

**CITY OF HELEN
COMMISSION MEETING
JULY 20, 2021
10:00 A.M.
AGENDA**

1. CALL TO ORDER BY MAYOR LEE LANDRESS
2. ROLL CALL BY CITY CLERK MARILYN CHASTAIN
3. PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE TO THE FLAG
4. APPROVAL OF AGENDA
5. APPROVAL OF MINUTES FROM JUNE 15, 2021 COMMISSION MEETING,
APPROVAL OF MINUTES FROM SPECIAL CALLED MEETING ON JUNE 18, 2021,
APPROVAL OF MINUTES FROM SPECIAL CALLED MEETING ON JUNE 24, 2021
6. ADMINISTRATIVE OPERATIONS
 - A. UPDATE FROM CITY MANAGER ON CURRENT PROJECTS
 - B. DISCUSSION FOR APPROVAL OF 2020 DISASTER MITIGATION PLAN
 - C. RESOLUTION 21-07-01; A RESOLUTION OF THE CITY OF HELEN MAYOR AND CITY COMMISSIONERS PURSUANT TO THE DISASTER MITIGATION ACT OF 2020 AUTHORIZING ADOPTION OF THE WHITE COUNTY HAZARD MITIGATION PLAN UPDATE.
 - D. FINANCIAL REPORT
 - E. RESOLUTION 21-07-02; A RESOLUTION OF THE CITY OF HELEN, GEORGIA APPROVING AND AUTHORIZING THE CITY MANAGER AND FINANCE OFFICER TO EXECUTE CERTAIN DOCUMENTS REQUIRED TO APPLY FOR AND ACCEPT LOCAL RECOVERY ASSISTANCE FUNDS UNDER THE AMERICAN RESCUE PLAN ACT; PROVIDING AN EFFECTIVE DATE; AND FOR OTHER PURPOSES
 - F. DISCUSSION OF MILLAGE RATE AND REMINDER OF CALLED MEETING ON JULY 30, 2021 AT 10:00 A.M. TO FINALIZE SETTING THE MILLAGE RATE
 - G. DISCUSSION FOR APPROVAL OF THE 2021/2022 CVB CONTRACT RENEWAL
 - H. DISCUSSION OF RENTALS IN AREAS ZONED RESIDENTIAL

- I. DISCUSSION OF POLICE STAFFING LEVELS
- 7. PETITIONS AND COMMUNICATIONS FROM THE PUBLIC
- 8. HELEN/WHITE COUNTY CVB MONTHLY REPORT
- 9. POLICE DEPARTMENT MONTHLY REPORT
- 10. FIRE DEPARTMENT MONTHLY REPORT
- 11. PUBLIC WORKS, WATER AND WASTE WATER MONTHLY REPORT
- 12. BUILDING AND ZONING MONTHLY REPORT
 - A. DISCUSSION OF TABLED CONDITIONAL USE REQUEST FOR PROPERTY LOCATED AT 8770 & 8772 NORTH MAIN STREET
- 13. PURCHASES AND BIDS
- 14. ORDINANCES; NONE
- 15. CITY COMMISSION COMMENTS
- 16. ADJOURNMENT

**THIS AGENDA WAS POSTED JULY 16, 2020 @ 11:45 A.M.
THE MEETING AGENDA IS SUBJECT TO CHANGE AND IS NOT FINAL UNTIL APPROVED BY THE
CITY OF HELEN COMMISSION AT THE COMMISSION MEETING STATED HEREIN.**

**CITY OF HELEN
COMMISSION MEETING
JULY 20, 2021
MINUTES OF MEETING**

The Helen City Commission met on Tuesday July 20, 2021 in the Commission Chambers at Helen City Hall with Mayor Lee Landress calling the meeting to order at 10:00 a.m. City Clerk Marilyn Chastain called the roll and attending were Commissioner Jeff Ash, Mayor Lee Landress, Commissioner Fred Garmon, Commissioner Geneva Elwell, and Commissioner Steve Fowler.

Also attending were Finance Officer Mona Wood, City Manager Jerry Elkins, City Attorney Carl Free, City Clerk Marilyn Chastain, Police Captain Mark Harris, Public Works Assistant Director Jack Morgan, Fire Chief Jody Prickett. Absent was Building & Zoning Director Darrell Westmoreland.

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE TO THE FLAG

APPROVAL OF AGENDA; Motion to amend the Agenda by adding as item 8 A report from Judy Holloway for the Helen Chamber of Commerce and approve the amended Agenda made by Commissioner Fred Garmon, 2nd by Commissioner Steve Fowler. Motion approved with a unanimous vote of the Commission.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES FROM JUNE 15, 2021, COMMISSION MEETING,

APPROVAL OF MINUTES FROM SPECIAL CALLED MEETING ON JUNE 18, 2021,

APPROVAL OF MINUTES FROM SPECIAL CALLED MEETING ON JUNE 24, 2021

Motion to approve all minutes as is made by Commissioner Steve Fowler, 2nd by Commissioner Geneva Elwell. Motion approved with a unanimous vote of the Commission.

ADMINISTRATIVE OPERATIONS

UPDATE FROM CITY MANAGER ON CURRENT PROJECTS; City Manager Jerry Elkins presented a list with the status of each project and gave a verbal report.

DISCUSSION FOR APPROVAL OF 2020 DISASTER MITIGATION PLAN; David Murphy from White County Emergency Management discussed the joint plan with White County, the Cities of Cleveland and Helen and the requirement of having the plan in place for funding purposes.

Motion to go into Public Hearing for discussion of Mitigation Plan at 10:13 a.m. made by Commissioner Steve Fowler, 2nd by Commissioner Fred Garmon. Motion approved with a unanimous vote of the Commission. There was no Public input.

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Motion to go out of the Public Hearing at 10:14 a.m. made by Commissioner Fred Garmon, 2nd by Commissioner Steve Fowler. Motion approved with a unanimous vote of the Commission.

RESOLUTION 21-07-01; A RESOLUTION OF THE CITY OF HELEN MAYOR AND CITY COMMISSIONERS PURSUANT TO THE DISASTER MITIGATION ACT OF 2020 AUTHORIZING ADOPTION OF THE WHITE COUNTY HAZARD MITIGATION PLAN UPDATE. Resolution was read by Mayor Lee Landress. Motion to approve made by Commissioner Steve Fowler, 2nd by Commissioner Jeff Ash. Motion approved with a unanimous vote of the Commission.

FINANCIAL REPORT; Motion to approve made by Commissioner Jeff Ash, 2nd by Commissioner Steve Fowler. Motion approved with a unanimous vote of the Commission.

RESOLUTION 21-07-02; A RESOLUTION OF THE CITY OF HELEN, GEORGIA APPROVING AND AUTHORIZING THE CITY MANAGER AND FINANCE OFFICER TO EXECUTE CERTAIN DOCUMENTS REQUIRED TO APPLY FOR AND ACCEPT LOCAL RECOVERY ASSISTANCE FUNDS UNDER THE AMERICAN RESCUE PLAN ACT; PROVIDING AN EFFECTIVE DATE; AND FOR OTHER PURPOSES; Resolution read by City Manager Jerry Elkins. Motion to approve made by Commissioner Fred Garmon, 2nd by Commissioner Steve Fowler. Motion approved with a unanimous vote of the Commission.

DISCUSSION OF MILLAGE RATE AND REMINDER OF CALLED MEETING ON JULY 30, 2021 AT 10:00 A.M. TO FINALIZE SETTING THE MILLAGE RATE

DISCUSSION FOR APPROVAL OF THE 2021/2022 CVB CONTRACT RENEWAL; Motion to approve made by Commissioner Jeff Ash, 2nd by Commissioner Geneva Elwell. Motion approved with a unanimous vote of the Commission.

DISCUSSION OF RENTALS IN AREAS ZONED RESIDENTIAL; Commissioner Steve Fowler asked if the current Ordinance needs changing to allow nightly rentals in residential zoning. City Attorney Carl Free stated that the current ordinance was written in 1992 and at that time there wasn't the huge demand for nightly rentals as there is now thru such sites as AirBnB, and the way it is currently written does not prevent nightly rentals.

DISCUSSION OF POLICE STAFFING LEVELS; Commissioner Steve Fowler stated that he had studied what other Police Departments in surrounding areas are paying their officers and that Helen is paying 7% less and thinks that the City should do something to attract

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new officers such as a base pay increase and take home vehicles. He suggested purchasing additional new vehicles. He asked Captain Mark Harris what he thought would help recruit new officers. Captain Harris stated that definitely take home vehicles would help and with the purchase of 3 new vehicles certainly should be enough cars to allow. He also talked of the current policy of allowing officers to become certified and paying for the training with the agreement that the officer would sign a contract agreeing to remain with the Police Department 3 years after becoming certified, and stated that we have the best officers anyone can have, that he personally is in charge of interviews, backgrounds, and hiring and that having take home cars would be the equivalent to adding \$2400.00 a year to their salary and one of the problems is finding good applicants.

Commissioner Steve Fowler made a motion to allow senior officers use of take home cars per policy currently in place, 2nd by Commissioner Jeff Ash. Motion approved with a unanimous vote of the commission.

Motion to purchase 3 new police vehicles made by Commissioner Steve Fowler, 2nd by Commissioner Fred Garmon. Motion approved with a unanimous vote of the Commission.

Motion to add to the July 30, 2021 meeting, discussion of increase to Police Department salaries made by Commissioner Jeff Ash, 2nd by Commissioner Steve Fowler. Motion approved with a unanimous vote of the Commission.

PETITIONS AND COMMUNICATIONS FROM THE PUBLIC; Rob Oberling of 246 Berg Weg complained about the permitting times for construction running until 10:00 p.m. and the noise associated during construction. He explained that construction on the lot next to his that the contractor works until 10:00 p.m. because he knows he can work until then. He explained his wife has health issues and is concerned about the roadway being blocked in the event an emergency vehicle needs to get thru. He would like the commission to consider changing the Ordinance to stop at 9:00 p.m. City Attorney Carl Free stated that any change to the Ordinance would take at least 2 months due to having to go thru two reading for approval. Mayor Lee Landress stated they would consider.

Cinnamon Rushton stated she is happy to hear of the take home car policy for the police department and would like to see approval of funding for another full time person for the fire department and thinks that the City should consider adding parking meters to the parking spaces in the island area and does not think the City should absorb the cost of providing parking for the residents.

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HELEN/WHITE COUNTY CVB MONTHLY REPORT; Report included as an integral part of the Minutes. Director Jerry Brown was present and gave a verbal report.

HELEN CHAMBER OF COMMERCE MONTHLY REPORT; Judy Holloway was present and gave a verbal report stating that Bands were being booked for Oktoberfest, that Bingo was going well, they are working on the website, that they currently have 148 members and are not funded any from the State or from the City, that they had applied for the Shuttered Grant Funding and had received \$401,000.

POLICE DEPARTMENT MONTHLY REPORT; Report included as an integral part of the Minutes. Captain Mark Harris was present and gave a verbal report.

FIRE DEPARTMENT MONTHLY REPORT; Report included as an integral part of the Minutes. Fire Department Chief Jody Prickett was present and gave a verbal report.

PUBLIC WORKS, WATER AND WASTE WATER MONTHLY REPORT; Report included as an integral part of the Minutes. Public Works Assistant Director Jack Morgan was present.

BUILDING AND ZONING MONTHLY REPORT; Report included as an integral part of the Minutes.

DISCUSSION OF TABLED CONDITIONAL USE REQUEST FOR PROPERTY LOCATED AT 8770 & 8772 NORTH MAIN STREET; City Manager Jerry Elkins explained that the request is to allow putting the patio only in the setback area and not the building. Motion to approve allowing the patio in the setback area made by Commissioner Steve Fowler, 2nd by Commissioner Fred Garmon. Motion approved with a unanimous vote of the Commission.

PURCHASES AND BIDS

ORDINANCES; NONE

CITY COMMISSION COMMENTS

ADJOURNMENT; Motion to adjourn at 11:34 a.m. made by Commissioner Fred Garmon, 2nd by Commissioner Steve Fowler. Motion approved with a unanimous vote of the Commission.

RESPECTFULLY PREPARED BY CITY CLERK MARILYN CHASTAIN

