

**MINUTES OF THE CITY OF SKY VALLEY ORGANIZATIONAL & REGULAR COUNCIL  
MEETING A TUESDAY JANUARY 14, 2025 AT 10:00 AM HELD AT 3608 HWY. 246 (CITY  
HALL) AND VIA TELECONFERENCE (ZOOM) SKY VALLEY, GA 30537**

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

**STAFF PRESENT:** City Manager Streetman, City Clerk Fleming, Communication Specialist Van Camp, PW Superintendent Shope, Water Coordinator English, Police Chief Wallis, and Building Inspector Pyburn

**1. Call to Order**

Mayor Steil called the meeting to order at 10:00 a.m. She thanked the Public Works department for their tireless efforts on clearing the roads during the recent snowstorm. Also, thanked Time Shares of Sky Valley for their donation of rooms to use and the City for having a plan of action.

**2. Invocation/Pledge of Allegiance**

Councilor Turner led the Invocation/Pledge of Allegiance.

**ORGANIZATIONAL MEETING**

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

City Clerk Fleming swears in Councilor Allred and Councilor Turner for another two-year term.

**4. Nomination and Selection of 2025 Council President**

Mayor Steil asked for nominations. Councilor McAfee made a motion to nominate Councilor Allred, seconded by Councilor Turner. Councilor Allred stated that he would accept. The motion was unanimously approved.

**5. Set 2025 Regular Council Meeting Dates**

Councilor Oliver made a motion to approve the meeting dates, seconded by Councilor McAfee, unanimously approved.

**6. Set Qualifying Fees for 2025 General Election**

Councilor Curtis made a motion to set the qualifying fees at \$15.00, seconded by Councilor Turner, unanimously approved.

**REGULAR MEETING**

**7. Approval of Minutes**

**October 25, 2024 – Council Work Session/Planning Retreat**

**November 4, 2024 – Public Hearing Held at 10:00 a.m.**

**November 4, 2024 – Public Hearing Held at 5:00 p.m.**

**November 12, 2024 - Public Hearing**

**November 12, 2024 – Special Called Council Meeting**

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

## **8. Adoption of Agenda**

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

## **9. City Manager Remarks**

City Manager Streetman thanked Public Works and the Police for their endeavors during the recent snow event. He stated that approximately \$400,000 in property taxes have been received. The water department 2024 expenditures exceeded revenue. May need to look at future rates as a rate study is underway. The 2024 budgeted expenditures, for the General Fund, went over but so did the revenues. Budget amendments will be needed. A Kubota RTV was purchased with Mayor Steil's approval. Also, a pole barn was constructed on Knob Drive to house the Kubotas' and other equipment. A snowplow, to be used on the F450, will be purchased soon.

Councilor Curtis asked if the RTVs' were trailered into the City which City Manager Streetman answered no. They are driven on the road with a truck behind, using flashing lights.

## **10. Department Remarks**

Building Inspector Pyburn, gave his report which consisted of one citation issued and one fine for not obtaining a permit. Two certificates of occupancy were issued. Two new homes currently under construction. Seventeen building permits and seventeen tree permits were issued in December. A total of 374 permits were issued in 2024.

A discussion ensued concerning the citation for cutting trees and vehicles parked on street rights-of-ways.

Police Chief Wallis, stated that during his first month on the job that he has been going through and cross referencing the City's Employee Handbook with the Department's Policy and Procedures Handbook. He stated that the Department is not in compliance with about fifty to seventy-five percent of the Department's SOP, which could hold the City liable. He stated that the mission statement is too lengthy and would like to get that minimized. Currently the Department doesn't have a Vision and Core Values Statement so he will be working on that also. He asked City Manager Streetman if there could be more line items added to his budget to keep up with the exact expenditures.

Only one minor accident was reported during the recent bad weather.

Public Works Superintendent Shope, stated that Cody done a fine job filling in for him during his absence. The leaf vac is repaired and will be back to use. Looking at future paving projects. Thank homeowners for their thoughtfulness during the snow event. Ditches are being redefined. He stated that he hired a new employee, Matthew Crowder.

Councilor McAfee stated that there are some fire hydrants barely visible because of the leaves around them. Superintendent Shope stated that his crew will be working on the removal.

Water Coordinator English, recommended for all homeowners to be aware of the freezing

weather and take measures to keep their pipes from freezing. Heaters in crawl spaces dripping faucets help during this time. He has currently rebuilt five City pressure reducing valves at a cost of approximately \$3,000 each. These newly rebuilt valves will help cut down on water line breaks by reducing pressure. He stated that since 2021 the price of a fire hydrant has doubled along with many items for repairs. The water rate study will help determine if the City needs to go up on their water rates. The old lodge area needs a new fire hydrant or repairs as it currently doesn't have a shut off or it has been paved over. Councilor McAfee asked Fire Chief Sigler how long it would take to drain our water tank of 250,000 gallons? He stated that it would take a long time, but they can also pull from the reservoirs on Tahoe Knob, and the Country Club.

Councilor Curtis asked if rebuilding the PRVs' would change the pressure at the fire hydrants? Fire Chief Sigler stated that his department would reassess them after completion.

#### **11. Committee Reports**

Special Projects Chairman, Councilor Turner, stated he would like for his committee to meet soon to go over the events of last year's Fallfest and to also talk about possibly changing the date to the fourth Saturday of October instead of the third. He would like to arrange some cleanup dates for Bald Mtn. Road, (entrance to Sinclair) and talk about some solutions for the amount of trash alongside Evergreen Way.

Marketing Committee Chairman Gordon Brand, stated that a new publication is forth coming and more Media Visits are in the works. Doug Hollingsworth is working with Explore Rabun to spotlight Sky Valley along with promoting Sky Valley at an upcoming PGA show. Visitor's Fact Sheet is being worked on to hand out. The committee is visiting the idea of using, Placer.AI, an entity that tracks cell phone usage to gather data showing where the individual is from for future marketing endeavors.

### **NEW BUSINESS**

#### **12. Ratification of the 2025 Sky Valley/Scaly Mountain Volunteer Fire and Rescue Agreement**

City Manager Streetman stated that this is an annual agreement with the Sky Valley/Scaly Mountain Fire Department. Collaborations with the Fire Department helps to keep homeowners' insurance premiums down. Currently we have an ISO of five (5).

Councilor McAfee asked Fire Chief Sigler what percentage of what we pay makes up their budget, and Chief Sigler answered 43%. Chief Sigler also stated that 72 % of the calls come from Sky Valley. A discussion ensued concerning the mills allocated and if a set amount could be budgeted instead of a percentage of the tax digest. Councilor Oliver stated that with the discussion a seed has been planted, and it would be appropriate to have future conversations concerning this topic.

Councilor McAfee made a motion to ratify the agreement set at 1.5 mills of the 2024 tax digest, seconded by Councilor Curtis, unanimously approved.

#### **13. Consider approval of 2025 committee appointments**

Mayor Steil wanted to thank the residents that gave of their time for these committees.

She wanted to add one more person to the Special Projects Committee: Vickie Trogdon.

Councilor Curtis thanked Mayor Steil for all the work that she puts in to help set up these committees.

Councilor McAfee made a motion to approve the 2025 committee appointments, seconded by Councilor Oliver, unanimously approved.

The committee members are as listed;

Mayoral Advisory Committee: Bill Oliver, Chairman, Tony Allred, Lise Rozier, David Spears, and Tim McClelland.

Special Projects Committee: Bruce Turner, Chairman, Jim Rhodes, Rick Rahn, Grace Guess, Ken Sigler, Vickie Trogdon, and Gordon Brand.

Landscaping Committee: Cheryl Beckert, Chairperson, Debbie Dalhouse-Curtis, Don Rice, Cathy Turner, Margaret Waggoner, and Becky Whitehead.

Sky Valley Marketing Committee: Gordon Brand, Chairman, Jim Curtis, Paul Evans, Lise Rosier, Harry Collins, Jack Brandon, Daniela Olvera, John Robson, and Ryan DuBois.

Planning and Zoning: Dan McAfee, Chairman, Tony Allred, David Spears, Don Germano, Jim Phelps, and Jim Pyburn.

**14. Ratification of Resolution to adopt the 2024 Rabun County Joint Comprehensive Plan update**

City Manager Streetman stated that every five years the County's Comp Plan is reviewed and changes made if necessary. There were public hearings held to get citizens' input. The county along with all the cities within the county must approve the comprehensive plan to be in compliance with the State for grant applications.

Councilor Oliver made a motion to official approve the Resolution to adopt the 2024 Rabun County Joint Comprehensive Plan, seconded by Councilor Allred, unanimously approved.

**15. Consider approval of the FY2025 Sky Valley Marketing Committee Budget**

Gordon Brand, Marketing Chairman, stated that the committee operates on contributions. This year the contributors will be: City of Sky Valley, Sky Valley Property Owners' Assn., Sky Valley Country Club, and Time Shares of Sky Valley. The balanced budget consists of revenues of \$26,404 along with expenditures of \$26,404.

Councilor Curtis made a motion to approve the FY2025 Sky Valley Marketing Budget, seconded by Councilor Oliver, unanimously approved.

**16. Consider adoption of the amendment to the City of Sky Valley Zoning Regulations as they apply to solar energy systems – 2<sup>nd</sup> Reading**

The approved minor changes were made to the Ordinance after the first reading. City Manager Streetman read the heading of the Ordinance. It reads, "An ordinance amending the zoning ordinance of the City of Sky Valley, Georgia adopted on August 11, 2003, for the

purpose of regulating the location, height, bulk, number of stories and the size of structures; the amount of lot which may be occupied; the size of yards, courts, and other open space; the density and distribution of population; the regulation of solar energy systems (SES); the use of structures, and land for trade commerce, residence, recreation, conservation, water supply, sanitation, public activities, and other purposes; creating districts for said purposes and establishing the boundaries thereof; defining certain terms used herein; providing for the method of administration and amendment; defining the powers and duties of the Planning and Zoning Commission, Building Inspector and Governing Authority; Providing penalties for violation; repealing conflicting regulation; and for other purposes.” City Manager Streetman stated that City Attorney Kidd had approved of the Ordinance as presented. Councilor Curtis had some concerns if this Ordinance would limit some homeowners. Councilor McAfee stated that an individual could apply for a variance if their need is outside of the Ordinance regulations.

The first reading was October 15, 2024.

Councilor McAfee made a motion to adopt the amendment to the Zoning Regulations Ordinance, seconded by Councilor Turner, unanimously approved.

**17. Consider approval to purchase one (1) excavator with enclosed cab, in an amount not to exceed \$75,000 (to be paid out of TSPLOST funds)**

City Manager Streetman stated this is a budgeted item. Currently the City has a 2017 excavator without a cab. He stated that having two would help in the event of coincided water line breaks or defining ditches on opposite sides of the City. A flail mower could be added to the excavator as well. Water Coordinator English stated the excavator is what meets the need and has a two-year warranty. Bobcat has previously supplied excellent customer service and Kubota has had their struggles, so he recommended purchasing the Bobcat. Three quotes were obtained: Nelson Motor Company Kubota KX057 \$77,600; James Short Tractors Kubota KX057 \$73,729; Bobcat of Blue Ridge Bobcat E60R2 \$73,680. A video was shown on the Bobcat.

Questions were asked concerning if this is the best use of \$75,000 and if the 2017 could be fitted with a cab. Water Coordinator English stated that it was what was needed and City Manager Streetman stated that it was cost prohibitive to have the 2017 excavator fitted for a cab.

Councilor Oliver made a motion to approve the purchase of the Bobcat excavator, seconded by Councilor McAfee, unanimously approved.

## **OTHER BUSINESS**

**18. Public Forum and General Comments**

No other comments were made.

**19. Executive Session**

Mayor Steil suggested closing the meeting to go into Executive Session. The reason for the session would be to discuss the future acquisition of real estate, (O.C.G.A. §50-14-3 (4))

Councilor Curtis made a motion to close the meeting, seconded by Councilor McAfee, un-

animously approved.

After the session, Councilor Oliver made a motion to open the meeting again, seconded by Councilor McAfee, unanimously approved. Mayor Steil stated that no action was taken.

**20. Adjournment**

As there being no further business to come before Mayor and Council, Councilor Allred made a motion to adjourn the meeting, seconded by Councilor Turner, unanimously approved.

The meeting adjourned at 1:05 p.m.

Respectfully submitted:

A handwritten signature in black ink, reading "Hollie Steil", written over a horizontal line.

Hollie Steil, Mayor

Attest:

A handwritten signature in blue ink, reading "Karen Fleming", written over a horizontal line.

Karen Fleming, City Clerk