

Gatlinburg City Commission October 22, 2024 Meeting Minutes

The Gatlinburg Board of Commissioners met in a regular meeting on Tuesday, October 22, 2024, at 6:00 P.M. in the City Council Room. All the members were present. Mayor Mike Werner called the meeting to order and led the Pledge of Allegiance. Director of Operations and Communications Seth Butler led the Invocation.

Mayor Werner then called for a motion to approve the Minutes of the regular meeting of September 17, 2024. Commissioner Jay Horner made a motion to approve the Minutes which was seconded by Commissioner Chad Reagan and then unanimously adopted.

Regarding Reports from Boards and Committees, Chad Netherland, Gatlinburg Convention and Visitors Bureau President & CEO reported that in the third quarter that had several key meetings, including a meeting with Sevierville, Pigeon Forge, Sevier County on the 2024 co-op marketing plan with Dolly Parton representatives, met with the CVB and Chamber staff to formulate a marketing strategy on slower visitation, gave a public meeting to the community about the State of Tourism locally and attended the Tennessee Governor's Conference on Tourism. Mr. Netherland also reported in the third quarter that the visitation to Gatlinburg.com was up approximately 20% and that Visit Gatlinburg App Usage users was up 680%. Mr. Netherland also reported that year to date, Visit Gatlinburg social media platforms have reached over 1 billion individuals. Also, Mr. Netherland announced that Gatlinburg had received several accolades, including USA Today's 10Best Winner for Best place to Visit for Fall for the second consecutive year. Regarding the Convention Center, Mr. Netherland reported that in the third quarter, the facility hosted 85 events, with total building attendance up 9.28% over last year.

The City Manager reported and/or requested:

- (1) that he wanted to announce that the Recreation Department is holding its 11th annual Halloween Spooktacular on October 29 at Rocky Top Sports World and that gates will open at 5:30 p.m., with the event beginning at 6 p.m; and,
- (2) that he wanted to announce that the Winterfest Kickoff and Chili Cookoff will be held on Thursday, November 7 from 5-8pm at the Shade Tree Parking Lot adjacent to the Convention Center. The GCVB will donate a portion of the proceeds from the event to Mountain Ways, a local non-profit garnering aide and resources for Hurricane Helene flood relief; and,
- (3) that he also wanted to announce that the annual Veterans Day Celebration will be held on Monday, November 11 at 11 a.m. at Ripley's Aquarium of the Smokies plaza and that Since the year 2000, Gatlinburg has been designated an official Regional Site for the Observance of Veterans Day as designated by Veterans Day National Committee and the Department of Veterans Affairs.

Old Business:

ORDINANCE NUMBER 2622, AN ORDINANCE TO AMEND THE MUNICIPAL CODE BY REPLACING TITLE 11, CHAPTER 2, SECTION 11-204 TITLED “PUBLIC DRUNKENNESS” AND AMENDING TITLE 11, CHAPTER 4, SECTION 11-401 TITLED “DISTURBING THE PEACE”, Second Reading (Passed First Reading 9/17/2024).

Item A under Old Business was Ordinance 2622, an Ordinance to amend the Municipal Code by replacing Title 11, Chapter 2, Section 11-204 titled “Public Drunkenness” and amending Title 11, Chapter 4, Section 11-401 titled “Disturbing the Peace”, Second Reading (Passed First Reading 9/17/2024). Commissioner Horner made a motion to adopt the Ordinance on second reading which was seconded by Vice Mayor Mark McCown. The Police Chief explained that the City Attorney advised amending the wording by adding the definition of Public Intoxication into the City Ordinance for disturbing the peace because State Law states that no City shall adopt local laws rendering public intoxication or drunkenness in and of itself and that City Court cannot adjudicate or hear its own public intoxication Ordinance in municipal court. Following these comments, the motion to adopt the Ordinance on first reading was unanimously approved.

New Business:

DISCUSSION AND CONSIDERATION OF APPROVING A MEDICAL INSURANCE PLAN WITH BLUECROSS/BLUESHIELD FOR THE PERIOD OF JANUARY 1, 2025, THROUGH DECEMBER 31, 2025.

Item A under New Business was discussion and consideration of approving a Medical Insurance Plan with BlueCross/BlueShield for the period of January 1, 2025, through December 31, 2025. Commissioner Reagan made a motion to approve the medical insurance plan which was seconded by Commissioner Horner. The motion to approve the medical insurance plan was unanimously adopted.

DISCUSSION AND CONSIDERATION OF APPROVING A VISION INSURANCE PLAN WITH PRINCIPAL’S VSP NETWORK FOR THE PERIOD OF JANUARY 1, 2025, THROUGH DECEMBER 31, 2026.

Item B under New Business was discussion and consideration of approving a Vision Insurance Plan with Principal’s VSP Network for the period of January 1, 2025, through December 31, 2026. Commissioner Horner made a motion to approve the vision insurance plan which was seconded by Commissioner Reagan. Commissioner Reagan asked if this was the same insurance plan previously used by the City. Mike McCroskey with Barnes Insurance Agency explained that this plan was an improvement upon the previous carrier based on better coverage of doctors. Following these comments, the motion to approve the vision insurance plan was unanimously adopted.

DISCUSSION AND CONSIDERATION OF APPROVING A GRANT CONTRACT

FOR THE FY 2024-25 UROP STATE OPERATING ASSISTANCE WITH THE TENNESSEE DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION FOR THE MASS TRANSIT DEPARTMENT.

Item C under New Business was discussion and consideration of approving a Grant Contract for the FY 2024-25 UROP State Operating Assistance with the Tennessee Department of Transportation for the Mass Transit Department. Commissioner Horner made a motion to approve the Grant Contract which was seconded by Vice Mayor McCown. The City Manager explained that this is a grant contract from the Tennessee Department of Transportation and that the allocation is in the amount of \$420,900 and is to cover Mass Transit expenditures through June 30, 2025, and the local match is \$105,225, bringing the grant contract project amount to \$526,125. Following these comments, the motion to approve the Grant Contract was unanimously adopted.

DISCUSSION AND CONSIDERATION OF APPROVING A GRANT CONTRACT FOR THE FY 2024-25 WITH THE TENNESSEE HIGHWAY SAFETY OFFICE (THSO) FOR THE POLICE DEPARTMENT.

Item D under New Business was discussion and consideration of approving a Grant Contract for the FY 2024-25 with the Tennessee Highway Safety Office (THSO) for the Police Department. Commissioner Reagan made a motion to approve the Grant Contract which was seconded by Commissioner Horner. The City Manager explained that this was a Tennessee Highway Safety Office grant in the amount of \$30,624 and includes salaries for officers overtime pay, in-car barcode scanners and printers to implement e-tickets. The Police Chief also explained that the focus of the grant is money to focus on safety issues, including the enforcement of seatbelt violations and texting and driving. Following these comments, the motion to approve the Grant Contract was unanimously adopted.

RESOLUTION NUMBER 1018, A RESOLUTION AUTHORIZING THE CITY TO PARTICIPATE IN THE PUBLIC ENTITY PARTNERS “DRIVERS SAFETY” LOSS CONTROL MATCHING GRANT PROGRAM.

Item E under New Business was Resolution Number 1018, a Resolution authorizing the City to participate in the Public Entity Partners “Drivers Safety” Loss Control Matching Grant Program. Vice Mayor McCown made a motion to adopt the Resolution which was seconded by Commissioner Reagan. The City Manager explained that this Resolution allows the City to participate in Public Entity Partners’ “Drivers Safety” matching grant program and the City will receive approximately \$5,000 which will be used to offset the cost of Motor Vehicle and CDL Reports, the purchase of backup cameras for the Sanitation, Utility, and Street Departments, and the purchase of additional GPS units and monitoring for the Street, Sanitation, and Utility Departments and Driver Safety Training. Following these comments, the motion to adopt the Resolution was unanimously approved.

RESOLUTION NUMBER 1019, A RESOLUTION AUTHORIZING THE CITY TO

DONATE \$125,000 TO MOUNTAIN WAYS TO ASSIST WITH RELIEF AND RECOVERY EFFORTS FROM HURRICANE HELENE.

Item F under New Business was Resolution Number 1019, a Resolution authorizing the City to donate \$125,000 to Mountain Ways to assist with the relief and recovery of efforts from Hurricane Helene. Commissioner Reagan made a motion to adopt the Resolution which was seconded by Commissioner Horner. Mayor Werner stated Sevier County and the other city governments were donating the same amount. The City Manager explained that this donation is in the amount of \$125,000 and will be used to assist with relief and recovery efforts from Hurricane Helene in Cocke County and that Mountain Ways is a registered 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization, which is dedicated to operating in affected communities. Following these comments, the motion to adopt the Resolution was unanimously approved.

ORDINANCE NUMBER 2623, AN ORDINANCE TO AMEND SECTION 17-111 OF THE MUNICIPAL CODE DESIGNATING AREAS OF THE CITY REQUIRING ANIMAL RESISTANT GARBAGE CONTAINERS, DUMPSTERS OR EQUIPMENT USED TO STORE GARBAGE.

Item G under New business was Ordinance Number 2623, an Ordinance to amend Section 17-111 of the Municipal Code designating areas of the City requiring animal resistant Garbage. Commissioner Horner made a motion to adopt the Ordinance on first reading which was seconded by Vice Mayor McCown. Mayor Werner stated that this is part of the City's ongoing efforts to help eliminate garbage as a food source for bears. Following these comments, the motion to adopt the Ordinance on first reading was unanimously approved.

ORDINANCE NUMBER 2624, AN ORDINANCE TO AMEND THE ZONING ORDINANCE, BEING NUMBER 830, AND FURTHER BEING AN ORDINANCE TO RECLASSIFY PARCEL 1, GROUP A OF TAX MAP 125M LOCATED AT 1050 SKI VIEW DRIVE IN THE CITY, FROM R-2 (MEDIUM DENSITY RESIDENTIAL) TO R-2A (MEDIUM DENSITY RESIDENTIAL).

Item H under New Business was Ordinance Number 2624, an Ordinance to amend the Zoning Ordinance, being Number 830, and further being an Ordinance to reclassify Parcel 1, Group A of Tax Map 125M located at 1050 Ski View Drive in the City, from R-2 (Medium Density Residential) to R-2A (Medium Density Residential). Commissioner Horner made a motion to adopt the Ordinance which was seconded by Vice Mayor McCown. The Planning Director explained that this is the rezoning of a single parcel at Ravenwood Condos and that the condominium's homeowners association recently updated the bylaws to not allow overnight rentals. The City Manager added that the rezoning was approved by the Gatlinburg Municipal Planning Commission at its September. Following these comments, the motion to adopt the Ordinance on first reading was unanimously approved.

DISCUSSION AND CONSIDERATION OF DECLARING CERTAIN CITY ITEMS AS SURPLUS.

Item I under New Business was discussion and consideration of declaring certain City items as surplus. Vice Mayor McCown made a motion to adopt the items as surplus which was seconded by Commissioner Horner. The City Manager explained that included in the property were eight vehicles, obsolete auto parts, various equipment items from the Golf Course, three Winterfest displays, and old computers and accessories.

UNSCHEDULED ITEMS:

Commissioner Jay Horner

(1) Stated that he wanted to thank Barnes Insurance Agency and BlueCross BlueShield and City staff for helping with the insurance plan approval.

Commissioner Kirby Smith

(1) Stated that he wanted to thank all the various City Departments, and the individuals that donated, to take supplies to Newport after the flooding from Hurricane Helene and that he was proud of the City for doing that.

Mayor Mike Werner

(1) Stated that he wanted to thank everyone for their assistance with the Hurricane Helene flood relief and that with the City Manager's leadership to get the Fire and Police Departments to help send supplies to Newport.

There being no further business to come before the City Commission, Vice Mayor McCown made a motion to adjourn. Commissioner Reagan seconded the motion which was unanimously adopted.


Mike Werner, Mayor

Greg Patterson, City Recorder
/sb