro Tem Lovette stated, "her concern is we don't know where the money went; therefore, she is in favor of a forensic audit first." Councilman Boston added, "we made a promise to the citizens to end the Fire Fee in December, and he will not vote to continue it in.

Mayor Pro Tem Lovette stated, "she thinks a forensic audit will end all the questions." "Councilman Boston asked the Mayor Pro Tem if she knew how much a forensic audit would cost?" She responded no. Attorney Moses stated there was \$25,000 set aside to which Councilwoman Kelly and Mayor Pro Tem Lovette stated it was gone. Mayor Hayes stated the ballpark amount she was looking at was free to which Boston stated he likes free.

VIII. Department Reports

City of Walthourville

Water Department

Patrick Golphin

Mr. Golphin stated disconnects occurred on September 9th and there were 10 customers disconnected for not paying the Fire Fee and 112 customers disconnected solely for nonpayment. Attorney Moses asked, how many have paid?" Mr. Golphin stated, "half of those customers have paid to be reconnected." Councilman Boston asked if there was a payment plan for those struggling to pay. Mr. Golphin stated we always work with the customers, and we work up a viable payment plan with the customer. Mayor Pro Tem asked how many were disconnected for fire fee? Mr. Golphin stated again, 10. He also stated the customers were cut off for over 3 months of non-paying the fire fee, not 1 month of \$31.60. Attorney Moses asked about the differentiation to know the fire fee is not paid. Mayor Pro Tem asked if they terminate the Fire Fee in December could they use those funds to pay their bill. Mr. Golphin stated yes, and he added, when we explain to the customers, they feel a little better and let them know we will work with them." Councilman Boston asked if there were any complaints on smelly water and Mr. Golphin stated no. Mr. Golphin stated the real issue is the old meters that need to be updated. Councilman Boston asked how many need to be updated to which Mr. Golphin stated the last reread consisted of 80 that needed to be reread. Mr. Golphin stated we try our best with rereads and data logs and that the new meters would help. Councilman Underwood asked Mayor Hayes if that was something we are working on, and she stated yes.

Fire Department

Chief Nicolas Maxwell

Chief Maxwell gave the statistics. There have been 27 calls of which there were 18 medical calls, 3 traffic accidents with injuries, 1 fire call and 1 miscellaneous. Councilman Boston asked how many full time staff? Chief Maxell responded 1, which is himself and 19 part-time firefighters and that they are a 24-hour station. Mayor Pro Tem asked how many responds to calls and Maxwell stated usually 5 persons.

Police Department

Chief Christopher Reed

Chief Reed gave the statistics. There have been 205 calls since the last meeting with 31 reports generated from those calls. Chief Reed spoke on Operation Drive Sober which happened on August 31st. From the road check there were 44 citations, 6 DUI's and 1 wanted person. The road check occurred on Highway 84 and EB Cooper Hwy. Since August 27th, there have been 82 citations with 14 warnings given and 2 vehicle crashes. Chief Reed stated he will be gone from Sept 16th – 18th for training and Sept 30th – Oct 11th for Firearm training for himself and Major Hooker. Chief Reed also stated there is an audit on September 20th for GCIC. Mayor Hayes asked, " how the diversion program was going?" Chief Reed stated it is going very well, it gives a person 90 days to pay for the ticket as well as give them the opportunity to take a driving course online and have the ticket dismissed.

Public Works

Elizabeth White
Garfield Turner

Ms. White stated she had been working with the City for 2 years but now it looks as if she will be cutting grass with the rest of the crew. Mayor Hayes asked how Public Works was? Ms. White stated, "very good." Mayor Pro Tem Lovette stated her garbage was not all removed, and this is the 3rd week this has happened. Mr. Turner stated with the privatization of Sanitation he will be here until December. Mr. Turner stated in terms Mayor Pro Tem Lovette's trash being left behind the guys will not dig in the bottom of the cans and that's what she had in her can was paper stuck to the bottom.

IX. Citizen Comments

Walthourville Citizens

Patricia Greene

Stated she came to talk about the forensic audit. Mayor Hayes stated she was talking about the 21, 22, 23 audits. Ms. Greene stated the citizens need to know where the money went that was left there when she was in office. Ms. Greene stated that Mayor Pro Tem Lovette spoke on the issue she was referring to.

Councilwoman Kelly asked Mayor Hayes if there were talks when the Forensic Audit would be done. Mayor Hayes stated once the 21, 22 and 23 audits were complete. Councilman Boston asked Attorney Moses what the difference between a regular audit and forensic audit is? Attorney Moses stated his degree is in law and not math and he is unsure, but he feels they will look deeper into accounts. Councilwoman Kelly asked who will do a forensic audit for free and Mayor Hayes stated she will give all that information once the audits are done.

X. Council Comments

Elected Officials

Councilman Mitchell Boston

none

Councilman Patrick Underwood

none

Councilwoman Bridgette Kelly

Stated her questions aren't being answered so she yielded her time.

Mayor Pro Tem Luciria L. Lovette

none

Councilman Robert Dodd

none

Mayor Hayes

There is a food giveaway on Monday September 16th in the parking lot of City Hall from 10:00 AM-1:00 PM. There will be a Farmer's Market on Saturday September 14th in the parking lot of City Hall. On September 20th there will be a football scrimmage in the park, and we are in support of more youth coming out, followed by a movie night. On Saturday September 21st there will be a cake cutting at noon in Johnnie Frasier Park. Mayor Pro Tem Lovette asked if there was any expense to the city for the food drive to which Mayor Hayes stated, "no." this has not been done in 2 years and if it was on the weekend the City would have to pay but during the week it is free.

XI. Adjournment: The motion to adjourn was made at 7:05 PM by Councilwoman Kelly and seconded by Councilman Boston. Vote: 5-0: Motion Carried Unanimously.

Kara Jackson
Ms. Kara Jackson

Minutes Submitted by Kara Jackson

Sarah B. Hayes
Sarah B. Hayes, Mayor

Shana T. Moss
Shana T. Moss, City Clerk