**Chattahoochee Hills**



|  |
| --- |
| Information Manual for theMayor and City Council |
|  |

**Table of Contents**

Introduction …………………………………………………………………………………………………………………… 4

Organizational Chart ……………………………………………………………………………………………………… 5

Powers and Duty of the Mayor ……………………………………………………………………………………… 6

 Emergency Authority …………………………………………………………………………………………. 6

General Powers of the City Council ………………………………………………………………………………… 7

Establish Policy …………………………………………………………………………………………………… 8

Appoint ……………………………………………………………………………………………………………… 9

Provide Community Leadership …………………………………………………………………………. 9

Decision Making …………………………………………………………………………......................... 9

Intergovernmental Relations ………………………………………………………………………………………… 10

 Service Delivery Status ………………………………………………………………………………………. 11

 TSPLOST …………………………………………………………………………………………………………….. 12

 Organizations …………………………………………………………………………………………………….. 12

Conflict of Interests, Ethics and Liability of Elected Officials …………………………………………… 12

 Liability ………………………………………………………………………………………………………………. 12

Overview of City Documents …………………………………………………………………………………………. 13

City Charter ……………………………………………………………………………………………………….. 13

City Code ……………………………………………………………………………………………………………. 13

Georgia Laws ……………………………………………………………………………………………………… 13

Zoning Ordinance ………………………………………………………………………………………………. 13

Annual Budget …………………………………………………………………………………………………… 13

Comprehensive Plan ………………………………………………………………………………………….. 14

Resolution …………………………………………………………………………………………………………. 14

Proclamations ……………………………………………………………………………………………………. 14

Council Meetings …………………………………………………………………………………………………………… 15

Meeting Schedule ……………………………………………………………………………………………… 15

Agendas …………………………………………………………………………………………………………….. 15

Quorums ……………………………………………………………………………………………………………. 16

Public Participation ……………………………………………………………………………………………. 16

Minutes ……………………………………………………………………………………………………………… 16

Training and Education …………………………………………………………………………………………………… 17

Newly Elected Municipal Officials Institute ………………………………………………………… 17

Harold F. Holtz Municipal Training Institute/Carl Vinson Institute ………………………. 17

Georgia Municipal Association (GMA) Convention ……………………………………………… 17

Cities United Summit ………………………………………………………………………………………….. 17

Other ………………………………………………………………………………………………………………….. 17

Registration for Classes, Conferences & Other Events ……………………………………….. 17

Boards and Other Positions …………………………………………………………………………………………… 18

Planning Commission ………………………………………………………………………………………… 18

Parks Commission ……………………………………………………………………………………………… 19

Historic Commission ………………………………………………………………………………………….. 19

City Attorney …………………………………………………………………………………………………………………. 20

City Solicitor ……………………………………………………………………………………………………….. 20

Municipal Judge …………………………………………………………………………………………………. 20

Financial Matters …………………………………………………………………………………………………………… 21

Budget ………………………………………………………………………………………………………………. 21

Preparation ………………………………………………………………………………………………………………….. 22

Millage Rate ……………………………………………………………………………………………………… 22

Audit …………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………….. 22

Monthly Financial Statements …………………………………………………………………………… 22

City Council Compensation …………………………………………………………………………………………… 23

Campaign Disclosures ………………………………………………………………………………………… 23

Personal Finance Disclosure (PFD) …………………………………………………………………….. 23

Expense Reimbursements …………………………………………………………………………………. 23

Communication ……………………………………………………………………………………………………………… 24

Communication from the City Council ……………………………………………………………….. 24

Communication to the City Council ……………………………………………………………………. 24

State Open Records Law ……………………………………………………………………………………. 24

Communication from the City ………………………………………………………………………………………… 25

Press Releases ……………………………………………………………………………………………………. 25

City Website ………………………………………………………………………………………………………. 25

Social Media ………………………………………………………………………………………………………. 25

Interaction with Staff ……………………………………………………………………………………………………. 26

Separation of Powers ………………………………………………………………………………………… 26

Staff Communication to the City Council ………………………………………………………….. 26

Citizen Requests for Service ………………………………………………………………………………. 26

Staff and Appointed Boards ……………………………………………………………………………….. 27

City Hall Facilities ………………………………………………………………………………………………. 27

**Introduction**

The City of Chattahoochee Hills is set up as a Council-Manager form of government. In this type of government, the Board of Mayor and Council (“the City Council”) is recognized as the governing body of the City, elected by the public and serving part-time, while the City Manager is hired by the City Council, and serves at their pleasure, carrying out policies established by the governing body. The City Council provides legislative direction, while the City Manager oversees the day-to-day operations of the City, based on policy set by the City Council.

Core functions of the Mayor and Council include – but aren’t limited to -- setting policy, approving the budget, and determining tax rates. Core functions of the City Manager include preparing the budget, directing daily operations, and hiring/firing personnel.

**Organizational Chart**



**Powers and Duties of the Mayor**

The Mayor shall be the chief executive officer of the city government, a member of and the presiding officer of the city council, and responsible for the efficient and orderly administration of the city's affairs.

The mayor shall be responsible for the enforcement of laws, rules, regulations, ordinances, and franchises in the city. The mayor may conduct inquiries and investigations into the conduct of the city's affairs and shall have such powers and duties as specified in the City Charter.

The mayor shall:

* Preside at all meetings of the city council;
* Be the head of the city for the purpose of service of process and for ceremonial purposes and be the official spokesperson for the city and the advocate of policy;
* Sign as a matter of course on behalf of the city all written and approved contracts, ordinances, resolutions, and other instruments executed by the city which by law are required to be in writing;
* See that all laws and ordinances of the city are faithfully executed;
* Vote on any motion, resolution, ordinance, or other question before the council in the case of a tie and vote on any matter before a committee on which he or she serves;
* Obtain short-term loans in the name of the city when authorized by the city council to do so;
* Appoint councilmembers to oversee and report on the functions of the various departments of the city;
* Require the city manager to meet with him or her at a time and place designated for consultation and advice upon the affairs of the city;
* Name qualified residents of the city to boards and commissions with approval of the city council;
* Make recommendations with respect to the employment or termination of city employees;
* Prepare or have prepared an agenda for each meeting of the city council which shall include all business submitted by the mayor, any councilmember, the city manager, and the city attorney; and;
* Fulfill and perform such other duties as are imposed by this Act and duly adopted ordinances.

**Emergency Authority of Mayor**

In the event of a manmade or natural disaster which may affect the lives and property of City citizens, the Mayor may declare a state of emergency. This means the Mayor can, among other things, assume direct operational control over all emergency management resources and temporarily seize private property for the protection of the public.

General Power and Authority of the City Council

Members of the City Council collectively serve as the governing body for the City of Chattahoochee Hills and exercise the legislative authority of the City. City Council members are tasked with making policy decisions for the community. The City Council appoints a professional City Manager tasked with carrying out the policies established by the City Council. City Council members have no individual authority but act only by majority vote of the City Council as a whole.

The council shall have the authority to adopt and provide for the execution of such ordinances, resolutions, rules, and regulations, not inconsistent with this Act and the Constitution and the laws of the State of Georgia, which it shall deem necessary, expedient, or helpful for the peace, good order, protection of life and property, health, welfare, sanitation, comfort, convenience, prosperity, or well-being of the inhabitants of the City of Chattahoochee Hills and may enforce such ordinances by imposing penalties for violation thereof.

The city council may, by ordinance or resolution, adopt rules and bylaws to govern the conduct of its business, including procedures and penalties for compelling the attendance of absent members. Such rules may include punishment for contemptuous behavior conducted in the presence of the city council.

The council, by ordinance, may establish, abolish, merge, or consolidate offices, positions of employment, departments, and agencies of the city as it shall deem necessary for the proper administration of the affairs and government of the city; provided, however, that the office of city manager may be abolished only upon an affirmative vote of four of the five members of the council. The council shall prescribe the functions and duties of existing departments, offices, and agencies or of any departments, offices, and agencies hereinafter created or established; may provide that the same person shall fill any number of offices and positions of employment; and may transfer or change the functions and duties of offices, positions of employment, departments, and agencies of the city.

The operations and responsibilities of each department now or hereafter established in the city shall be distributed among such divisions or bureaus as may be provided by ordinance of the council. Each department shall consist of such officers, employees, and positions as may be provided by this Act or by ordinance and shall be subject to the general supervision and guidance of the mayor and council.

Guidelines: The City Council may exercise only such authority as granted to it by the State of Georgia through the City’s Charter, State laws and Court decisions. The power of the City Council so conferred is constrained by the State and Federal constitutions and laws.

Scope & Effect: The purpose of this position is to put effective policies into place for the benefit of the citizens of the City of Chattahoochee Hills, Georgia.

Personal Contacts: City Council members are expected to have personal contact with the citizens of the City in order to discern citizens’ priorities for City government. City Council members also have extensive contact with the City Manager who is tasked with carrying out policy objectives. City Council members should not have personal contact with the officers and associates of the City who are subject to the direction and the supervision of the City Manager.

Purpose of Contacts: Contacts are typically to give and exchange information, as well as to inform decision making of the City Council members and to direct the City Manager as appropriate.

Supervisory & Management Responsibility: As a body, the City Council is responsible for appointing a professional City Manager. The City Manager should be left to carry out the day-to-day business of the City without the interference from members of the City Council. However, the City Council as a whole is responsible for ensuring that the City Manager effectively carries out policies established by the City Council.

Minimum Qualifications:

The mayor and members of the city council shall serve for terms of four years and until their respective successors are elected and qualified. No person shall be eligible to serve as mayor or councilmember unless that person shall have been a resident of the area comprising the corporate limits of the City of Chattahoochee Hills for a continuous period of at least 12 months immediately prior to the date of the election for mayor or councilmember, shall continue to reside therein during that person's period of service, and shall continue to be registered and qualified to vote in municipal elections of the City of Chattahoochee Hills. In addition to the above requirements, no person shall be eligible to serve as a councilmember representing a council district unless that person has been a resident of the district such person seeks to represent for a continuous period of at least six months immediately prior to the date of the election for councilmember and continues to reside in such district during that person's period of service.

**Establish Policy**

One of the most visible roles that the City Council has is its legislative responsibilities, which involves setting policy for the City. Some of these include, but are not limited to, adopting ordinances and resolutions, setting the millage rate for property taxes, approving the annual budget, approving City expenditures over $15,000.00, establishing priorities for City services, entering into contracts, establishing policies and procedures, and hearing rezoning and annexation requests.

**Appoint**

The City’s appointed boards, commissions, and authorities assist the City Council by serving in an advisory capacity and by overseeing various functions or projects. All members of boards, commissions, and authorities of the city shall be nominated by the mayor and be confirmed by the council for such terms of office and such manner of appointment as provided by ordinance, except where other appointing authority, term of office, or manner of appointment is prescribed by this Act or by applicable state law. Some examples of the City’s appointed bodies include the Planning Commission, Parks Commission, Tree Board and the Historic Commission. In addition to appointing boards, commissions, and authorities, the City Council also appoints people to serve in individual capacities, such as the City Manager, Judges, Solicitors, and City Attorney.

**Provide Community Leadership**

City Council members will be offered many opportunities, both as a whole and individually, to take a visible role in interacting with and engaging the community and to show public support for the City’s various initiatives and programs. Some examples of these include attending new business ribbon cuttings, attending meetings geared towards elected officials such as the South Fulton Municipal Association, and going to festivals that are supported by the City. Members may also attend the meetings of other boards and commissions. The City Council members have an important role in interacting with the community -- listening to wishes of constituents and communicating the City’s vision and goals. Lastly, Council members will help to represent the City’s interests at various regional, county, state, and federal levels.

**Decision Making**

Closely related to the City Council’s legislative authority is the role City Council members play in making important decisions that provide guidance to staff for carrying out the day-to-day operations of the City. Such decisions might include such things as feedback on various City initiatives or programs or guidance on the scope of a project. While typically less formal than the City Council’s legislative powers (many times not requiring a formal vote in a meeting), such decisions are important and will typically be included as a discussion item for a work session.

**Intergovernmental Relations**

Intergovernmental relations refers to the interaction between different government entities, such as those on the federal and state levels, county officials such as members of the Fulton County School Board, and even agencies like the Atlanta Regional Commission. Many of the Board’s legislative functions will involve negotiation and coordination with other governments, such as distribution of various tax revenues and negotiation of the Service Delivery Strategy (SDS). Board members will interact with elected and appointed officials from other governmental entities on a regular basis.

**Service Delivery Strategy (SDS)**

House Bill 489, known as the Service Delivery Strategy (SDS) Act of 1997, requires every county within the State of Georgia to develop and adopt a service delivery strategy that outlines current and future service delivery arrangements. In short, the strategy essentially outlines which government entities within a County are providing certain services, ensuring they are provided countywide in a manner that eliminates the unnecessary duplication of services. The strategy must be reviewed, re-negotiated (if necessary), and re-adopted every 10 years by each of the affected jurisdictions. The strategy must be submitted to the Georgia Department of Community Affairs for verification in order to remain eligible for state administered financial grants or state permits. The act requires that each strategy contain four components:

1. **Identification of current service delivery arrangements**. The strategy must identify all local government services presently provided or primarily funded by each government and authority within the county and describe the geographic area in which the identified services are provided. In Chattahoochee Hills, the county currently provides tax billing sewer and water and animal control services.

2. **Identification of future service delivery arrangements.** The strategy must indicate which local government authority will provide each service, the geographic areas of the county in which each service will be provided and a description of any services provided by any local government to any area outside its geographical boundaries.

3. **Funding sources of both current and future services.** The strategy must describe the funding source for each service to be provided. This component must indicate the source of revenue each local government will use to fund each service it will provide within the county.

4. **Identification of the legal mechanisms that will be used by each of the jurisdictions to implement the service delivery strategy.** The strategy must identify the mechanisms, if any, to be used to implement the service delivery strategy, such as intergovernmental agreements, ordinances, and resolutions.

**TSPLOST**

Another important issue that involves coordination with Fulton County and the municipalities is TSPLOST (Transportation Special Purpose Local Option Sales Tax). If a TSPLOST is approved, it provided funding for transportation related initiatives. Our TSPLOST is ¾ of every one-cent spent on sales and use tax that is enacted by the direct vote of constituents. Used to fund specific infrastructure projects, a TSPLOST is first initiated by the county government for approval by the voters. This voter referendum must state the purpose of the tax, the length of time it will be imposed and the amount of revenue it will raise. The county and municipalities negotiate not only the percentage of revenue that will be distributed to the county and then to the municipalities as a whole, but the municipalities must also agree to a formula for how they will distribute their share among themselves. The current distribution is based on population.

**Organizations**

There are several organizations that help to facilitate intergovernmental relations, both within Fulton County and around the region and state. Some of these are as follows:

• **Atlanta Regional Commission (ARC)** -- The ARC is the regional planning and intergovernmental coordination agency for the 10-county metro area. The City’s elected officials take part in providing input and helping to develop the regional plans and initiatives that ARC oversees. The ARC also provides numerous training opportunities for elected officials and staff, as well as technical assistance and grant funding opportunities. For more information, please see www.atlantaregional.com.

• **South Fulton Municipal Association (SFMA)** -- The SFMA is a nonprofit organization that was formed by the cities of South Fulton County in order to foster better cooperation among the municipalities and to improve the understanding of the complex issues that cities face. The SFMA holds general membership meetings on a regular basis, which are open to the elected officials and staff.

• **Georgia Municipal Association (GMA)** -- GMA is a statewide organization that provides leadership, tools, and services to assist local municipalities. GMA offers a number of training opportunities, including the annual Cities United Summit (January) and Convention (June). GMA’s website [www.gacities.com](http://www.gacities.com) includes a wealth of resources, including training materials for elected officials, legislative tracking, news reports from municipalities across the state, and more.

**Conflicts of Interest, Ethics & Liability of Elected Officials**

**Conflicts of Interest**

The state laws regarding ethics and conflicts of interest are some of the most important for the City Council to be aware of and follow. Essentially, these laws prohibit any Council member from voting on any question that is brought before the governing body in which he/she is personally involved. Due to both the complexity of these laws and the significant consequences if violated, it is highly suggested that City Council members discuss the law and potential conflicts with the City Attorney.

**Liability**

The City provides a number of high profile services, such as public safety, roads, and parks that carry some degree of risk and liability. The City must always approach its responsibilities in a manner that reduces the potential of risk and liability for all involved. The City Attorney will provide guidance to the City and City Council on reducing liability. It is important to understand that violations of certain laws and regulations by individual members of the City may result in personal liability that is not covered by the City’s insurance or ineligibility to be represented by the City Attorney. Examples may include discrimination, harassment, or fraud.

**Overview of City Documents**

Members of the City Council will want to familiarize themselves with a number of different documents that will help guide many aspects of the role as Mayor or Council member.

**City Charter**

Chattahoochee Hills’ charter is a written document that establishes the basic governmental structure, form of government, corporate boundaries, and municipal powers. In this respect, it is similar to a state or national constitution. Each municipality in Georgia has a charter, which is approved by the State General Assembly. As such, amendments to the City charter require action by the General Assembly.

**City Code**

The City Code is the compilation of local laws (or ordinances) that have been adopted and codified by the City Council. The City Code covers a wide range of areas, including everything from taxes and court to environmental regulations and alcoholic beverages.

**Georgia Laws**

Municipalities are created by the State and, as such, many state laws apply to the operation of the City. The City Attorney provides guidance in this area.

**Zoning Ordinance**

The Zoning Ordinance regulates what is permitted in each zoning district, such as building heights, required parking, and landscape and buffer requirements. When public necessity, convenience, general welfare, or good zoning practices justify it, changes can be made to the Zoning Ordinance from time to time. An amendment can be initiated by the City Council, the Planning Commission, or by an application filed with the City Manager by any City resident. Amendments to the Zoning Ordinance are drafted by City staff and then forwarded to the Planning Commission. The proposed amendment is advertised through a newspaper ad, posted signs and required public hearings. The City Council has the final vote.

**Annual Budget**

The budget is the City’s financial plan that presents the services to be provided to the community over the coming year and the funds necessary to perform these services. In early spring, staff begins the process of estimating anticipated revenues, identifying and evaluating potential expenditures and preparing a recommended budget. The City Manager and department heads discuss the budget in several meetings, including a public hearing, starting in early spring. The budget shall be approved by the end of the fiscal year which is June 30th.

**Comprehensive Plan**

The Georgia Planning Act requires that cities and counties maintain Comprehensive Plans that help shape future growth. These plans generally recognize the physical, economic, social, political and aesthetic factors of a community and are developed in a process that includes intensive analysis and robust public engagement. The Comprehensive Plan can be used to promote orderly, rational and quality development. Planning can help the City invest money and time wisely in infrastructure such as streets, parks and other facilities needed to sustain the high quality of life already enjoyed by Chattahoochee Hills’ residents, business and property owners. The plan establishes a vision and implementation measures to make that vision a reality.

**Resolutions**

A resolution is the formal expression of the opinion, intent, or will of the City Council. Unlike ordinances, there is no punishment if a resolution is broken. It is not a law. Resolutions are adopted by a vote and signed by the Mayor. The resolution is active immediately upon signing.

**Proclamations**

Proclamations are ceremonial documents acknowledged by the City Council and signed by the Mayor in a regular meeting. An example is a proclamation celebrating Arbor Day or a resident’s 100th birthday. They are not statements of policy and do not require a City Council vote.

**council Meetings**

**Meeting Schedule**

The City Council typically meets twice each month – the last Thursday of the month and the first Tuesday of the month. The schedule often changes during holiday months like November and December or when there are elections being held at City Hall.

* Work Sessions are typically on Thursdays at 6:00 p.m. This is when agenda items are discussed among City Council members with input from, City Manager, staff, or other guests. No votes are taken in a work session.
* Regular Meetings are typically the Tuesday following the Thursday Work Session at 6:00 p.m. This is when the City Council votes on matters that may have been discussed in the previous work session. This is also when documents are signed by the Mayor. Public comment is also allowed at regular meetings.

Public Hearings are meetings called to receive public comment only when required by law. For example, adoption of the budget requires a public hearing as do applications for special use permits.

* Special Called Work Sessions/Meetings can be requested by the Mayor. This is often done when a topic requires a lot of discussion and input from experts or the public. Voting can only occur during special called meetings, not special called work sessions.
* Executive Sessions are closed to the public, usually with just the City Council, City Manager, and the City Attorney in attendance. By law, the only topics that can be discussed in executive session are pending litigation, personnel, and the purchase or lease of real estate.
* Retreats. Some Councils use regular retreats – usually once per year – to look back at the successes and challenges of the previous year and prioritize goals for the coming year. They are day-long meetings sometimes with a facilitator and are open to the public.

**Agendas**

*Creation*: Developing an agenda is a team effort between the Mayor and City Manager. The City Manager may add items that must be addressed for the day-to-day operations of the City. The Mayor or other City Council members may request topics that are of interest or concern to them or members of the community. The Mayor must approve the agenda before it is distributed or posted on the website. Once the agenda is made public, items can only be added or removed by a vote at the meeting before the adoption of the agenda.

*Distribution*: Agendas are posted as far ahead of a meeting as possible, usually 3-5 days or sooner. Hard copies of the agenda are posted at City Hall on the bulletin board outside. The agenda is posted on the City’s website, along with any supportive documents for items on the agenda. Hard copies are also available to the public the night of the meeting.

*City Council Packets*: The City Council will receive a packet at least three days before a scheduled meeting. It will be left outside the door to your home by a police officer and/or be e-mailed to you. The packet is put together by the City Clerk and will contain any background information you may need for any current City-related items or upcoming. If there is no information to be sent out, you will receive an e-mail from the City Clerk letting you know there will be no packet that day.

**Quorums**

A quorum is when the majority of a City Council is present which, in the case of the Chattahoochee Hills City Council, is three members. If a quorum is not present, the meeting is not valid. A quorum must be present for any voting to occur. A quorum at a social gathering is not considered a meeting unless City business or another public matter is discussed.

**Public Participation**

The City of Chattahoochee Hills prides itself on public participation. All City Council meetings, except executive sessions, are open to the public. The Mayor sets the policy for how the public comment portion of meetings is conducted. The public is also encouraged to email the members of the City Council directly.

**Minutes**

By law, all City Council meetings, except executive sessions, require minutes that are posted for public inspection. A draft of minutes are first sent to members of the City Council. Barring any changes, the minutes are then voted on, or engrossed, and signed by the Mayor in a regular meeting. Once approved and signed, a hard copy is filed in the City Clerk’s office and posted on the City website.

**Education & Training**

The Mayor and City Council have a number of training opportunities, both optional and mandatory, that are offered by various organizations. The City pays for training and any related travel expenses. Here are some resources:

**Newly Elected Municipal Officials Institute** State law requires each City Council member to attend this training. The day-and-a-half program is coordinated by Georgia Municipal Association (GMA) and the Newly Elected Officials Institute (part of the University of Georgia, or UGA) and is offered at locations throughout the state, usually in February or March. The course provides an orientation to City government for new elected officials and includes legal, financial and ethical responsibilities. This course must be taken within the first 12 months in office. [www.gacities.com](http://www.gacities.com)

**Harold F. Holtz Municipal Training Institute/Carl Vinson Institute** Elected officials can also attend various training courses pertaining to the basic performance of their duties. In partnership with the Carl Vinson Institute of Government at UGA, GMA provides the Municipal Training Institute, which offers a variety of courses. [www.cviog.uga.edu](http://www.cviog.uga.edu)

**Georgia Municipal Association (GMA) Convention**

The GMA hosts an annual convention each year. In addition to providing required and elective training classes, the convention also includes sessions on various topics and networking opportunities with other cities. The convention is typically held the last weekend in June at the Savannah Convention Center.

[www.gacities.com/events](http://www.gacities.com/events)

**Cities United Summit**

This is also a GMA event and a smaller version of the convention. Held in Atlanta in mid-January each year, the conference offers required and elective training courses and sessions on various topics. [www.gacities.com/events](http://www.gacities.com/events)

**Other**

Other non-required professional development opportunities will arise. The City Council will decide, along with City staff, if an opportunity is appropriate on a case-by-case basis.

**Registration for Classes, Conferences & Other Events**

The City Clerk can assist City Council members with registration for classes, conferences and other events along with any travel arrangements.

**Boards and Other Positions**

All members of boards, commissions, and authorities of the city shall be nominated by the mayor and be confirmed by the council for such terms of office and such manner of appointment as provided by ordinance, except where other appointing authority, term of office, or manner of appointment is prescribed by this Act or by applicable state law.

Boards and Commission Members

* Provide a valuable link to the community and to the various interests that make up the community
* Assist in the development of policy recommendations to the City Council
* Provide leadership and support to City staff
* Promote the City and its programs
* Provide expertise in specialized areas

**Planning Commission**

The Planning Commission was seated on March 4, 2008 and operates as an advisory board to the City Council. The Planning Commission hears requests for re-zonings, variances, and use permits and proposed changes to the zoning ordinance and subdivision regulations.

The planning commission shall consist of either five or seven members who shall serve one-year terms, which shall begin on April 1 and end on March 31 of the following year. Members may serve successive terms. Except as provided in subsection (b) of this section or otherwise in this Code, the council shall establish qualifications for members of the planning commission. Each member shall be nominated by the mayor and approved by the council.

**Your Current Planning Commission:**Bob Simpson – Chair
Jim Hancock
Jett Hattaway
Patrick Johnson
Mark Prater

**Meetings:**Planning Commission meetings are held the Thursday following the second Tuesday of every month at 6:30 PM at City Hall

**Parks Commission**

The Parks Commission was seated in August of 2012, following the completion of the City’s purchase of our park land. The Parks Commission makes recommendations to the City Council on the development, uses, improvements and rules and regulations for the City’s parks.

The Parks and Recreation Commission shall consist of not less than five (5) members nor more than seven (7) members who shall serve one-year terms, which shall begin on April 1 and end on March 31 of the following year. Members may serve successive terms. Except as provided in subsection (b) of this section or otherwise in this Code, the council shall establish qualifications for members of the Parks and Recreation Commission.

**Your Current Parks Commission:**Diana Wilson – Chair
Roland Alston
Clifford Blizzard
Tom Blum
Kay Long

**Meetings:**

Parks Commission meetings are held the second Tuesday of each month at 6:00 PM at City Hall

**Historic Commission**

The Historic Commission was seated on April 9, 2019 and operates as an advisory board to the City Council.

The Historic Commission shall be composed of not less than five (5) members nor more than seven (7) members who shall serve one-year terms, which shall begin on April 1 and end on March 31 of the following year. Members may serve successive terms. Except as provided in subsection (b) of this section or otherwise in this Code, the council shall establish qualifications for members of the Historic Commission

**Your Current Historic Commission:**

Allison Duncan - Chair/Secretary

Brian Gross

Sarah Love

Lila Rhyne

Kim Taylor-Cloud

**Meetings:**Historic Commission meetings are held the second Tuesday of each month at 8:00 AM at City Hall.  Meetings are typically not held in July, November, and December.

**City Attorney**

The City Attorney is not a staff position but a law firm that contracts with the City. The City Attorney advises the City Manager and City Council on any and all legal issues (including the approval of all contracts and ordinances) and also provides representation and defense of the City in all litigation. The City Attorney also attends City Council, as well as other, meetings as requested.

**City Solicitor**

The City Solicitor is appointed every year to represent the City in municipal court. Municipal court takes place at City Hall the first Tuesday of the month. The Court hears and adjudicates traffic offenses and violations of City ordinances that occur within the City limits. In addition to the City Solicitor and Municipal Judge, Chattahoochee Hills also contracts with a third party to administer probation and associated activities.

**Municipal Judge**

The City’s municipal judge presides over court that takes place the first Tuesday each month.

**Financial Matters**

It’s important to recognize the key distinctions between the financial operations of a municipality compared to the private sector. A city’s primary goal is to provide services to its constituents within budgetary constraints. Commercial businesses exist to maximize profit. Cities operate in an entirely different economic, legal, political, and social environment, which requires different objectives and financial reporting requirements.

**Budget**

Each year, the City adopts an annual budget that determines where the funds to operate the City will come from and how they will be spent. The adopted budget serves as an important internal tool and control to both guide the services to be provided and ensure authorized spending limits are not exceeded. The budget has an important role externally and, with public participation in budget development, is one of the most significant ways the City can provide open and transparent leadership. The budget is a means to monitor City business performance. Cities are required to adopt a balanced budget, meaning expenditures and revenues are equal.

The annual Budget Document, which has received the Distinguished Budget Presentation Award from the Government Finance Officers Association of America (GFOA), is available on the City’s web site as at as through the Carl Vinson Institute of Government ([www.ted.cviog.edu/financial-documents](http://www.ted.cviog.edu/financial-documents)) as required by House Bill 122.

Governmental Funds are defined by law as funds used to account for “governmental-type activities”. They account for all current financial resources except for those required by law to be accounted for in another fund. Most of the city’s basic services are accounted for in governmental funds. These funds focus on how assets can readily be converted into cash flow in and out, and what monies are left at year-end that will be available for spending in the next year.

The City of Chattahoochee Hills operates on Governmental Fund Accounting and recognizes Governmental Funds, Internal Service Funds and Proprietary Funds. The Governmental Funds include the General Fund (a major fund), Special Revenue Funds, Capital Projects Funds and a Debt Service Fund. The Special Revenue Funds utilized are the Hotel/Motel Fund and Confiscated Fund. The below diagram better illustrates the fund accounting breakdown:



**Preparation**

Budget preparation for an upcoming year typically begins during the previous April, May and June. The process begins early on with the City Manager and department directors. A first draft of the budget is sent to the City Council in April. The budget is discussed in either a City Council work session or public hearing until it is adopted in June.

**Millage Rate**

Setting the millage rate each year is closely related to developing the budget. The millage is the rate of taxes charged and collected by the City for all real and personal property within the City limits. Fulton County provides tax assessment services for the City and forwards a consolidated, estimated Tax Digest to the City in early summer. Through a series of public hearings and readings, the millage rate is usually adopted by the end of August.

**Audit**

State law requires that the City be audited every year in compliance with generally accepted accounting principles (GAAP) and generally accepted government auditing standards (GAGAS). The purpose of the audit is to verify that the City’s financial statements accurately represent its financial health. Audits usually occur in the fall with a final report being presented to the City Council before the end of the calendar year.

**Monthly Financial Statements**

At the beginning of each month, the City Manager prepares a statement for fiscal activities occurring in the previous month. Statements are included in the City Council packets and presented to the City Council at its business meeting. Additionally, the City Manager prepares a Financial Newsletter each month that provides a narrative of the financials that is more user friendly to the reader. Both of these documents are available to the public at the meeting and on the City’s web site.

**City Council Compensation**

The Mayor may elect/choose to receive a monthly stipend of $100.00 per month.

**Campaign Disclosures**

State law requires the City Council to submit public disclosure forms for campaign contributions and expenditures. More details, including the forms, can be obtained from the Georgia Government Transparency and Campaign Finance Committee at [www.ethics.georgia.gov](http://www.ethics.georgia.gov). This is something the City Clerk can assist you with filing.

**Personal Finance Disclosure (PFD)** Each year, state law also requires personal finance disclosures to ensure there are no conflicts of interest for the Mayor or City Council members. The forms can also be found at [www.ethics.georgia.gov](http://www.ethics.georgia.gov). The City Clerk can assist with these forms.

**Expense Reimbursements**

Members of the City Council can be reimbursed for expenses incurred in the course of carrying out official duties. Keep receipts or other documentation and the City Clerk and City Manager can assist you. When scheduling training and travel, Council members can ask the City Clerk to make those arrangements and pay for them in advance.

**Communications**

One of the City Council’s fundamental roles is communication. The Council communicates with the public to share the City’s vision and goals and to give updates on current issues. In turn, the Council receives opinions, needs and desires from residents and businesses. City staff and the City Council must also communicate with each other in order to give and receive direction, feedback, and more.

**Communication from the City Council**

New City Council members are issued a City e-mail account, which will be posted on the City website, and provided business cards listing the phone number of their choice.

The Mayor serves as the official spokesperson for the City Council and City. City Council members should defer to the Mayor the role of communicating the City’s position on policy matters to the public and other external groups. It is appropriate for the City Council to use City letterhead and titles when sending correspondence pertaining to City business. Staff support is also available for preparing and sending such correspondence; please forward requests to the City Manager. Letterhead, e-mail, staff support and postage may not be used for personal or political purposes.

**Communication to the City Council**

Mail, including letters, memos, and magazines, that is received by the City and addressed to an individual Council member, will placed in the respective City Hall mailbox. If mail is addressed to a former City Council member, it will be passed to a new member until the sender can update their address book.

**State Open Records Law**

Generally, any items, such as letters, e-mails, maps, photographs, and audio and video recordings that are prepared, maintained or received in the course of operation of a public office is defined as a public record. Such records must be maintained and produced, if requested through an open records request. E-mail generated and received through the City e-mail system may be retrieved from storage even if they’ve been deleted.

The regulations concerning open records are covered extensively in various training courses for elected officials as well as in several guidebooks given out by City staff.

**Communication from the City**

**Press Releases**

Along with the bulk of communications from City Hall, press releases are usually written by the City Manager. Press releases are done occasionally and sent out to the media. They are written at the request of the Mayor or City Council.

**City Website**

The City’s website – [www.chatthillsga.us](http://www.chatthillsga.us) is a vital way City staff and the City Council can communicate with residents and businesses and vice versa. The site is maintained by the City Manager. There is a calendar of meetings and events on the home page as well as meeting agendas, minutes, the full zoning code of ordinances and everything in between. The City Manager can arrange a website orientation for new Council members.

**Social Media**

The City’s Facebook page can be found at <https://www.facebook.com/chattahoocheehills.georgia/>. The Mayor and City Manager coordinates posts to this account.

**Interaction with City Staff**

As a Council-Manager form of government, the policies set by the Mayor and City Council are carried out by City staff, under the oversight of the City Manager. This form of government allows the City Council to direct their time and energy to legislation and policy development, while the City Manager focuses on the organizational, legal, personnel, financial, and other administrative matters that occur on a daily basis. There is a clear distinction between the roles of both, so it’s critical that the relationship between the two be understood. The City Council and City Manager are most effective when there is mutual respect between both parties.

**Separation of Powers**

The City Council is to work through the City Manager when dealing with the administrative duties of the City. The City Council or its individual members shall not, either directly or indirectly, be involved in or attempt to influence administrative matters that are under the direction of the City Manager, such as staff decision-making, the development of staff recommendations, scheduling of work, executing department priorities, personnel issues, purchasing, etc. This is necessary to protect staff from undue influence and pressure from individual Council members and to allow staff to execute work in the priority set by management. If a Council member wishes to influence and administrative action, he/she must bring it to the attention of the rest of the City Council so the whole can decide whether to address it as a matter of policy.

Requests for staff assistance shall be directed to the City Manager. Then he/she will assign such requests to the appropriate staffers(s).

**Staff Communication to the City Council**

The City Manager and staff use a variety of methods to communicate information to the City Council. The City Manager has an open door policy for Council members wishing to meet. Phone calls and e-mails are also welcome. The City Manager’s Weekly Report and Council Packets are meant to update Council members on the activities of that week with a look ahead to upcoming meetings. There are circumstances under which the City Manager is restricted from providing information to the City Council, such as confidential personnel information and certain aspects of police affairs.

**Citizen Requests for Service**

Members of the City Council will receive frequent requests from citizens regarding service by the City, such as the repair of potholes, code enforcement issues, roadway hazards, and litter, for example. Council members can direct them to City staff or forward any related emails to the City Manager. In addition, any resident or business owner can request services by filling out a form on the City website.

**Staff and Appointed Boards and Commissions**

City staff provides support and assistance to the appointed boards and commissions. Such support includes assistance with agenda development, scheduling, preparation of reports, and background materials on issues before the boards. This assistance allows the boards/commissions to have sufficient information to discuss the issues before them. Appointed boards/commissions do not have supervisory authority over staff. While staff members may work closely with the boards/commissions, staff remains responsible to their immediate supervisor and, ultimately, the City Manager.

**City Hall Facilities**

The Council Chambers, administrative conference room and Public Safety Training room are available to members of the City Council for meetings. Please see City staff to schedule such times. Access codes to various offices will be provided.