

**Mayor**  
Rhonda Haight

**City Council**  
Angie Arp, Mayor Pro Tempore  
Jack Taylor  
Christy Kay  
Bill Bivins  
William Whaley



**City Administrator**  
Eric M. Soroka

**City Clerk**  
Amy Mintz

**City Attorney**  
Chuck Conerly

**City of Blue Ridge**  
**City Council Meeting Agenda**  
**January 16, 2024**

**6:00 p.m.**

**Blue Ridge City Hall**

**480 West First Street**

**Blue Ridge, Ga 30513**

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**Swearing in of Council Members**

**1. Call Meeting to Order**

**2. Prayer and Pledge of Allegiance**

**3. Approval of Minutes from Previous Meeting**

a. December 12, 2023 (Council Meeting)

**4. Approval of Agenda or Motion to Amend Agenda (if applicable)**

**5. Public Hearings**

a. AN ORDINANCE TO AMEND SECTION 24-3 ("WATER AND SEWER SERVICE IMPROVEMNET ACCOUNT") OF THE CODE OF THE CITY OF BLUE RIDGE, GEORGIA TO INCREASE THE SURCHARGE TO BE PAID BY APPLICANTS FOR WATER AND/OR SEWER SERVICES AT A LOCATION NOT PRESENTLY SERVED OR FOR EXPANDED SERVICES TO A SITE PREVIOUSLY BEING SERVED; TO INCREASE THE TAPS FOR WATER AND SEWER AND TO PROVIDE FOR AN EFFECTIVE DATE. **FIRST READING BR2024-02**

**Our Mission Statement**

Our mission is to enrich the quality of life in Blue Ridge for all our citizens. We pledge to work in partnership with our residents, all stake holders and the Fannin County government to protect, preserve and secure the quaintness of our small-town community and to enhance the natural beauty of our environment.

**6. Consent Agenda**

- a. RESOLUTION AUTHORIZING THE MAYOR TO EXECUTE THE SECOND MODIFICATION OF THE PROMISSORY NOTE AND LOAN AGREEMENT BETWEEN THE CITY AND GEORGIA ENVIRONMENTAL FINANCE AUTHORITY (GEFA) IN THE AMOUNT OF \$5,000,000. **BR2024-03**
- b. A RESOLUTION OF THE CITY COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF BLUE RIDGE, GEORGIA ADOPTING THE REVISIONS TO THE CITY OF BLUE RIDGE EMPLOYEE HANDBOOK AND PROVIDING AN EFFECTIVE DATE. **BR2024-01**

**7. Action Agenda Items (Items Requiring the Approval of the City Council)**

- a. MOTION TO APPROVE THE SIDEWALK AND STEET INFRASTRUCTURE IMPROVEMENTS CONTAINED IN EXHIBIT A. AS PROPOSED BY THE CITY ADMINISTRATOR FOR 2024.

**8. Discussion Agenda Items**

**9. Reports**

**10. Public Comment**

*Do not misconstrue this as a question-and-answer session with the Mayor/Council. Limit 3 minutes per person. Please state name and address before comments. All comments should be addressed to the Mayor.*

**11. Executive Session (If Needed)**

**12. Adjournment**

**Our Mission Statement**

Our mission is to enrich the quality of life in Blue Ridge for all our citizens. We pledge to work in partnership with our residents, all stake holders and the Fannin County government to protect, preserve and secure the quaintness of our small-town community and to enhance the natural beauty of our environment.



**City of Blue Ridge  
City Council Meeting  
Minutes  
December 12, 2023**

**6:00 p.m.**

**Blue Ridge City Hall**

**480 West First Street**

**Blue Ridge, Ga 30513**

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**1. Call Meeting to Order**

Mayor Rhonda Haight called the meeting to order at 6:00 PM. Present were Mayor Rhonda Haight, Council Members William Whaley, Angie Arp, Jack Taylor, Christy Kay, Bill Bivins, City Administrator Eric Soroka, and City Clerk Amy Mintz.

**2. Prayer and Pledge of Allegiance**

Led by Council Member Whaley.

**3. Approval of Minutes from Previous Meeting**

a. November 8, 2023 – Public Hearing

A motion to approve was offered by Council Member Whaley, seconded by Council Member Taylor, passed with Council Member Bivins abstaining.

b. November 8, 2023 – Workshop

A motion to approve was offered by Council Member Taylor, seconded by Council Member Whaley, passed with Council Member Bivins abstaining.

c. November 14, 2023 – Council Meeting

A motion to approve was offered by Council Member Whaley, seconded by Council Member Bivins, passed unanimously.

**4. Approval of Agenda or Motion to Amend Agenda (if applicable)**

A motion to approve was offered by Council Member Arp, seconded by Council Member Taylor, passed unanimously.

## 5. Public Hearings

City Administrator explained the following to be voted on:

- a. A RESOLUTION OF THE CITY COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF BLUE RIDGE, GEORGIA GRANTING A VARIANCE FROM SECTION 140-213 (“C-2 AREA, YARD AND HEIGHT RESTRICTIONS”) OF THE CODE OF ORDINANCES OF THE CITY OF BLUE RIDGE GEORGIA (“CODE”) TO PERMIT NO REAR SETBACK WHERE A FIFTEEN FEET SETBACK WOULD OTHERWISE BE REQUIRED BY THE CODE FOR THE PROPERTY LOCATED AT 10081 BLUE RIDGE DRIVE AND IDENTIFIED AS TAX PARCEL BR01-107. **BR2023-33**

A motion to adopt was offered by Council Member Taylor, seconded by Council Member Whaley, passed unanimously. Adopted ad BR2023-33

## 6. Consent Agenda

None.

## 7. Action Agenda Items (Items Requiring the Approval of the City Council)

City Administrator explained the following to be voted on:

- a. A RESOLUTION OF THE CITY COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF BLUE RIDGE, GEORGIA ADOPTING THE WATER AND SEWER RATE SCHEDULE ATTACHED AS EXHIBIT “A” AND PROVIDING AN EFFECTIVE DATE. **BR2023-32**

A motion to adopt was offered by Council Member Whaley, seconded by Council Member Taylor, passed unanimously. Adopted as BR2023-32

## 8. Discussion Agenda Items

None

## 9. Reports

None

## 10. Public Comment

*Do not misconstrue this as a question-and-answer session with the Mayor/Council. Limit 3 minutes per person. Please state name and address before comments. All comments should be addressed to the Mayor.*

- a. Julie Whuten

A motion to extend time was offered by Council Member Whaley, seconded by Council Member Arp, passed unanimously.

## 11. Executive Session (If Needed)

A motion to enter into executive session was offered by Council Member Whaley, Seconded by Council Member Taylor, passed unanimously. Entered into executive session 6:14 PM.

A motion to adjourn executive session was offered by Council Member Whaley, Seconded by Council Member Taylor, passed unanimously. Adjourned executive session 7:16 PM.



A motion to approve a new hire for the Tax and License Position was offered by Council Member Whaley, seconded by Council Member Taylor, passed unanimously.

**12. Adjournment**

Mayor Haight adjourned the meeting at 7:16 PM.

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Mayor, Rhonda Haight

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City Clerk, Amy Mintz

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Date

# City Council Meeting Agenda Submittal

MEETING DATE: 1/16/2024

AGENDA NO: 5a

## AGENDA ITEM:

AN ORDINANCE TO AMEND SECTION 24-3 ("WATER AND SEWER SERVICE IMPROVEMENT ACCOUNT") OF THE CODE OF THE CITY OF BLUE RIDGE, GEORGIA TO INCREASE THE SURCHARGE TO BE PAID BY APPLICANTS FOR WATER AND/OR SEWER SERVICES AT A LOCATION NOT PRESENTLY SERVED OR FOR EXPANDED SERVICES TO A SITE PRESENTLY BEING SERVED; TO INCREASE THE TAPS FOR WATER AND SEWER AND TO PROVIDE FOR AN EFFECTIVE DATE.

## BACKGROUND:

The attached Ordinance does the following:

- increases the Water and Sewer Service Improvement Account Surcharge Fee for new development both inside and outside the city, based on meter size. Fees collected under this section are to be used solely to upgrade portions of the utility system deemed to be inadequate to provide new or expanded service.
- Increases the water and sewer tap fees based on increased costs to the City.

The increase in fees is based on the recommendation of the Utility Director.

## RECOMMENDATION:

It is recommended that the City Council adopt the attached Ordinance.

## ATTACHMENT (S):

Ordinance and Exhibits

APPROVED:

  
\_\_\_\_\_

Mayor

  
\_\_\_\_\_

City Administrator

FIRST READING January 16, 2024

SECOND READING \_\_\_\_\_

PASSED \_\_\_\_\_

**AN ORDINANCE NO. BR2024-02**

**AN ORDINANCE TO AMEND SECTION 24-3 (“WATER AND SEWER SERVICE IMPROVEMENT ACCOUNT”) OF THE CODE OF THE CITY OF BLUE RIDGE, GEORGIA TO INCREASE THE SURCHARGE TO BE PAID BY APPLICANTS FOR WATER AND/OR SEWER SERVICES AT A LOCATION NOT PRESENTLY SERVED OR FOR EXPANDED SERVICES TO A SITE PRESENTLY BEING SERVED; TO INCREASE THE TAPS FOR WATER AND SEWER AND TO PROVIDE FOR AN EFFECTIVE DATE.**

**WHEREAS**, Chapter 24 (“Utilities”), Article III (“Water Service”) and Article IV (“Sanitary Sewerage”) of the Code of the City of Blue Ridge, Georgia (“Code”) provide generally for the provision of water and sanitary sewer service within the City; and

**WHEREAS**, Chapter 24 (“Utilities”), Article III (“Water Service”) and Article IV (“Sanitary Sewerage”) of the Code confer upon the City Council the authority to establish the fees for new taps and service connections as well as the rates for water and sewer service; and

**WHEREAS**, the City Council previously established a “Water & Sewer Service Improvement Account,” the purpose of which was to pay the costs and expenses for repairing, improving, and upgrading portions of the City’s water and sanitary sewer system deemed inadequate to provide new or expanded service; and

**WHEREAS**, the City Council previously (by and through the adoption of Ordinance Amendment No. 2015-09-08) established a surcharge to be paid by applicants for water and/or sewer service at a location not presently served or for expanded service to locations presently served, in addition to the usual application and connection fees; and

**WHEREAS**, the creation of the “Water & Sewer Service Improvement Account” is now codified as Section 24-3 (“Water and Sewer Service Improvement Account”) of the Code; and

**WHEREAS**, with the increasing costs to construct new or expanded water and sanitary sewer infrastructure and increased costs associated for water and sewer taps, the Mayor and City Council find it in the public interest to increase the surcharges associated with providing new and expanded water and sanitary sewer services and increase the water and sewer tap fees; and



**SECTION 4.**

**EFFECTIVE DATE.**

The effective date of this ordinance shall be upon its passage by the City Council.

**SO ORDAINED** this \_\_\_\_\_ day of \_\_\_\_\_, 2024.

MAYOR AND CITY COUNCIL OF BLUE RIDGE

\_\_\_\_\_  
Mayor, City of Blue Ridge

\_\_\_\_\_  
Clerk, City of Blue Ridge

EXHIBIT "A"

Chapter 24—Utilities	
24-3(b)(1)	<p>Water and Sewer Service Improvement Account surcharge fee for water service for 3/4-inch residential meter.</p> <p><u>Inside City Limits</u> <u>Outside City Limits</u></p> <p>\$1,250 <b>\$1,500</b> \$1,500 <b>\$1,750</b></p>
24-3(b)(1)	<p>Water and Sewer Service Improvement Account surcharge fee for water service for 3/4-inch commercial meter.</p> <p><u>Inside City Limits</u> <u>Outside City Limits</u></p> <p>\$3,000 <b>\$3,500</b> \$3,500 <b>\$4,000</b></p>
24-3(b)(1)	<p>Water and Sewer Service Improvement Account surcharge fee for water service for one-inch meters.</p> <p><u>Inside City Limits</u> <u>Outside City Limits</u></p> <p>\$5,500.00 <b>\$6,000</b> \$6,000 <b>\$6,500</b></p>
24-3(b)(1)	<p>Water and Sewer Service Improvement Account fee for water service for meters above one inch.</p> <p><u>Inside City Limits</u> <u>Outside City Limits</u></p> <p>\$5,500.00 <b>\$6,000</b> per inch \$6,000 <b>\$6,500</b> per inch</p>

EXHIBIT "A"

<b>Chapter 24—Utilities</b>	
24-3(b)(1)	<p>Water and Sewer Service Improvement Account surcharge fee for water service for 3/4-inch residential meter.</p> <p><u>Inside City Limits</u> \$1,250 <b>\$1,500</b></p> <p><u>Outside City Limits</u> \$1,500 <b>\$1,750</b></p>
24-3(b)(1)	<p>Water and Sewer Service Improvement Account surcharge fee for water service for 3/4-inch commercial meter.</p> <p><u>Inside City Limits</u> \$3,000 <b>\$3,500</b></p> <p><u>Outside City Limits</u> \$3,500 <b>\$4,000</b></p>
24-3(b)(1)	<p>Water and Sewer Service Improvement Account surcharge fee for water service for one-inch meters.</p> <p><u>Inside City Limits</u> \$5,500.00 <b>\$6,000</b></p> <p><u>Outside City Limits</u> \$6,000 <b>\$6,500</b></p>
24-3(b)(1)	<p>Water and Sewer Service Improvement Account fee for water service for meters above one inch.</p> <p><u>Inside City Limits</u> \$5,500.00 <b>\$6,000</b> per inch</p> <p><u>Outside City Limits</u> \$6,000 <b>\$6,500</b> per inch</p>



## WATER & SEWER TAP FEES 2024 PROPOSED Exhibit B

RES 3/4 INSIDE	RES 3/4 OUTSIDE	RES 1" INSIDE	RES 1" OUTSIDE
TAP/METER \$968	TAP/METER \$1,175	TAP/METER \$1,068	TAP/METER \$1,068
CONNECTION \$35	CONNECTION \$50	CONNECTION \$35	CONNECTION \$35
DEPOSIT \$175	DEPOSIT \$175	DEPOSIT \$175	DEPOSIT \$175
SURCHARGE \$1,250	SURCHARGE \$1,500	SURCHARGE \$1,750	SURCHARGE \$3,000
<b>TOTAL \$2,428</b>	<b>TOTAL \$2,778</b>	<b>TOTAL \$3,250</b>	<b>TOTAL \$4,278</b>
CO 3/4" INSIDE	CO 3/4" OUTSIDE	CO 1" INSIDE	CO 1" OUTSIDE
TAP/METER \$968	TAP/METER \$1,175	TAP/METER \$1,068	TAP/METER \$1,126
CONNECTION \$35	CONNECTION \$50	CONNECTION \$35	CONNECTION \$35
DEPOSIT \$400	DEPOSIT \$400	DEPOSIT \$400	DEPOSIT \$500
SURCHARGE \$3,000	SURCHARGE \$3,500	SURCHARGE \$4,000	SURCHARGE \$5,500
<b>TOTAL \$4,403</b>	<b>TOTAL \$5,125</b>	<b>TOTAL \$5,725</b>	<b>TOTAL \$7,161</b>

2" INSIDE	2" OUTSIDE	CO 1.5" INSIDE	CO 1.5" OUTSIDE
TAP/METER \$4,269	TAP/METER \$4,800	TAP/METER \$4,369	TAP/METER \$3,769
CONNECTION \$35	CONNECTION \$50	CONNECTION \$35	CONNECTION \$35
DEPOSIT \$900	DEPOSIT \$900	DEPOSIT \$900	DEPOSIT \$700
SURCHARGE \$12,000	SURCHARGE \$15,000	SURCHARGE \$13,000	SURCHARGE \$8,325
<b>TOTAL \$17,204</b>	<b>TOTAL \$20,750</b>	<b>TOTAL \$17,804</b>	<b>TOTAL \$12,829</b>

**TAP APPLICATION \$50.00 RESIDENTIAL/\$100 COMMERCIAL**      **ENGINEERING REVIEW FEE - STARTS AT \$300.00**

**LARGER THAN 2" IS ADDITIONAL**

TAP/METER \$2,400      2700 in/out PER INCH      \*

SURCHARGE \$6,000      6,500 in/out PER INCH      \*\*

DEPOSIT \$100      PER INCH

**ROAD BORE/CUT STARTS AT \$1,500**

**AFTER HOURS FEE \$100**

**TAP ABANDONMENT - a tap will be considered abandoned after 5 years of inactivity, all fees above will be paid before meter is installed and service re-established**      \*\*\*\*\*

SEWER IS CHARGED BASED ON SIZE AS STATED ABOVE MINUS THE DEPOSIT

DEPOSIT CAN BE REDUCED BY \$50 IF CUSTOMER SUBMITS 2 LETTERS OF CREDIT FROM OTHER UTILITIES SHOWING NO LATE PAYMENTS OR UNPAID BALANCES LETTERS OF CREDIT MUST BE FOR SERVICE WITHIN THE PAST 12 MONTHS

**FIRE HYDRANT DEPOSIT \$1500**      **FIRELINES ARE EXEMPT FROM SURCHARGES**

**PRICING DOES NOT INCLUDE PATCHING, VAULTS, EXTENSIONS, PLAN REVIEWS ETC.**

DEPOSIT REDUCTIONS ONLY APPLY TO THOSE WHO HAVE NO OUTSTANDING BALANCES WITH THE CITY(UTILITIES, TAXES, BL, ETC) AND WHO HAVE KEPT PREVIOUS CITY ACTS IN GOOD STANDING

surcharges increased 02/2024      \*\$500 off for existing tap in good condition



## City Council Meeting Agenda Submittal

**MEETING DATE:** 1/16/2024

**AGENDA NO:** 6a

**AGENDA ITEM:**

Resolution authorizing the Mayor to execute the Second Modification of the Promissory Note and Loan Agreement between the City and Georgia Environmental Finance Authority (GEFA) in the amount of \$5,000,000.

**BACKGROUND:**

This is the second modification of the Promissory Note and Loan Agreement dated August 11, 2020 in the amount of \$5,000,000 to upgrade Wastewater Plant. A GEFA loan was utilized to fund the improvements. The modification involves updating the project schedule. The new completion date is now August 1, 2025. This project has started this month.

**RECOMMENDATION:**

It is recommended that the City Council adopt the attached Resolution authorizing the Mayor to execute the Loan Second Modification Agreement between the City and Georgia Environmental Finance Authority (GRFA) in the amount of \$5,000,000.

**ATTACHMENT (S):**

Resolution and Agreement

**APPROVED:**



Mayor



City Administrator

**RESOLUTION NO. BR2024-03**

**A RESOLUTION OF THE MAYOR AND COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF BLUE RIDGE, STATE OF GEORGIA, TO APPROVE THAT CERTAIN SECOND MODIFICATION TO THE DECEMBER 3, 2020 LOAN FROM THE GEORGIA ENVIRONMENTAL FINANCE AUTHORITY, LOAN NO. CW2020018, ORIGINAL AMOUNT OF \$5,000,000**

**WHEREAS**, the City of Blue Ridge, Georgia (hereinafter "Borrower") has borrowed \$5,000,000 from the **GEORGIA ENVIRONMENTAL FINANCE AUTHORITY** (the "Lender"), pursuant to the terms of the Loan Agreement (the "Loan Agreement"), dated **December 3, 2020**, between the Borrower and the Lender; and

**WHEREAS**, the Borrower's obligation to repay the loan made pursuant to the Loan Agreement is evidenced by a Promissory Note (the "Note"), date **August 11, 2020**, of the Borrower; and

**WHEREAS**, the Borrower and the Lender have determined to amend and modify the Loan Agreement, pursuant to the terms of a Second Modification of Promissory Note and Loan Agreement (the "Second Modification") between the Borrower and the Lender, the form of which has been presented at this meeting.

**NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED** by the governing body of the Borrower that the form, terms, and conditions and the execution, delivery, and performance of the Modification are hereby approved and authorized.

**BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED** by the governing body of the Borrower that the terms of the Second Modification are in the best interest of the Borrower, and the governing body of the Borrower designates and authorizes the following persons to execute and deliver, and to attest, respectively, the Second Modification, any related documents necessary to the consummation of the transactions contemplated by the Second Modification:

ADOPTED this \_\_\_\_\_ day of January 2024

MAYOR AND CITY COUNCIL OF BLUE RIDGE

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Mayor, Rhonda Haight

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City Clerk, Amy Mintz



December 5, 2023

Eric Soroka  
City Administrator  
City of Blue Ridge  
480 West First St  
Blue Ridge, GA 30513

RE: Second Modification for Loan No. CW2020018

Dear Mr. Soroka:

Enclosed are the modification documents for the Clean Water State Revolving Fund loan agreement between the Georgia Environmental Finance Authority (GEFA) and the city of Blue Ridge. GEFA is pleased to provide you with the following materials:

1. Three copies of the Modification of Promissory Note and Loan Agreement, including:
  - a. Exhibit A – Description of Project (Scope of Work, Budget, and Schedule)
  - b. Exhibit E – Opinion of Borrower's Counsel
  - c. Exhibit F – Resolution of Governing Body

In order to execute this modification in a timely manner, please read the following instructions:

#### SECOND MODIFICATION OF PROMISSORY NOTE AND LOAN AGREEMENT

Three copies of the modification are enclosed. Each copy is an original counterpart and each must be executed. Please do not date page one of these copies of the modification. This date will be completed by GEFA at the time of execution of this modification. Please have the appropriate official sign each copy and the appropriate person attest the signature. Once signed, return all three copies of the modification with any other documents for our review and execution. GEFA will send your counterpart to you after execution.

#### EXHIBIT E – OPINION OF BORROWER'S COUNSEL

Exhibit E is a letter that must be prepared by your local government's attorney. This letter ensures that the modification documents and other documents have been properly reviewed and approved by the borrower's counsel. On page 3 of the modification, the borrower's counsel must also sign where indicated that modification is "Approved as to form."

#### EXHIBIT F – RESOLUTION OF GOVERNING BODY

This resolution gives authorization to the chief elected official to execute the modification documents, and any and all other documents. This resolution must be submitted along with the signed modification documents. The same elected official authorized to sign the modification documents within the resolution must also sign the modification documents.



GEFA is glad to assist you with the modification of this loan agreement and promissory note. Please do not hesitate to let us know if we can answer any questions or be of assistance in any other way.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "J. Cherry". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a large loop at the end of the last name.

Jamelle Cherry

Enclosures

cc: Matt Smith/Carter & Sloope Inc. (w/o enclosures)



### Recipient Execution Checklist

Borrower Name: CITY OF BLUE RIDGE Loan Number: CW2020018

For your convenience, this checklist will help you complete all pertinent documents that must be returned to GEFA for execution. Please **initial** each item below to verify the items are completed. Please return this initialed checklist with your executed loan documents.

\_\_\_\_\_ **(3) Modification of Promissory Note and Loan Agreement**

Signed, dated, and marked with the borrower's seal

\_\_\_\_\_ **Exhibit E: Opinion of Borrower's Counsel**

Signed, dated, and on the attorney's letterhead

\_\_\_\_\_ **Exhibit F: Resolution of Governing Body**

Signed, dated, and marked with the borrower's seal. **This resolution authorizes the signer and attester. The same people must sign all the documents.**



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**CLEAN WATER STATE-REVOLVING-FUND, ADMINISTERED BY GEORGIA  
ENVIRONMENTAL FINANCE AUTHORITY**

(a public corporation duly created and  
existing under the laws of  
the State of Georgia)

as Lender

and

**CITY OF BLUE RIDGE**

(a public body corporate and politic duly created and existing  
under the laws of the State of Georgia)

as Borrower

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**SECOND MODIFICATION OF PROMISSORY NOTE AND LOAN AGREEMENT**

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**SECOND MODIFICATION OF PROMISSORY NOTE AND LOAN AGREEMENT**

**THIS SECOND MODIFICATION OF PROMISSORY NOTE AND LOAN AGREEMENT** (this "Second Modification") dated \_\_\_\_\_, by and between **CITY OF BLUE RIDGE**, a Georgia public corporation (the "Borrower"), and the **CLEAN WATER STATE FUND, ADMINISTERED BY GEORGIA ENVIRONMENTAL FUND**, a Georgia public corporation (the "Lender").

Do NOT DATE THIS PAGE

**Statement of Facts**

A. The Lender and the Borrower are parties to that certain Loan Agreement, dated **DECEMBER 3, 2020**, as amended prior to the date hereof (as so amended, the "Loan Agreement"; all capitalized terms used in this Second Modification but not defined herein have the meanings given in the Loan Agreement), pursuant to which the Lender made a loan to the Borrower in accordance with the terms and conditions thereof. The Borrower's obligation to repay such loan is evidenced by that certain Promissory Note, dated **AUGUST 11, 2020**, as amended prior to the date hereof (as so amended, the "Note").

B. The Lender and the Borrower desire to modify the Loan Agreement and Note in certain respects in accordance with the terms and conditions set forth herein.

**NOW, THEREFORE**, in consideration of the promises, the covenants and agreements contained herein, and other good and valuable consideration, the receipt and adequacy of which are hereby acknowledged, the Lender and the Borrower further agree as follows:

**Statement of Terms**

**1. Amendments of Note** - Subject to the fulfillment of the conditions precedent to the effectiveness of this Second Modification that are set forth below, the Note is hereby amended as follows:

Accrued interest on this Note shall be payable monthly on the first day of each calendar month until the first day of the calendar month following the earlier of (1) the Completion Date (as defined in the hereinafter defined Loan Agreement), (2) **AUGUST 1, 2025**, or (3) the date that the loan evidenced by this Note is fully disbursed (the "**Amortization Commencement Date**"). Principal of and interest on this Note shall be payable in **TWO HUNDRED NINETY-NINE (299)** consecutive monthly installments equal to the Installment Amount (as hereinafter defined), commencing on the first day of the calendar month following the Amortization Commencement Date, and continuing to be due on the first day of each succeeding calendar month thereafter, together with a final installment equal to the entire remaining unpaid principal balance of and all accrued interest on this Note, which shall be due and payable on the date that is **25** years from the Amortization Commencement Date (the "**Maturity Date**").

**2. Amendments of Loan Agreement** - Subject to the fulfillment of the conditions precedent to the effectiveness of this Second Modification that are set forth below, the Loan Agreement is hereby amended as follows:

Section 2 (a) of the Loan Agreement is hereby amended and restated to read as follows: "The Lender agrees to advance to the Borrower, on or prior to the earlier of (1) the Completion Date (as hereinafter defined), (2) **AUGUST 1, 2025**, or (3) the date that the loan evidenced by this Note is fully disbursed, the Loan in a principal amount of up to **\$5,000,000** which Loan may be disbursed in one or more advances but each such disbursement shall reduce the Lender's loan commitment hereunder and any sums advanced hereunder may not be repaid and then re-borrowed."

Exhibit A is amended and restated to read as written in the attached Exhibit A.

**3. No Other Waivers or Amendments** - Except for the amendments expressly set forth and referred to in Section 1 and 2 above, the Note and the Loan Agreement shall remain unchanged and in full force and effect. Nothing in this Second Modification is intended, or shall be construed, to constitute a novation or an accord and satisfaction of any of the obligations created by the Note.

**4. Representations and Warranties** - To induce the Lender to enter into this Second Modification, the Borrower does hereby warrant, represent, and covenant to the Lender that: (a) each representation or warranty of the Borrower set forth in the Loan Agreement is hereby restated and reaffirmed as true and correct on and as of the date hereof as if such representation or warranty were made on and as of the date hereof (except to the extent that any such representation or warranty expressly relates to a prior specific date or period), and no Event of Default has occurred and is continuing as of this date under the Loan Agreement; and (b) the Borrower has the power and is duly authorized to enter into, deliver, and perform this Second Modification, and this Second Modification is the legal, valid, and binding obligation of the Borrower enforceable against it in accordance with its terms.

**5. Conditions Precedent to Effectiveness of this Second Modification** - The effectiveness of this Second Modification is subject to the truth and accuracy in all material respects of the representations and warranties of the Borrower contained in Section 4 above and to the fulfillment of the following additional conditions precedent:

a. the Lender shall have received one or more counterparts of this Second Modification duly executed and delivered by the Borrower; and

b. the Lender shall have received (1) a signed opinion of counsel to the Borrower, substantially in the form of Exhibit E attached hereto, and (2) a certified copy of the resolution adopted by the Borrower's governing body, substantially in the form of Exhibit F attached hereto.

**6. Counterparts** - This Second Modification may be executed in multiple counterparts, each of which shall be deemed to be an original and all of which when taken together shall constitute one and the same instrument.



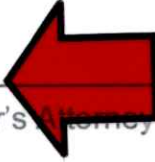
**IN WITNESS WHEREOF**, the parties hereto have caused this Second Modification to be duly executed and delivered as of the date specified at the beginning hereof

**CITY OF BLUE RIDGE**

Approved as to form:

By: \_\_\_\_\_

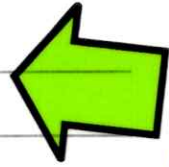
Borrower's Attorney



Signature: \_\_\_\_\_

Print Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Title: \_\_\_\_\_

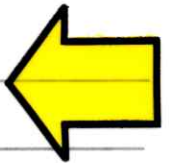


(SEAL) A green rectangular box with a black border and the words "Seal Here" written inside in a cursive font.

Attest Signature: \_\_\_\_\_

Print Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Title: \_\_\_\_\_



**CLEAN WATER STATE REVOLVING FUND,  
ADMINISTERED BY GEORGIA  
ENVIRONMENTAL FINANCE AUTHORITY**

Signature: \_\_\_\_\_

Hunter Hill  
Executive Director

(SEAL)

**DESCRIPTION OF THE PROJECT**

**SCOPE OF WORK**

**Recipient: CITY OF BLUE RIDGE**

**Loan Number: CW2020018**

The project consists of rehabilitating the Water Pollution Control Plant (WPCP) and related appurtenances.

DESCRIPTION OF THE PROJECT

PROJECT BUDGET

Recipient: CITY OF BLUE RIDGE

Loan Number: CW2020018

ITEM	TOTAL	CWSRF
Construction	\$4,110,000	\$4,110,000
Contingency	400,000	400,000
Engineering & Inspection	490,000	490,000
Administrative/Legal	-	-
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>\$5,000,000</b>	<b>\$5,000,000</b>

\*The amounts shown above in each budget item are estimates. Borrower may adjust the amounts within the various budget items without prior Lender approval provided Borrower does not exceed the loan amount contained in Section 1 of the Loan Agreement. In no event shall Lender be liable for any amount exceeding the loan amount contained in Section 1 of the Loan Agreement.

**DESCRIPTION OF THE PROJECT**

**PROJECT SCHEDULE**

**Recipient: CITY OF BLUE RIDGE**

**Loan Number: CW2020018**

<b>ACTION</b>	<b>DATE</b>
Plans & Specs Submitted to EPD	APRIL 2020
Bid Opening	JULY 2020
Notice to Proceed	AUGUST 2020
Completion of Construction	APRIL 2025

**OPINION OF BORROWER'S COUNSEL**  
(Please furnish this form on Attorneys Letterhead)

Date

Clean Water State Revolving Fund, Administered by  
Georgia Environmental Finance Authority  
47 Trinity Ave SW  
Fifth Floor  
Atlanta, GA 30334-9006

Ladies and Gentlemen:

A legal opinion from **TAYLOR ENGLISH DUMA LLP** was delivered to you, dated **SEPTEMBER 15, 2020** (the "Closing Opinion"), relating to the Loan Agreement (the "Loan Agreement"), dated **DECEMBER 3, 2020**, between **CITY OF BLUE RIDGE** (the "Borrower") and the **CLEAN WATER STATE REVOLVING FUND, ADMINISTERED BY GEORGIA ENVIRONMENTAL FINANCE AUTHORITY** (the "Lender"), and the Promissory Note (the "Note"), dated **AUGUST 11, 2020**, of the Borrower. A legal opinion was also delivered to you dated **FEBRUARY 1, 2022**, relating to the modification of Promissory Note and Loan Agreement dated **JUNE 22, 2022**. As counsel for the Borrower, I have examined the original of the Modification of Promissory Note and Loan Agreement (the "Modification"), between the Borrower and the Lender, the proceedings taken by the Borrower to authorize the Modification, the Closing Opinion, and such other documents, records, and proceedings as I have deemed relevant or material to render this opinion. Based upon such examination, I hereby reconfirm as of the date hereof the opinions contained in the Closing Opinion, subject to the modification that all references to the Note and the Loan Agreement (as defined in the Closing Opinion) shall be deemed to include a reference to the Modification. Nothing has come to my attention, after due investigation, that in any way might question the continuing validity and accuracy of the Closing Opinion, as modified above.

Very truly yours,

---

Signature

---

Printed Name

---

Date

EXTRACT OF MINUTES  
RESOLUTION OF GOVERNING BODY

Recipient: CITY OF BLUE RIDGE

Loan Number: CW2020018

At a duly called meeting of the governing body of the Borrower identified above (the "Borrower") held on the \_\_\_\_\_ day of Date Here the following resolution was introduced and adopted.

**WHEREAS**, the Borrower has borrowed **\$5,000,000** from the **GEORGIA ENVIRONMENTAL FINANCE AUTHORITY** (the "Lender"), pursuant to the terms of the Loan Agreement (the "Loan Agreement"), dated **DECEMBER 3, 2020**, between the Borrower and the Lender; and

**WHEREAS**, the Borrower's obligation to repay the loan made pursuant to the Loan Agreement is evidenced by a Promissory Note (the "Note"), dated **AUGUST 11, 2020**, of the Borrower; and

**WHEREAS**, the Borrower and the Lender have determined to amend and modify the Note and the Loan Agreement, pursuant to the terms of a Second Modification of Promissory Note and Loan Agreement (the "Second Modification") between the Borrower and the Lender, the form of which has been presented to this meeting;

**NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED** by the governing body of the Borrower that the form, terms, and conditions and the execution, delivery, and performance of the Second Modification are hereby approved and authorized.

**BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED** by the governing body of the Borrower that the terms of the Second Modification are in the best interests of the Borrower, and the governing body of the Borrower designates and authorizes the following persons to execute and deliver, and to attest, respectively, the Second Modification and any related documents necessary to the consummation of the transactions contemplated by the Second Modification.

\_\_\_\_\_  
(Signature of Person to Execute Documents)

\_\_\_\_\_  
(Print Title)

\_\_\_\_\_  
(Signature of Person to Attest Documents)

\_\_\_\_\_  
(Print Title)

The undersigned further certifies that the above resolution has not been repealed or amended and remains in full force and effect.

Date:

Date/Seal  
(SEAL)

\_\_\_\_\_  
Secretary/Clerk





## City Council Meeting Agenda Submittal

MEETING DATE: 1/16/2024

AGENDA NO: 6b

### AGENDA ITEM:

A RESOLUTION OF THE CITY COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF BLUE RIDGE, GEORGIA ADOPTING THE REVISIONS TO THE CITY OF BLUE RIDGE EMPLOYEE HANDBOOK AND PROVIDING AN EFFECTIVE DATE.

### BACKGROUND:

The original City of Blue Ridge Employee Handbook was approved in 2021. This document includes updates to the Handbook that addresses the following:

- Changes in the policies impacted by changes in state or federal law.
- Interchanges Mayor and/or City Administrator is the individual responsible for enforcing the policies.
- Incorporate revisions instituted by the City Council/Administration since January 2022.

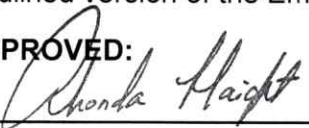
### RECOMMENDATION:

It is recommended that the City Council adopt the attached Resolution adopting the revisions to the City of Blue Ridge Employee Handbook.

### ATTACHMENT (S):

Redlined version of the Employee Handbook and Resolution No. BR2024-01.

APPROVED:

  
\_\_\_\_\_

Mayor

  
\_\_\_\_\_

City Administrator

**RESOLUTION NO. BR2024-01**

**A RESOLUTION OF THE CITY COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF BLUE RIDGE, GEORGIA ADOPTING THE REVISIONS TO THE CITY OF BLUE RIDGE EMPLOYEE HANDBOOK AND PROVIDING AN EFFECTIVE DATE.**

**WHEREAS**, the City Administration recommends that the City of Blue ridge Employee Handbook adopted in 2021 be updated; and

**WHEREAS**, the City Council finds it in the public interest and in the best interest of the City to update the City of Blue Ridge Employee Handbook as contained in the attached document.

**NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED**, that the City Council of Blue Ridge does hereby the revisions to the City of Blue Ridge Employee Handbook as contained in the attached document. This Resolution shall become effective immediately upon its

The foregoing Resolution was offered by \_\_\_\_\_ who moved its adoption. The motion was seconded by \_\_\_\_\_, and upon being put to a vote, the vote was as follows:

Councilmember Angie Arp	_____
Councilmember Jack Taylor	_____
Councilmember Christy Kay	_____
Councilmember Bill Bivins	_____
Councilmember William Whaley	_____

PASSED AND ADOPTED this \_\_\_ day of January 2024.



Resolution No. BR2024-01  
Page 2

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RHONDA HAIGHT, MAYOR

ATTEST:

---

AMY MINTZ  
CITY CLERK



**CITY OF BLUE RIDGE EMPLOYEE HANDBOOK**

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City of Blue Ridge

**WELCOME FROM THE ~~MAYOR~~CITY**

On behalf of your colleagues, ~~I~~we welcome you to the City of Blue Ridge, Georgia (“Blue Ridge” or the “City”) and wish you every success here.

We believe that each employee contributes directly to the City's growth and success, and we hope you will take pride in being a member of our team.

This City of Blue Ridge Employee Handbook (the “Handbook”) was developed to describe some of the expectations of our employees and to outline the policies, programs, and benefits available to eligible employees. Employees should familiarize themselves with the contents of the Handbook as it will answer many questions about employment with the City. Should you have any questions regarding the contents of this Handbook, please direct them to your supervisor or the City Clerk/Human Resources ~~Department~~.

We hope that your experience here will be challenging, enjoyable, and rewarding. Again, welcome!

Sincerely,

~~Donna Whitener~~  
MayorMayor/City  
Council



## **Organization Description**

### I. Our Facilities and Locations

City Hall is located at 480 West First Street, Blue Ridge. The City maintains facilities for a public works and utilities shop, Water Plant, Sewer Plant and Police Station along with a downtown park and pool and ballpark on Grey Street.park. In addition, the city owns the Farmers Market.

### II. The History of the City

Incorporated in 1886-1887 and located in the northeast corner of Georgia, the City of Blue Ridge is the county seat of Fannin County. The City consists of 2.2 square miles and has a population of 1,290,253, according to the 2010-2020 census.

### III. Our Organizational Structure

The City Council consists of five councilmembers and the mayor. The City Council establishes levels of service and appropriates funds to meet the needs of the community. By adopting ordinances and resolutions, pay and benefit programs, and other actions, the City Council provides the basic tools to guide, motivate, attract and retain a productive work force.

The Department Head/Supervisor is responsible for ensuring the optimum performance of his/her department by providing leadership, guidance and direction to achieve organizational goals and assure departmental integrity through coordinated teamwork. The Supervisor ensures satisfactory performance, enforces rules and ensures compliance with regulations. A supervisor gives positive guidance and corrects or responds to improper action or misconduct ~~witnessed~~.

The City Clerk /Human Resources Technician Department is responsible for maintaining personnel policies and procedures ~~with approval of the Council~~ and providing guidance and direction to Department Heads and Supervisors on personnel issues and is available to employees to discuss any personnel policy matter. References to the Human Resources Department shall also mean City Clerk.

The employee's role is to perform assigned duties efficiently, effectively and professionally, and to be flexible in adjusting with the changing nature of the City's functions based on the expectations of management and the public. The employee is responsible for responding to direction from supervisors, managers, or directors, including those not directly within his/her own chain of command. All employees should recognize we serve the residents and businesses and we should strive to maintain and improve our community

#### IV. Our Goals

The primary goal of the organization is to provide the community and its citizens efficient, effective and responsive service while ensuring the prudent use of public funds.

#### **Introductory Statement**

This Handbook is designed to acquaint you with the City and provide you with information about working conditions, employee benefits, and the policies affecting your employment. You should read, understand, and comply with all provisions of this handbook.

It describes many of your responsibilities as an employee and outlines the programs developed by the City to benefit employees. One of our objectives is to provide a work environment that is conducive to both personal and professional growth.

No employee handbook can anticipate every circumstance or question about policy. The City reserves the right to revise, supplement, or rescind any policies or portion of the Handbook from time to time as it deems appropriate, in its sole and absolute discretion. The only exception to any changes is our employment-at-will policy permitting you or the City to end our relationship for any reason at any time. Employees will, of course, be notified of such changes to the Handbook as they occur.

Any employment issue which is not specifically included in this Handbook or any question which may arise relating to policies not expressly set out herein shall be resolved at the discretion of the Mayor/City Administrator. Should such an issue arise and be dealt with as noted, the Mayor/City Administrator should inform the City Council within two weeks of the nature of the issue and the decision in the matter. The Council may uphold, revise or reverse the Mayor/City Administrator's decision and thereby create a policy for dealing with this type of issue from that date forward.

### **101 Nature of Employment**

*Effective Date: 8/17/2021*

*Revision Date:*

Employment with the City is voluntarily entered, and the employee is free to resign at will at any time, with or without cause. Similarly, the City may terminate the employment relationship at will at any time, with or without notice or cause, so long as there is no violation of applicable federal or state law.

Policies set forth in this Handbook are not intended to create a contract, nor are they to be construed to constitute contractual obligations of any kind or a contract of employment between the City and any of its employees. The provisions of the Handbook have been developed at the discretion of management and, except for its policy of employment-at-will, may be amended or canceled at any time, at the City's sole discretion.

These provisions supersede all existing policies and practices and may not be amended or added to without the express approval of the City Council.

### **103 Equal Employment Opportunity**

*Effective Date: 8/17/2021*

*Revision Date:*

In order to provide equal employment and advancement opportunities to all individuals, employment decisions at the City will be based on merit, qualifications, and abilities. The City does not discriminate in employment opportunities or practices based on race, color, religion, sex (including sexual orientation, gender identity, and pregnancy), national origin, age, disability, or any other characteristic protected by law.

The City will make reasonable accommodations for qualified individuals with known disabilities unless doing so would result in an undue hardship. This policy governs all aspects of employment, including selection, job assignment, compensation, discipline, termination, and access to benefits and training.

Any employees with questions or concerns about any type of discrimination in the workplace are encouraged to bring these issues to the attention of their immediate supervisor or the Human Resources Office. Employees can raise concerns and make reports without fear of reprisal. Anyone found to be engaging in any type of unlawful discrimination will be subject to disciplinary action, up to and including termination of employment.

### **105 Hiring of Relatives**

*Effective Date: 8/17/2021*

*Revision Dote:*

The employment of immediate family members in the same area of an organization may cause serious conflicts and problems with favoritism and employee morale. In addition to claims of partiality in treatment at work, personal conflicts from outside the work environment can be carried over into day-to-day working relationships.

For purposes of this policy, an immediate relative has the same definition as utilized in Policy 309 Bereavement Leave. This policy applies to all employees without regard to the gender or sexual orientation of the individuals involved.

Immediate relatives of current employees may not occupy a position that will be working directly for or supervising their relative. The City also reserves the right to take prompt action if an actual or potential conflict of interest arises involving relatives or individuals involved in a dating relationship who occupy positions at any level (higher or lower) in the same line of authority that may affect the review of employment decisions.

If a relative relationship is established after employment between employees who are in a reporting situation described above, it is the responsibility and obligation of the supervisor involved in the relationship to disclose the existence of the relationship to management. The individuals concerned will be given the opportunity to decide who is to be transferred to another available position. If that decision is not made in a timely manner, management will decide who is to be transferred or, if necessary, terminated from employment. Such decision shall be made taking into account performance evaluations, departmental seniority, supervisory/management level, and other job-related criteria relevant for the City's best interest. It is not incumbent upon the City to create a new position to accommodate constraints of this policy.

In other cases where a conflict or the potential for conflict arises because of the relationship between employees, even if there is no line of authority or reporting involved, the employees may be separated by reassignment or terminated from employment. Employees in a close personal relationship should refrain from public workplace displays of affection or excessive personal conversation.

Failure to provide the City with timely notice of a relationship that violates this policy may result in discipline, up to and including termination.

## **107 Immigration Law Compliance**

*Effective Date: 8/17/2021*

*Revision Date:*

The City is committed to employing only United States citizens and aliens who are authorized to work in the United States and does not unlawfully discriminate based on citizenship or national origin.

In compliance with the Immigration Reform and Control Act of 1986, each new employee, as a condition of employment, must complete the Employment Eligibility Verification Form I-9 and present documentation establishing identity and employment eligibility. Former employees who are rehired must also complete the form if they have not completed an I-9 with the City within the past three years, or if their previous I-9 is no longer retained or valid.

Employees with questions or seeking more information on immigration law issues are encouraged to contact the Human Resources Office. Employees may raise questions or complaints about immigration law compliance without fear of reprisal.

## **108 Conflicts of Interest**

*Effective Date: 8/17/2021*

*Revision Date:*

Employees have an obligation to conduct business within guidelines that prohibit actual or potential conflicts of interest. This policy establishes only the framework within which the City wishes the business to operate. The purpose of these guidelines is to provide general direction so that employees can seek further clarification on issues related to the subject of acceptable standards of operation. Contact the Human Resources Office for more information or questions about conflicts of interest.

An actual or potential conflict of interest occurs when an employee can influence a decision that may result in a personal gain for that employee or for a relative as a result of the City's business dealings. For the purposes of this policy, a relative is any person who is related by blood or marriage, or whose relationship with the employee is like that of persons who are related by blood or marriage.

No "presumption of guilt" is created by the mere existence of a relationship with outside firms. However, if employees have any influence on transactions involving purchases, contracts, or



leases, it is imperative that they disclose to ~~an~~the officer-Mayor/City Administrator of the City as soon as possible the existence of any actual or potential conflict of interest so that safeguards can be established to protect all parties.

Personal gain may result not only in cases where an employee or relative has a significant ownership in a firm with which the City does business, but also when an employee or relative receives any kickback, bribe, substantial gift, or special consideration as a result of any transaction or business dealings involving the City.

Violations of this policy may result in discipline, up to and including termination.

### **110 Outside Employment**

*Effective Date: 8/17/2021*

*Revision Date:*

An employee may hold a job with another organization or perform services for paid employment in addition to his/her employment with the City if he or she satisfactorily performs his or her job responsibilities with the City. All employees will be judged by the same performance standards and will be subject to the City's scheduling demands, regardless of any existing outside work requirements.

Such work shall not involve the performance of duties which the employee should perform as part of his/her employment with the City or occur during the employee's regular or assigned working hours unless the employee is on pre-approved vacation.

If the City determines that an employee's outside work interferes with performance or the ability to meet the requirements of the City as they are modified from time to time, the employee may be asked to terminate the outside employment if he or she wishes to remain with the City.

Outside employment will present a conflict of interest if it has an adverse impact on the City.

### **112 Non-Disclosure**

*Effective Date: 4/11/2018*

*Revision Date:*

- The protection of confidential business information is vital to the interests and the success of the City. Such confidential information includes, but is not limited to, the following examples:

## City of Blue Ridge

- confidential information
- employee payroll or medical information
- information which has not been cleared for public disclosure

Employees who improperly use or disclose confidential business information will be subject to disciplinary action, up to and including termination of employment and legal action, even if they do not actually benefit from the disclosed information.

All open records requests should be directed to the City Clerk, who will consult the City Attorney if there is a question about the legality of releasing the requested information.

This policy does not limit (and will not be enforced so as to limit) your rights to discuss your wages, hours and other terms and conditions with others.

### **114 Disability Accommodation**

*Effective Date: 8/17/2021*

*Revision Date:*

The City is committed to complying fully with the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) and ensuring equal opportunity in employment for qualified persons with disabilities. All employment practices and activities are conducted on a non-discriminatory basis.

Hiring procedures provide persons with disabilities meaningful employment opportunities. Upon request, job applications are available in alternative, accessible formats, as is assistance in completing the application. Pre-employment inquiries are made only regarding an applicant's ability to perform the duties of the position. Applicants may be requested to have a physical based upon the job description after a conditional offer of employment and, before a final offer of employment is made.

Reasonable accommodation is available to all disabled employees, where their disability affects the performance of job functions. All employment decisions are based on the merits of the situation in accordance with defined criteria, not the disability of the individual.

Qualified individuals with disabilities are entitled to equal pay and other forms of compensation (or changes in compensation) as well as in job assignments, classifications, organizational structures, position descriptions, lines of progression, and seniority lists. Leave of all types will be available to all employees on an equal basis.

The City is also committed to not discriminating against any qualified employees or applicants



City of Blue Ridge

because they are related to or associated with a person with a disability. The City will follow any state or local law that provides individuals with disabilities greater protection than the ADA.

This policy is neither exhaustive nor exclusive. The City is committed to taking all other actions necessary to ensure equal employment opportunity for persons with disabilities in accordance with the ADA and all other applicable federal, state, and local laws.

## **201 Employment Categories**

*Effective Date: 8/17/2021*

*Revision Date:*

It is the intent of the City to clarify the definitions of employment classifications so that employees understand their employment status and benefit eligibility. These classifications do not guarantee employment for any specified period of time. Accordingly, the right to terminate the employment relationship at will at any time is retained by both the employee and the City.

Each employee is designated as either NONEXEMPT or EXEMPT from federal and state wage and hour laws. NONEXEMPT employees are entitled to overtime pay under the specific provisions of federal and state laws. EXEMPT employees are excluded from specific provisions of federal and state wage and hour laws. An employee's EXEMPT or NONEXEMPT classification may be changed only upon written notification by the Mayor/City management Administrator.

In addition to the above categories, each employee will belong to one other employment category:

REGULAR FULL-TIME employees are those who are not in a temporary or introductory status and who are regularly scheduled to work at least 30 hours per week. Generally, they are eligible for the City's benefit package, subject to the terms, conditions, and limitations of each benefit program.

PART-TIME employees are those who are not assigned to a temporary or introductory status and who are regularly scheduled to work less than 30 hours per week. While they do receive all legally mandated benefits (such as Social Security and workers' compensation insurance), they are ineligible for ~~all of~~ the City's other benefit programs.

INTRODUCTORY-PROBATIONARY employees are those whose performance is being evaluated to determine

whether further employment in a specific position or with the City is appropriate. Employees who satisfactorily complete the introductory period will be notified of their new employment classification.

TEMPORARY employees are those who are hired as interim replacements, to temporarily supplement the work force, or to assist in the completion of a specific project. Employment assignments in this category are of a limited duration. Employment beyond any initially stated period does not in any way imply a change in employment status. Temporary employees retain that status unless and until notified of a change. While temporary employees receive all legally mandated benefits (such as workers' compensation insurance and Social Security), they are ineligible for all the City's other benefit programs.

### **203 Employment Reference Checks**

*Effective Date: 8/17/2021*

*Revision Date:*

To ensure that individuals who join the City are well qualified and have a strong potential to be productive and successful, it is the policy of the City to ~~check~~check the employment references of all applicants.

The Human Resources Office will respond in writing only to those reference check inquiries that are submitted in writing. Responses to such inquiries will confirm only dates of employment, wage rates, and position(s) held.

### **204 Personnel Data Changes**

*Effective Date: 8/17/2021*

*Revision Date:*

It is the responsibility of each employee to promptly notify the City of any changes in personnel data. Personal mailing addresses, telephone number, number and names of dependents, individuals to be contacted in the event of an emergency, educational accomplishments, and other such status reports should be accurate and current at all times. If any personnel data has changed, employees should notify the Human Resources Office in writing. All authorized changes will become effective at the beginning of the next full pay period.



## **205 ~~Introductory-Probationary~~ Period**

*Effective Date: 8/17/2021*

*Revision Date:*

The ~~introductory-probationary~~ period is intended to give new employees the opportunity to demonstrate their ability to achieve a satisfactory level of performance and to determine whether the new position meets their expectations. The City uses this period to evaluate employee capabilities, work habits, and overall performance. Either the employee or the City may end the employment relationship at will at any time during or after the ~~probationaryintroductory~~ period, with or without cause or advance notice.

All new and rehired employees work on an ~~probationaryintroductory~~ basis for the first 180 calendar days after their date of hire. Employees who are promoted or transferred within the City must complete a secondary ~~probationaryintroductory~~ period of the same length with each reassignment to a new position. If employment status is changed from part-time to full-time but there is no job change, the ~~probationaryintroductory~~ period will be reduced by the number of days of service as a part-time employee. Any significant absence will automatically extend an ~~probationaryintroductory~~ period by the length of the absence. If the City determines that the designated ~~probationaryintroductory~~ period does not allow sufficient time to thoroughly evaluate the employee's performance, the ~~probationaryintroductory~~ period may be extended for a specified period.

In cases of promotions or transfers within the City, an employee who, in the sole judgment of management, is not successful in the new position can be removed from that position at any time during the secondary ~~probationaryintroductory~~ period. If this occurs, the employee may be allowed to return to his or her former job or to a comparable job for which the employee is qualified, depending on the availability of such positions and the City's needs.

The employee's supervisor should complete an employee evaluation immediately prior to completion of the initial ~~probationaryintroductory~~ period and recommend the employee for "regular" employment classification. The employee ~~will~~ may receive a pay increase based upon his or her evaluation at the completion of the ~~probationaryintroductory~~ period. No pay changes should be made during the ~~probationaryintroductory~~ period. ~~Uniforms may be purchased when the introductory period is complete for new hires.~~

During the introductory period, new employees are eligible for those benefits that are required by law, such as workers' compensation insurance and Social Security. They may also be eligible for other City-provided benefits, subject to the terms and conditions of each benefits program. Employees should read the information for each specific benefits program for the details on eligibility requirements. Employment status is not changed during the second introductory period that results from a promotion or transfer within the City.

## **209 Performance Evaluation**

*Effective Date: 3/19/2018*

*Revision Date:*

Supervisors and employees are strongly encouraged to discuss job performance and goals on an informal, day-to-day basis. Formal performance evaluations are conducted at the end of an employee's initial period in any new position. This period, known as the ~~introductory~~ probationary period, allows the supervisor and the employee to discuss the job responsibilities, standards, and performance requirements of the new position. Additional formal performance evaluations are conducted to provide both supervisors and employees the ~~opportunity~~ opportunity to discuss job tasks, identify and correct weaknesses, encourage and recognize strengths, and discuss positive, purposeful approaches for meeting goals.

The performance of all employees is generally evaluated on an annual basis in March of each year, with a mid-year feedback review to help the employee prepare for the annual review. ~~The annual review should normally be timed near the end of the budget year with the mid-year review occurring approximately in the middle of the budget year; however, the time of such reviews will depend upon operational needs of the Department and the availability of the supervisor and employee. The performance review shall be conducted in accordance with established policy utilizing the forms prepared by the City.~~

Merit-based pay adjustments in accordance with the City's Pay Plan are awarded by the City in an effort to recognize ~~truly superior~~ employee performance. The decision to award such an adjustment is dependent upon numerous factors, including the information documented by this formal performance evaluation process. ~~The Council will evaluate~~ City's Pay Plan may also include separate cost-of-living raises applying to all employees as necessary.

## **210 Job Descriptions**

*Effective Date: 8/17/2021*

*Revision Date:*

The City makes every effort to create and maintain accurate job descriptions for all positions within the Organization. Each description includes a job information section, a job summary section (giving a general overview of the job's purpose), an essential duties and responsibilities section, a supervisory responsibilities section, a qualifications section (including education and/or experience, language skills, mathematical skills, reasoning ability, and any certification required), a physical demands section, and a work environment section.



The City maintains job descriptions to aid in orienting new employees to their jobs, identifying the requirements of each position, establishing hiring criteria, setting standards for employee performance evaluations, and establishing a basis for making reasonable accommodations for individuals with disabilities.

The Human Resources Office ~~and the hiring manager~~ with input with the appropriate department head prepare job descriptions when new positions are created. Existing job descriptions are also reviewed and revised in order to ensure that they are up to date. Job descriptions may also be rewritten periodically to reflect any changes in the position's duties and responsibilities. All employees will be expected to help ensure that their job descriptions are accurate and current, reflecting the work being done.

Employees should remember that job descriptions do not necessarily cover every task or duty that might be assigned, and that additional responsibilities may be assigned, as necessary. Contact the Human Resources Office if you have any questions or concerns about your job description.

## **211 Salary Administration**

*Effective Date: 8/17/2021*

*Revision Date:*

The salary administration program at the City was created to achieve consistent pay practices, comply with federal and state laws, mirror our commitment to Equal Employment Opportunity, and offer competitive salaries within our labor market. Because recruiting and retaining talented employees is critical to our success, the City is committed to paying its employees equitable wages that reflect the requirements and responsibilities of their positions and are comparable to the pay received by similarly situated employees in other organizations in the area.

Compensation for every position is determined by several factors, including job analysis and evaluation, the essential duties and responsibilities of the job, and salary survey data on pay practices of other employers. The City periodically reviews its pay scale, restructures it as necessary and ~~adopts any amendments by written Resolution~~ incorporates the changes in the Pay Plan ~~of presented to the~~ City Council. Annual Pay increases usually occur in the first pay period in January.

~~All pay changes will be effective the first full pay period following the approval or action resulting in the change unless otherwise specifically indicated.~~

~~Merit-based pay adjustments may be awarded in conjunction with superior employee~~

~~performance documented by the performance evaluation process. Incentive bonuses may be awarded depending on the overall performance of the City and based on each employee's individual contributions to the Organization. Pay increases may be given for completion of certification programs as defined by the pay scale. All training and certification should be approved by the supervisor or Mayor, if applicable to supervisors, prior to registering. The City will provide the opportunity up to two times and pay all related expenses of training in order to advance or maintain employee licensing or certification relevant to their job with the City. Cost-of-living adjustments may be made to the compensation of all employees by the City Council during the budget process.~~

Employees should bring their pay-related questions or concerns to the attention of their immediate supervisors, who are responsible for the fair administration of departmental pay practices. The Human Resources Office is also available to answer specific questions about the salary administration program and provide a copy of the current pay scale.

### **301 Employee Benefits**

*Effective Date: 8/17/2021*

*Revision Date:*

Eligible employees at the City are provided a wide range of benefits. Several of the programs (such as Social Security, workers' compensation, state disability, and unemployment insurance) cover all employees in the manner prescribed by law.

Benefits eligibility is dependent upon a variety of factors, including employee classification. Details of many of these programs can be found elsewhere in the employee handbook and any questions should be directed to the Human Resources Office. Some benefit programs require contributions from the employee.

The City reserves the right to amend, modify, change, replace, suspend, or cancel any of these benefits at any time, with or without cause, with or without notice.

The following benefit programs are available to eligible employees at the time of publication and may be subject to change:

- Vacation Benefits
- Personal Leave
- Leave Sharing
- Holidays
- Bereavement Leave



- Voting Time Off
- Jury Duty Leave
- Health Insurance
- Dental Insurance
- Vision Care Insurance
- Short-term Disability
- AirMed Emergency Transport Insurance
- Life Insurance
- Supplemental Life Insurance
- Pension Plan
- Deferred Compensation Plan
- Year End ~~Incentive~~ Bonus Payment
- Uniforms
- Water Bonus

### **302 Vacation Benefits**

*Effective Date: 8/17/2021*

*Revision Date:*

Vacation time off with pay is available to eligible employees to provide opportunities for rest, relaxation, and personal pursuits. Employees in the following employment classification(s) are eligible to earn and use vacation time as described in this policy:

- Regular full-time employees

The amount of paid vacation time an employee receives each year increases with the length of their employment as shown in the following schedule ~~(the schedule in effect just prior to adoption or revision shall remain in effect through the end of the calendar year, with the following schedule effective as of January 1):~~

1 year	Six 8-hour days or 48 hours
2-4 years	Twelve 8-hour days or 96 hours
5-9 years	Fifteen 8-hour days or 120 hours
10-14 years	Eighteen 8-hour days or 144 hours
15-19 years	Twenty 8-hour days or 176 hours
20+ years	Twenty-five 8-hour days or 200 hours

The length of eligible service is calculated ~~on the basis of~~ based on a "benefit year" for the first year. This is the 12-month period that begins on the employee's hire date. Vacation shall accrue on the first working day of the calendar year after the first year of service and will be based on the years of service as ~~of January 1~~ their anniversary date.



Once employees enter an eligible employment classification, they begin to earn paid vacation time according to the schedule. They can request use of vacation time after it is earned.

Regular full-time employees who are normally scheduled to work fewer than 40 hours per week, will accrue reduced vacation hours according to their normal schedule. For example, an employee who is scheduled to work 32 hours per week will receive 80% of the vacation accrual above. Employees who transition from part-time to full-time shall receive credit for half of the years of service provided they regularly worked more than 20 hours per week and shall be rounded to the nearest year and credited in 6-month increments. For example, one year and 2 months of part-time service would be rounded down to one year and awarded as 6 months of service.

~~Paid vacation time can be used in minimum increments of one hour.~~ To take vacation, employees should request advance approval from their supervisors as soon as plans are known, but no less than one week -in advance. Requests will be reviewed based on a number of factors, including business needs, staffing requirements and seniority. A vacation calendar with requested vacation dates should be submitted at the beginning of the calendar year to each supervisor.

Upon notice of resignation, any previously approved vacation falling within the notice period ~~shall~~may be canceled, and the employee may not utilize any vacation time during the notice period.

Employees are encouraged to utilize all vacation during the calendar year, however unused vacation of up to 160 hours may be rolled over to the following year. Vacation hours in excess of 160 hours may be paid out provided there is written approval from the Mayor/ City Administrator stating a valid reason why it was not physically possible for the employee to utilize his/her vacation.

Upon termination of employment, employees will be paid for unused vacation time that has been earned through the last day of work. However, if the City terminates employment for cause or the employee fails to work a two-week advance notice, forfeiture of unused vacation time will result.

### **303 Personal Leave Benefits**

*Effective Date: 8/17/2021*

*Revision Date:*

The City provides paid personal leave benefits to all eligible employees for periods of temporary absence due to illness or injuries or for personal business that cannot be conducted outside of normal working hours. Eligible employee classification(s):

- Regular full-time employees

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- Introductory employees working in positions classified as regular full-time

Eligible employees will accrue personal leave benefits at the rate of approximately 9 days per year (3 hours per bi-weekly pay period). Employees classified as ~~introductory-probationary~~ due to a new hire or regular full-time who normally work less than 40 hours per week will accrue personal leave benefits at a reduced rate of 1.5 hours per bi-weekly pay period.

Paid personal leave can be used in minimum increments of one half-hour. An eligible employee may use personal leave benefits for an absence due to his or her own illness or injury or medical appointment, or that of a child, parent, spouse or another individual who is domiciled in the employee's household and is financially dependent. Personal leave may be used for personal business that cannot be conducted outside of normal working hours or for paid absence due to weather conditions. Employees requesting paid personal leave should provide sufficient information regarding the reason for the requested leave so that the supervisor can determine whether the absence qualifies.

Employees who are unable to report to work due to illness or injury should notify their direct supervisor before the scheduled start of their workday if possible. The direct supervisor must also be contacted on each additional day of absence.

If an employee is absent for three or more consecutive days due to illness or injury, a physician's statement must be provided upon return to work verifying the illness or injury and its expected ending date. Such verification may be requested for any other personal leave absences due to sickness as well and may be required as a condition to receive leave benefits if a supervisor suspects abuse of the policy.

Use of personal leave for personal reasons must be approved six (6) days prior to the absence by the employee's direct supervisor.

An employee on an extended absence must apply for any other available compensation and benefits, such as workers' compensation. Personal leave benefits will be used to supplement any payments that an employee is eligible to receive from state disability insurance or workers' compensation. The combination of any such disability payments and personal leave benefits cannot exceed the employee's normal weekly earnings. The employee will have the option to continue all regular payroll deductions for the employee's share of all employee benefits by using paid personal leave during the extended absence. Personal leave will not be accrued during some extended absences as documented in each leave section of the personnel policy.

Unused personal leave benefits will be allowed to accumulate until the employee has accrued a total of 60 calendar days (480 hours). If the employee's benefits reach this maximum, further accrual of personal leave benefits will be suspended until the employee has reduced the balance below the limit.

Unused personal leave benefits will not be paid to employees while they are employed or upon



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termination of employment.

### **304 Leave Sharing Policy**

*Effective Date: 12/8/2020*

*Revision Date:*

Leave sharing permits eligible regular full-time employees who have exhausted their personal leave balances to continue receiving their salary by using personal leave hours donated to them by other employees. To be eligible, an employee must be on approved Family and Medical Leave. The eligible employee shall submit a written request for leave sharing to Human Resources. If an employee is physically or mentally unable to submit a request, a family member or supervisor may submit a request on the employee's behalf. Human Resources will notify other employees of the request and the procedure for donating personal leave hours. A requesting employee shall not attempt to directly solicit donations of leave hours from other employees.

Employees desiring to donate personal leave hours toward the request should notify Human Resources in writing of the number of hours they are willing to donate. Donors do not have to retain any minimum leave balances, nor is there a limit on the number of personal leave hours they may donate; however, a donor cannot have a negative balance.

Employees may also donate personal leave to an eligible employee even if the eligible employee has not submitted a request to Human Resources. In this event, except to the extent require by law, the name of the employee(s) donating personal leave shall not be disclosed by Human Resources without written permission from the employee(s) making the donation.

Donated hours will be used in the order donated and deducted from the donor in up to 40-hour increments when **actually** used by the receiving employee. Any unused donations will be cancelled if not used when the intended recipient returns from FMLA leave or is terminated. Otherwise, leave given by a donor may not be reclaimed.

Leave sharing benefits shall not be available to an employee when the absence is compensable to the employee by worker's compensation, the absence is due to an intentionally self-inflicted injury (except under conditions that qualify as a disability under the Americans with Disabilities Act), or the absence is due to injuries occurring while violating a law.

### **305 Holidays**

*Effective Date: 8/17/2021*

*Revision Date:*

The City will grant holiday time off to all employees on the holidays listed below. A recognized holiday that falls on a Saturday will be observed on the preceding Friday. A recognized holiday that falls on a Sunday will be observed on the following Monday. If approved by the Mayor/City Administrator, an alternate day off could be recognized if substituted by one of the following

holidays:

- New Year's Day (January 1)
- Martin Luther King, Jr. Day (third Monday in January)
- Presidents' Day (third Monday in February)
- Good Friday (Friday before Easter)
- Confederate Memorial Day (fourth Monday in April)
- Memorial Day (last Monday in May)
- Juneteenth (June 19)
- Independence Day (July 4)
- Labor Day (first Monday in September)
- Veterans' Day (November 11)
- Thanksgiving (fourth Thursday in November)
- Day after Thanksgiving
- Christmas Eve (December 24)
- Christmas (December 25)

The City will grant paid holiday time off to all eligible employees immediately upon assignment to an eligible employment classification. Holiday pay will be eight (8) hours calculated based on the employee's straight time pay rate (as of the date of the holiday). Eligible employee classification(s):

- Regular full-time employees
- Introductory employees

Regular full-time employees who are regularly scheduled to work or average less than 40 hours per week are not eligible for holiday pay.

In order to receive pay for an observed holiday, an employee must not have been absent, except on approved vacation leave, on the workday either immediately before or after the holiday unless a doctor's note is provided for personal leave. If a holiday falls during an eligible employee's approved vacation or personal leave, holiday pay will be provided instead of the paid time off benefit that would otherwise have applied.

If eligible nonexempt employees work on a recognized holiday, they will receive holiday pay plus wages at their straight-time rate for the hours worked on the holiday.

**306 Workers' Compensation Insurance**

*Effective Date: 8/17/2021*

*Revision Date:*

The City provides a comprehensive workers' compensation insurance program at no cost to employees. This program covers any injury or illness sustained in the course of

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employment that requires medical, surgical, or hospital treatment. Subject to applicable legal requirements, workers' compensation insurance provides benefits after a short waiting period or, if the employee is hospitalized, immediately.

Employees who sustain work-related injuries or illnesses must inform their supervisor immediately. No matter how minor an on-the-job injury may appear, it is important that it be reported immediately. This will enable an eligible employee to qualify for coverage as quickly as possible.

An employee who must be absent from work as a result of an injury at work will be compensated by the Insurance Carrier for benefit periods at a rate established by the Georgia Workers' Compensation Act. During the period of absence, the employee will be granted regular pay for the mandated seven (7) day waiting period prior for commencement of benefit payments. If an employee is absent for at least 21 days, the City's workers' compensation carrier may also compensate the employee directly for the waiting period. The employee will be liable for signing this compensation over to the employer as he/she has already been fully compensated for any waiting period. During the leave of absence, the employee will be granted leave under the Family Medical Leave Act, which shall run concurrent with leave of absence due to a Worker's Compensation claim.

Following the seven (7) day waiting period, the employee may draw payment for accrued personal leave or vacation leave to supplement the rate paid by the insurance carrier up to his/her regular rate of pay until such time as the employee is able to return to work or the employee's accrued leaves are exhausted. The request for supplemental payment should be made in writing at the time the employee reports his/her inability to perform his/her job duties. At the time all leaves are exhausted, the employee ceases to accrue future vacation and personal leave. The employee will then receive only payment provided by the Insurance Carrier, as outlined in the Workers' Compensation Act of Georgia. Holiday pay is not available to individuals on leave for a Worker's Compensation claim.

Employees are permitted to remain on the clock for doctor's appointments, treatment or activities as a result of a worker's compensation injury if it is a medical only claim or he/she has returned to work full-time.

If the employee is unable to perform his/her regular duties as a result of an injury suffered at work, the employee may be assigned other duties with the City for the period of recuperation. The employee will be paid his/her regular rate of pay for hours worked for a reasonable length of time as determined by the insurance carrier, or until the employee is able to resume the duties of his/her position, whichever occurs first as outlined by the Worker's Compensation Act of Georgia. The employee should provide a statement of health furnished by his/her attending physician upon return to work.

A fraudulent claim is grounds for disciplinary action up to and including termination.



### **309 Other Leave**

*Effective Date: 8/17/2021*

*Revision Date:*

Employees who wish to take time off due to the death of an immediate family member should notify their supervisor immediately. Up to 3 days of paid bereavement leave will be provided to eligible employees in the following classification(s):

- Regular full-time employees

Bereavement pay is calculated based on the base pay rate at the time of absence and will not include any special forms of compensation, such as incentives, commissions, bonuses, or shift differentials.

Bereavement leave will normally be granted unless there are unusual business needs or staffing requirements. Employees may, with their supervisors' approval, use any available paid leave for additional time off as necessary.

The City defines "immediate family" as the employee's spouse, parent, child, sibling; the employee's spouse's parent, child, or sibling; the employee's child's spouse; grandparents or grandchildren; or any relative domiciled in the employee's household. Special consideration will also be given to any other person whose association with the employee was similar to any of the above relationships.

**Voting** Employees are encouraged to exercise their individual right to vote. Employees assigned to work during the time that polls are open on election day may be allowed to take a maximum of one (1) hour to cast their ballot in local, state, or national level elections. No employee shall be given or refused employment or suspended or discharged because of his/her vote or failure to vote in any primary or election.

**Vaccinations** The City will provide one (1) hour of paid leave for recommended or mandatory vaccinations per occurrence.

### **311 Jury Duty**

*Effective Date: 8/17/2021*

*Revision Date:*

The City encourages employees to fulfill their civic responsibilities by serving jury duty when required. Employees in an eligible classification may request up to 2 weeks of paid jury duty leave over any 1-year period but shall forfeit to the City any jury duty compensation received from a court. Jury duty pay will be calculated on the employee's base pay rate times the number of hours

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the employee would otherwise have worked on the day of absence. Employee classifications that qualify for paid jury duty leave are:

- Regular full-time employees
- Introductory employees

If employees are required to serve jury duty beyond the period of paid jury duty leave, they may use any available paid time off (for example, vacation benefits) or may request an unpaid jury duty leave of absence.

Employees must show the jury duty summons to their supervisor as soon as possible so that the supervisor may make arrangements to accommodate their absence. Of course, employees are expected to return for work whenever the court schedule permits.

Either the City or the employee may request an excuse from jury duty if, in the City's judgment, the employee's absence would create serious operational difficulties.

The City will continue to provide health insurance benefits for the full term of the jury duty absence. Vacation, sick leave, and holiday benefits will continue to accrue during unpaid jury duty leave.

### **313 Benefits Continuation (COBRA)**

*Effective Date: 8/17/2021*

*Revision Date:*

The federal Consolidated Omnibus Budget Reconciliation Act (COBRA) gives employees and their qualified beneficiaries the opportunity to continue health insurance coverage, for up to 36-months or according to current federal law, under the City's health plan when a "qualifying event" would normally result in the loss of eligibility. Some common qualifying events are resignation, termination of employment, or death of an employee; a reduction in an employee's hours or a leave of absence; an employee's divorce or legal separation; and a dependent child no longer meeting eligibility requirements.

Under COBRA, the employee or beneficiary pays the full cost of coverage at the City's group rates and may be assessed an administration fee. The City health insurance carrier provides each eligible employee with a written notice describing rights granted under COBRA when the employee becomes eligible for coverage under the City's health insurance plan. The notice contains important information about the employee's rights and obligations.

Continuation is not available to persons who are covered under another group plan or are eligible for Medicare

Individuals electing continuation must pay the entire premium amount in advance by the first day of the coverage month.



### **316 Health and Other Insurance**

*Effective Date: 8/17/2021*

*Revision Date:*

The City's health insurance plan provides employees and their dependents access to medical, dental, and vision care insurance benefits. The City also provides short-term disability coverage and AirMed Emergency Transport Insurance for employees. Employees in the following employment classifications are eligible to participate in the health and other insurance plan:

- Regular full-time employees
- Probationary employees

Eligible employees may participate in the health insurance plan subject to all terms and conditions of the agreement between the City and the insurance carrier. Supplemental dental and vision care insurance benefits may be elected with some or all costs to be paid by the employee.

A change in employment classification that would result in loss of eligibility to participate in the health insurance plan may qualify an employee for benefits continuation under the Consolidated Omnibus Budget Reconciliation Act (COBRA). Refer to the Benefits Continuation (COBRA) Policy for more information.

Details of the health insurance plan are described in the Summary Plan Description (SPD). An SPD and information on cost of coverage for health insurance and other supplemental insurance available will be provided in advance of enrollment to eligible employees. Contact the Human Resources Office for more information about insurance benefits.

The City offers employees the opportunity to decline coverage or request cancellation of medical health insurance coverage through an Insurance Buy Out Program. The employee must provide proof of insurance coverage through another provider and sign a statement relieving the City of Blue Ridge from any liability with regard to these insurance provisions. This election is completely voluntary and, in exchange for medical insurance coverage, the employee will receive \$200 of taxable compensation per month. The employee will be allowed to re-enroll in the City's health insurance plan during the open enrollment period each year or if a qualifying event according to the insurance provider occurs.

### **317 Life Insurance**

*Effective Date: 8/17/2021*

*Revision Date:*

Life insurance offers you and your family important financial protection. The City provides a basic life insurance plan for eligible employees and dependents. Additional supplemental and/or dependent life insurance coverage may also be purchased.

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Employees in the following employment classifications are eligible to participate in the life insurance plan:

- Regular full-time employees
- Probationary employees

Eligible employees may participate in the life insurance plan subject to all terms and conditions of the agreement between the City and the insurance carrier.

Details of the basic life insurance plan including benefit amounts are described in the Summary Plan Description provided to eligible employees. Contact the Human Resources Office for more information about life insurance benefits.

### **320 Retirement Plans**

*Effective Date: 6/25/2018*

*Revision Date:*

The City has established a pension plan and a 457(b) plan to provide employees the potential for future financial security for retirement.

Eligibility and benefits are governed by the plan documents and subject to change. Generally, as of the date of publication of this policy, employees who regularly work more than 20 hours per week are eligible for the pension plan administered by the Georgia Municipal Association through the Georgia Municipal Employee Benefit System (GMEBS). The plan is funded completely with employer contributions and employees vest after 10 years of service. The plan provides retirement and disability benefits, annual cost of living adjustments, and death benefits to plan members and beneficiaries.

Benefits are provided by the Plan whereby retirees receive 1.5% multiplied by the average of the five highest years of regular earnings multiplied by the total credited years of service. Members may retire at 65 years of age with 5 years of service or 55 years of age with 25 years of service. Early retirement is possible at age 55 with 10 years of service.

Employees may elect to defer compensation to the 457(b) plan pre-tax earnings up to the allowable IRS limits. The funds are invested and administered by VALIC and the employee directs such investments. The plan is portable and eligible for rollover.

Contact the Human Resources Office for more information about the plans.

### **321 Year End Incentive Payment**

*Effective Date: 8/17/2021*

*Revision Date:*

Regular full-time employees shall receive a Year End Incentive Payment, or Christmas bonus, in an amount to be set in the annual budget by the City Council. ~~Introductory-Probationary~~ employees and part-time employees averaging 20 hours or more weekly shall receive a Christmas bonus in an amount equal to one half of the amount provided to regular full-time employees. The bonus shall be a minimum of \$200 with an additional \$50 per each five years of service up to a maximum total bonus of \$500.

### **322 Uniforms**

*Effective Date: 8/17/2021*

*Revision Date:*

The City of Blue Ridge provides uniforms to all employees as applicable to their department. The maintenance/~~plant~~ workers, including public works, parks and distribution but not limited to the street, water, sewer, and park departments are provided semi-annually with shirts and jackets uniforms with the City logo, ~~and receive \$200 annually for the purchase of pants~~. Boots can be purchased or reimbursed (with a receipt) up to \$200 annually as determined by the department supervisor. ~~All lifeguards are provided with bathing suits, approved and purchased directly by the City.~~ The police department is supplied with all uniforms and accessories deemed necessary by the Police Chief and purchased directly by the City. The City Hall ~~department personnel is are~~ provided with a shirts and cardigan/jackets/vests with the City logo semi-annually and is provided a pants and shoe allowance of \$100 per person annually. City Hall personnel who are not required to wear uniforms are provided a clothing allowance of \$150 annually. uniform allowance of \$200 per person annually, to include any applicable embroidery. The value of all items not embroidered or printed with the City logo and specific for City use will be added to the employee's W-2. Uniforms allowances will be paid upon completion of the introductory period.

### **323 Water Bonus**

*Effective Date: 8/17/2021*

*Revision Date:*

To promote water loss control and maintain the City water infrastructure, the City has a bonus program based on findings and decreases in the overall water loss. Employees who find leaks will be eligible to receive \$200. Employees will be required to submit written documentation and pictures evidencing their involvement in finding water loss to receive the bonus. The leak must be verified by the Utilities Director. This does not include leaks found while working with a leak detection company or specific leaks reported by other individuals. To promote water loss control and maintain the City, the City has a bonus program based on decreases in the overall water

loss. For every million gallons that water loss is below an amount annually determined by the Mayor and Utilities Supervisor, water, street and water plant department employees will receive \$50. Employees who do not regularly work in the water department will be required to submit written documentation evidencing their involvement in any water loss activities to receive the bonus.

### **324 Years of Service Award**

*Effective Date: 8/17/2021*

*Revision Date:*

The City wishes to recognize its employees for their loyalty. Accordingly, for major milestone anniversaries, which are every 10<sup>th</sup> anniversary, employees may receive a non-monetary award.

### **401 Timekeeping**

*Effective Date: 8/17/2021*

*Revision Date:*

Accurately recording time worked is the responsibility of every nonexempt employee. Federal and state laws require the City to keep an accurate record of time worked in order to calculate employee pay and benefits. Time worked is all the time actually spent on the job performing assigned duties.

Nonexempt employees should accurately record the time they begin and end their work, as well as the beginning and ending time of each meal period. They should also record the beginning and ending time of any split shift or departure from work for personal reasons. Overtime work must always be approved ahead of time. Failure to obtain prior approval for overtime may result in discipline, up to and including termination.

Altering, falsifying, tampering with time records, or recording time on another employee's time record may result in ~~disciplinarily~~ disciplinary action, up to and including termination of employment.

Nonexempt employees should report to work no more than 6 minutes prior to their scheduled starting time nor stay more than 6 minutes after their scheduled stop time without expressed, authorization from their supervisor if it will cause overtime. Unauthorized time due to an improper clock in or clock out is subject to correction.



### **403 Paydays**

*Effective Date: 8/17/2021*

*Revision Date:*

All employees are paid biweekly on every other Thursday. Council members are paid monthly by the 14th day of the month. Each paycheck will include earnings for all work performed through the end of the previous payroll period. The payroll period for biweekly employees begins on Saturday and all timecard information must be submitted by Monday following the end of the two-week period.

In the event that a regularly scheduled payday falls on a day off such as a weekend or holiday, employees will receive pay on the last day of work before the regularly scheduled payday.

Employees may have their pay directly deposited into their bank accounts by providing advance written authorization to the City. Employees will receive an itemized statement of wages when the City makes direct deposits.

### **405 Employment Termination**

*Effective Date: 8/17/2021*

*Revision Date:*

Termination of employment is an inevitable part of personnel activity within any organization, and many of the reasons for termination are routine. Below are examples of some of the most common circumstances under which employment is terminated:

- Resignation - voluntary employment termination initiated by an employee.
- Discharge - involuntary employment termination initiated by the organization.
- Layoff – involuntary employment termination initiated by the organization for non-disciplinary reasons.
- Retirement – voluntary employment termination initiated by the employee meeting age, length of service, and any other criteria for retirement from the organization.

Since employment with the City is based on mutual consent, both the employee and the City have the right to terminate employment at will, with or without cause, at any time. All City property, including but not limited to cell phone, gasoline or other credit cards, uniforms, keys and equipment, should be turned in prior to the employee's final paycheck.

Employee benefits will be affected by employment termination in the following manner. All accrued vacation benefits that are due and payable at termination will be paid. Sick/personal leave is not payable upon termination. Some benefits may be continued at the employee's expense if the employee so chooses. The employee will be notified of the benefits that may be

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continued and of the terms, conditions, and limitations of such continuance.

#### **408 Pay and Time Advances**

*Effective Date: 8/17/2021*

*Revision Date:*

The City does not provide pay or time advances on unearned wages or paid leave to employees.

#### **410 Pay Deductions and Setoffs**

*Effective Date: 8/17/2021*

*Revision Date:*

The law requires that the City make certain deductions from every employee's compensation. Among these are applicable federal, state, and local income taxes. The City also must deduct Social Security taxes on each employee's earnings up to a specified limit that is called the Social Security "wage base". The City matches the amount of Social Security taxes paid by each employee.

The City offers programs and benefits beyond those required by law. Eligible employees may voluntarily authorize deductions from their paychecks to cover the costs of participation in these programs.

Any changes to deduction amounts must be authorized in writing and filed in the employee's personnel file.

If you have questions concerning why deductions were made from your paycheck or how they were calculated, the Human Resources Office can assist in having your questions answered.

#### **501 Safety**

*Effective Date: 8/17/2021*

*Revision Date:*

To assist in providing a safe and healthful work environment for employees, customers, and visitors, the City has established a workplace safety program. This program is a top priority for the City. The Safety Coordinator has responsibility for implementing, administering, monitoring, and evaluating the safety program. Its success depends on the alertness and personal commitment of all.

The City provides information to employees about workplace safety and health issues through regular internal communication channels such as supervisor-employee meetings, bulletin board postings, memos, or other written communications. Each supervisor is responsible and will be held accountable for the loss control performance within her/her department. Supervisors are expected to complement the effort of the Safety Coordinator to reduce accidents and provide for the safety

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of the public. These loss control responsibilities are continuous and equal in importance with all other operational considerations.

Employees and supervisors should receive periodic workplace safety training, at least quarterly. The training covers potential safety and health hazards and safe work practices and procedures to eliminate or minimize hazards. The Safety Coordinator will be responsible for working with supervisors to ensure meetings are taking place. An attendance sheet should be turned in to the Safety Coordinator after each meeting/training. The Safety Coordinator is required to perform at least two safety self-inspections per year, a minimum of every 6 months. The safety committee, composed of representatives from throughout the organization, has been established to help monitor the City's safety program and to facilitate effective communication between employees and management about workplace safety and health issues.

Each employee is expected to obey safety rules and to exercise caution in all work activities. Employees must immediately report any unsafe condition to the appropriate supervisor. Employees who violate safety standards, who cause hazardous or dangerous situations, or who fail to report or, where appropriate, remedy such situations, may be subject to disciplinary action, up to and including termination of employment.

### **502 Work Schedules**

*Effective Date: 8/17/2021*

*Revision Date:*

Work schedules for employees vary throughout our organization. Supervisors will advise employees of their individual work schedules. Staffing needs and operational demands may necessitate variations in starting and ending times, as well as variations in the total hours that may be scheduled each day and week.

Flexible scheduling is available in some cases to allow employees to vary their schedules. Flextime may be possible if a mutually workable schedule can be negotiated with the supervisor involved. However, such issues as staffing needs, the employee's performance, and the nature of the job will be considered before approval of flextime. Employees should consult their supervisor to request participation in the flextime program.

### **503 Telecommuting**

*Effective Date:*

*Revision Date:*

It is vital to the smooth operation of the City that its employees show up to work in person. That being said, the City recognizes that there are times when an employee may desire to work from home. For positions where it is feasible to perform the work remotely, the City will allow occasional teleworking.



~~Temporary and introductory employees are not eligible for teleworking. Additionally, E~~employees who have been disciplined or received a less than satisfactory evaluation within the past 6 months are not eligible.

To telework, you must:

- Obtain written clearance from your direct supervisor and the Human Resources Department that your job duties may be performed remotely.
- Submit a written request to telecommute to your direct supervisor and the Human Resources Department providing the dates on which you want to telework.

Requests to telecommute will be approved based on the needs of the City. Failure to obtain written prior approval for telework will result in discipline up to and including termination.

Employees must continue to abide by the City's policies and procedures while telecommuting. Employees are expected to accurately record all working time while telecommuting.

This policy does not apply to requests for reasonable accommodation for a disability, which are handled separately.

### **505 Smoking**

*Effective Date: 8/17/2021*

*Revision Date:*

In keeping with the City's intent to provide a safe and healthful work environment, smoking is prohibited in the heated and finished space of any City building. Open-air bays, shelters, and the grounds around City buildings may be used as smoking areas at the discretion of the supervisor. The use of tobacco or nicotine products is not permitted in City vehicles.

This policy applies equally to all employees, customers, and visitors.

### **507 Overtime**

*Effective Date: 8/17/2021*

*Revision Date:*

When operating requirements or other needs cannot be met during regular working hours, employees may be scheduled to work overtime hours. When possible, advance notification of these mandatory assignments will be provided. All overtime work must receive the supervisor's authorization. Overtime assignments will be distributed as equitably as practical to all employees qualified to perform the required work.

Overtime compensation is paid to all nonexempt employees at the rate of time and one-half, or awarded an equivalent of compensatory time, for all hours worked in excess of forty (40) hours in a 7-day work period. This is in accordance with federal and state wage and hour restrictions and includes the allowed exception of police department sworn officers. Compensatory time earned shall be limited to sixty hours a calendar year. Police personnel will receive overtime pay for all hours actually worked in excess of 84 hours during a 14-day work period, in accordance with Section 207(k) of the Fair Labor Standards Act. Any compensatory time awarded or taken must be approved ahead of time by the employee's supervisor.

Overtime pay is based on actual hours physically worked and, for some employees, will include paid holiday leave. Time off on sick/personal and vacation leave will not be considered hours worked for purposes of performing overtime calculations. Holiday leave will be included as time worked for overtime calculations of all employees, except for those who must regularly work scheduled holidays, ~~such as water plant, sewer plant~~ and police employees.

Salaried (exempt) employees are not eligible for overtime, but may be given some administrative leave by the Mayor/City Administrator in rare instances where they have put in an excessive number of hours ~~due to an unusual occurrence.~~

Employees who work overtime without receiving prior authorization from the supervisor may be subject to disciplinary action.

### **509 On Call**

*Effective Date: 4/1/2018*

*Revision Date: 1/9/2018*

Employees performing standby or on-call duty are required to carry their City cell phone and are required to stay within a geographical range of 30 miles to assure a specific response time.

On-call duty is rotated weekly by the qualified employees in the ~~water and street maintenance~~ departments designated by the Mayor/City Administrator beginning each Friday at 5:00 pm.

Employees performing this duty will be paid for any hours worked beginning with a 3-hour minimum at their regular rate of pay for time worked less than 40 hours in the regular work week and at the rate of time and one half for hours worked in excess of 40 hours in the regular work week. The 3-hour minimum is sufficient for all work within each 3-hour period, meaning multiple calls within a 3-hour period do not each accrue a 3 hour minimum. The 3-hour minimum shall not overlap with any regularly scheduled work hours. Employees will receive time for call-ins up to the regularly scheduled hours.

Employees performing on-call duty will receive additional pay of \$75 upon satisfactory completion of a week of on-call duty. This includes submission of an on-call report and efficient response time of 30 minutes or less. An efficient response is at least a return call to the customer or other individual who calls and leaves a message on the on-call phone. Failure to do so will forfeit on call pay.

After-hours call-in response to mutual aid will follow our mutual aid policy.

### **510 Emergency Closings**

*Effective Date: 8/17/2021*

*Revision Date:*

At times, emergencies such as severe weather, fires, power failures, or earthquakes, can disrupt company operations and may require the closing of a work facility.

When the decision to close is made AFTER the workday has begun, employees will receive official notification from their immediate supervisor. In these situations, time off from scheduled work will be unpaid for nonexempt employees if closing four (4) hours or less. However, with supervisory approval, employees may use available paid leave time. When the decision to close is made BEFORE the workday has begun or operations will be closed in excess of four (4) hours, time off from scheduled work will be paid.

In cases where an emergency closing is not authorized, employees who fail to report for work will not be paid for the time off. Employees may request available paid leave time.

Employees in essential operations may be asked to work on a day when operations are officially closed. In these circumstances, employees who work will receive regular pay plus a \$50 hazard pay bonus.

Essential employees will be determined by the Mayor or applicable supervisor depending on the situation and non-essential employees will not be eligible for hazard pay, even if they choose to report or remain at work. Weekend hazard pay will depend on if essential employees, who are not regularly scheduled to work, are called in for hazardous road conditions. Hazard pay will include employees who have to travel and clock in during the 24- hour day that essential employees are required to be present.



## **512 Business Travel Expenses**

*Effective Date: 8/17/2021*

*Revision Date:*

The City will ~~reimburse~~ provide a per diem check to employees for reasonable business travel expenses incurred while on assignments away from the normal work location. All business travel must be approved in advance by the immediate supervisor. Employees whose travel plans have been approved are responsible for making their own travel arrangements.

When approved, the actual costs of travel, meals, lodging, and other expenses directly related to accomplishing business travel objectives will be reimbursed by the City. Employees are expected to limit expenses to reasonable amounts.

Expenses that generally will be reimbursed include the following:

- Airfare or train fare for travel in coach or economy class or the lowest available fare.
- Car rental fees, only for compact or mid-sized cars.
- Fares for shuttle or airport bus service, where available; costs of public transportation for other ground travel.
- Taxi fares, only when there is no less expensive alternative.
- Mileage costs for use of personal cars, only when less expensive transportation is not available.
- Cost of standard accommodations in low to mid-priced hotels, motels, or similar lodgings.
- Meals according to the following rates: ~~set by the purchasing policy.~~
  - Breakfast - \$15
  - Lunch - \$25
  - Dinner - \$30

Employees who are involved in an accident while traveling on business must promptly report the incident to their immediate supervisor. Vehicles owned, leased, or rented by the City may not be used for personal use without prior approval.

With prior approval, employees on business travel may be accompanied by a family member or friend, when the presence of a companion will not interfere with successful completion of business objectives. Generally, employees are also permitted to combine personal travel with business travel, as long as time away from work is approved. Additional expenses arising from such nonbusiness travel are the responsibility of the employee.

When travel is completed, employees should submit completed travel expense reports within 30 days. Reports should be accompanied by receipts for all individual expenses.

~~Employees should contact their supervisor or refer to the purchasing policy for guidance and assistance on procedures related to travel arrangements, travel advances, expense reports, reimbursement for specific expenses, or any other business travel issues.~~

Abuse of this business travel expenses policy, including falsifying expense reports to reflect costs not incurred by the employee, can be grounds for disciplinary action, up to and including termination of employment.

## **516 Computer and Email Usage**

*Effective Date: 8/17/2021*

*Revision Date:*

Computers, computer files, the email system, and software furnished to employees are the City property intended for business use. Employees should not use a password, access a file, or retrieve any stored communication without authorization. To ensure compliance with this policy, computer and email usage may be monitored.

The City strives to maintain a workplace free of harassment and sensitive to the diversity of its employees. Therefore, the City prohibits the use of computers and the email system in ways that are disruptive, offensive to others, or harmful to morale.

For example, the display or transmission of sexually explicit images, messages, and cartoons is not allowed. Other such misuse includes, but is not limited to, ethnic slurs, racial comments, off-color jokes, or anything that may be construed as harassment or showing disrespect for others.

The City purchases and licenses the use of various computer software for business purposes and does not own the copyright to this software or its related documentation. Unless authorized by the software developer, the City does not have the right to reproduce such software for use on more than one computer.

Employees may only use software on local area networks or on multiple machines according to the software license agreement. The City prohibits the illegal duplication of software and its related documentation.

Employees should notify their immediate supervisor, the Human Resources Office or any member of management upon learning of violations of this policy. Employees who violate this policy will be subject to disciplinary action, up to and including termination of employment.



**517 Internet Usage**

*Effective Date: 8/17/2021*

*Revision Date:*

Internet access to global electronic information resources on the World Wide Web is provided by the City to assist employees in obtaining work-related data and technology. The following guidelines have been established to help ensure responsible and productive Internet usage. While Internet usage is intended for job-related activities, incidental and occasional brief personal use is permitted within reasonable limits.

All Internet data that is composed, transmitted, or received via our computer communications systems is considered to be part of the official records of the City and, as such, is subject to disclosure to law enforcement or other third parties. Consequently, employees should always ensure that the business information contained in Internet email messages and other transmissions is accurate, appropriate, ethical, and lawful.

The equipment, services, and technology provided to access the Internet remain at all times the property of the City. As such, the City reserves the right to monitor Internet traffic, and retrieve and read any data composed, sent, or received through our online connections and stored in our computer systems.

Data that is composed, transmitted, accessed, or received via the Internet must not contain content that could be considered discriminatory, offensive, obscene, threatening, harassing, intimidating, or disruptive to any employee or other person. Examples of unacceptable content may include, but are not limited to, sexual comments or images, racial slurs, gender-specific comments, or any other comments or images that could reasonably offend someone on the basis of race, age, sex, gender identity, religious or political beliefs, national origin, disability, sexual orientation, or any other characteristic protected by law.

The unauthorized use, installation, copying, or distribution of copyrighted, trademarked, or patented material on the Internet is expressly prohibited. As a general rule, if an employee did not create material, does not own the rights to it, or has not gotten authorization for its use, it should not be put on the Internet. Employees are also responsible for ensuring that the person sending any material over the Internet has the appropriate distribution rights.

Internet users should take the necessary anti-virus precautions before downloading or copying any file from the Internet. All downloaded files are to be checked for viruses; all compressed files are to be checked before and after decompression.

Abuse of the Internet access provided by the City in violation of law or the City policies will result in disciplinary action, up to and including termination of employment. Employees may also be held personally liable for any violations of this policy. The following behaviors are examples of previously stated or additional actions and activities that are prohibited and can result in disciplinary action:

- Sending or posting discriminatory, harassing, or threatening messages or images
- Using the organization's time and resources for personal gain
- Stealing, using, or disclosing someone else's code or password without authorization
- Copying, pirating, or downloading software and electronic files without permission
- Sending or posting confidential material, trade secrets, or proprietary information outside of the organization
- Violating copyright law
- Failing to observe licensing agreements
- Sending or posting messages or material that could damage the organization's image or reputation
- Participating in the viewing or exchange of pornography or obscene materials
- Sending or posting messages that defame or slander other individuals
- Attempting to break into the computer system of another organization or person
- Sending or posting chain letters, solicitations, or advertisements not related to business purposes or activities
- Using the Internet for political causes or activities, religious activities, or any sort of gambling
- Jeopardizing the security of the organization's electronic communications systems
- Passing off personal views as representing those of the organization
- Engaging in any other illegal activities

This list is illustrative and not exhaustive.

## **519 Social Media**

*Effective Date: 8/17/2021*

*Revision Date:*

This policy is not intended to prohibit any employee's personal expression in general or through social media activity in particular; however, because such activity can adversely affect the efficiency and effectiveness of City operations, as well as undermine public trust and confidence, a certain amount of regulation is necessary and appropriate. This policy therefore attempts to strike a reasonable balance between the employees' interest in engaging in social media activity and the City's interest in preventing unnecessary disruption to or interference with its operations and relationship to the public it serves, or purposes of this policy, the term "social media" is defined as the online technologies through which employees and other individuals engage in "social media activity." Online social media technologies covered by this policy also include, but are not limited

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to, such applications as web logs/blogs, video logs/blogs, message boards, podcasts, and wikis.

This policy applies to all employees of the City without regard to whether their social media activity is conducted in or outside the workplace, while on or off-duty, or anonymously or through the use of pseudonyms. It also applies without regard to job title, position or rank; however, with the approval of the City Council, the Police Department and any other city department having special or unique concerns pertaining to its employees' social media activity may adopt and implement more restrictive SOP's or other internal rules narrowly designed to address such concerns.

All employees of the City should remain mindful that, as public servants, they are generally held to higher standards than the general public with regard to their on-duty and off-duty conduct, professionalism, and ethics. As a result, certain social media activity that may be tolerated or even acceptable in the private sector may nevertheless constitute a violation of this policy.

Each employee of the City who engages in social media activity must take personal responsibility for ensuring that such activity is consistent with all policies of the City, including, but not limited to, those pertaining to making false or misleading statements, promoting or endorsing violence or illegal activity, promoting or endorsing the abuse of alcohol or drugs, disparaging individuals or groups based on race, ethnicity, national origin, gender, sexual orientation, gender identity, religion, disability, or other characteristics protected by law, or otherwise engaging in conduct unbecoming an employee of the City, bringing discredit to the City, or interfering with or detrimental to the mission or function of the City.

Employees must refrain from engaging in any social media activity which disqualifies them from performing, or in any way reasonably calls into question their ability to objectively perform, any essential function of their jobs. Examples of such functions include, but are not limited to, testifying, making hiring or promotion decisions or recommendations, conducting performance evaluations, and determining eligibility for City programs.

Employees are strictly prohibited from directly or indirectly representing themselves to be speaking on behalf of the City on personal social media pages.

The City reserves the right to require any employee to remove immediately any posted or uploaded text, audio recordings, video recordings, photographs/images, etc. (even if previously approved) if such posted material constitutes a violation of this policy or other City policies.

City employees should be aware that social media activity is not secure or private, even if active steps are taken to restrict access. For this reason, and consistent with the City's policies, employees should have no expectation of privacy in any social media activity conducted in the workplace and/or on-duty or in any social media activity which otherwise directly or indirectly relates to or affects the City, any of its departments, or its employees.

Employees engaging in social media activity in violation of this policy will be held accountable, and corrective and/or disciplinary action, up to and including termination of employment, may be taken in accordance with the City's disciplinary policies procedures.

Nothing in this policy is intended to or will be applied manner that violates any employee's constitutional rights, including rights to freedom of speech, expression, and association, or federal or state rights to engage in any statutorily protected activity.

**526 WIRELESS COMMUNICATIONS Cell Phone Usage**

*Effective Date:* 8/12/17/2021/2022

*Revision Dale:*

~~The City's Wireless Communications policy is contained in the ADMINISTRATIVE DIRECTIVES AND PROCEDURES issued in December of 2022. The City provides cellular telephones to some employees as a business tool. They are provided to assist employees in communicating with management and other employees, their customers, associates, and others with whom they may conduct business. City cell phones are intended for business-related calls only and personal calls are not permitted. Cell phone invoices may be regularly monitored.~~

~~Employees may have access to a cell phone while in their cars and should remember that their primary responsibility is driving safely and obeying the rules of the road. Employees are prohibited from using cell phones to conduct business while driving and should safely pull off the road and come to a complete stop before dialing or talking on the phone.~~

~~As a representative of the City, City cell phone users are reminded that the regular business etiquette employed when speaking from office phones or in meetings applies to conversations conducted over a City cell phone.~~

~~City cell phones remain the property of the City. Employees shall have no expectation of privacy with respect to the contents of City cell phones or phone records for City cell phones.~~



### **530 Employee Breaks and Meal Periods for Office Personnel**

*Effective Date: 8/2022*

*Revision Date:*

Employees scheduled to work an eight (8) hour shift are allowed one ten (10) minute break during the first half of the shift, and another ten (10) minute break during the second half of the shift. Breaks should only be taken if and when approved by direct supervisor and only if workflow allows; there is no right to a break. Breaks (other than meal breaks\periods during which an employee is fully relieved from duty) are paid, however, an employee that does not take breaks will not receive additional pay. Employees may not report to work late, or leave early, in lieu of taking breaks. Breaks should not be utilized to extend meal periods. If a break is missed during the first or second half of a shift, it does not roll over to allow for more time during your second break, does not entitle the employee to an additional break, nor does it roll over to the next day. These paid breaks are counted towards work hours in determining overtime pay; however, if an employee extends his or her break without authorization, such extension may be deducted from the employee's hours worked for the day.

All employee breaks should be coordinated within the department to ensure proper continuation of City services. Employees may not leave the premises of City Hall during break periods. Examples of permissible uses of breaks include attending to personal phone calls or personal business or getting something to eat or drink.

Employees who are not required to work through their meal break must take their entire non-compensated meal break away from their work area.

Breaks are considered to be a privilege and not a right. Abuse of breaks may result in termination of the break period allowance.

### **601 Family and Medical Leave**

*Effective Date: 8/17/2021*

*Revision Date:*

The City offers unpaid leave consistent with the requirements of the federal Family and Medical Leave Act (FMLA). Employees eligible for FMLA leave may take leave for the following reasons:

- The birth of a child and to care for the newborn child;
- Placement of a child into adoptive or foster care with the employee;
- Care for a spouse, child, or parent who has a serious health condition;
- Care for the employee's own serious health condition;
- Qualifying emergencies arising out of a spouse's, child's, or parent's active duty or call to active duty as a member of the military reserves or National Guard ("Emergency Military Leave"); or
- Care for a spouse, child, parent, or next of kin (nearest blood relative) who is: (a) an Armed Forces member (including the military reserves and National Guard) undergoing medical treatment, recuperation, therapy, or is otherwise in an outpatient status, or is otherwise on the temporary disability retired list, due to a serious injury or illness incurred or aggravated in the line of duty; or (b) a person who, during the five (5) years prior to the treatment necessitating the leave, served in the active military, Naval, or Air Service, and who was



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discharged or released under conditions other than dishonorable (a "veteran" as defined by the Department of Veterans Affairs) and who has a serious injury or illness incurred or aggravated in the line of duty while on active duty that arose before or after the member became a veteran ("Military Caregiver Leave").

For purposes of this policy, a serious health condition means an illness, injury, impairment or physical or mental condition or disability that involves inpatient care in a hospital, hospice, or residential medical care facility; continuing treatment by a health care provider; and temporary disabilities associated with pregnancy, childbirth, and related medical conditions.

To be eligible for family and medical leave under the Family Medical Leave Act (FMLA), an employee must have been employed by the employer for at least 12 months and worked at least 1,250 hours during the 12-month period immediately preceding the commencement of the leave.

Eligible employees should make requests for family and medical leave to their supervisors at least 30 days in advance of foreseeable events and as soon as possible for unforeseeable events.

Employees requesting family or medical leave related to their own serious health condition or that of a child, spouse, or parent may be required to submit a health provider's statement verifying the need for a family leave to provide care, its beginning and expected ending dates, and the estimated time required.

Any changes in this information should be promptly reported to the City. A serious health condition includes treatment for a serious, chronic health condition which, if left untreated, would likely result in an absence from work of more than ten (10) days (for example, heart attacks, cancer, back conditions requiring therapy or surgery, strokes, appendicitis, pneumonia, emphysema, pregnancy, and childbirth).

Voluntary or cosmetic treatments which are not medically necessary are not considered a serious health condition unless inpatient hospital care is required.

Employees returning from medical leave must submit a health care provider's verification of their fitness to return to work.

Eligible employees are normally granted medical leave for the period of the serious medical condition, up to a maximum of 12 weeks within any 12-month period. Eligible employees may request up to a maximum of 12 weeks of family leave within any 12-month period. For purposes of determining the 12-month period, the City uses a "rolling" 12-month period measured forward from the first date an employee uses leave. Any combination of medical leave and family leave may not exceed this maximum limit. If the initial period of approved absence proves insufficient, consideration will be given to a request for an extension.

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The maximum amount of FMLA Leave for an employee wishing to take Military Caregiver Leave will be a combined leave total of twenty-six (26) workweeks in a single 12-month period. If both spouses work for the Company and are eligible for FMLA Leave, the spouses will be limited to a total of 26 workweeks off between the two of them when the leave is for Military Caregiver Leave or a combination of Military Caregiver Leave with another leave category.

Under certain conditions, employees may take the twelve (12) weeks of family leave in non-consecutive days or hours. With approval of the Supervisor, an employee may work a reduced schedule when leave is taken as a result of the birth, adoption, or placement for foster care of a child. Leave to care for a seriously ill child, spouse or parent can be taken whenever medically necessary. Only the actual leave time taken will be charged against the twelve weeks of allowable leave. Married employee couples may be restricted to a combined total of 12 weeks leave within a 12-month period for childbirth, adoption, or placement of a foster child; or to care for a family member with a serious health condition.

Employees are permitted, but not required, to use any available paid leave during a family or medical leave of absence, such as vacation and/or personal leave.

Employees who sustain work-related injuries are eligible for a medical leave of absence for the period of disability in accordance with all applicable laws covering occupational disabilities.

Subject to the terms, conditions, and limitations of the applicable plans, the City will continue to provide health insurance benefits for the full period of the approved family or medical leave provided the employee continues to make any required premium contribution. The employee's required contribution will be taken from his/her paycheck as long as the employee is on paid leave. During periods of unpaid leave, the employee must make required payments before the beginning of the coverage period.

Benefit accruals, such as vacation and sick leave, and holiday benefits, will be suspended during the approved family or medical leave period for any unpaid time (e.g., in which employee does not use personal or vacation leave) and will resume upon return to active employment.

When a family or medical leave ends, the employee will be reinstated to the same position, if it is available, or to an equivalent position for which the employee is qualified.

If an employee fails to return to work on the agreed upon return date, the City will assume that the employee has resigned.

### **605 Military Leave**

*Effective Date: 8/17/2021*

*Revision Date:*

A military leave of absence will be granted to employees who are absent from work because of service in the U.S. uniformed services in accordance with the Uniformed Services Employment and Reemployment Rights Act (USERRA). Advance notice of military service is required, unless military necessity prevents such notice, or it is otherwise impossible or unreasonable.

Employees will continue to receive full pay for up to 30 days of military leave each fiscal year. Employees may use any available paid time off for the absence.

Continuation of health insurance benefits is available as required by USERRA based on the length of the leave and subject to the terms, conditions and limitations of the applicable plans for which the employee is otherwise eligible.

Vacation, sick leave, and holiday benefits will continue to accrue during a military leave of absence.

Employees on military leave for up to 30 days are required to return to work for the first regularly scheduled shift after the end of service, allowing reasonable travel time. Employees on longer military leave must apply for reinstatement in accordance with USERRA and all applicable state laws.

Employees returning from military leave will be placed in the position they would have attained had they remained continuously employed or a comparable one depending on the length of military service in accordance with USERRA. They will be treated as though they were continuously employed for purposes of determining benefits based on length of service.

Contact the Human Resources Office for more information or questions about military leave.

### **606 Administrative Leave**

*Effective Date: 8/17/2021*

*Revision Date:*

The City Administrator may place an employee in a non-disciplinary administrative leave status without loss of pay, benefits, or seniority when it is necessary to conduct a fact-finding investigation. This action is clearly non-prejudicial in nature and will imply neither guilt nor innocence. Non-disciplinary administrative leave shall not be charged to vacation, personal, or other leave categories.

If the employee is placed in administrative leave status due to unfavorable or harmful working conditions, he/she will be returned to work when those conditions are alleviated. If the employee is placed in administrative leave status due to allegations of possible wrongdoing, a fact-finding investigation will be held. If cleared of all charges, the employee will be returned to work immediately. If not cleared of all charges, the appropriate disciplinary action

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will be initiated following the City's disciplinary action policy.

### **607 Pregnancy-Related Absences**

*Effective Date: 8/17/2021*

*Revision Date:*

The City will not discriminate against any employee who requests an excused absence for medical disabilities associated with pregnancy. Such leave requests will be evaluated according to the medical leave policy provisions outlined in this handbook and all applicable federal and state laws.

Requests for time off associated with pregnancy and/or childbirth, such as bonding and child care, not related to medical disabilities for those conditions will be considered in the same manner as other requests for unpaid family or personal leave.

### **701 Employee Conduct and Work Rules**

*Effective Date: 8/17/2021*

*Revision Date:*

To ensure orderly operations and provide the best possible work environment, the City expects employees to follow rules of conduct that will protect the interests and safety of all employees and the Organization.

It is not possible to list all the forms of behavior that are considered unacceptable in the workplace. The following are examples of infractions of rules of conduct that may result in disciplinary action, up to and including termination of employment:

- Theft or inappropriate removal or possession of property
- Falsification of timekeeping records
- Working under the influence of alcohol or illegal drugs
- Possession, distribution, sale, transfer, or use of alcohol or illegal drugs in the workplace, while on duty, or while operating employer-owned vehicles or equipment
- Fighting or threatening violence in the workplace
- Negligence or improper conduct leading to damage of employer-owned or customer-owned property
- Insubordination or other disrespectful conduct
- Violation of safety or health rules
- Sexual or other unlawful or unwelcome harassment
- Possession of dangerous or unauthorized materials in the workplace
- Excessive absenteeism or any absence without notice
- Unauthorized use of telephones, mail system, or other employer-owned equipment

## City of Blue Ridge

- Violation of personnel policies
- Unsatisfactory performance or conduct
- Conduct that adversely impacts the ability of the City and/or the employee to provide government services

Employment with the City is at the mutual consent of the City and the employee, and either party may terminate that relationship at any time, with or without cause, and with or without advance notice.

### **702 Drug and Alcohol Use**

*Effective Date: 8/17/2021*

*Revision Date:*

It is the City's desire to provide a drug-free, healthful, and safe workplace. To promote this goal, employees are required to report to work in appropriate mental and physical condition to perform their jobs in a satisfactory manner.

While on the City premises and while conducting business-related activities off the City premises, no employee may use, possess, distribute, sell, or be under the influence of alcohol or illegal drugs. The legal use of prescribed drugs is permitted on the job only if it does not impair an employee's ability to perform the essential functions of the job effectively and in a safe manner that does not endanger other individuals in the workplace.

Violations of this policy may lead to disciplinary action, up to and including immediate termination of employment, and/or required participation in a substance abuse rehabilitation or treatment program. Such violations may also have legal consequences.

Employees with questions or concerns about substance dependency or abuse are encouraged to discuss these matters with their supervisor or the Human Resources Office to receive assistance or referrals to appropriate resources in the community.

Employees with drug or alcohol problems that have not resulted in, and are not the immediate subject of, disciplinary action may request approval to take unpaid or accrued paid leave to participate in a rehabilitation or treatment program. Leave may be granted if the employee agrees to abstain from use of the problem substance; abides by all the City policies, rules, and prohibitions relating to conduct in the workplace; and if granting the leave will not cause the City any undue hardship.



Under the Drug-Free Workplace Act, an employee who performs work for a government contract or grant must notify the City of an arrest and/or criminal conviction for drug-related activity occurring in the workplace. The report must be made within five days of the ~~arrest~~ arrest or conviction.

Employees with questions on this policy or issues related to drug or alcohol use in the workplace should raise their concerns with their supervisor or the Human Resources Office without fear of reprisal.

### **703 Drug Testing**

*Effective Date: 8/17/2021*

*Revision Date:*

The City is committed to providing a safe, efficient, and productive work environment for all employees. Using or being under the influence of drugs or alcohol on the job may pose serious safety and health risks. The City does not and will not tolerate any employee's possession, sale, distribution or consumption of alcoholic beverages or illegal drugs or any related paraphernalia, or the abuse of prescription medications, while on City property or while conducting City business at any time. Further, the City does not and will not tolerate any employee being under the influence of alcohol or being impaired due to any illegal drug while on City property or while conducting City business at any time.

To help ensure a safe and healthful working environment, the City conducts drug testing in certain situations:

- Pre-Employment: Applicants for any City position, including positions requiring a commercial driver's license (CDL) and/or safety sensitive positions, will be tested after a conditional offer of employment has been extended. An applicant who refuses a drug test(s) or who tests positive, shall not be extended a final offer of employment.
- Reasonable Suspicion: Employees may be asked to submit to a drug and alcohol test if an employee's supervisor or other person in authority has a reasonable suspicion, based on objective factors such as the employee's appearance, speech, behavior, or other conduct and facts, that the employee possesses or is under the influence of unlawful drugs, including marijuana, or alcohol, or both. Employees who take over-the-counter medication or other lawful medication that can be legally prescribed under both federal and state law to treat a disability should inform their supervisors/the Human Resources Department if they believe the medication will impair their job performance, safety, or the safety of others or if they believe they need a reasonable accommodation before reporting to work while under the influence of that medication.
- As may be required by DOT regulations for employees that are CDL drivers.
- Upon submission of a first report of injury for a worker's compensation claim.

Refusal to submit to drug testing may result in disciplinary action, up to and including termination of employment.

Questions concerning this policy or its administration should be directed to the Human Resources Office.

#### **704 Attendance and Punctuality**

*Effective Date: 8/17/2021*

*Revision Date:*

To maintain a safe and productive work environment, the City expects employees to be reliable and to be punctual in reporting for scheduled work. Absenteeism and tardiness place a burden on other employees and on the City. In the rare instances when employees cannot avoid being late to work or are unable to work as scheduled, they should notify their supervisor as soon as possible in advance of the anticipated tardiness or absence.

Employees are expected to not have unexcused absences. Non-emergency department employees must notify their supervisor of an unexpected absence no later than a half hour prior to their scheduled starting time, excluding other extenuating circumstances to be determined by the supervisor. In a department where a relief employee is required, the employee must notify the supervisor of an unexpected absence no later than one hour prior to the scheduled starting time. In the event the employee fails to notify his/her supervisor, the employee can be charged with leave without pay and further disciplinary action.

An employee is considered tardy if arriving for work or from lunch or another break more than 5 minutes later than the scheduled time. Chronic tardiness is defined as being late three times in a 30-day calendar month and will be subject to disciplinary action.

Poor attendance and excessive tardiness are disruptive. Either may lead to disciplinary action, up to and including termination of employment. Any employee absent for two consecutive working days without calling in or without an excuse shall be considered as having voluntarily terminated his/her employment with the City and shall not be subject to reconsideration for employment.

#### **705 Personal Appearance**

*Effective Date: 8/17/2021*

*Revision Date:*

Dress, grooming, and personal cleanliness standards contribute to the morale of all employees and affect the business image the City presents to its citizens, customers and visitors. During business hours or when representing the City, you are expected to present a professional image through a

City of Blue Ridge

clean, neat, and tasteful appearance. You should dress and groom yourself according to the requirements of your position and accepted social standards. This is particularly true if your job involves dealing with citizens, customers or visitors in person.

Your supervisor or ~~department head~~ Mayor/City Administrator is responsible for establishing a reasonable dress code appropriate to the job you perform. If your supervisor feels your personal appearance is inappropriate, you may be asked to leave the workplace until you are properly dressed or groomed. Under such circumstances, you will not be compensated for the time away from work. Consult your supervisor if you have questions as to what constitutes appropriate appearance. Where necessary, reasonable accommodation may be made to a person with a disability.

Without unduly restricting individual tastes, the following personal appearance guidelines are a nonexclusive list of projecting the required professional image:

- Canvas or athletic type shoes or flip flops are not appropriate professional attire.
- Tank tops, tube or halter tops, cold shoulder straps or shorts may not be worn under any circumstances.
- Tattoos and other body art that is offensive (for example on the basis of race, sex, etc.), indicative of impermissible bias in the performance of job duties, or potentially disruptive to the City's governmental function.
- Pants, skirts or other bottoms must be knee length or longer.
- Tights or leggings must be accompanied by a fingertip length or longer top.

Uniform clothing should be worn by all City employees who perform a substantial amount of their work away from a City facility for the purpose of visual identification. These consist of shirts, T-shirts and jackets as designated by the appropriate supervisor. Replacement of uniform shirts and jackets will be purchased at the discretion of the supervisor and within his/her budget. ~~Each employee will also receive \$250 annually for the purchase of jeans or work pants and/or boots through a City account or upon submission of receipts for such items. Receipts can be submitted at any time and checks for reimbursement will be done quarterly. These payments will be added to the employee's annual taxable wages according to IRS law.~~

~~Administrative employees are eligible for up to \$200 per calendar year, including embroidery, for professional clothing for the office at the discretion of the supervisor and within his/her budget.~~

Part-time employees are eligible to receive half of the available uniform benefit. Probationary employees will be issued shirts but will not receive pants and/or boots or reimbursement for these items until the introductory period is completed.

The following is intended to serve as a guide to help define appropriate casual business wear for all employees during designated casual days. Each Friday will be a designated casual day



## City of Blue Ridge

and other days, such as certain holidays or days preceding holidays, may be designated as casual days with prior notification from your immediate supervisor.

Our primary objective is to have employees project a professional image while taking advantage of more casual and relaxed fashions. Casual dress offers a welcome alternative to the formality of typical business attire.

However, not all casual clothing is appropriate for the office. Casual business wear means clean, neat, professional clothing. It is never appropriate to wear stained, wrinkled, frayed, or revealing clothing to the workplace. If you are considering wearing something and you are not sure if it is acceptable, choose something else or inquire first.

Listed below is a general overview of acceptable casual business wear as well as a listing of some of the more common items that are not appropriate for the office. Obviously, neither group is intended to be all inclusive. Rather, these items should help set the general parameters for proper casual business wear and allow you to make intelligent judgments about items that are not specifically addressed. On Fridays all City Hall employees are required to wear City provided tops with city logo.

Examples of acceptable casual business wear include:

- jeans (without rips or holes)
- ~~casual shirts and blouses~~
- athletic shoes
- flats
- dress sandals

Examples of inappropriate clothing items that should not be worn on casual days include:

- sweatpants
- warm-up or jogging suits and pants
- shorts
- spandex or other form fitting pants
- miniskirts

On occasion, we may announce dress-down days where looser, even more informal clothing can be worn in order to allow you to enjoy a special occasion, better tolerate excessive heat conditions, or more comfortably organize your work area. For some, traditional business attire may simply remain a more favored option on casual days. The choice will be yours.

We hope and fully expect that casual days will help make our workplace more enjoyable and productive. [Employees should refer to the uniform section on page 26 for more information regarding rules and allowances.](#)

## **706 Sexual and Other Unlawful Harassment**

*Effective Date: 8/17/2021*

*Revision Date:*

The City is committed to providing a work environment that is free from all forms of discrimination and conduct that can be considered harassing, coercive, or disruptive, including sexual harassment. Actions, words, jokes, or comments based on an individual's sex (including sexual orientation, gender identity, and pregnancy), race, color, national origin, age, religion, disability, or any other legally protected characteristic will not be tolerated. The City provides ongoing sexual harassment training to ensure you have the opportunity to work in an environment free of sexual and other unlawful harassment.

Sexual harassment is defined as unwanted sexual advances, or visual, verbal, or physical conduct of a sexual nature. This definition includes many forms of offensive behavior and includes gender-based harassment of a person of the same sex as the harasser. The following is a partial list of sexual harassment examples:

- Unwanted sexual advances.
- Offering employment benefits in exchange for sexual favors.
- Making or threatening reprisals after a negative response to sexual advances.
- Visual conduct that includes leering, making sexual gestures, or displaying of sexually suggestive objects or pictures, cartoons or posters.
- Verbal conduct that includes making or using derogatory comments, epithets, slams, or jokes.
- Verbal sexual advances or propositions.
- Verbal abuse of a sexual nature, graphic verbal commentaries about an individual's body, sexually degrading words used to describe an individual, or suggestive or obscene letters, notes, or invitations.
- Physical conduct that includes touching, assaulting, or impeding or blocking movements.

Unwelcome sexual advances (either verbal or physical), requests for sexual favors, and other verbal or physical conduct of a sexual nature constitute sexual harassment when:

(1) submission to such conduct is made either explicitly or implicitly a term or condition of employment; (2) submission or rejection of the conduct is used as a basis for making employment decisions; or, (3) the conduct has the purpose or effect of interfering with work performance or creating an intimidating, hostile, or offensive work environment.



If you experience or witness sexual or other unlawful harassment in the workplace, report it immediately to your supervisor. If the supervisor is unavailable or you believe it would be inappropriate to contact that person, you should immediately contact the Human Resources Office or any other member of management. You can raise concerns and make reports without fear of reprisal or retaliation.

All allegations of sexual harassment will be quickly and discreetly investigated. To the extent possible, your confidentiality and that of any witnesses and the alleged harasser will be protected against unnecessary disclosure. When the investigation is completed, you will be informed of the outcome of the investigation.

Any supervisor or manager who becomes aware of possible sexual or other unlawful harassment must immediately advise the Human Resources Office or any member of management so it can be investigated in a timely and confidential manner. Anyone engaging in sexual or other unlawful harassment will be subject to disciplinary action, up to and including termination of employment.

#### **707 Credit Card Use**

*Effective Date: 4/25/2018*

*Revision Date:*

~~The Mayor, City Clerk and department supervisors~~ Employees who have been authorized by ~~the governing authority of the City~~ the Mayor/City Administrator to use government purchasing cards or government credit cards must abide by all of the applicable state laws and the purchasing card policy.

Transaction limits may be established, and individual monthly card limits may be set by the supervisor or Mayor/Administrator, but all credit card purchases must comply with the City's purchasing policy.

At no time should a City issued purchasing card or credit card be used for personal purchases regardless of the circumstances and intentionally doing so for any item or service not directly related to such employee's public duty may result in disciplinary action including, but not limited to, termination and felony criminal prosecution. The use of a government purchasing card or government credit card may be suspended or revoked at any time by the Mayor/Administrator or supervisor.

City employees may use government purchasing cards or government credit cards to purchase goods and/or services not prohibited by the purchasing card policy or state law. Cards may be used as a method of payment when the transaction is properly approved according to the current purchasing policy. Splitting transactions to circumvent the purchasing policy, cash refunds or advances or the purchase of alcohol or liquor of any kind is also strictly prohibited.

Credit cards should be kept in a secure location and are the sole responsibility of the elected official or employee who is issued a credit card. Again, abuse of any City credit card may result in immediate disciplinary action including, but not limited to, termination and felony criminal prosecution.

### **708 Resignation**

*Effective Date: 8/17/2021*

*Revision Date:*

Resignation is a voluntary act initiated by the employee to terminate employment with the City. Although advance notice is not required, the City requests at least 2 weeks written resignation notice from all employees.

If an employee does not provide advance notice as requested, the employee will be considered ineligible for rehire or payout of accrued paid leave.

### **709 Acceptance of Gifts and Gratuities**

*Effective Date: 8/17/2021*

*Revision Date:*

City employees shall not accept gifts, gratuities, or loans from organizations, business concerns, or individuals with whom he/she has any official City government business relationship. These limitations are not intended to prohibit the acceptance of articles of negligible value which are distributed generally, nor to prohibit employees from accepting social courtesies which promote good public relations, nor to prohibit employees from obtaining loans from regular lending institutions. It is particularly important that inspectors, contracting officers, and enforcement officers guard against relationships which might be construed as evidence of favoritism, coercion, unfair advantage, or collusion. The value of an acceptable gift or gratuity cannot exceed \$100. Violations of this policy will result in disciplinary action, up to and including termination.

### **710 Security Inspections**

*Effective Date: 8/17/2021*

*Revision Date:*

The City wishes to maintain a work environment that is free of illegal drugs, alcohol, unauthorized



## City of Blue Ridge

firearms, explosives, or other improper materials. To this end, the City prohibits the possession, transfer, sale, or use of such materials on its premises. The City requires the cooperation of all employees in administering this policy.

Desks, ~~lockers, and other storage devices~~ may be provided for the convenience of employees but remain the sole property of the City. Accordingly, they, as well as any articles found within them, can be inspected by any agent or representative of the City at any time, either with or without prior notice.

The City likewise wishes to discourage theft or unauthorized possession of the property of employees, the City, visitors, and customers. To facilitate enforcement of this policy, the City or its representative may inspect not only desks ~~and lockers~~ but also persons entering and/or leaving the premises and any packages or other belongings. Any employee who wishes to avoid inspection of any articles or materials should not bring such items onto the City's premises.

### **711 City Vehicles**

*Effective Date: 8/17/2021*

*Revision Date:*

Employees must adhere to all federal, state, and local rules and regulations regarding motor vehicle laws, including the use of cell phones while driving. Employees are not permitted to read or respond to e-mails or text messages while operating a City vehicle on City business and/or on City time. In accordance with O.C.G.A. § 40-6-241.2 writing, sending or reading text-based communications while operating a motor vehicle is prohibited. All employees are required to wear a seat belt (on all vehicles and equipment with seat belts) while driving or riding in any vehicle, either personal or City-owned while performing City business.

City vehicles are not to be used for personal use. Only City employees or other government officials in the course of conducting City business are allowed to ride in City vehicles. The transportation of any and all family members or other non-employees in a City vehicle is strictly prohibited.

All employees required to drive City vehicles must have a valid driver's license. If an employee's license is misplaced, suspended or revoked, the employee must notify his/ her supervisor immediately. Employees whose jobs require a CDL license will be required to meet DOT requirements.

To ensure that employees who drive vehicles in the course of their job duties maintain valid driver's license, the City will check motor vehicle records (MVR) of all applicants prior to making offers of employment, and all current employees at least once each year. As part of the hiring process, applicants will be required to sign a written consent form allowing the City to check their MVR at

## City of Blue Ridge

any time prior to or during their employment. Employees with negative MVR report may be required to participate in additional training.

City vehicles should only be operated when in safe operating condition. Employees are responsible for repairing maintenance issues and maintaining the cleanliness of the vehicle they are operating.

An employee who drives City vehicles as part of his/her job with the City is required to report to his/her supervisor any citations, DUI violations, or accidents (incidents) in personal vehicles that may impact the status of their driver's license at any time after he/she becomes employed with the City. All accidents involving a city vehicle, no matter how small, must be reported immediately to his/her supervisor and/or the City Clerk and investigated by the Police Department. Failure to report such incidents within twenty-four (24) hours may result in discipline up to and including immediate termination of employment with the City.

Any employee whose duties include the operation of City vehicles and who is cited for DUI, DWI, or for any other serious driving violation will be considered to have an unacceptable driving record and his or her continued employment with the City will be subject to review.

An employee cited for a driving or on-the-road violation in a City vehicle shall report it immediately to his/her supervisor. If the employee is found guilty of such a violation, the employee will be responsible for paying any fine or penalty and will be subject to discipline, up to and including immediate termination of employment with the City.

### **716 Progressive Discipline**

*Effective Date: 8/17/2021*

*Revision Date:*

The purpose of this policy is to state the City's position on administering equitable and consistent discipline for unsatisfactory conduct in the workplace. The best disciplinary measure is the one that does not have to be enforced and comes from good leadership and fair supervision at all employment levels.

The City's own best interest lies in ensuring fair treatment of all employees and in making certain that disciplinary actions are prompt, uniform, and impartial. The major purpose of any disciplinary action is to correct the problem, prevent recurrence, and prepare the employee for satisfactory service in the future.

Although employment with the City is based on mutual consent and both the employee and the City have the right to terminate employment at will, with or without cause or advance notice, the City may use progressive discipline at its discretion.

Disciplinary action may call for any of four steps — documented verbal warning, written warning, suspension with or without pay, or termination of employment -- depending on the severity of the problem and the number of occurrences. There may be circumstances when one or more steps are bypassed.

Progressive discipline means that, with respect to most disciplinary problems, these steps will normally be followed: a first offense may call for a documented verbal warning; a next offense may be followed by a written warning; another offense may lead to a suspension; and still another offense may then lead to termination of employment. If more than 12 months have passed since the last disciplinary action, the process will normally start over.

The City recognizes that there are certain types of employee problems that are serious enough to justify either a suspension, or, in extreme situations, termination of employment, without going through the usual progressive discipline steps.

While it is impossible to list every type of behavior that may be deemed a serious offense, the Employee Conduct and Work Rules policy includes examples of problems that may result in immediate suspension or termination of employment. However, the problems listed are not all necessarily serious offenses, but may be examples of unsatisfactory conduct that will trigger progressive discipline.

By using progressive discipline, we hope that most employee problems can be corrected at an early stage, benefiting both the employee and the City.

### **718 Problem Resolution**

*Effective Date: 8/17/2021*

*Revision Date:*

The City is committed to providing the best possible working conditions for its employees. Part of this commitment is encouraging an open and frank atmosphere in which any problem, complaint, suggestion, or question receives a timely response from the City supervisors and management.

The City strives to ensure fair and honest treatment of all employees. Supervisors, managers, and employees are expected to treat each other with mutual respect. Employees are encouraged to offer positive and constructive criticism.



If employees disagree with established rules of conduct, policies, or practices, they can express their concern through the problem resolution procedure. No employee will be penalized, formally or informally, for voicing a complaint with the City in a reasonable, business-like manner, or for using the problem resolution procedure.

If a situation occurs when employees believe that a condition of employment or a decision affecting them is unjust or inequitable, they are encouraged to make use of the following steps. The employee may discontinue the procedure at any step.

1. Employee presents problem to immediate supervisor within 15 calendar days, after incident occurs. If supervisor is unavailable or employee believes it would be inappropriate to contact that person, employee may present problem to Mayor/City Administrator or any other member of management.
2. Supervisor responds to problem during discussion or within 7 calendar days (which will be extended by the number of days the supervisor is out on any type of leave), after consulting with appropriate management, when necessary. Supervisor documents discussion.
3. Employee presents problem to Human Resources Office within 7 calendar days (which will be extended by the number of days the Human Resources Director is out on any type of leave), ~~if problem~~ if problem is unresolved.
4. Human Resources Office counsels and advises employee, assists in putting problem in writing, visits with employee's manager(s), if necessary, and directs employee to Council-Mayor/City Administrator for review of problem.
5. Employee presents problem to Mayor/City Administrator ~~Mayor and Council~~ in writing.
6. Mayor/City Administrator ~~Council~~ reviews and considers problem. Mayor/City Administrator ~~Council~~ informs employee of decision within 15 calendar days, and forwards copy of written response to Human Resources Office for employee's file. The Mayor/City Administrator ~~Council~~ has full authority to make any adjustment deemed appropriate to resolve the problem.

The City will endeavor to adhere to the response times outlined above. However, occasions may arise where it is impossible or impractical to do so, depending on the nature of the situation.

Problems, disputes, or claims not resolved through the preceding problem resolution steps are subject to mediation. Mediation will be conducted under the Employment Mediation Rules of the American Arbitration Association. Employees who choose to use mediation to resolve a problem will be expected to share the cost of mediation with the City.

Not every problem can be resolved to everyone's satisfaction, but only through understanding and discussion can employees and management develop confidence in each other. This confidence is important to the operation of an efficient and harmonious work environment and helps to ensure everyone's job security.

**EMPLOYEE ACKNOWLEDGEMENT FORM**

By signing my name below, I acknowledge that I have received a copy of the City of Blue Ridge Employee Handbook (the "Handbook") and that I have read and understood it and I agree to comply with the information contained in the Handbook.

I understand that the Handbook is intended to provide me with a general overview of the City of Blue Ridge's (the "City") policies and procedures. I acknowledge that nothing in this Handbook is to be interpreted as a contract, express or implied, or an inducement for employment, nor does it guarantee my employment for any period of time.

I understand and accept that my employment with the City is at-will. I have the right to resign at any time with or without cause, just as the City may terminate my employment at any time with or without cause or notice, subject to applicable laws. I understand my at-will employment cannot be altered by any verbal statement or alleged verbal agreement made by City personnel. It can only be changed by a legally binding, written contract covering employment status.

I acknowledge that, as part of my employment, I am expected to know and follow the City's policies and procedures, including those included in this Handbook. I further acknowledge that the City expressly prohibits discrimination and harassment on the basis of race, color, religion, creed, sex (including sexual orientation and gender identity) national origin, age, disability, marital status, veteran status, or any other status protected by applicable law. If I experience or witness any unlawful harassment and/or discrimination, I understand that I am to report it immediately to my supervisor or Human Resources.

I also understand that failure to adhere to the City's policies and procedures, whether included in this Handbook or not, may result in discipline up to and including termination. If I have any questions about this Handbook or the City's policies and procedures, I understand that I am free to direct those questions to my supervisor or Human Resources.

I acknowledge that the City may revise, suspend, revoke, terminate, change, or remove, prospectively or retroactively, any of the policies or procedures of the City, whether outlines in this Handbook or elsewhere, in whole or in part, with or without notice at any time, at the City's sole discretion.

I understand that if I leave my employment at the City, I must return all City property, including this Handbook.

\_\_\_\_\_  
Employee Signature

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

\_\_\_\_\_  
Employee Name

## City Council Meeting Agenda Submittal

MEETING DATE: 1/16/2024

AGENDA NO: 7a

### AGENDA ITEM:

Motion to approve the sidewalk and street infrastructure improvements contained in Exhibit A. as proposed by the City Administrator for 2024.

### BACKGROUND:

This past year the City Engineer, Carter & Sloope, Inc performed an evaluation of City roads and sidewalks to develop a priority list of sidewalk and street improvements that would be funded going forward. The list that was developed for 2024 contained in Exhibit "A" was developed based on the following criteria:

- Meets the highest level of distress as contained in the evaluation;
- Does not conflict with ongoing underground utility improvements, therefore eliminating the need to again disrupt new pavement or sidewalks;
- Addresses high volume traffic areas;
- Address the safety of pedestrian walk areas and ADA requirements.

### RECOMMENDATION:

It is recommended that the City Council adopt the motion to approve the sidewalk and street infrastructure improvements contained in Exhibit A.

### ATTACHMENT (S):

None

APPROVED:



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Mayor



---

City Administrator

## Exhibit A

### 2024 Recommended Sidewalk and Street Infrastructure Improvements

#### **Sidewalks:**

1. E. Highland Street (W. First to W Second) 310 LF
2. W. First Street (Mountain Street to Depot Street) 1300 LF
3. E. Second Street (Seal and Repair) 4,100 LF

#### **Streets:**

1. Sierra Lane 1810 LF
2. Gray Street (Church St to Park entrance) 1,630 LF
3. Ridge Street 860 LF
4. W. Highland Street 1,000 LF
5. Austin & Mountain St. 1800 LF
6. E. 2<sup>nd</sup> St. (Church St. to E. First St.) 4200 LF
7. Hill St. 270 LF



REVISIONS

STREET AND SIDEWALK  
IMPROVEMENTS  
FOR THE  
CITY OF BLUE RIDGE  
FANNIN COUNTY, GEORGIA

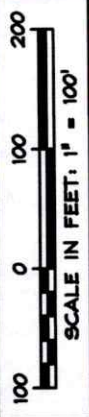
**Carter & Slope**  
CONSULTING ENGINEERS  
MACON • ATHENS • CANTON • MARIETTA



DATE:	C.S.S.
DESIGN:	END
SCALE:	AS SHOWN
DRAWN:	NAME: SWS
PROJECT NO.:	87070403
TITLE:	SIERRA LANE
DATE:	JANUARY 2024
SHEET NO.:	1
OF:	1 SHEETS



±1,810 L.F. PROPOSED  
± 4,215 S.Y. OVERLAY & LEVELING  
PRICE - \$98,625



SIERRA LANE PROPOSED STREET IMPROVEMENTS



STREET AND SIDEWALK  
IMPROVEMENTS  
FOR THE  
CITY OF BLUE RIDGE  
FANNING COUNTY, GEORGIA

**Carter & Sloope**  
CONSULTING ENGINEERS

MAISON AIRMONT CANON MORRIS



DATE:	C. & S.
DESIGN:	END
SCALE:	AS SHOWN
ENG. NAME:	WMS
PROJ. NO.:	07070303
SHEET NO.:	1
DATE:	JANUARY 2004
	OF 1 SHEETS



GRAY STREET PROPOSED STREET IMPROVEMENTS



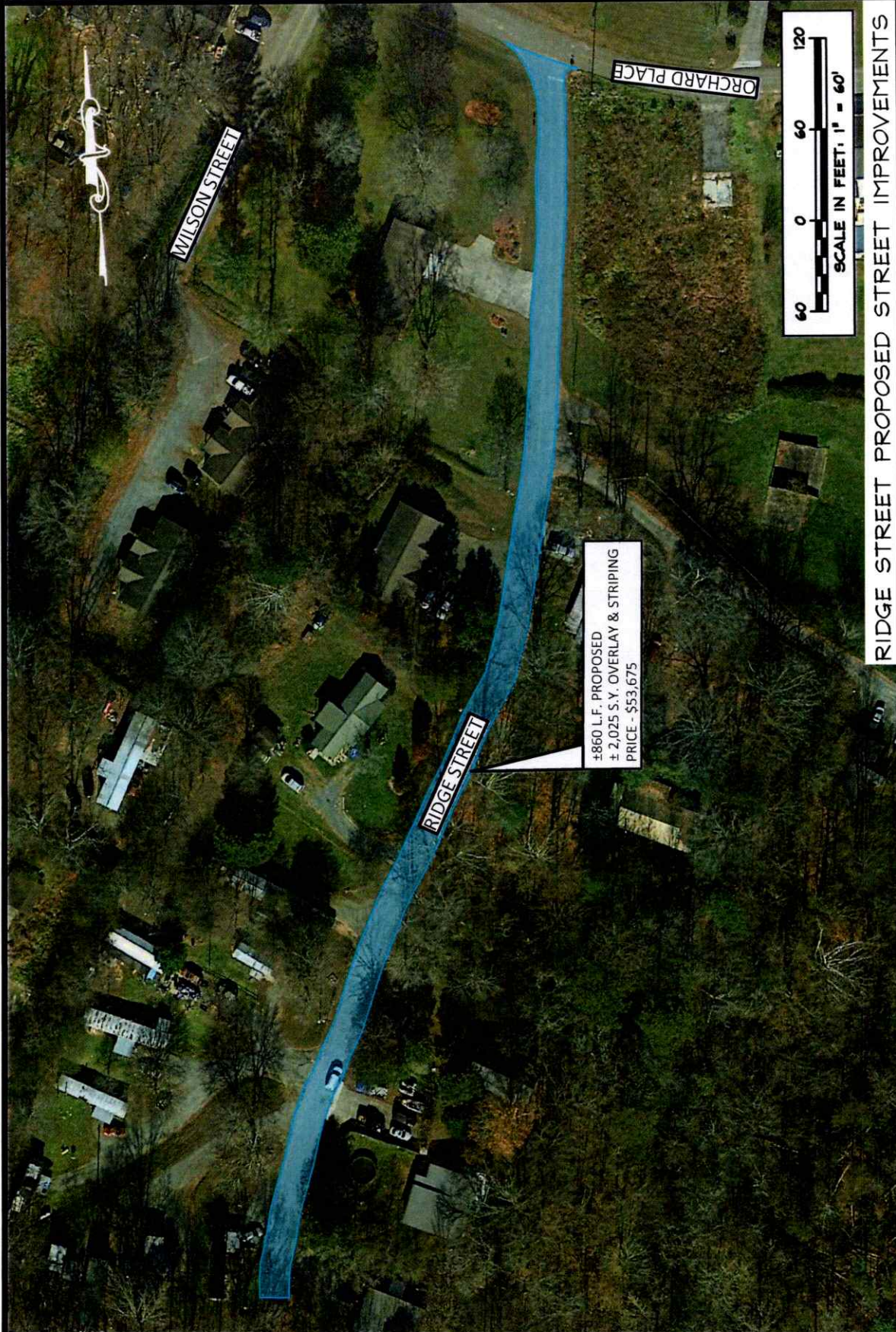
REVISIONS

STREET AND SIDEWALK  
IMPROVEMENTS  
FOR THE  
CITY OF BLUE RIDGE  
FANNIN COUNTY, GEORGIA

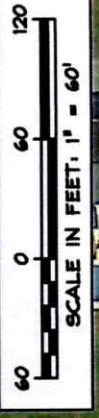
**Carter & Sloope**  
CONSULTING ENGINEERS  
MACON AIRS CARON MOBILES



DATE:	C & S
OWNER:	CDR
SCALE:	AS SHOWN
DATE PLOTTED:	1/27/2015
PROJECT NO.:	1
DATE:	JANUARY 2015
OF 1 SHEETS	



±860 L.F. PROPOSED  
 ±2,025 S.Y. OVERLAY & STRIPING  
 PRICE - \$53,675



RIDGE STREET PROPOSED STREET IMPROVEMENTS



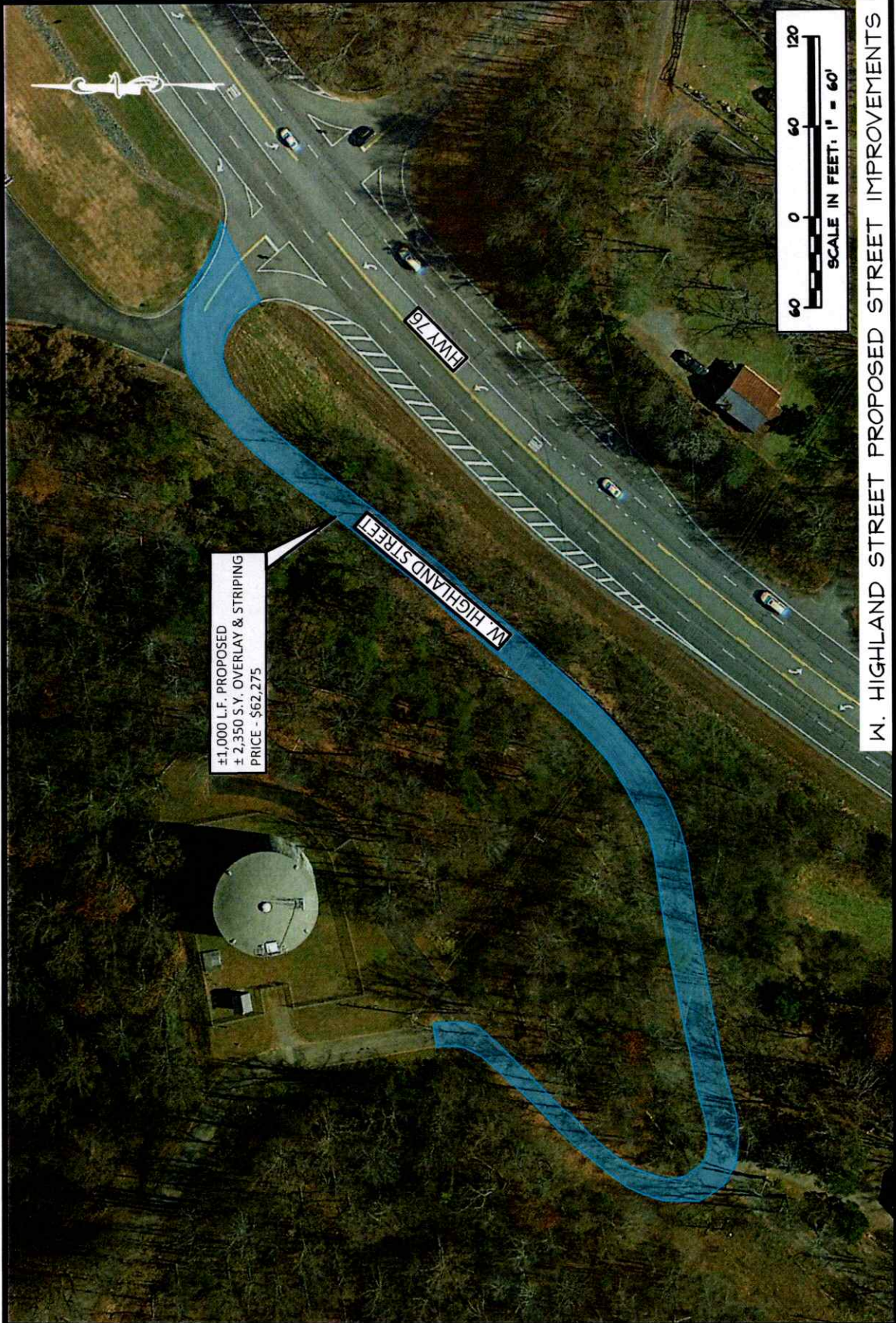
STREET AND SIDEWALK  
IMPROVEMENTS  
FOR THE  
CITY OF BLUE RIDGE  
FANNIN COUNTY, GEORGIA

**Carter & Sloope**  
CONSULTING ENGINEERS

MACON ALBANY CANTON MARIETTA



DATE	1 JANUARY 2014
PROJECT NO.	10707003
DRAWN BY	CS
CHECKED BY	CS
SCALE	AS SHOWN
DRAWN DATE	10/15/13
PROJECT NAME	IMPS
DATE	
SHEET NO.	1
OF	1 SHEETS



±1,000 L.F. PROPOSED  
± 2,350 S.Y. OVERLAY & STRIPING  
PRICE - \$62,275



W. HIGHLAND STREET PROPOSED STREET IMPROVEMENTS

DATE PLOTTED



STREET AND SIDEWALK  
IMPROVEMENTS  
FOR THE  
CITY OF BLUE RIDGE  
FANNIN COUNTY, GEORGIA

**Carter & Sloope**  
CONSULTING ENGINEERS  
MACON AIRBENT CAMDEN MOHRRE

DATE:	JANUARY 2024
PROJECT NO.:	87570303
DRAWN BY:	C. S. S.
CHECKED BY:	END
SCALE:	AS SHOWN
DRAWN IN:	MAPS
DATE:	01/20/24
SHEET NO.:	1
OF 1 SHEETS	



±1,800 L.F. PROPOSED  
±4,200 S.Y. OVERLAY  
PRICE - \$90,300



MOUNTAIN STREET PROPOSED STREET IMPROVEMENTS



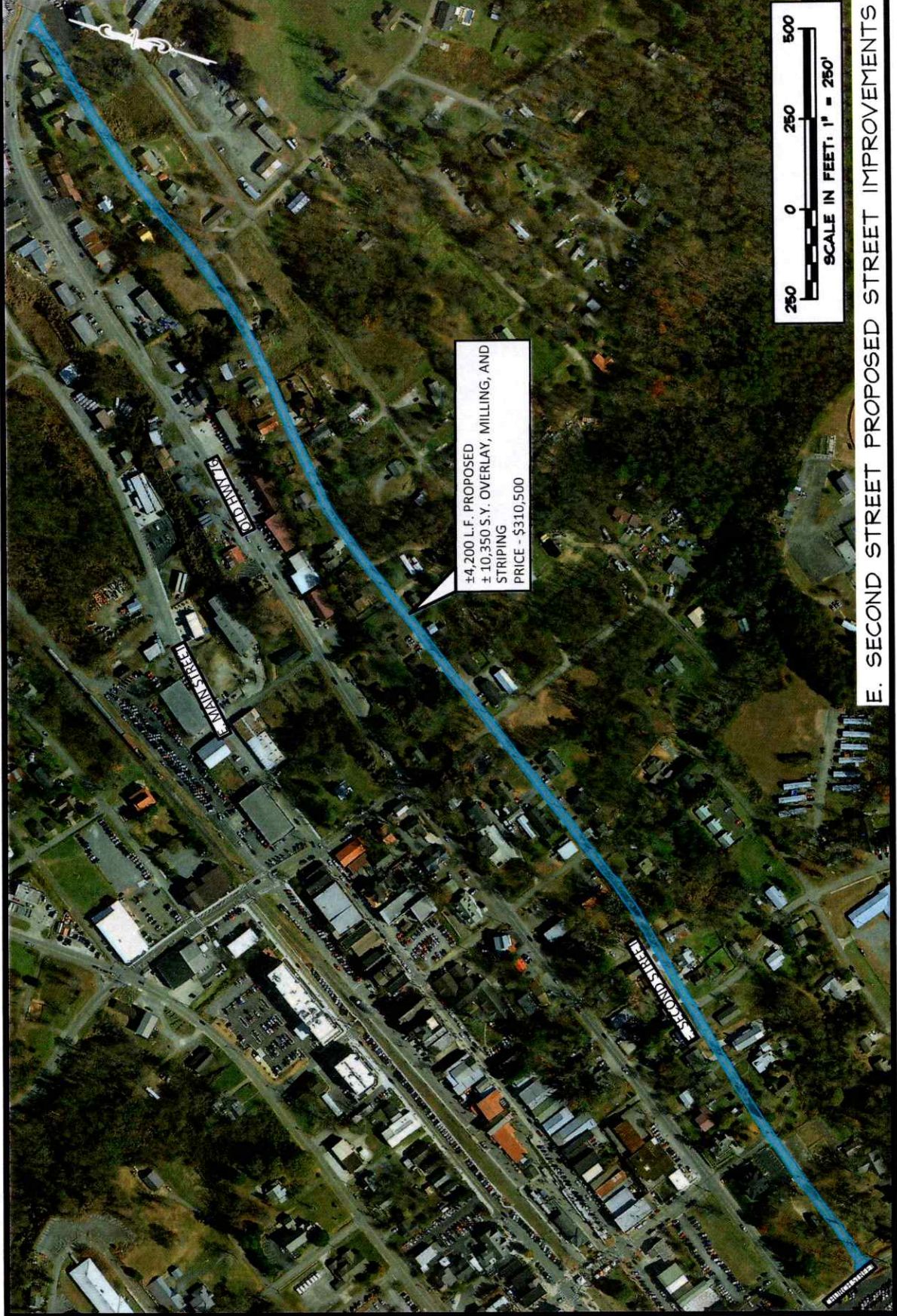
STREET AND SIDEWALK  
IMPROVEMENTS  
FOR THE  
CITY OF BLUE RIDGE  
FANNING COUNTY, GEORGIA

**Carter & Sloope**  
CONSULTING ENGINEERS

MACON AIRPORT CANTON MARIETTA



DATE:	0 8 8
DESIGN:	DRG
SCALE:	AS SHOWN
DRAWN BY:	SWP
PROJ. NO.:	07070403
TITLE:	STREET NO. 1
DATE:	JANUARY 2004
OF 1 SHEETS	1

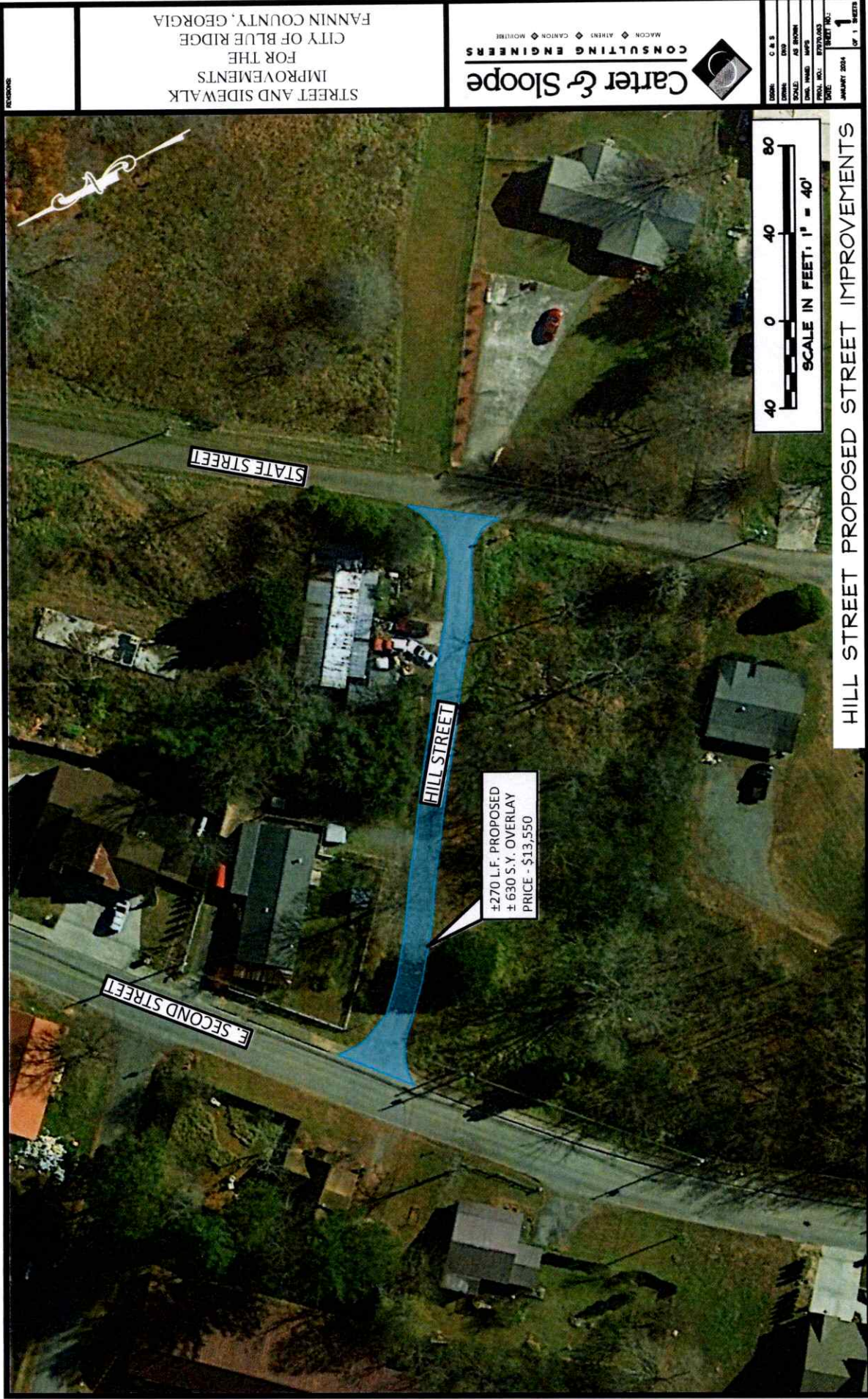


±4,200 L.F. PROPOSED  
±10,350 S.Y. OVERLAY, MILLING, AND  
STRIPING  
PRICE - \$310,500



E. SECOND STREET PROPOSED STREET IMPROVEMENTS





STREET AND SIDEWALK  
IMPROVEMENTS  
FOR THE  
CITY OF BLUE RIDGE  
FANNING COUNTY, GEORGIA

**Carter & Sloope**  
CONSULTING ENGINEERS  
MACON AIRSANT CAMDEN MORRIS

DATE:	0 8 5
DRAWN:	END
SCALE:	AS SHOWN
DATE PLOTTED:	1/27/2024
PROJECT NO.:	2024-001
DATE:	JANUARY 2024
SHEET NO.:	1
OF 1 SHEETS	

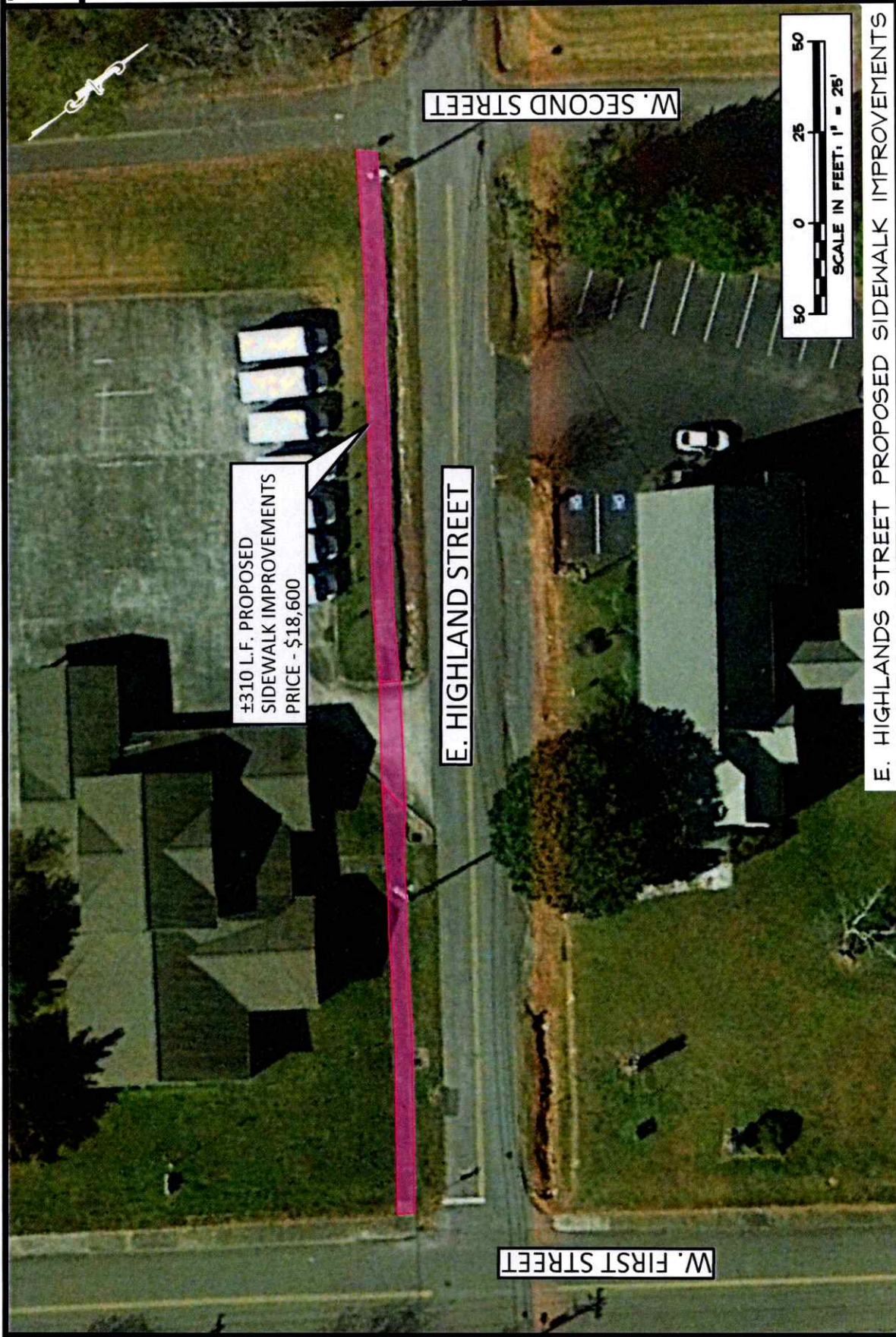


HILL STREET PROPOSED STREET IMPROVEMENTS

±270 L.F. PROPOSED  
± 630 S.Y. OVERLAY  
PRICE - \$13,550

REVISIONS





W. SECOND STREET

E. HIGHLANDS STREET

W. FIRST STREET

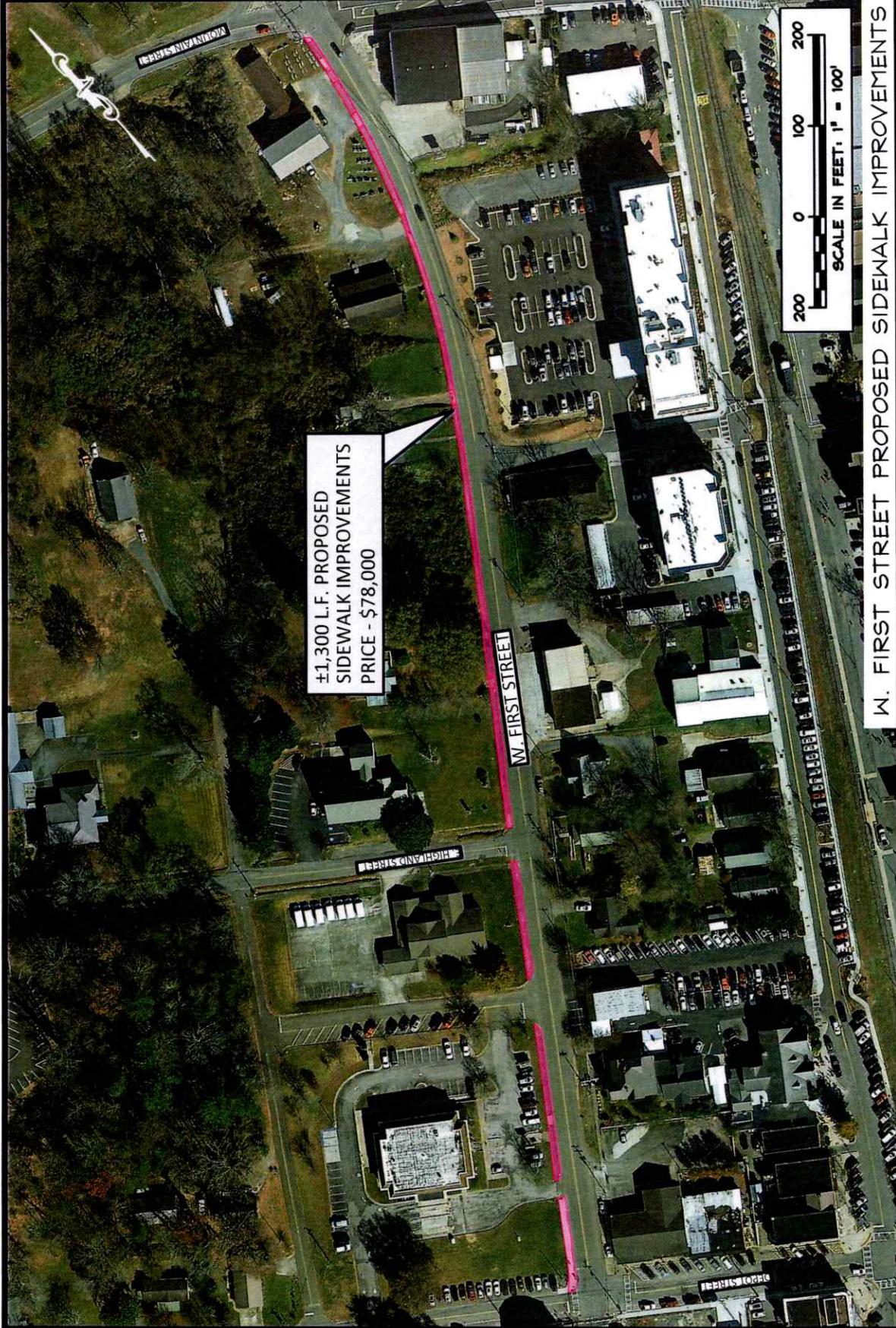
+310 L.F. PROPOSED  
 SIDEWALK IMPROVEMENTS  
 PRICE - \$18,600



E. HIGHLANDS STREET PROPOSED SIDEWALK IMPROVEMENTS

REVISED





±1,300 L.F. PROPOSED  
SIDEWALK IMPROVEMENTS  
PRICE - \$78,000



W. FIRST STREET PROPOSED SIDEWALK IMPROVEMENTS

STREET AND SIDEWALK  
IMPROVEMENTS  
FOR THE  
CITY OF BLUE RIDGE  
FANNIN COUNTY, GEORGIA

**Carter & Slope**  
CONSULTING ENGINEERS  
MACON ♦ ATHENS ♦ CANTON ♦ MARIETTA

DATE:	1 JANUARY 2024
PROJECT NO.:	2400000001
DRAWING NO.:	2400000001-01
SCALE:	AS SHOWN
DATE:	01/01/2024
DESIGNER:	C. S. S.
CHECKER:	D. D. D.
DATE:	01/01/2024
PROJECT NO.:	2400000001
SHEET NO.:	1
OF 1 SHEETS	



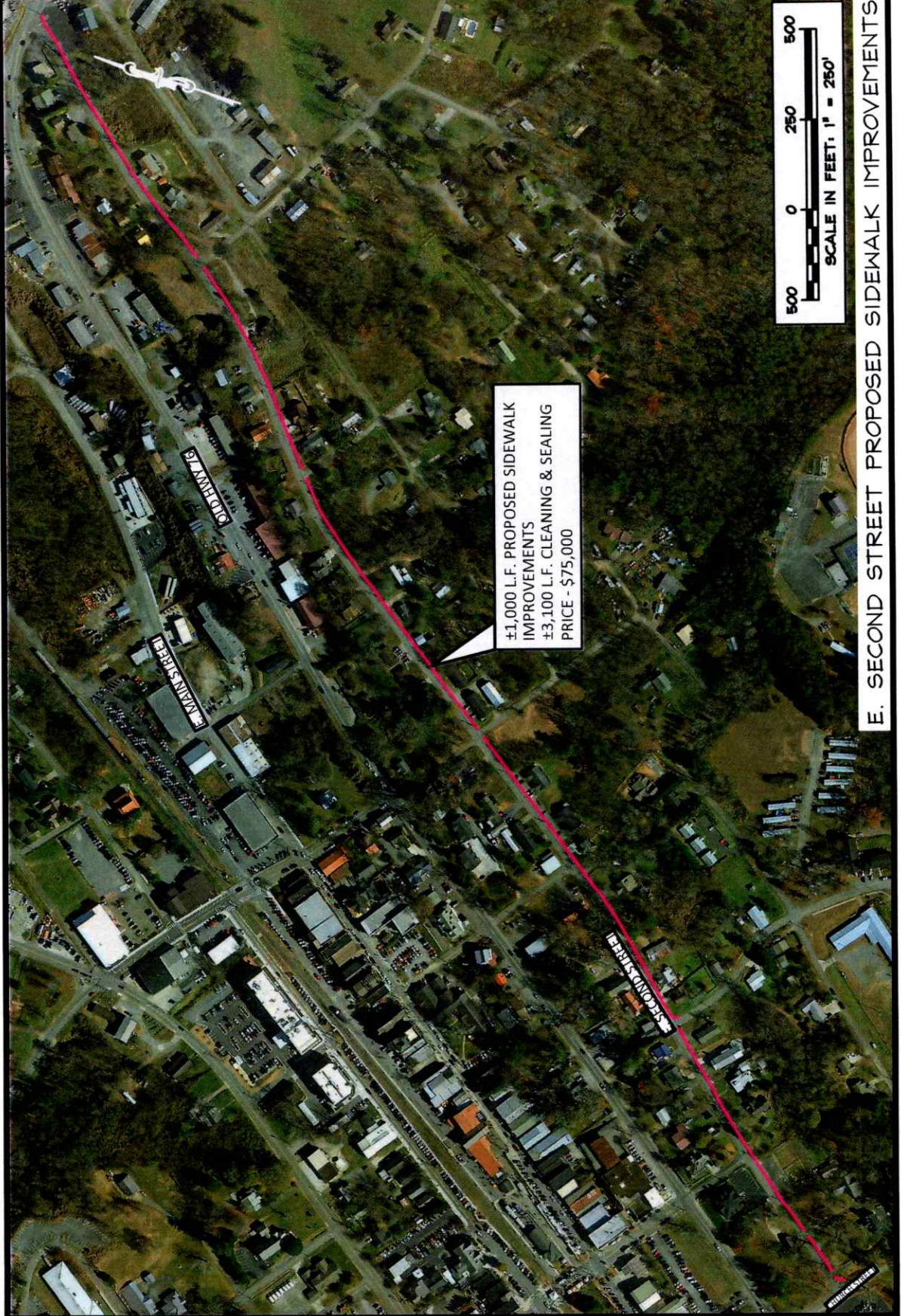
STREET AND SIDEWALK  
IMPROVEMENTS  
FOR THE  
CITY OF BLUE RIDGE  
FANNIN COUNTY, GEORGIA

**Carter & Slope**  
CONSULTING ENGINEERS

MACON • ATHENS • CANTON • MONTICELLO



DESIGN	C & S
DRAWN	DSB
SCALE	AS SHOWN
DATE	NOV 2024
PROJECT NO.	25700400
TITLE	STREET IMPROVEMENTS
DATE	JANUARY 2024
SHEET NO.	1
OF	1 SHEETS



±1,000 L.F. PROPOSED SIDEWALK  
IMPROVEMENTS  
±3,100 L.F. CLEANING & SEALING  
PRICE - \$75,000



E. SECOND STREET PROPOSED SIDEWALK IMPROVEMENTS