

**MINUTES OF THE ORGANIZATIONAL & REGULAR COUNCIL MEETING HELD AT THE CITY OF SKY VALLEY, GEORGIA ON JANUARY 12, 2021, A TUESDAY AT 10:00 AM VIA TELECONFERENCE (ZOOM)**

**MEMBERS PRESENT:** Mayor Steil, Councilors Oliver, Turner, Morley, Allred, and Curtis

**STAFF PRESENT:** Police Chief Estes, City Clerk Fleming and City Attorney Kidd

**1. Call to Order**

Mayor Steil called the meeting to order and wished everyone a Happy New Year.

**2. Invocation**

Helen Kleiber led the invocation.

**ORGANIZATIONAL MEETING**

**3. Swearing in of Newly Elected Officials**

Tony Allred and Jim Curtis were sworn in by City Attorney Kidd as new Sky Valley Council Members. Councilor Curtis and Allred ran unopposed to fill the two available seats.

**4. Nomination and Selection of 2021 Council President**

Mayor Steil asked for a nominated candidate. Councilor Morley nominated Councilor Oliver to serve another term. Councilor Curtis made a motion for the selection of Councilor Oliver as 2021 Council President, seconded by Turner, unanimously approved.

**5. Set 2021 Regular Meeting Dates**

Councilor Curtis made a motion to approve the Regular Meeting dates as presented seconded by Councilor, unanimously approved.

**REGULAR MEETING**

**6. Approval of Minutes**

**December 15, 2020 – Regular Council Meeting**

**December 16, 2020 - Special Called Council Meeting**

Councilor Oliver made a motion to approve the minutes as presented, seconded by Councilor Curtis, unanimously approved.

**7. Adoption of Agenda**

Councilor Oliver made a motion to approve the agenda as presented, seconded by Councilor Turner, unanimously approved.

**8. Mayoral Remarks**

Mayor Steil thanked the Public Work's Department and Police Department for their performance during the recent snow. Also, thanked the City Hall staff for handling the extra workload in the absence of a City Manager. She thanked Shelly Brown with TimeShares of Sky Valley, for offering accommodations to the City Staff during the many hours they worked to keep the roads safe.

## 9. Council Remarks

**Councilor Oliver** – Thanked the volunteers with the Sky Valley/Scaly Mountain Fire Department. He stated that it was so good to see all the different entities, in Sky Valley, working together in an incredibly positive way.

**Councilor Morley** – Stated that all the City workers have done a wonderful job, “Kudos to our team”. Applauded Councilor Curtis for signing up for another two years and welcomed Councilor Allred. He feels like the City Council was successful in their endeavors for 2020. He also talked about the different Committees that were set up and their accomplishments.

**Councilor Turner** - Stated that there has been a marked improvement in the appearance of Sky Valley with the help of the Committees.

**Councilor Curtis** – Welcomed Councilor Allred. He stated that a lot of sprucing up of some houses look great as many homes were sold last year. He also encouraged everyone to continue wearing their masks and to not let their guard down, regarding COVID.

**Councilor Allred** – Thanked everyone for their warm support and that he considered it a pleasure to work with Sky Valley.

## 10. Committee Reports

- **Mayoral Advisory Committee**

Councilor Oliver stated that the Committee had made two recommendations to Mayor and Council. One recommendation was concerning the pond at the City Park and the other was for the building on 246. Future topics will include the City’s infrastructure and reviewing some of the City’s Ordinances.

- **Special Projects Committee**

Councilor Turner went over some of the 2020 accomplishments which included:

1. Lights at the two stone signs.
2. Front entrance LED lights – the same number of light bulbs were installed as previously but some of the areas are too bright and a lifetime, tinted film will be placed over to soften. This was a project that came from the results of the Survey that was conducted, asking for priority improvements suggestions.
3. The iconic rock at the corner of LaBelle & Ridgepole, was landscaped.

Councilor Turner would like to see the 911 identifying signs be used by all residents. The pavers at the front entrance needs to be cleaned along with the TimeShare Park and Maintenance Building needing attention, which will be future endeavors. He would also like to have volunteers for periodic cleanup of Bald Mountain roadside.

- **Landscaping Advisory Committee**

Debbie Dalhouse-Curtis, Chairperson, went over the primary focus of the Committee for 2020. These areas were at the front entrance – front and back of the stone wall, teardrop island and Sky Valley Way. The committee work along side Mark Wannamaker with the plant selection. This was a shared cost between the Sky Valley Garden Club and the Sky Valley Property Owner’s Association. Some of suggested projects for 2021 are improvements at the former Visitor Center and

street entrances at Winding Ridge Drive, Sky High Drive, and Rebel Circle. A possible solution for the flooding area at the mailboxes will be investigated also.

## **NEW BUSINESS**

### **11. Consider Approval of Marketing Committee Expenditure Report**

Mayor Steil, in the absence of Bob O'Keefe due to an auto accident, read the expenditure report as submitted. This wasn't a complete budget, as not all of 2021 contributions have been received, as of date. The Council considered the committed expenses. Councilor Morley abstained from voting on the approval, as he is on the board of the Club. Councilor Curtis made a motion to approve the 2021 expenditure report, seconded by Councilor Turner, unanimously approved.

### **12. Consider Approval of City Manager Candidate and Employment Agreement**

Mayor Steil stated that the name of the candidate for the City Manager's position is Michael DuVall. She went over his degrees and accomplishments, and the hiring process which involved a Screening Committee. Councilor Turner made a motion to approve the hiring of Michael Duvall as the new City Manager, seconded by Councilor Morley, unanimously approved.

Mr. Duvall stated it was a privilege and appreciated the support from the community.

### **13. Set Qualifying Fees for 2021 General Election**

Mayor Steil suggested that the qualifying fees for the 2021 elections be set at \$15.00 per available seat. There will be four seats to fill this year, Mayor and three Council Members. Councilor Morley made a motion to approve setting the qualifying fees at \$15.00, seconded by Councilor Curtis, unanimously approved.

### **14. Consider 2021 Agreement with Sky Valley/Scaly Mountain Volunteer Fire and Rescue, in the amount of \$88,766.77**

Councilor Oliver made a motion to approve the 2021 Sky Valley/Scaly Mountain Volunteer Fire and Rescue Agreement, seconded by Councilor Morley, unanimously approved.

## **OTHER BUSINESS**

### **15. Public Forum and General Comments**

City Attorney Kidd talked about an incident involving one of Sky Valley's Police Officers, Ronald Baumes. There were allegations made by a homeowner, after viewing the home surveillance video. The Council and City Attorney considered the allegations seriously and followed the recommended, legal procedures for initiating internal and external investigations. The Police Department completed an internal investigation. Outside agencies, The Rabun County Sheriff's Department, the GBI, and District Attorney's Office conducted independent investigations of these allegation. All agencies found no cause for charges to be considered. During this time, the officer was put on administrative leave and he was able to come back to work following the thorough investigation. The officer had a reasonable explanation for his actions. It has been stated that there are similar videos and City Attorney Kidd stated that if that is the case to please submit them and they will be reviewed.

**16. Adjournment**

Councilor Curtis made a motion to adjourn the meeting, seconded by Councilor Oliver, unanimously approved.

The meeting adjourned at 11:10 a.m.

Respectfully submitted,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Hollie Steil". The signature is written in black ink and is positioned above a horizontal line.

Hollie Steil, Mayor

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Karen Fleming". The signature is written in black ink and is positioned above a horizontal line.

Karen Fleming, City Clerk