



*Town council work session  
Jan. 27, 2025*

Present: Mayor Chris Lelle; Councilmen, Tommy Buchanan, Eric Dailey, Sally Brown, Doug Koestel and Sharon Johnson; Clerk, Kathy Bridges, Attorney, Jack Samuels

Visitors: Beth Buchanan, Scott Morgan, Phillip Jones

The meeting began at 7:00 p.m. with the Pledge of Allegiance.

The Mayor asked if the council had read the Jan. 6 meeting minutes. Sally Brown made the motion to approve the minutes, Sharon Johnson seconded the motion, and the vote was unanimously approved.

Doug Koestel made a motion to add a post evaluation of the Christmas décor company to the agenda. Sally Brown seconded the motion, and the vote was unanimously approved.

The Mayor asked to amend the agenda to add the demolition permit for the house fire at 143 Manning Gin Road. Sally Brown made the motion to amend the agenda, Eric Dailey seconded the motion, and the vote was unanimously approved.

Phillip Jones with the NE Georgia Regional Commission presented an update on the progress of the amendments to the comprehensive future land use map. He said a public hearing would be scheduled for the March 3 council meeting.

The council appointed Eric Dailey as the Mayor Pro Tem with a nomination by Sally Brown, a second by Sharon Johnson and a unanimous vote. Johnson made the motion to continue to use The Samuels Law Firm for the year 2025. Eric Dailey seconded the motion, and the motion passed unanimously.

Sally Brown asked that the Town apply to be a Passport acceptance facility. She said the Statham Library had been doing so for several years and making up to \$50,000 a year on the service. She said the training was free and the clerk would only have to verify the birth certificate and Driver's License of an applicant. Doug Koestel made the motion to pursue the application, Eric Dailey seconded the motion, Johnson and Brown voted yes and Tommy Buchanan voted no. The motion passed 4-1.

Brown also suggested the town consider renting out space for RVs during UGA football game days. She said a charge of \$350 a camper could be made for parking Friday to Sunday. The

pavilion bathrooms would be kept open and Brown said she would be in charge of inspecting the property afterwards. The Mayor thought the idea was worth exploring.

Lastly Brown proposed keeping the Star of Bethlehem lit year around. The council seemed open to the suggestion. Johnson proposed a timer, and the Mayor said he would get pricing on a photocell timer.

Next on the agenda was a request to use the community room weekly for Narcotics Anonymous meetings. Brown made the motion to approve the use; Johnson seconded the motion, Dailey and Koestel voted yes and Buchanan voted no. The motion passed by a 4-1 vote.

The Mayor gave updates on scraping the roads with the tractor during the ice storm. He said he volunteered his time and used \$45 in fuel. He said there was no need for a brine tank at this time.

Lelle said the road projects, including the culverts on Joseph Street and McElhannon Road and the 4-way stop at Star and David were to begin Feb. 10. The stop signs would have flashing lights to improve safety as the intersection.

The Mayor spoke about Senate Bill HB 581, the homestead exemption bill.

He said the tree maintenance around town was underway. Tommy Buchanan said Holly Lane had some trees that needed trimming.

The Mayor said the town's Facebook page was live.

Sharon Johnson asked for an update on code violations to be added to the agenda. Sally Brown seconded the motion, and the vote was passed unanimously. The Mayor said the letters were being sent by certified mail to the violators.

The council discussed the Christmas décor company. Johnson said she was satisfied with their service. Koestel asked if they were worth the cost of twice what it had been in the past.

Lastly the council was asked to waive the demolition permit fee for the homeowner at 143 Manning Gin Road. Sally Brown made the motion to approve the waiver, Sharon Johnson seconded the motion, and the vote was unanimously approved.

The meeting adjourned at 8:30.