



**DRAFT MINUTES OF THE  
MAYOR AND COUNCIL  
CITY OF DULUTH, GA  
SEPTEMBER 25, 2023**

**PRESENT: Mayor Harris, Councilmembers Harkness, Thomas, Doss, Graeder, and Whitlock, City Manager, Department Directors, City Attorney**

**Mayor Harris called the special called meeting to order at 5:30pm**

**I. NEW BUSINESS**

1. APPROVAL OF LEASE AGREEMENT – GROW DULUTH DEVELOPMENT {A}

City Manager James Riker presented the proposed lease agreement with Grow Duluth Development LLC for the parking lot located next to the THRIVE building in downtown Duluth. The purpose of this agreement is to allow the City to use the parking lot through the upcoming Fall Festival and Howl on the Green events until the City's acquisition of the parking lot is complete.

**A motion was made by Councilmember Harkness, seconded by Councilmember Thomas, to approve the lease agreement with Grow Duluth Development LLC as presented.**

**Voting for: Councilmembers Harkness, Thomas, Graeder, and Whitlock  
Motion carried.**

*Councilmember Doss entered the meeting at 5:34pm.*

2. BID AWARD – RED CLAY THEATRE SOUND SYSTEM {B}

Mr. Riker explained that staff published an RFP for the replacement of the sound system at the Red Clay Theatre and recommends the bid be awarded to Baker Audio Visual in the amount of \$110,000. Purchase and installation of the sound system is a SPLOST 2023 budgeted item. Eddie Owen of the Red Clay Theatre described the equipment being replaced and the timeframe for the work to be completed.

**A motion was made by Councilmember Graeder, seconded by Councilmember Whitlock, to approve the award of the bid for the Red Clay sound system to Baker Audio Visual in an amount not to exceed \$110,000 as recommended.**

**Voting for: Councilmembers Harkness, Thomas, Doss, Graeder, and Whitlock  
Motion carried.**

## **II. EXECUTIVE SESSION**

It was necessary to hold an executive session on Real Estate, Pending/Potential Litigation, Personnel, which is properly excluded from the Georgia Open and Public Meeting Law (O.C.G.A. 50-14).

**A motion was made by Councilmember Whitlock, seconded by Councilmember Thomas to adjourn into executive session at 5:37pm.**

**Voting for: Councilmembers Harkness, Thomas, Doss, Graeder, and Whitlock  
Motion carried.**

**After the discussion, a motion was made by Councilmember Harkness, seconded by Councilmember Thomas to adjourn the executive session and return to the special called meeting at 5:50pm.**

**Voting for: Councilmembers Harkness, Thomas, Doss, Graeder, and Whitlock  
Motion carried.**

## **III. ADJOURNMENT**

**A motion was made by Councilmember Graeder, seconded by Councilmember Doss, to adjourn to the regularly scheduled work session at 5:50pm.**

**Voting for: Councilmembers Harkness, Thomas, Doss, Graeder, and Whitlock  
Motion carried.**

### **NOTES OF THE WORK SESSION MAYOR AND COUNCIL CITY OF DULUTH, GA SEPTEMBER 25, 2023**

## **I. PUBLIC COMMENTS**

Marsha Bomar of 3630 Ridgeway Rd, Duluth GA, came forward to speak on the proposed compensation for Mayor and Council.

## **II. PRESENTATIONS/DISCUSSIONS/UPDATES**

### **1. ANNUAL PAVING UPDATE**

{C}

Director of Public Works Audrey Turner and staff presented the annual paving update as well as updates for crosswalk and road sign maintenance and debris removal.

### **2. SCOTT HUDGENS PARK – AFUSA USAGE AGREEMENT**

Director of Parks and Recreation Kathy Marelle presented the recommendation to continue the usage agreement with the West Gwinnett/Atlanta Fire United Soccer Association (AFUSA) beginning December 29, 2023, and continuing until December 28, 2028.

*Staff was authorized to place the agreement on the October 9, 2023 consent agenda for approval.*

### 3. ELECTED OFFICIAL COMPENSATION

Assistant City Manager/City Clerk Teresa Lynn presented the compensation survey of elected officials in surrounding cities, mandatory conditions for increasing compensation, and limitations of such increases.

*Council elected to place this item on hold.*

### 4. CITY CHARTER AMENDMENTS

Ms. Lynn presented the proposed amendments to the City Charter. In 2022 an audit of the City's Municipal Code and Charter was performed. The amendments to the Municipal Code were approved and implemented. Amendments to the Charter were brought before the Council for consideration.

*Staff was authorized to place charter amendments as presented on a future agenda.*

### 5. MASSAGE ORDINANCE AMENDMENT

Ms. Lynn presented the changes in state law which specify only the state is allowed to regulate massage therapists; local jurisdictions are no longer permitted to run background checks on employees of a massage establishment. Therefore, Chapter 7 Article VIII sections 7-248(b)(2), 7-248(b)(3), and 7-248(b)(5)(I) require amending.

*Staff was authorized to place Chapter 7 Article VIII amendments as presented on the October 9, 2023 consent agenda.*

### 6. PUBLIC SAFETY STAFFING CHANGES

{D}

Chief Carruth presented an overview of an ambassador program she would like to implement which would reclassify two sworn positions into non-sworn (civilian) positions. Staff outlined changes relating to compensation of sworn officers and dispatchers which includes a 5% increase as well as a housing stipend of \$650 for officers living within City limits. The proposed changes are intended to assist with recruitment and retention of public safety positions.

*Staff was authorized to include a 5% increase in compensation and a \$650 housing stipend in the FY24 budget as presented.*

## III. MATTERS FROM COUNCIL

- 2024 Strategic Planning Conference
- Parks and Recreation Master Plan
- Fall Festival

#### **IV. ADJOURNMENT**

*The next scheduled meeting of the Mayor and Council is October 9, 2023 in City Hall Council Chambers at 6:00 pm.*

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