

**CITY OF HELEN  
COMMISSION MEETING  
MARCH 3, 2015  
10:00 A.M.  
AGENDA**

1. CALL TO ORDER BY MAYOR DONA K BURKE
2. ROLL CALL BY CITY CLERK MARILYN CHASTAIN
3. PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE TO THE FLAG
4. APPROVAL OF AGENDA
5. APPROVAL OF MINUTES FROM FEBRUARY 17, 2015
6. PETITIONS AND COMMUNICATIONS FROM THE PUBLIC
7. ADMINISTRATIVE OPERATIONS
  - A. DISCUSSION FOR CONSIDERATION OF INCREASING 4TH OF JULY FIREWORKS DISPLAY
  - B. DISCUSSION AND CONSIDERATION FOR APPROVAL OF SOWO SPECIAL EVENT FOR MAY 15-17-2015
8. POLICE DEPARTMENT OPERATIONS
9. FIRE DEPARTMENT OPERATIONS
10. PUBLIC WORKS, WATER AND WASTE WATER OPERATIONS
11. BUILDING AND ZONING OPERATIONS
12. PURCHASES AND BIDS
13. ORDINANCES
  - A. FIRST READING OF ORDINANCE 15-02-01; AN ORDINANCE OF THE CITY OF HELEN, GEORGIA, TO AMEND THE OFFICIAL CODE OF THE CITY OF HELEN, GEORGIA, BY THE DELETION OF THE PRIOR CHAPTER 43, SHORT TERM SPECIAL EVENTS, IN ITS ENTIRETY; AND ITS REPLACEMENT WITH A NEW CHAPTER 43, SHORT TERM SPECIAL EVENTS
14. RESOLUTIONS
15. CITY COMMISSION COMMENTS

16. ADJOURNMENT

**THIS AGENDA WAS POSTED FEBRUARY 27, 2015 @ 11:00 A.M.**

**CITY OF HELEN  
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MARCH 3, 2015  
10:00 A.M.  
MINUTES OF MEETING**

The Helen City Commission met on Tuesday March 3, 2015 in the Commission Chambers at Helen City Hall with Mayor Dona K Burke calling the meeting to order at 10:00 a.m. City Clerk Marilyn Chastain called the roll and the following were present Commissioner Fred Garmon, Commissioner Helen Wilkins, Mayor Dona K Burke, Commissioner Judy Holloway, Commissioner Jeff Ash.

Also attending were City Manager Jerry Elkins, City Attorney Carl Free, City Clerk Marilyn Chastain, Police Chief Jim Couch, Fireman Johnathan Sutton, Public Works Director Ross Hewell, Building & Zoning Director Larry Krul. Fire Captain Lee Poteat was absent.

Pledge of Allegiance to the Flag was given.

Mayor Dona K Burke recognized the Public Works Department for their work during the past year and during the recent snow and ice and stated as appreciation that the City is going to buy them lunch. City Manager Jerry Elkins added they also be commended for their work in the Island area project, the new Public Works storage building, Oktoberfest, Christmas lights putting up and taking down, extra time worked during the snow and ice, repairing broken water and sewer lines and how appreciative he is of all their hard work. He also thanked the Hotels that had provided rooms at no charge to the city during the snow.

Approval of Agenda; Motion to amend the Agenda by the addition of item A under Petitions and Communications discussion from Annette Dixon, and add after Resolutions an Executive Session for Real Estate acquisition made by Commissioner Helen Wilkins, 2nd by Commissioner Fred Garmon. Motion approved with a unanimous vote of the Commission.

Approval of Minutes from February 17, 2015; Motion to approve made by Commissioner Jeff Ash, 2nd by Commissioner Fred Garmon. Motion approved with a unanimous vote of the Commission.

Petitions and Communications from the public;

A. Discussion from Annette Dixon about the Helen Library. Ms. Dixon informed the Commission that the State had stopped funding for purchasing Books and Materials to the Libraries and that members of Friends of the Library had been having fund raisers with the next being March 21, 2015 at Babyland General, the cost of tickets is \$50.00 and hopes that the event will be a success.

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Administrative Operations;

A. Discussion for Consideration of increasing 4th of July Fireworks display; City Manager Jerry Elkins informed the Commission that for the past 15 years the City has spent the same amount of money for the fireworks of \$6,000.00, and due to the increase in cost to produce, the amount of fireworks has also decreased. After more discussion, Commissioner Helen Wilkins made a motion to increase the amount to purchase fireworks for the 4th of July to \$10,000.00, 2nd by Commissioner Judy Holloway. Motion approved with a unanimous vote of the Commission.

B. Discussion and Consideration for approval of SOWO Special Event for May 15-17, 2015. Matthew Bounds was present representing Southern Worthersee and answered questions from the Commission about the upcoming event. He also requested that the event be considered as a City Wide event and presented a plaque to the City from SOWO for their upcoming 9th year being in Helen. City Manager Jerry Elkins informed the Commission that the only existing City Wide events are Oktoberfest and the Balloon Fest. Commissioner Helen Wilkins stated she does not think the City should take on the responsibility as a City wide event. There was discussion of the number of people expected to attend and the impact the event will have on the local and surrounding areas for housing. Mayor Dona K Burke stated the town is small and it is hard to accommodate this large number of people, but does appreciate the business it brings to Helen and the surrounding areas. Commissioner Judy Holloway said there are only 3 business listed on the sponsor list, which Mr. Bounds replied he had met earlier with the business association and is working with them to sell SOWO merchandise to hopefully help get people into their stores. There was discussion of signage for the event and what could be allowed. City Attorney Carl Free stated the Commission could at their discretion permit additional signs. Police Chief Jim Couch stated the City street closings last year had worked out very well, and would like to have a motion from the Commission to allow him to be able to decide for safety concerns, which streets and times of street closings for the event and that he has been talking with Mr. Bounds preparing for the Event. Commissioner Fred Garmon made a motion to approve the event and to approve Police Chief Jim Couch to use his discretion for the times, and of which City streets to close during the event, 2nd by Commissioner Helen Wilkins. Motion approved with a unanimous vote of the Commission.

Police Department Operations; No further motions were made.

Fire Department Operations; Fireman Johnathan Sutton informed the Commission that there was maintenance being done on the trucks, and inspections of the Apparatus.

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Public Works, Water and Waste Water Operations; Public Works Director Ross Hewell thanked the Commission for the recognition to the department and stated that Phase 2 of the Island project should start next week along with the new sidewalk in front of the Village Inn Motel after a fire hydrant is moved.

Building & Zoning Operations; Building & Zoning Director Larry Krul asked the Commission to clarify that the SOWO event was approved, and asked for confirmation if the window signs and banners for the event were also approved. City Attorney Carl Free stated that there would need to be a motion from the Commission for a variance to allow the signs. Commissioner Jeff Ash made a motion to allow a variance to the existing temporary sign Ordinance to allow during the SOWO event 2'x3' banners that are each consistent in design, and to allow 8 1/2" x 11" signs in the windows of merchants that are supporting the event, 2nd by Commissioner Judy Holloway. Motion approved with a unanimous vote of the Commission.

There was additional discussion of the SOWO event and of the use of City property. Commissioner Fred Garmon asked Director Krul how the inspections on signs and fire safety were going, which he replied he had the majority of the signs looked at and would need to compare the sign wording with the Occupational Tax applications, but some of the signs had been up so long that they may be grandfathered in, but he would continue to work on those. Director Krul also informed the Commission that he had delivered a notice to Merle Long that he had 30 days in which to remove the signs that do not match the Occupational Tax certificates on Escowee.

Mayor Dona K Burke invited Cindy Bailey with the White County Chamber of Commerce to the podium to discuss upcoming events. She informed the Commission of Bike rides, the Taste of the Town, Easter Extravaganza and Car Show. Commissioner Helen Wilkins asked why the article in the recent newspaper had not mentioned Helen as a major source of income for the County. Ms Bailey explained the figures had come from the state and had not been broken down as to what portions came from the Cities but that certainly Helen was the greatest contributor to the tourist industry.

Purchases and Bids; None

Ordinances; First reading of Ordinance 15-02-01; AN ORDINANCE FO THE CITY OF HELEN, GEORGIA, TO AMEND THE OFFICAL CODE FO THE CITY OF HELEN, GEORGIA, BY THE DELETION OF THE PRIOR CHAPTER 43, SHORT TERM SPECIAL EVENTS, IN ITS ENTIRETY; AND ITS REPLACEMENT WITH A NEW CHAPTER 43, SHORT TERM SPECIAL EVENTS. Mayor Dona K Burke read the first 3 pages, then City Manager Jerry Elkins read the remainder of the Ordinance.

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Motion to approve the first reading of Ordinance 15-02-01 made by Commissioner Judy Holloway, 2nd by Commissioner Helen Wilkins. Motion approved with a unanimous vote of the Commission.

Resolutions; None

Motion to go into Executive Session at 11:30 a.m. for the discussion of Real Estate acquisition made by Commissioner Judy Holloway, 2nd by Commissioner Jeff Ash. Motion approved with a unanimous vote of the Commission.

Commissioner Fred Garmon left the meeting before the Executive Session started.

The regular Commission meeting resumed at 11:39 a.m.; No motions were made as a result of the Executive Session.

City Commission Comments; Commissioner Jeff Ash stated compliments to the employees. Commissioner Judy Holloway asked when the remainder of the Christmas decorations were to be removed, Director Ross Hewell stated after the rain & ice stopped. Mayor Dona K Burke stated thanks to all the Police Department, Public Works, and City Hall employees during the winter storm.

Adjournment; Motion to adjourn at 11:42 a.m. made by Commissioner Judy Holloway, 2nd by Commissioner Helen Wilkins. Motion approved with a unanimous vote of the Commission present.

**RESPECTFULLY PREPARED BY CITY CLERK MARILYN CHASTAIN**