



**MINUTES OF THE
MAYOR AND COUNCIL
CITY OF DULUTH, GA
APRIL 11, 2022**

PRESENT: Mayor Harris, Council members Harkness, Thomas, Doss, Graeder, and Whitlock, City Manager, Department Directors, City Attorney

A work session was held prior to the regular scheduled meeting to allow the elected officials to discuss this evening's agenda items. No other items were discussed, and no action was taken.

Mayor Harris called the meeting to order at 5:40 p.m.

I. EXECUTIVE SESSION

It was necessary to hold an executive session on Real Estate, Pending/Potential Litigation, or Personnel, which is properly excluded from the Georgia Open and Public Meeting Law (O.C.G.A. 50-14).

A motion was made by Councilmember Whitlock, seconded by Councilmember Thomas, to adjourn to executive session at 5:40 p.m.

**Voting for: Council members Harkness, Thomas, Doss, Graeder, and Whitlock
Motion carried.**

After the discussion, a motion was made by Councilmember Harkness, seconded by Councilmember Graeder, to return to regular session at 5:50 p.m.

**Voting for: Council members Harkness, Thomas, Doss, Graeder, and Whitlock
Motion carried.**

Mayor Harris called for a Moment of Silence, followed by the Pledge of Allegiance

II. ANNOUNCEMENTS

1. AGENDA CHANGES (none)

2. UPCOMING EVENTS – www.duluthga.net/events

Egg Hunt, Saturday, April 16, 10am. Bunten Road Park. Join us for our annual egg hunt at Bunten Road Park. For ages 2-12 (age groups will be divided into separate areas for the hunt. For more information visit www.duluthga.net/parksandrecreation.

Duluth Cluster Band Concert, Friday, April 22, 6pm-7pm. Festival Center Stage. Students from Duluth High School, Coleman Middle School and Duluth Middle School will perform a variety of music including many recognizable selections from movies and popular songs.

Duluth Spring Arts Festival, April 29 through May 1, 2022. Saturday 10am-5pm, Sunday 11am-5pm. Town Green. The Duluth Arts Festival features up to 60 painters, photographers, sculptors, leather and metalwork, glass blowers, jewelers, and crafters! The Duluth ARTS Festival will offer artist demonstrations, live acoustic music, a children's play area, plus festival foods and beverages. Brought to you by The Atlanta Foundation for Public Spaces, LLC. For more information such as vendor applications and sponsorship opportunities visit www.duluthartsfestival.com.

Fridays-N-Duluth, every Friday May through September, 6pm-9pm. Town Green and Parsons Alley. Duluth is the place to be on Friday night as food trucks take over Downtown Duluth! Experience exotic flavors in a mobile vending setting with amazing local cuisine while listening to live entertainment on the Festival Center Stage and in Parsons Alley.

Duluth Derby Day, Saturday, May 7, 2:30pm-7:30pm. Parsons Alley. Pull out your wide-brimmed hats and bow ties and join us for the ultimate Kentucky Derby viewing party! Relax on lounge seating and enjoy everything from the pre-show activities to the big race on a large screen.

III. CONSENT AGENDA

1. APPROVAL OF MARCH 14 & 28 MINUTES -

2. ORDINANCE TO APPOINT BOARD OF ETHICS

{A}

Approval of this item approves ordinance O2022-18 appointing Donna Kain to the Board of Ethics, fulfilling the unexpired term of Michael Park, term ending March 31, 2025.

A motion was made by Councilmember Thomas, seconded by Councilmember Doss, to approve the Consent Agenda as presented.

**Voted For: Council members Harkness, Thomas, Doss, Graeder and Whitlock
Motion carried.**

IV. NEW BUSINESS

1. ORDINANCE TO APPOINT ASSISTANT SOLICITOR

{B}

The Mayor and Council considered approval of ordinance O2022-19 appointing Ashley Trinh as the Assistant Solicitor pursuant to the Duluth City Code, Section 2-208. The compensation of the assistant solicitor shall be on an hourly basis and the rate shall be fixed by the Mayor and Council on an annual basis during the regular budget process. Before entering on the duties of office, the assistant solicitor shall take an oath before an officer duly authorized to administer oaths that he or she will truly, honestly, and faithfully discharge the duties of his or her office. The Police Chief and Deputy Chief recommend the appointment of Ms. Ashley Trinh.

A motion was made by Councilmember Harkness, seconded by Councilmember Graeder, to approve ordinance O2022-19 appointing Ms. Trinh as presented.

**Voted For: Council members Harkness, Thomas, Doss, Graeder, and Whitlock
Motion carried.**

2. FISCAL YEAR 2021 - ANNUAL AUDIT REPORT

{C}

Mr. Josh Carroll, City Auditor with Mauldin and Jenkins, came forward and presented the City's annual FY21 audit report as reported to the Employees Benefits and Audit Review Committee (EBARC) on March 24. The audit report includes the City as a whole, the Downtown Development Authority, and the Urban Redevelopment Agency. The audit confirmed that the City's financial statements were prepared in accordance with Generally Accepted Accounting Principles (GAAP) and that the City received an Unqualified Opinion or "certified clean audit." The only mention that continues to arise relates to separation of duties for property tax billing and collection. Staff has mitigated this concern to the extent possible without hiring additional staff. The Committee and staff recommended acceptance of the FY21 Audit Report.

A motion was made by Councilmember Whitlock, seconded by Councilmember Doss to accept the Fiscal Year 2021 Audit as presented.

**Voted For: Council members Harkness, Thomas, Doss, Graeder, and Whitlock
Motion carried.**

3. ANNUAL RENEWAL – EMPLOYEE HEALTH BENEFITS

{D}

MSI Benefits Group insurance broker Matt Bidwell came forward and presented the annual renewal process for the City's health, dental, disability, life insurance, and vision plans as reported to the Employee's Benefits and Audit Review Committee on March 24. He highlighted last year's renewal statistics and explained how the loss ratio fluctuation plays into the rate quotes. Once a few of the large claims were removed from the equation, the City's percentages have been relatively low since 2012. He then reviewed this year's proposals and noted how unusual it is to be offered an even more robust benefit plan for medical without any premium increase.

The Committee and staff recommends that the Council consider changing from the current provider Cigna to United Health Care. Health benefits are a proposed 0% increase. Dental and vision benefits with United Health Care is an increase of 0.28%. The Committee further recommends changing the City's disability and life insurance benefits from MetLife to Standard Life with an increase of 1.85%. The total amount of all the increases is approximately \$8,228.

Councilmember Harkness noted that sometimes a cost savings cannot be quantified if the employees are extremely unhappy with a decision, and he felt that cohesiveness was very important at this time.

Councilmember Thomas noted all the other offerings such as the Ally plan that would be of greater benefit to the employees.

Councilmember Whitlock noted that medical insurance tends to be a very emotional purchase; as a private employer himself, the goal is to not create any significant hardships for the employees outside of the organization.

Councilmember Graeder asked if the same doctor base was available from Cigna to United. Mr. Bidwell noted that the Wellstar system is still under dispute with United Healthcare but that is located mostly on the west side of town (Cobb County).

A motion was made by Councilmember Thomas, seconded by Councilmember Whitlock, to approve changing the City's health, dental, and vision benefits from Cigna to United Health Care and furthermore approve changing the City's disability and life insurance benefits from MetLife to Standard Life as recommended.

**Voted For: Council members Harkness, Thomas, Doss, Graeder, and Whitlock
Motion carried.**

V. MATTERS FROM COUNCIL

Councilmember Whitlock noted the passing of Ray Walker. Mr. Walker served on the City's Downtown Development Authority as well as other committees. He also served as Poll Manager for City elections.

Councilmember Graeder thanked staff for hosting two great events this past weekend, the Beer Festival and the Farmer/Artisan market.

Taylor Park playground is almost finished.

VI. MATTERS FROM CITY MANAGER

1. The Mayor and Council authorized Juneteenth be added to the City's observed holiday calendar, effective this year with observation on June 20.
2. The local chapter of the Georgia Planning Association will be conducting a tour of the City on April 22nd
3. Advertisements will be posted within the next three days for the Playable Art Contest for Taylor Park.

VII. ADJOURNMENT

A motion was made by Councilmember Whitlock, seconded by Councilmember Harkness to adjourn at 6:35 pm.

**Voting for: Council members Harkness, Thomas, Doss, Graeder, and Whitlock
Motion carried.**

Approved this 9 day of May, 2022.



Mayor Nancy Harris

ATTEST:



Asst. City Mgr/City Clerk, Teresa Lynn