

COLIN BAENZIGER & ASSOCIATES

EXECUTIVE RECRUITING

Section 9

Daniel T. Porta

*Sarasota City Manager
Candidate Report*

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Cover Letter and Resume

Section 9

February 6, 2025

Colin Baenziger
Colin Baenziger & Associates
2055 S Atlantic Ave
Daytona Beach Shores, FL 32118

Dear Mr. Baenziger:

I am writing to express my interest in the position of City Manager for the City of Sarasota. With a strong background in public administration, managing multiple, complex operations like police, fire, finance, planning and development, water and sewer services, as well as economic development, I am excited about the opportunity to lead the employees of Sarasota and help drive the city's mission forward.

In my current role as City Manager for the City of Cartersville, I have improved responsiveness to our citizens, managed many capital construction projects, negotiated million-dollar agreements, and assisted with many economic development agreements. My decades of government experience have honed my ability to manage multiple departments, adapt to the changing needs within my city and to lead my organization effectively while providing excellent customer service to citizens and visitors. As City Manager in a full-service city, I have experience in many areas, including emergency management, redevelopment, budgeting and finance, economic development, infrastructure improvements and six utility enterprises, and I am eager to leverage my skills and experience with the City of Sarasota.

In addition, I am an engaged leader who is visible within the community and have expertise in communicating and forging relationships with citizens, employees, as well as local, regional, and statewide leaders. Consensus building is important to get projects completed and I have worked with elected officials and citizens to move projects forward to improve Cartersville. In addition, I work with other local governments like Bartow County, the local school system, State House and Senate Representatives, as well as other state level leaders to move projects forward that have benefited our community.

I am excited about this position and working with the Mayor and City Commissioners on contributing to the city's vision to be a world-class community and a destination that is treasured. Thank you for considering my resume. I look forward to discussing how my experience and vision align with the goals of the City of Sarasota. Please feel free to contact me at 770-429-5544 or via email at danporta6@gmail.com to schedule an interview.

Sincerely,



Dan Porta

Enclosure

Dan Porta, ICMA-CM

13 Encore Lane, Cartersville, GA 30120
Mobile 770-429-5544
Danporta6@gmail.com

PROFESSIONAL SUMMARY

An innovative, creative, and detail-oriented executive; that strongly encourages teamwork and values individual performance with a collaborative management style to achieve organizational excellence. Equipped with well-defined financial, business, and strategic acumen. I have well-honed communication, organizational, problem-solving, analytical, and technical aptitudes. As a servant leader, I encourage those that I work for and with, and have improved employee morale, enhanced work environments, and created a high-performance organization, all while serving the employees that I am entrusted to lead.

PROFESSIONAL EXPERIENCE

City of Cartersville, GA (www.cityofcartersville.org)

City Manager

September 2020 – Present

Located in northwest Georgia, adjacent to metro Atlanta, Cartersville is a growing full-service city with 411 full-time employees and an annual budget of \$274 million. I serve under a six-member City Council elected at large with four-year overlapping terms and a Mayor elected every two years. As City Manager, I serve as the Chief Executive Officer, tasked with carrying out the City Council's legislative and policy objectives by implementing all city ordinances, policies and resolutions and assuring that they are enforced. I am accountable for administrative and operational affairs of the city and am responsible to advise the Mayor and City Council on all matters especially those pertaining to operational and financial activities, productivity improvement, program development and recommending changes to city policies and procedures. In addition, I oversee 19 departments, and work with my team to be proactive on issues and find solutions to problems.

Key Accomplishments:

- Develop the City's Annual Vision with the Mayor, City Council and Department Heads and then champion these short-term and long-term goals.
- Negotiated a new Water Services Contract with Bartow County.
- Negotiated increased share of Local Option Sales Tax and Special Purpose Local Option Sales Tax with Bartow County.
- Increased General Fund balance by over \$30 million and other city fund balances over \$70 million in last four years.
- Spearheaded new Water Administration Building, 5th Fire Station, new Police Firing Range, new City Hall and new Recreational Facility.
- Created the first City of Cartersville App to allow citizens to report problems and have my team be more responsive to the issues impacting the residents of Cartersville.
- Rebranded the City of Cartersville by creating a logo to highlight and showcase the city and give us more opportunities to market Cartersville on social media.
- Oversaw complete overhaul to the City of Cartersville website which added more features and relevant information for citizens and visitors.

- Created Emergency Operations Procedures and conducted the first tabletop emergency training exercise to prepare my team for a significant or catastrophic event.
- Created and hosted Citizens Academy to share with local citizens how our city operates.
- Significantly improved employees' pay and benefits by over 30% and doubled the pension multiplier for employees, while reducing the city's pension contribution costs.
- Spearheaded \$13 million investment for replacement and upgrade to 30,000 electric, gas and water meters with automated readings to be more responsive to our customers.
- Part of the Economic Development Team that has brought in two large corporations into our community with over \$7 billion in new investments and jobs for our citizens within the last two years and many other companies over the last 20 years.
- Assisted in development of Stormwater Utility to fund stormwater improvements. Oversaw use of ARPA grant funds for several projects to improve stormwater conditions in the city.

City of Cartersville, GA (www.cityofcartersville.org)

Assistant City Manager

September 2001 – August 2020

Finance Director

July 1998 – March 2009

Key Accomplishments:

- Created the city's first Human Resources Department that includes updated personnel policies and implemented a workforce succession plan. Involved in all changes to the pay and classification system, employee benefits programs, and departmental staffing.
- Consolidated various city technology functions and turned around a non-profitable Fiber Optics Utilities Fund into a profitable fund that is responsive to customers and stays abreast of the latest technology needs, cybersecurity measures, telecommunications and emergency communications needs of the city.
- Established the Finance Department for the city and developed and implemented accounting policies that have improved the overall financial health and stability of the city.
- Achieved a positive change in the city's bond rating through leadership and effective financial management actions.
- Liaison to Cartersville-Bartow Airport Authority and oversaw operations and management. Obtained over \$13 million in grants from FAA and GDOT for airport safety improvements, which improved economic job growth for Cartersville.
- Enhanced the city's emergency preparedness through upgrade to 700/800-megahertz radio system and 911 system. Also, was Project Manager for construction of city's Emergency Operations Center.
- Oversaw Downtown Development Authority to improve economic development, promotions, and traffic in downtown Cartersville, which included downtown concerts and events. Assisted in creation and implementation of first Downtown Master Plan and Business Improvement District to help with redevelopment of downtown Cartersville.
- Managed city property acquisitions and construction projects including Gas Department Headquarters and Fuel Station, LEED Silver Police and Fire Headquarters, Fiber Data Center, and two fire stations. Coordinated Plan Review meetings with city and Bartow County departments to improve efficiency and responsiveness. Oversee city Plan Review process and ensure that my team is listening to and being responsive to developer requests and review of plans while still following development regulations.

- Assisted in the development and implementation of comprehensive Impact Fee Program to fund transportation, public safety, library, and recreation.
- Assisted in the development of four successful Special Purpose Local Option Sales Tax referenda dedicated to over \$100 million in capital projects that included transportation, water and sewer, public safety facilities, and other capital improvements.
- Implemented all Governmental Accounting Standards Board accounting requirements and all State mandates including the adoption of a uniform chart of accounts.
- Implemented safety and vehicle use policies that dramatically reduced the city's workers' compensation costs by over \$300,000 annually since 2007, reduced property and casualty insurance premiums by \$100,000 annually, and increased employee accountability.

City of Perry, FL

Finance Director/Assistant to City Manager

July 1991– July 1998

Located in North Florida, the City of Perry, population of 6,847 had 120 full-time employees and an annual budget of \$7 million. Reported to the City Manager, I oversaw the Accounting, Utility Billing, Occupational License, Purchasing, and Personnel Divisions.

Key Accomplishments:

- Worked directly with City Manager in directing and overseeing all municipal operations, including Customer Service, Police, Fire, Building and Zoning, Public Works, Water, Wastewater and Natural Gas.
- Developed and implemented the annual operating and capital improvements budget including citywide budget guidelines and goals, revenue forecasting, short and long-range budget planning, and debt financing which resulted in improvements in the city's General Fund balance.
- Managed city's risk management program. Implemented a self-insured health insurance program that saved 20% in annual premiums and provided comprehensive medical coverage for all employees.
- Received the Government Finance Officers Association Distinguished Budget Award for the first time.

CORE COMPETENCIES / SKILL AREAS

| | | |
|--------------------------------|------------------------|-------------------------|
| Organizational Leadership | Grant Funding | Emergency Management |
| Strategic Planning & Execution | Team Building | Policy Development |
| Public Utilities Management | Budgeting & Finance | ERP & Cybersecurity |
| Personnel/Employment Law | Economic Development | Impact Fee Programs |
| Intergovernmental Relations | Information Technology | Succession Planning |
| Planning and Development | Neighborhood Planning | Stakeholder Engagement |
| Diversity Equity & Inclusion | Consensus Builder | Customer Service |
| Performance Measurement | Risk Management | Legislative Relations |
| Capital Improvement Planning | Regulatory Compliance | Outside the Box Thinker |

EDUCATION

Master of Public Administration, May 1998
Reubin O'D. Askew School of Public Administration and Policy
Florida State University, Tallahassee, FL

Bachelor of Science, Accounting, December 1987
University of Houston, Clear Lake, TX

PROFESSIONAL AFFILIATIONS / MEMBERSHIPS

International City/County Management Association (2006 – Present)
 Credentialed Manager (ICMA-CM)
 Member, Conference Evaluation Committee (2011-2012)
 Member, Conference Education Committee (2014-2015)
 Member, ICMA Guidebook for Assistant and Deputy Managers, August 2021
 Member, Performance Measurement Risk Management Committee
 Member, Center for Performance Measurement
Georgia City/County Management Association
 Member, Conference Planning Committee (2011-2019)
Cartersville Building Authority, Chairman (2022 – Present)
Cartersville/Bartow County Joint Development Authority
Georgia Public Web Board of Directors (2017-2022)
Downtown Development Authority of Cartersville
Cartersville-Bartow County Airport Authority
Cartersville-Bartow County Chamber of Commerce
Cartersville-Bartow County Convention and Visitor's Bureau
Georgia Government Finance Officers Association
Florida Government Finance Officers Association

CERTIFICATION / ACADEMIES

ICMA Gettysburg Leadership Institute
National Incident Management System (NIMS) Training
Georgia Academy for Economic Development
Main Street/Better Hometown Training
Instructor, GGFOA Insurance Benefits Seminar
Cartersville-Bartow County Chamber of Commerce Leadership Class

AWARDS RECEIVED

Government Finance Officers Association Annual Comprehensive Financial Report Award
Government Finance Officers Association Distinguished Budget Presentation Award

Candidate Introduction

DAN PORTA

EDUCATION

Master of Public Administration, May 1998, Florida State University, Tallahassee, FL
Bachelor of Science, Accounting, December 1987, University of Houston, Clear Lake, TX

EXPERIENCE

| | |
|-------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------|
| City Manager, City of Cartersville, GA | 09/2020 – present |
| Assistant City Manager, City of Cartersville, GA | 2008 – 08/2020 |
| Assistant City Manager/Finance Director, City of Cartersville, GA | 2001 – 2008 |
| Finance Director, City of Cartersville, GA | 1998 – 2001 |
| Finance Director/Assistant to City Manager, Perry, FL | 1991 – 1998 |

BACKGROUND

The population of the City of Cartersville, Georgia is 24,937. There are 411 employees of which I directly supervise 15 employees. The general fund budget is \$72 million, and the total city budget is \$274 million.

The three most important issues facing the City of Cartersville are:

- a. Employee Recruitment – with the labor pool shrinking and unemployment rates at all-time lows, one of the challenges facing cities is being able to find individuals who want to work for my city when the private sector typically has higher wages. Due to this challenge, I have been working with my Mayor and City Council on improving employee pay and benefits to be able to attract the best and brightest individuals to fill open positions. Since becoming City Manager, I have successfully increased our minimum hourly pay for full-time employees from \$12.25 per hour to \$20.34 per hour. Salaried employees have seen pay increases of over 25% in the last five years, while also significantly increasing their benefits. Employee recruitment is going to remain a challenge for many years, and I will continue to fight for good wages and benefits for my employees.
- b. Stormwater Infrastructure – due to the increase in intensity of storms over the last couple of years, we have seen areas within the city where improvements needed to be made to our stormwater infrastructure. I have been working with my Public Works Director on the critical areas that need improvement and finding funding sources to complete these projects. Funding for stormwater infrastructure has been a challenge for Cartersville, and when we received our American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) funds, I obtained approval by my City Council to earmark all of these funds for stormwater improvements. The ARPA funds have allowed us to make headway on several projects which have improved some critical areas, and I am working to fund some additional stormwater infrastructure projects.

- c. Water and Sewer Plant Expansions – with the economic growth Cartersville is experiencing, we are having to increase the plant capacities at both our water and sewer treatment facilities with estimated expansion costs of \$350 million dollars. I have been working with my Water & Sewer Director on financing these plant expansions through reserves and the issuance of revenue bonds. In addition to these significant plant expansions, I am working with my Water & Sewer Director on potential challenges we may experience from per- and polyfluoroalkyl substances, known as PFAS or forever chemicals. Once the Environmental Protection Agency determines testing guidelines, I will be working with my Director on potential upgrades to our plants to test and treat these chemicals.

GENERAL, MANAGEMENT STYLE AND EXPERIENCE

The City of Sarasota is truly a world class community that is family friendly with an abundance of recreational opportunities, growth potential and an excellent place to live, work and play. Sarasota continues to be ranked as one of the best places to live and residents love its small-town feel. There are many similarities between Cartersville and Sarasota, like the number of museums, public art, recreational trails and other activities for families and my leadership experience in Cartersville make me an excellent candidate for this position and fits into my career path. I would be a good fit in this organization due to my experience, leadership, and ability to work with the City Commission, employees, and citizens to continue to make Sarasota a great place to live and raise a family.

I have an open-door management style that allows any employee in the city to talk with me about any issue or concern. Employees throughout the organization know that I will listen to them and that my decision will be fair and honest. I make decisions by gathering all the facts or evidence, weighing out the benefits, and then making a decision that will best serve the employees, council, and citizens of the city.

Employees would state that I am honest and a caring manager and take time to listen to their concerns. They would state that I empower them in their work and give them opportunities to improve their skills through professional training and development.

Elected officials would state that I am an innovative and visionary leader who is highly competent, ethical, great listener and empathetic towards others and well-respected within the city and by city employees. In addition, they would state that I am very successful in completing projects and handling complex issues effectively and have improved both employee morale and the city's financial condition.

My greatest strengths are that I am always there to listen to my department head's needs and concerns, provide mentoring and guidance to help them succeed and let them do their jobs. Also, every city employee knows that I am available to listen to them and take action, if needed, no

DAN PORTA

matter what, because I care for and respect all my employees.

As a conscientious and dedicated employee with strong leadership skills who continues to work hard daily for the betterment of the employees, the City Council, and citizens, a weakness area is perfectionism. My desire for excellence is something that I am continually learning to balance, while I prioritize tasks and set realistic goals for myself and my team, while also acknowledging the importance of quality work.

Annually I have Visioning Meetings with the Mayor, City Council and Department Heads to set short-term and long-term goals for the city, like Sarasota's Strategic Plan. During this Visioning Session I have my Department Heads share the accomplishments from the previous year to show that we are meeting or exceeding our organization's goals. To monitor the status of projects and measure performance, I have one-on-one meetings with my Department Heads throughout the year to see how we are making progress on City Council and departmental goals and to see if additional resources are needed and share these updates with the City Council.

One of my more recent achievements has been to help negotiate a new water service agreement with Bartow County, who is Cartersville's largest water customer purchasing 7.5 million gallons per day. The existing water service agreement has been expired for over 20 years and previous City Managers and Water Directors were unable to negotiate a new agreement with Bartow County, so we continued under the old agreement which was not favorable to the city. Due to my negotiation and collaboration skills, I was able to finalize a new 30-year agreement with Bartow County, that guarantees Cartersville a minimum purchase amount of water plus other benefits to the city in case Bartow County decides to build their own water treatment plant or purchase water from another source. This new agreement is a big win for Cartersville and guarantees us a consistent revenue stream from Bartow County for several decades.

In 1999 we were going through a computer conversion from our old utility billing software to new software, and our consulting company lost some key personnel that had experience in transferring customer utility data. My IT Director and I listened to our consultant who told us they could hire a third-party to transfer the customer data without any problems even though they didn't have experience with the old and new software systems. I didn't think this was the best way to handle this, but I did not push for using a different method and we went with the consultant's decision. This mistake cost us by delaying the conversion, plus errors in data that were incorrectly transferred and impacted us for several years. From this I learned to become a better leader and to take charge when decisions need to be made.

In every organization that I have worked for, I have found that some individuals can work with minimal guidance, while others need some more oversight to complete their work effectively. I have taken time to mentor these employees in hopes that they will learn from their mistakes and improve their work, so that they can be productive. Unfortunately, after working with an individual for over a year, they failed to do their job without major errors and tried to cover up these mistakes, which impacted the city's reputation with some large utility customers and ultimately cost this individual their job. Firing someone is not an easy decision and before I took

DAN PORTA

this type of action, I assessed the situation and made the decision that is best for the organization. I don't feel great about this part of my position but must do what is right for the organization.

Some of the challenges facing the next city manager are improving pedestrian safety by adding roundabouts and improving street crossings in high traffic areas; improving stormwater runoff; addressing noise concerns by downtown residents during downtown events; finding additional funding if tax increment financing for The Bay or the new performing arts center is not sufficient; ensuring that we are prepared for the upcoming hurricane season and completing the City Commission's Strategic Goals. Having experience with road projects like adding a roundabout on a Georgia Department of Transportation road that will improve traffic flow and pedestrian safety; making improvements to stormwater systems; addressing citizen concerns; obtaining grants and other funding to finance large projects; or working with my elected body to create a shared vision and strategic plan are some of the many tasks that I have experience with and makes me an excellent candidate to help the City of Sarasota succeed in overcoming these challenges.

Within my first six months in Sarasota, I will have meetings with each City Commissioner to discuss current issues and concerns, as well as their goals and visions for the city. I will meet with department heads and city employees and will establish working days with city departments to work alongside them, which will help me to better understand their roles and responsibilities. In addition, I will meet with members of the community like the Bay Park Conservancy, Performing Arts Foundation Board, Sarasota County Commissioners, Sarasota County Administrator, as well as other prominent community members or leaders like the Coalition of City Neighborhood Associations to get to know them better so these relationships can grow and be a benefit to Sarasota.

I am open and honest with the media and provide them with answers to their questions. This is the same approach that I take with managing my city as I provide full transparency on decisions I make. There is nothing in my background that would embarrass the City of Sarasota.

I would use social media to communicate with citizens about city events in our downtown or at our parks, share news about our employees, and to keep the public informed about any upcoming changes within the city like road closures. In Cartersville, I have effectively used social media to showcase the city, talking about upcoming events like our 175th city anniversary celebration, citizen academy classes, or positive news about city employees. In addition, I added a MyCartersville app for citizens to report issues like street light outages, potholes, or other concerns that my staff was not aware of, so we could take care of these issues immediately. The app and social media posts have allowed my employees to be more responsive to our citizens and has allowed me to be proactive and tell the city's story to our citizens and visitors and I would bring this knowledge with me to Sarasota.

When it becomes known that I am a finalist for the Sarasota City Manager position, you will not have anyone speak negatively about me, as I have always treated everyone I've met with respect and dignity.

DAN PORTA

In my leisure time, I spend time with family and friends, enjoying the outdoors. My wife and I like to go outside and walk, ride bikes, and travel.

SIX ADJECTIVES OR PHRASES YOU WOULD USE TO DESCRIBE YOURSELF

- Highly Ethical
- Empathetic
- Stewardship
- Knowledgeable
- Proactive
- Foresight

REASON FOR WANTING TO LEAVE CURRENT JOB SECTION

As a semi-native Floridian, who has family and friends nearby, I am interested in becoming Sarasota's next City Manager to help the city maintain its high quality of life, where our residents continue to enjoy a low crime rate and a quiet, peaceful atmosphere. This position fits my overall career goals by allowing me the opportunity to come back home to Florida and bring my experience to ensure we complete capital projects timely, improve the city's stormwater and road infrastructure, while being prepared for hurricanes and to continue serving our citizens. Having worked for the City of Cartersville for 26 years, I feel it is time for a strategic change to a community where I can utilize my expertise and experience to help lead Sarasota's downtown redevelopment, park improvements, ensure funding for the new performance arts center, improve pedestrian safety, mentor and support city employees, while continuing to provide exceptional customer service. As my track record shows, I like to stay with an employer for many years. My goal with the City of Sarasota is to continue this track record and have a solid working relationship with the City Commission for many years to come.

CURRENT SALARY

My current salary is \$209,760, plus 15% deferred compensation and a city provided vehicle.

CB&A Background Checks

**Background Check Summary for
DANIEL “DAN” THOMAS PORTA**

Criminal Records Checks:

Nationwide Criminal Records Search No Records Found

County
 Bartow County, GA No Records Found

State
 Georgia No Records Found

Civil Records Checks:

County
 Bartow County, GA No Records Found

Federal
 Georgia No Records Found

Motor Vehicle

 Georgia **May 2023** – Speeding 80/65
 Disposition: July 2023, Fine and Points

Credit Excellent

Personal Bankruptcy No Records Found

Sex Offender Registry Not Listed

Education Confirmed

Employment Confirmed

Social Media Nothing of Concern Found

**Background Check Summary for
DANIEL “DAN” THOMAS PORTA**

Under the Fair Credit Reporting Act, 15 U.S.C. 1681-1681Y, credit and bankruptcy information are very sensitive and should not be used in the consideration of hiring. The information is included for each candidate because we do not want you to be surprised if third parties raise what they consider to be a concern. Also, some states have limited the reporting to seven years, so any records older than that will not be available in those states. In addition, motor vehicle reports are limited to three to seven years, depending on the state.

**Background Check Summary for
DANIEL "DAN" THOMAS PORTA
Personal Disclosure**

Personal Disclosure Questionnaire

Name of Applicant: Dan Porta

The following questions are designed so that we will be able to make full disclosure to our client concerning your background. Please answer them honestly. Cutting corners or misrepresenting your past will result in you being eliminated from all further searches conducted by this firm. We understand that frivolous charges are sometimes made and that charges do not mean you were guilty. We also understand that you may have been wronged and needed to seek compensation. The bottom line is that we want to be certain that our client is fully informed. If you have any questions, please contact us for clarification.

Please explain any yes answers on a separate sheet of paper.

1. Have you ever been charged or convicted of a felony?
Yes No
2. Have you ever been accused of or have been involved in a domestic violence or abuse incident?
Yes No
3. Have you ever declared bankruptcy or been an owner in a business that did so?
Yes No
4. Have you ever been the subject of a civil rights violation complaint that was investigated or resulted in a lawsuit?
Yes No
5. Have you ever been the subject of a sexual harassment complaint that was investigated or resulted in a lawsuit?
Yes No
6. Have you ever been charged with driving while intoxicated, driving under the influence, operating a vehicle impaired, or a similar offense?
Yes No
7. Have you ever sued a current or former employer?
Yes No
8. Please list all your social media accounts (Facebook / X (Twitter) / Instagram / LinkedIn, etc.) and your personal web page if you have one. *LinkedIn account - Dan Porta*
9. Is there anything else in your background that, if made public, would cause you, our client or our firm embarrassment if it came to light through the press or any other mechanism?
Yes No
10. Please provide a list of any lawsuits in which you are or have been a party either as plaintiff or defendant.

Attested to: *Dan Porta*
Signature of Applicant

CB&A Reference Notes

Reference Notes
Dan Porta

Scott Carter – Fire Chief, City of Cartersville, GA

PII Firefighters - F.S.
119.071(4)(d)2.d.

Mr. Carter has known Mr. Porta since the late 1990s or early 2000s. Mr. Carter was the Deputy Fire Chief and Mr. Porta was the Finance Director. They have worked side by side since. He is the most ethical person that Mr. Carter knows.

Mr. Porta is top notch. He is extremely thorough, very detail oriented, and great at strategic planning. As manager, he took the vision of the Mayor and Council and mapped out the process to achieve their goals.

When hiring personnel, Mr. Porta does very well. He is very thorough in the hiring process, and then he sets new employees up to succeed. You do not always know how someone will perform until they begin work, but that is true for everyone. His decisions are well thought out. He is not rash but when a quick decision is necessary, he does not hesitate. He looks at all the options. He maintains an organization at a high-performance level, with innovation. He accents the best but never remains stagnant.

Mr. Carter and Mr. Porta have worked on several construction projects together, including a public safety complex and two stations. He is a great steward of tax dollars. While he does not give Directors all they want, he funds the departments with what they need.

Community outreach is Mr. Porta's strong suit. He has given presentations to civic organizations and brought a citizen's academy to the City. He is great at listening and is a good facilitator for any idea that will improve the City. He is also a good communicator internally. He keeps confidential information private, particularly if the final decision has not been made. He shares information with the staff at the appropriate time.

When Mr. Porta first became a City manager, he spent a great deal of time in each department to work alongside them. He rode in a garbage truck one day. He was able to learn what the employees needed to provide quality service. However, he does not stay in the weeds. Once he understands how the department works, he steps back and lets the Director lead the department, while holding them accountable and providing the resources that they need.

Mr. Porta led the process to create a city-wide disaster plan. He brought department heads together for input and continuity planning. For any large projects he assembles a team to create the best plan to move forward. He did a great job during the pandemic.

Fiscal responsibility is something that Mr. Porta holds in high regard. His budgets are always squared away to the betterment of the City. He accomplishes the work on time, has good follow up, and gets stuff done. He handles stress well and is never angry. He is a man of faith, which shows. They have had private conversations where they have supported each other in both life and work. Through it all, Mr. Porta remains even keeled, and does not have highs or lows.

Reference Notes
Dan Porta

Mr. Porta's conduct is exemplary and would not concern an employer. A former department head or two that were under performing might have a different perspective about Mr. Porta. However, those invested in the work have no complaints about him.

Beyond a shadow of a doubt Mr. Carter would hire Mr. Porta. Mr. Carter fully supports Mr. Porta and believes in him. Whoever hires him will have a great leader.

Words or phrases used to describe Dan Porta:

- Dependable,
- Ethical,
- Visionary,
- Team builder,
- Someone I would follow, and
- Great support of the Council, community, and city employees.

Strengths: Extremely thorough, strategic planning, goal setting, ethical.

Weaknesses: Public speaking, but he has improved in this area over the years. He is a quiet, humble man.

David Archer – External City Attorney, Archer & Lovell, Cartersville, GA

PII City Attorney - F.S.
119.071(4)(d)2.w.

Mr. Archer has been the City Attorney for Cartersville since the late 1970s. They met when Mr. Porta was hired in 1998 as the Finance Director. They began to work closely together once Mr. Porta became the Assistant City Manager and then the City Manager

Cartersville had a long-term manager who served for over twenty years. Mr. Porta applied for the position, but it was awarded to an employee in the electric department. She left after a year for a higher position within the electrical company. The elected officials realized they should have hired Mr. Porta in the first place and elevated him to the position. At the time they had some significant issues and he handled them extremely well. He is a lowkey person, not a showboat. He does not look for attention or want to be in the limelight, he is a solid employee. He has done an extraordinarily good job in terms of administration and management.

Mr. Archer's focus is with the Joint Development Authority, which relates to the recruitment of industry. The former long term City Manager did not attend many of the meetings. Mr. Porta not only attends every meeting but actively participates in them. He has played a significant role in the recruitment of businesses and industries to the City. He also attends Chamber meetings. He is very focused on his job and the community.

Reference Notes
Dan Porta

When residents are upset about something happening in the City, they call Mr. Archer because he has been in the community for so long. He refers them to Mr. Porta. They have always been complimentary of the way he handled their issues. He has a lowkey approach and he listens.

Mr. Porta is good about keeping others informed. He has been much more responsive than any other City Manager in Cartersville. In fact, Mr. Archer has never reached Mr. Porta's voicemail because he always answers the phone. He responds to texts immediately.

One difficult situation that Mr. Porta dealt with personnel related. An underperforming Human Resources (HR) Manager was causing rifts with employees and City leadership was receiving complaints. She was given several opportunities to correct her deficiencies and did not do so. Mr. Porta met with employees in the City who had complaints. He made the decision to separate the HR Manager from the City, which the City Council approved. He handled the process appropriately, and rendered a judgement that needed to be made.

Mr. Archer is not aware of any controversy that involves Mr. Porta. He is a family man who does his job. Mr. Archer would hire Mr. Porta, he was a better manager than Mr. Archer expected because he had such a hard act to follow. His performance has been admirable. He is efficient, a good person, and he does his job.

Words or phrases used to describe Dan Porta:

- Laid back,
- Competent,
- Efficient,
- Personable,
- Good judgement, and
- Discretion.

Strengths: Good judgment, lowkey.

Weaknesses: While he could be more aggressive, this is not a weakness. He is lowkey and just wants to get the job done.

**Steven Schumacher – Executive Director, Convention & Visitors Bureau, Cartersville-
Bartow County, GA 203-206-7235**

Mr. Schumacher began working with Mr. Porta in 2020 when he was hired as the Interim Executive Director for the Convention & Visitors Bureau.

The Agency that employs Mr. Schumacher is 40% funded by the hotel/motel tax in Cartersville. Mr. Porta works closely with the agency and its Board. Mr. Schumacher and Mr. Porta have

Reference Notes
Dan Porta

worked together on several projects. Mr. Porta is extremely organized, well respected, and a good communicator. Residents are not always happy with decisions made, but he does what is best for the City as a whole. His decisions are always good.

Mr. Porta has done a great deal for both businesses and residents. He grew the budget without raising taxes. He worked with the Council to keep the City moving in the right direction, despite the tremendous growth occurring in both the city and county.

From ribbon cuttings, luncheons, breakfasts, and more Mr. Porta is visible in the community and brings his family to many events. The elected officials prefer to be public facing, but he is very public facing for a City Manager.

Mr. Porta attends the Agency's Board meetings. He is one of only two managers who come to every single meeting. He is very well connected to the Agency. They are currently working on a confidential project that will be great for tourism and is related to a historical building in the downtown area. He is very forward thinking.

Cartersville had multiple logos designed over the years and different departments used different logos. Mr. Porta hired a new Marketing Director and led a full rebrand of the City. It was a significant undertaking. They worked with the community and the new logo has been well received. This logo is visible on trucks and t-shirts of employees, and the community loves it.

Finance is where Mr. Porta really excels. The budget has grown, and the City has a reserve level that it has never reached before. In addition, they have continued to work on projects and fund new parks and recreational opportunities through sales tax. He is always very responsive.

One controversy was an old Firehouse. They looked at retrofitting the building which cost twice as much as tearing it down and rebuilding it. Residents who love historical buildings in the community are not happy now, but they will love the building when it is done. Mr. Porta's approach was practical. They will have a state-of-the-art building that matches the historic ambiance of the community rather than having state-of-the-art technology in an old building. He is very levelheaded and does not seem to become stressed. Some may consider him dull, but he understands how things work and does not let his emotions get the best of him. His personality is exactly what you want in a manager for a municipality.

Mr. Schumacher would be shocked to learn of anything controversial that relates to Mr. Porta. His background and conduct are free of any incident that might embarrass an employer. Some local business owners who do not want competition, and residents who want the community to remain rural, are not happy with the current growth. They might be the only ones who would speak negatively about Mr. Porta.

Hiring Mr. Porta is a smart move. Mr. Schumacher works more closely with Mr. Porta than with any of the other managers. Mr. Schumacher hates the thought of losing Mr. Porta but wishes him all the best.

Reference Notes
Dan Porta

Words or phrases used to describe Dan Porta:

- Intelligent,
- Levelheaded,
- Analytical,
- Thoughtful,
- Proactive, and
- Community oriented.

Strengths: Communication, organization, analytical thinker.

Weaknesses: He prefers to be behind the scenes and could be more comfortable when public facing. However, this has improved during his tenure, and he has put himself out there more in recent years.

Parnick Jennings – Former Chairman, Cartersville-Bartow County Chamber of Commerce, GA 678-767-7169

Mr. Jennings has known Mr. Porta since the late 1990s. Mr. Jennings was a former Chairman of the Chamber of Commerce and is very active in the community. Mr. Porta really listens to residents and business leaders. He worked with others to encourage buy in on tax increases and made sure that the Chamber was supporting the vision of the City and the Council.

One of Mr. Porta's greatest strengths is his integrity. You do not have to wonder whether he is being truthful. He is also very thoughtful when making decisions which leads to good decisions. He reaches out to others to hear their opinions and brings them to the table to build consensus. He shares the positive and negatives of every option, and then makes a recommendation to the Council when the decision is theirs.

Mr. Porta is not afraid to build new structures on blighted properties while ensuring that the historic areas in the community maintain their presence. Cartersville has three Smithsonian museums, which is incredible for a community of their size and has helped to grow their tourism. He invested in the infrastructure necessary to bring the museums to the community.

Working with the public is another strength Mr. Porta has. He has utilized Citizen Committees and holds open meetings. He has an open-door policy and will meet with anyone from any walk of life. When a resident with a very limited education wanted to meet with Mr. Porta about a concern, Mr. Porta listened intently. This man, though not educated in the traditional sense, had a good point about waste pickup and Mr. Porta recognized that.

The City publishes a monthly newsletter to keep the community informed. Mr. Porta also holds listening sessions with residents and staff. He is available before and after the City Council

**Reference Notes
Dan Porta**

meetings if someone has a question or wants clarification. He makes everyone feel welcome at Appreciation luncheons. He has great relationships with Fire and Police Officers, as well as the other cities in the region and the County.

Mr. Porta understands zoning and handles it well. They have had a large influx of residents, and he ensured that the zoning was proper. He did not want to allow a bunch of apartment buildings next to each other without having the infrastructure to support them.

Mr. Porta is very responsive. He returns calls after hours and does not clock out at 5:00. He is very well respected by the staff. When he was not selected for the City manager position, he was supportive of the employee who was. He earned the respect of everyone for the professional way that he handled the situation. This Manager left after a short time, and he was then promoted to the City Manager position. His support of the selected individual created a healthy environment at City Hall. He did his job without causing any issues.

During a real estate convention in the community, a group wanted to hold a seminar. Though it was not Mr. Porta's job, he researched the individuals to ensure they were who they said they were. He takes his position very seriously and is a man of respect.

Mr. Jennings does not want Mr. Porta to leave. Mr. Jennings has worked with fifty cities in Georgia and considers Mr. Porta the best City Manager of all he has worked with. Anyone who hires him will be fortunate.

Words or phrases used to describe Dan Porta:

- Integrity,
- Listens,
- Involved,
- Thoughtful,
- Ethical, and
- Diligent.

Strengths: Honesty, integrity, considerate, thoughtful, provides options along with his recommendation, well respected by all in the community.

Weaknesses: None identified.

Dwight Hale – Former HR Director, City of Cartersville, GA

PII Human Resources -
F.S. 119.071(4)(d)2.h.

Mr. Hale first met Mr. Porta in 2003 when he interviewed for the Human Resource Director position in Cartersville. Mr. Hale reported to Mr. Porta for a time and later reported to the City Manager after a restructuring. Mr. Hale retired in 2017.

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Dan Porta

Mr. Porta ran the budget, controlled the finances, and did an excellent job. He handled negotiations for insurance contracts and oversaw the IT department. This full-service city has close to 400 employees, and he worked well with all of them.

When Mr. Porta makes decisions, he has the good of the organization in mind, particularly from a financial perspective. He is an innovative manager who also keeps operations running at a high level. He has an open door and keeps the staff informed.

Mr. Porta attended Council and community meetings. He was very active in the community, but in an introverted sort of way. He did not walk into a room and command attention, but he was very creative and did his job well. With residents he could find that balance of working within policy to give them what he could, while explaining why when he could not accommodate them.

The budget process was led by Mr. Porta every year. He balanced and aligned it with expected revenue. Not everyone was happy all the time, but he did a good job. He addressed many utility issues and worked with the School District. Sometimes constituents do not pay their utility bills. Mr. Porta worked with them to try and reduce the bad debt write off and collect what he could.

Being detail oriented, Mr. Porta ensured that everything was done. He performs well under stress. In one of the first budget meetings that Mr. Hale attended, an employee, who tended to be volatile at times, began screaming at Mr. Porta. Mr. Porta remained calm and worked through it. He deescalated the confrontation and handled it better than others would have. He never became upset or yelled in this incident, or in any other stressful occurrence.

Some employees wanted a 50/20 pension plan, but others did not. Mr. Porta created three segments which were public safety, administration, and public works. He calculated the costs associated with a 50/20 plan and then let employees vote on whether to accept it or not. While Public Safety voted to pay the additional tariff for the 50/20 plan, the other two groups did not. It was controversial but it has worked out very well.

Nothing in Mr. Porta's background or conduct would concern an employer. Some employees may feel that he micromanages, but he only does so when employees are non-communicative and acting independently of the organization's goals and vision. When Mr. Hale and Mr. Porta disagreed, they talked through the issues to arrive at a mutual decision.

Mr. Hale would hire Mr. Porta. Cartersville is a full-service City, which is unusual for its size. He has great experience and is extremely honest and straight forward.

Reference Notes
Dan Porta

Words or phrases used to describe Dan Porta:

- Detailed,
- Attentive,
- Focused,
- Caring,
- Energetic, and
- Very high level of integrity. You know what you are going to get with him.

Strengths: Very detail oriented, great with numbers, finance, understands city operations.

Weaknesses: Being very detail oriented is both a strength and a weakness. He knows the finances inside and out and keeps a tight rein on them, which is a good thing. However, it can slow the process down.

Sidney Forsyth – Water & Sewer Director, City of Cartersville, GA 770-608-4959

Mr. Forsyth was hired in 1997 and has known Mr. Porta since 1998. Mr. Porta is the ultimate professional. He does a great job. One of his best attributes is that he knows what he knows. He comes from accounting and does not pretend to know everything about utilities. He is not afraid to ask questions or gather input. He bases decisions on the staff's professional opinions and his own experience and knowledge.

When hiring staff Mr. Porta does well. The employees he hired have made the City better. He is very innovative and always looking for a way to improve operations in a positive way. He is not afraid of change, but he does not change processes that are working well.

Cartersville has a residency requirement for the City Manager. When Mr. Porta was hired, he moved into the community to meet that requirement. He makes a concerted effort to be in the community. He always leans in towards hearing the public, which can create more work for staff, but he always wants to do the right thing. He is a public servant.

More so than any other manager that Mr. Forsyth has worked with, Mr. Porta uses a team approach. Mr. Porta is very good about keeping employees informed. They are replacing all the current meters with automated meters for water, gas, and electric. They have around 40,000 meters so it is quite an undertaking. The process has gone smoothly and as well as it could have. The process started years ago, and he is seeing it through to completion.

Accomplishing a great deal, Mr. Porta can quickly shift his focus as he needs to. He has stacks of papers on his desk related to each department and methodically works through everything that comes in front of him. He does not let matters sit and fester. He never shows any stress. When someone is yelling at him, he does not respond in kind. He just looks for the right thing to do.

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Dan Porta

Some projects were controversial that Mr. Porta was tasked to move forward. Also, he has had to make hard decisions related to personnel. One matter was terminating the employment of the HR Manager for performance issues. However, there has been no controversy related to him personally. His only detractors are those who do not have all the information he has, or understand the decisions that he must make.

Mr. Forsyth would hire Mr. Porta. Whoever hires him will have a manager who does things right, timely, and professionally.

Words or phrases used to describe Dan Porta:

- Professional above all,
- Sets expectations for staff,
- Smart, and
- Personable once you know him.

Strengths: Strong decision maker, not afraid to make hard decisions, very intelligent.

Weaknesses: Because he is strict about adhering to written policies, he can seem inflexible. However, he is not afraid to change policy but until it is changed, he will follow whatever is in the books even when it does not make sense.

Peter Olson – County Administrator, Bartow County, GA 770-608-6347

Mr. Olson has worked with Mr. Porta since 2012, though they knew each other prior to this time. The County and the City share responsibilities for several areas, including the airport, conference center, and the Joint Development Authority.

Mr. Porta has done a great job, and the City is in a strong financial position. His background is in finance, and he does a great job of budgeting conservatively. He presents his vision to improve the City, while being respectful of the elected officials and the process. He moves the community forward, and has made improvements in storm water, streetscapes, and traffic.

Mr. Porta works well with the public. He is matter of fact and straight forward. He has a good way of articulating the City's vision. When he became the Manager, he asked for a monthly lunch meeting with Mr. Olson so they could keep each other in the loop. He is very responsive, and he turns tasks and assignments around very quickly.

On joint projects Mr. Porta has provided good input. They are working to renew the six-year County wide sales tax for capital projects. Mr. Porta gave suggestions on the structure of the document, and what they should ask for. He also led the removal of an old fire station that was an eyesore to build a new structure that will match the historic buildings in the area. Mr. Porta

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Dan Porta

assembled the team to move the project forward. The members of the community who are historical minded were not happy that the building was torn down, but it was too expensive to renovate. The City has a charming downtown area. He worked with the downtown businesses, JDA, and the Historical Commission and played a significant role in creating it.

Mr. Porta has not been involved in any controversy, either personally or professionally. Some residents wish the City would do more, but he is working with an elected body of seven members with different perspectives and goals.

Mr. Olson would hire Mr. Porta, he is great to work with. He will be missed in Cartersville, but he will do a great job for whoever hires him.

Words or phrases used to describe Dan Porta:

- Intelligent,
- Reliable,
- Dependable,
- Diligent,
- Detail oriented, and
- Focused.

Strengths: Super organized, very detail oriented, very budget minded.

Weaknesses: He is not an extrovert and could be more visible, but that is more a politician's job and not his job. He attends meetings for various boards in the community.

Kevin McBurnett – City Manager, City of Emerson, GA 678-725-5324

Mr. McBurnett has been the City Manager for Emerson since 2007 and he has known Mr. Porta since that time. They routinely converse over items of mutual interest. Mr. Porta has done an excellent job in Cartersville. They work well together. Mr. Porta always communicates information to Mr. McBurnett on items that will or could potentially impact Emerson.

Mr. Porta makes good decisions. He does a good job with the resources that he has. He maintains the organization at a high-performance level. He seems to be out in the community and works well with others. He is open and willing to work with constituents, even those who are disgruntled and difficult.

The local County landfill has issues with maintaining ingress and egress. Also, the drop off location is usually full of nails and screws which is expensive in terms of damage to vehicles and tires. Mr. Porta is looking to put in a transfer station. They would still utilize County services, but hope to procure a truck made specifically for the transfer station. Items would be dumped

Reference Notes
Dan Porta

directly into the truck, and then hauled to the landfill. He brought Emerson on Board with the idea, and they have been working together to solve the issues.

Mr. Porta is very responsive and calls right back. They usually communicate through text, and he always responds within a day. Due to his position, Mr. Porta does not face a single day without stress. He always does a good job.

Mr. McBurnett is not aware of anything controversial that involves Mr. Porta. Every City Manager has detractors, but Mr. McBurnett is not aware of anyone who has a negative opinion of Mr. Porta. Mr. McBurnett would hire Mr. Porta. He is an excellent candidate who will make any employer proud.

Words or phrases used to describe Dan Porta:

- Strong,
- Dedicated,
- Knowledgeable,
- Leader,
- Smiling, and
- Pleasant.

Strengths: Accounting and finance.

Weaknesses: Public speaking. He does it, but he can become a little nervous in front of a larger crowd.

Christopher McKellar – Partner, Mauldin & Jenkins, Atlanta, GA 404-574-9400

Mr. McKellar manages the annual audit for Cartersville. He works primarily with the Finance Director, but has some interactions with Mr. Porta. They generally communicate over larger items and control type matters.

The audit for Cartersville has gone very smooth. In the first few years that Mr. McKellar oversaw the audit, the City had several findings, but the City cleared them up very quickly. The City has not had any findings in the past three years.

Most of Mr. McKellar's interactions with Mr. Porta are in relation to federal compliance audits which are required when municipalities receive over \$750,000 in federal expenditures. Mr. Porta always provides the necessary information. He is responsive and easy to work with.

Prepared by: Lynelle Klein
Colin Baenziger & Associates

CB&A Internet Research

**Internet – Newspaper Archives Searches
Dan Porta
(Articles are in reverse chronological order)**

Daily Tribune News, The (Cartersville, GA)
February 10, 2025

Cartersville awards bids, approves tower replacement

Author/Byline: David Herron

The Cartersville City Council awarded bids for several departments during its meeting Feb. 6. "First item I got here is the construction bid award for the high pressure system ... essentially creating a redundant loop around that system, which is currently a one-way feed," Cartersville Water Department Director Sidney Forsyth said. After six bids were placed, F.S. Scarbrough, LLC. was awarded the contract for \$1.49 million. One of the first purchases of the evening was for the police department for the subscription from Power DMS for \$11,216. "This is a request to pay our annual subscription for Power DMS, which we used for our state certifications and our police certifications," Cartersville Police Chief Frank McCann said.

Approval to replace the Aubrey Street communication tower was made during the meeting. "It's actually in bad shape and needs to be replaced," Cartersville City Manager **Dan Porta** said.

The work of dismantling of the existing Aubrey Street lattice tower, decommissioning of the AMI base station, construction of the new 100-foot monopole and reinstallation of the AMI base station will go to Equipment Controls Co. for \$136,824. Cartersville City Schools also will reimburse the city \$54,999 as they also are collocated on the tower.

Toward the beginning of the meeting, Cartersville Mayor Matt Santini touted the success of the 175th anniversary the city celebrated in downtown Feb. 1. "I want to once again thank Logan Bagley for his efforts and everybody in the city," Santini said. "All of the departments. It was a perfect day, and Dan for your leadership and helping pull all this stuff together. "It was a great day. It was a fun celebration filled with a lot of community pride and unity — and just people getting together and enjoying being a part of who we are."

At the end of the meeting, several residents voiced questions regarding construction being done on Grassdale Road. Cartersville officials were willing to help as **Porta** asked to set up a time so that they could meet on site. Santini also asked for more information to work with the residents. "Not making excuses at all, but we're administering a project that's a pretty good one and at some level with utilities being moved and all the coordination by contractor, it's got our attention," Santini said.

The next Cartersville City Council meeting is scheduled for Feb. 20.

**Internet – Newspaper Archives Searches
Dan Porta
(Articles are in reverse chronological order)**

Daily Tribune News, The (Cartersville, GA)
January 27, 2025

Cartersville celebrates grand opening of Fire Station 5

Author/Byline: David Herron

The city of Cartersville hosted a dedication and open house to celebrate the grand opening of Fire Station 5 Jan. 23. "This new Station 5 is a very huge blessing for not only the department but the citizens," Cartersville Fire Chief Hagen Champion said. "The station here is going to greatly enhance the response on the south end of the city, reduce response times and give a whole additional element of coverage across the entire city. "There's four personnel responding out of this station daily. So when you look at that, it allows the other stations to stay in-house and provide a faster response time across the entire city because we're not having to pull those resources in different directions."

The new fire station is located at 51 Carter Grove Blvd. In an interview with retired Cartersville Fire Chief Scott Carter in 2023, he described the station as 11,000 square feet — with a 3,900-square-foot auxiliary garage — and a total cost of less than \$8.7 million. "This station is a very huge asset to the south-end with the new developments at Switch, the new school here in Carter Grove and at the corridor of 113," Champion said. "... This station is a proactive approach by the city to get ahead of all those things and really get us ahead of the curve."

Several city officials spoke during the event, including Cartersville Mayor Matt Santini, Cartersville City Manager **Dan Porta**, Cartersville Assistant City Manager Freddy Morgan and Cartersville-Bartow Chamber of Commerce CEO Cindy Williams. "As we all know, the city of Cartersville will most likely continue to grow and develop, and we are excited to bring this particular station on board," Williams said.

Members of the project's build team include **Porta**, Morgan, Champion, Carter, Joe Croft from Croft and Associates, Reeves Young Superintendent Noah Offutt and Reeves Young Project Manager Brent Newman.

Champion discussed the service areas for the new fire station. "This truck will be first in response to Cartersville-Bartow Airport," he said. "It will serve the Old Alabama Road community and the Douthit Ferry Road community up to Pine Grove."

The station also will serve all the way up to The Waterford subdivision. "It will be a citywide response and it will be called in at any time it needs to give an additional resource," Champion said as he spoke about Fire Station 5. "Its primary response is the south-end of the city here off of Old Alabama and Douthit Ferry."

At the grand-opening ceremony, Sam Holladay sang the national anthem and Crosspoint City Church lead pastor James Griffin led a dedication prayer. The Cartersville Fire Guard presented the colors during the event. Toward the end of the program, the department held an uncoupling

**Internet – Newspaper Archives Searches
Dan Porta
(Articles are in reverse chronological order)**

of the hose, signifying the opening of the station. "In a symbolic and proud moment, the fire hose was uncoupled, officially opening the doors to our brand-new station," the city stated in a Facebook post. "Fire Chief Hagen Champion marked the occasion by toning out and notifying dispatch that Station #5 is now in service, ready to protect and serve our community."

**Internet – Newspaper Archives Searches
Dan Porta
(Articles are in reverse chronological order)**

Daily Tribune News, The (Cartersville, GA)
January 20, 2025

Cartersville approves HPF grant application

Author/Byline: David Herron

The Cartersville City Council approved a resolution regarding a grant application for the Historic Preservation Fund at its meeting Jan. 16. "This is phase two of the project that we started last year where we're required every 10 years to update historic research survey data," Cartersville Planning and Development Director Randy Mannino said. "With that, phase two will get into the Carson properties." The city will help with the project by providing a 40% local cash match toward the overall cost.

Architectural and engineering services for the new city hall campus and the block around it were approved. The master plan agreement was with CROFT & Associates for the entire block of North Erwin Street, West Church Street, North Public Square and West Cherokee Avenue. Councilman Gary Fox asked Cartersville Assistant City Manager Freddy Morgan if the concerns and suggestions that the historic preservation commission had were addressed and Morgan said they were. "Between those concerns being expressed with the HPC, we did have a meeting with CROFT and they, again did address those," Cartersville Mayor Matt Santini said. "One of them that they wanted to make sure that the elements of the downtown business development building guidelines were followed."

Cartersville City Manager **Dan Porta** also noted the concerns and suggestions were all addressed.

During the meeting, Cartersville Finance Director Tom Rhinehart gave the November 2024 financial reports. He compared the financials to November 2023. "In the general fund, revenues increased over the last year by \$1.1 million," Rhinehart said. Expenses also increased from November 2023 to November 2024 by \$5.3 million.

Revenue increases during this time period include the water and sewer fund (\$977,218), the gas fund (\$340,466), the electric fund (\$2.3 million) and the fiber optics fund (\$200,961). There were a couple of decreases in revenue from November 2023 to November 2024, such as the stormwater fund by \$13,147 and the solid waste fund by \$88,780. Toward the end of the meeting, Santini was thankful for the response by city employees during the winter weather earlier in the month.

The next Cartersville City Council meeting is scheduled for Feb. 6.

**Internet – Newspaper Archives Searches
Dan Porta
(Articles are in reverse chronological order)**

Daily Tribune News, The (Cartersville, GA)
December 16, 2024

Cartersville receives award from UGA's Connected Resilient Communities Program
Author/Byline: David Herron

The Cartersville City Council recently received an award from the University of Georgia's Connected Resilient Communities Program. "It was a competitive application process," Cartersville Downtown Development Authority Executive Director Lillie Read said. "The city manager, **Dan Porta**, gave me permission to apply on behalf of the city."

Read said they had nine people on a steering committee to help with the projects. "The Connected Resilient Communities program, organized by UGA's Archway Partnership, connects local governments with the expertise and resources of the University of Georgia to address community challenges and enhance economic development," the city of Cartersville stated in a Facebook post. "Participating communities work with UGA faculty and students to engage residents, analyze local data, and complete three projects chosen from a framework of 10 categories and more than 70 initiatives."

Read presented the award at Cartersville City Council's meeting Dec. 5. "They do three resilience projects over the course of 18 months and on the completion of each project, you get a silver, gold and platinum certification," she said. "And once you've completed all of the projects, you're deemed a Connected Resilient Community under that program."

The work also includes students at the university. "Lillie, with the help of leaders such as City Manager **Dan Porta**, Councilman Cooley, Assistant City Manager Freddy Morgan, and City Planner David Hardegee, guided Cartersville through this competitive program, collaborating with UGA students and faculty over 18 months to complete impactful projects," the city stated in the Facebook post. "These included conducting market research for downtown, creating a business guide to support minority and underprivileged entrepreneurs, and researching policies to improve workforce and affordable housing citywide."

**Internet – Newspaper Archives Searches
Dan Porta
(Articles are in reverse chronological order)**

Daily Tribune News, The (Cartersville, GA)
August 30, 2024

Cartersville demos old City Hall/Fire Station to develop new City Hall campus

Author/Byline: David Herron

On Aug. 23, Cartersville started the demolition process regarding the old City Hall/Fire Station building to develop a new City Hall campus. The work is expected to be complete by Sept. 6, with two sections of the structure still needing to be removed at this time. "Several members toured the building before the start of the May 21 Historic Preservation Commission meeting," Cartersville City Planner David Hardegree said. "At the May 21 meeting, there were discussions regarding alternatives to demolition, including saving some or all of the building. The Historic Preservation ordinance requires a redevelopment plan or site stabilization plan to accompany a demolition request. At the time of the Commissions' review, no redevelopment plan was available, though it was widely known that the site would be redeveloped with a new City Hall and with a focus on municipal court and City Council functions. "Following the Commissions' denial of the demolition, several commission members met with the Mayor Santini and **Dan Porta**, city manager, to discuss their concerns and options for saving all or a portion of the building. Mayor Santini and **Mr. Porta** listened to the concerns and directed the project architectural firm, Croft and Associates, to explore options and costs for saving some or all of the building."

The building — located at 19 N. Erwin St. — was built back in 1916 and originally used as a city hall. It later served the fire department and then the gas department's office. "It is listed as a historic resource on the 1994 North Erwin Street National Register of Historic Places nomination form and included in the local Downtown Business District Historic District, adopted 2004," Hardegree said.

Cartersville Mayor Matt Santini weighed in on the demolition. "The city administration and the council have worked for years to find a way to preserve or save all or part of that building," he said in a news release. "Removing a building with that much history and significance is difficult. I know the effort and resources of exploring every option to save that structure in a way that is useful to our community while respecting public dollars. There simply wasn't a way to do that. Our mission now is to move forward and create a new history that we can all be proud of."

Hardegree continued to talk about the demolition. "The Historic Preservation Commission did their job," he said. "They fought for the preservation of a historic structure with a tremendous history of service to the community. Unfortunately, the costs of the alternatives in today's financial climate were too much to overcome. The Commission will be reviewing building and site plans for the new City Hall at a future meeting. "On a positive note, the city salvaged the front doors facing Erwin Street. They will be incorporated into the new building design. Also, local businessman and property owner, John Lewis, was able to salvage several of the interior doors, including one exterior door on the Church Street side for use in his historic properties."

**Internet – Newspaper Archives Searches
Dan Porta
(Articles are in reverse chronological order)**

Porta also commented on the demolition. "The Mayor, City Council and staff are making every effort to honor the building's legacy by exploring ways to incorporate or display pieces of the structure in the design of the new City Hall," he said in a news release.

The city also shared what the new building and space will look like. "The upcoming City Hall campus will include new green space, improved pedestrian traffic flow and state-of-the-art facilities for city departments, the municipal court and City Council chambers," the city announced in a news release. "This transformation promises to be a source of pride for Cartersville, reflecting our ongoing dedication to progress and community engagement."

**Internet – Newspaper Archives Searches
Dan Porta
(Articles are in reverse chronological order)**

Daily Tribune News, The (Cartersville, GA)
August 23, 2024

Cartersville prepares for Quiet Zone project

Author/Byline: David Herron

The city of Cartersville is laying the groundwork for the Quiet Zone project, which has a tentative completion date of early 2025. Public works crews are completing curbing and pipe work, which will be followed by the installation of five Quiet Zones in the downtown area. "The Quiet Zones have been discussed for many years by prior City Councils, however funding for the project was not available," Cartersville City Manager **Dan Porta** said. "In the 2020 SPLOST, the citizens approved funding for the Quiet Zones, which are estimated at \$500,000 per crossing with five total crossings. Quiet Zones will be installed at Main Street, Cherokee Avenue, Carter Street, Leake Street and West Avenue."

The city first posted about the construction Aug. 15. "A Quiet Zone is a segment of a rail line where locomotive horns are not routinely sounded at public crossings, provided certain safety measures are met," the city said in a Facebook post. "Established by public authorities like cities or counties, Quiet Zones help reduce noise in communities while ensuring safety. Train horns may still be used in emergencies or other required situations."

Porta also discussed the importance of the Quiet Zones. "The importance of the Quiet Zones is that train conductors are not required to blow their horn as they approach any railroad crossings that have the extra safety crossing gates, referred to as Quiet Zones," he said. "By not blowing train horns as trains move through the downtown area, it is less disruptive to local businesses and with less train noise, it would be more conducive to build homes, condos or apartments closer to railroad tracks."

The city and CSX have entered into some agreements over the project. "The city has signed agreements with CSX for each railroad crossing and has made the required down payment for CSX to order the materials for the project," **Porta** said. "Per the agreement, the city had to construct sidewalks at West Avenue, Leake Street and Cherokee Avenue and construct concrete curb and extend culverts at the Carter Street intersection. We are completing our requirements of the agreement and look forward to CSX scheduling the installation of the quad gates sometime within the next four to six months." There were several qualifications for Quiet Zones to be placed. "The Federal Railroad Administration states that to qualify for Quiet Zone designation, crossing safety improvements must be implemented, such as crossing closures; medians; one-way conversions; pavement markings; quad gates or signs," **Porta** said. "For the five Cartersville crossings to qualify for quiet zone designation, the city will be installing quad gates." **Porta** is thankful for the community. "We would like to thank the citizens for approving the 2020 SPLOST, which has allowed us to fund this much needed project, and we look forward to getting the Quiet Zones installed."

**Internet – Newspaper Archives Searches
Dan Porta
(Articles are in reverse chronological order)**

Daily Tribune News, The (Cartersville, GA)
August 7, 2024

Cartersville Electric crew provides hurricane relief

Author/Byline: David Herron

A crew from the Cartersville Electric Department has made their way to south Georgia to Thomasville to help with the relief efforts from Hurricane Debby. The electric department is helping with mutual aid through Electric Cities of Georgia. Crews from all over, like Calhoun and Newnan, are lending a hand as the hurricane rolls through the Atlantic coast. "We're all in times of need at some point, especially from an electric utilities standpoint and they used to be kind of handshake deals and they have become more formal as things have gone forward," Cartersville Electric System Director Tom McKee said. "It's always been an industry where if there is a need from another neighboring utility or even with help with utilities across the country — whether it be from a natural disaster or otherwise — there's always been a big group, almost like a brotherhood, that assists and follows and goes out there. "It goes all the way down to the manufacturers that are electric utilities specific. The manufacturers have done a great job in holding to that mutual aid and prioritizing anybody that is in a situation like that, like with the hurricane that is going on right now."

McKee continued to discuss Cartersville's relief efforts in south Georgia. "It is always a local decision," he said. "We decided on this one to help some other folks and that starts with Thomasville. It could continue on to other cities once they finish restoration there, if there is still need elsewhere. "We could continue to send those crews to different areas that are around that area. Ultimately, it is a local decision. The electric utilities department is lucky to have the backing of City Manager **Dan Porta**, who ultimately makes that decision that we are going to assist others in need, as well as the council."

Seven employees, including Zack Crowe, Butch Cole, Tim Storey, Dalton Witt, Rocky Diddle, Parker Martin and Colbie Clark, went down to assist with relief along with four total vehicles. "It's extremely important," McKee said about helping others in times like this. "All utilities really do kind of rely on being able to pull resources from surrounding communities and at the same time, we understand ... the mutual part in mutual aid and if we're ever in that situation by being able to provide resources to those utilities that are in need, if it ever happens in the future that we are in need, we always know we can rely on those utilities to assist us in the future as well."

McKee went into detail about what some of the electric utilities crew is doing down in south Georgia. "They are doing a variety of different work orders to restore power and make the electric infrastructure safe after storm-related damage, but the focus is definitely on replacing broken utility poles and reinstalling wire that came down in the winds," he said.

McKee spoke about what the electric crew experienced with the weather. "While the focus is on restoring power, the safety of our crews is the first priority. With that in mind, they were able to pace and time their travels to arrive just after the worst of the storm exited," he said Aug. 6.

**Internet – Newspaper Archives Searches
Dan Porta
(Articles are in reverse chronological order)**

"They still experienced windy conditions and rain yesterday, while today was a bit breezy but closer to normal."

The crew left earlier this week to go help communities in need. "They departed Monday morning and may be released to come back home as early as tomorrow," McKee said. "They have successfully, efficiently and safely assisted in restoring power to the roughly 6,000 customers affected in the Thomasville area."

**Internet – Newspaper Archives Searches
Dan Porta
(Articles are in reverse chronological order)**

Daily Tribune News, The (Cartersville, GA)
July 26, 2024

Cartersville's new recreation center set to open 2026

Author/Byline: Marie Nesmith

Cartersville's new recreation center on the city's north side is starting to take shape. Still in the design phase, the 53,000-square-foot structure — which is set to open in 2026 — will be located at 640 N. Tennessee St. "This building will provide needed space for our basketball and gymnastics programs, in addition to having an indoor walking trail and recreation space for our," Cartersville Mayor Matt Santini said. "We are also hoping to add an outdoor multi-use trail around the perimeter of the property. This facility will provide recreation opportunities in a new area of the city, and we also believe it will lead to further enhancement of the Tennessee Street corridor and the adjacent neighborhoods.

"This building is efficiently designed, and much of the credit for that goes to our city manager, **Dan Porta**, and our recreation director, Steve Roberts. The three of us toured several recreation facilities and got a sense of what was done well in those buildings and what was left out. Steve's experience with the building of Kennesaw's recreation facility was extremely helpful as well."

Roberts, who started working for the city of Cartersville in April 2023, previously served as the director of Kennesaw Parks & Recreation. "I was at Kennesaw when we designed and built the new center there," Roberts said. "To see the transformation that happened there and the amount of people we were able to serve was amazing. I know the difference it will make for this community and our department. "We have a need for gymnasiums. We have one city-owned gym. We have over 450 kids in our basketball program. We also had 17 adult teams this winter. Like other parks, the recreation center will be an amenity that will benefit the health and wellness of our citizens. It will help extend our footprint into the community."

Santini also underscored the need for this type of facility in Cartersville. "The city has planned for a park or recreation opportunity on the north side of town for several years, and has even been approved by voters as part of the SPLOST list," he said. "We were able to acquire that property about a year and a half ago, and from there we have been exploring possibilities. One of the areas where our city recreation offerings has been lacking is indoor basketball courts. The city currently owns one. This has been woefully short of the demand for our recreation programs and for our community. "This project is being funded from the city's portion of land sale proceeds at Highland 75. The citizens invested in that park years ago, so council felt that it was right to use those funds for projects that will benefit our city as a sort of dividend to that investment. We are also funding our new fire station and new city hall with those land sale proceeds in addition to other funding sources." The new recreation center will tentatively be in the design phase through October, and the city of Cartersville will accept bids for a construction manager at risk until Aug. 23.

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Dan Porta
(Articles are in reverse chronological order)**

"The city purchased this property with 5.83 acres in March 2022 with plans to obtain funding to build the new recreational center," **Porta** said. "We are on track with a late fall 2024 groundbreaking with approximately 15 to 18 months for construction. Based on this current projection, we are looking at the new facility being open to the public by late spring/early summer of 2026. "This project has been in discussions for a couple of years and during our Annual Visioning Session with the mayor and city council in January 2022, a decision was made to move forward with purchase of the property at 640 N. Tennessee St. Since the property was acquired, we have looked at funding sources for the new facility and with these in place, the city council gave the go-ahead a couple of months ago to hire CROFT & Associates to design the building."

Once open, the building will be accessible to the community Monday through Saturday from 7 a.m. to 9 p.m. "It will have three gymnasiums — they will be lined of with nine total pickleball courts, three volleyball courts, three full-size and six side-to-side basketball courts," Roberts said. "We will have a new gymnastics center that will enhance the program. The opportunities it will provide for us to serve this community is what excites me the most." He later added, "This is long overdue for a community this vibrant and will help us come more in line with cities our size."

Porta provided some insight to what the building's second floor will entail as well as how the overall project will be funded. Like Roberts and Santini, he is delighted to see this project get underway. "There is a second level, however, it will only have a walking track upstairs and a viewing section overlooking the gymnastics program," **Porta** said. "We are estimating total project cost of \$23 million and a significant portion of the funding is coming from the city's return on investment in the Highland 75 Industrial Park and the balance of funding coming from the general fund. "The city council has had a goal to enhance the north side of the city with a park or recreational facility, and this new facility will make this a reality. I'm excited that we are able to provide a new recreational facility that will serve all of our citizens and am looking forward to the groundbreaking and final completion of the new facility."

Santini further expressed his excitement over this project and its ability to greater serve the public. "I am proud that we are moving forward with this project, so we can be more efficient with our basketball and gymnastics operations, and provide indoor recreation opportunities for our community," he said. "It also opens up the possibility for new and expanded programs. It will be a facility that all of our residents will be proud of."

**Internet – Newspaper Archives Searches
Dan Porta
(Articles are in reverse chronological order)**

Daily Tribune News, The (Cartersville, GA)
May 6, 2024

Cartersville approves annexation, rezoning

Author/Byline: David Herron

During its council meeting May 2, Cartersville voted to approve annexation into the city and rezoning for the 4.2-acre tract at 144 Cassville Road. The applicant was Old Castle APG South Inc. and Georgia Masonry Supply. Since the first reading, they heard the concerns of nearby residents and added some conditions to the proposals. "We tried to submit conditions that would address their concerns, which were predominantly related to concerns about noise that might be created by this expansion and project," Brandon Bowen, representative for the clients, said.

Council is requiring the site to produce stormwater runoff and stormwater quality solutions. Concrete waste is required to be removed from the floodplain on the property and disposed of properly. "The prior owner apparently dumped concrete in that area, much of which was floodplain, and that is something that has to be fixed," Bowen said.

The zoning changed from R-10 to H-I (Heavy Industrial) after the vote. One resident was satisfied and appreciative of the staff for working with the local residents on conditions and hearing their concerns.

City Council did deny a change in zoning off of Thornwood Drive that would go from G-C to RA-12. This would have been for 96 townhomes. "We met with numerous developers with proposals on this property and nothing has actually ever come through," Randy Mannino, planning and development director for the city of Cartersville, said. The applicant was not present for the first or second readings for the application in front of the council.

Council also approved civil engineering and construction documents for Dellinger Park Softball Fields. The proposal includes the documents needed for the sitework and installation. Cartersville Parks and Recreation Director Steve Roberts said the cost for CPL Architecture, Engineering, and Planning's work on the fields is \$89,500. The school system will pay for the cost for the field house documents.

Dan Porta, Mike Fields and Ralph Miller all received new terms after the board voted to approve them for the Cartersville Building Authority. Their terms will go through May 15, 2028.

The next Cartersville City Council meeting is scheduled for May 16.

**Internet – Newspaper Archives Searches
Dan Porta
(Articles are in reverse chronological order)**

The Daily Tribune News (GA)
April 5, 2024

Cartersville Building Authority approves transfer for new city hall building
Author/Byline: David Herron

The Cartersville Building Authority approved the transfer of 19 N. Erwin St. from the authority back to the city at its meeting April 4. “The city is looking to request that property back,” Cartersville City Manager **Dan Porta** said. “We’re going to move forward on an issue there of building a new city hall.”

The building authority also approved the ratification of acceptance of termination of lease for 19 N. Erwin St. by Phoenix Air. “The city is going to move forward in that building and Phoenix has moved out of there,” **Porta** said. In a letter from Phoenix Air to the city of Cartersville, Dent Thompson — senior vice president and COO of Phoenix Air — stated that as of March 1, all of their property was removed from inside the leased building.

Cartersville Attorney Keith Lovell also believed the authority will not need to meet for the rest of the year unless something new comes up. “I will say the city in the next couple of years will have several construction projects and they are also going to do a new SPLOST,” Lovell said. “It is possible that as a result of any of those individual projects, that the city may want to finance and run those through the building authority. I imagine you won’t hear from any of them until the end of 2025 or 2026 at most.”

**Internet – Newspaper Archives Searches
Dan Porta
(Articles are in reverse chronological order)**

The Daily Tribune News (GA)
March 8, 2024

Cartersville moves forward with new city hall

Author/Byline: David Herron

The Cartersville City Council approved architectural and engineering services for a new city hall at its March 7 meeting. “This is a big swing,” Cartersville Mayor Matt Santini said. “This has been considered for a long time by this council. We looked at doing different things to try and preserve and save the building next door. At the end of the day, not to speak for council but I think the consensus is, we can spend an awful lot of money on a building that would have very little function and benefit to the taxpayer.”

Santini continued to talk about the new city hall plan. “Of all the things on this, the addition of a city council chamber is not the purpose of that building. Yes we will get that, but it’s really because it’s more so for the city courts. And to have more streamline operation to have a single point of entry will be great for building safety, for people that need to come to the city to sign up for services or for whatever reason will have a better point of access in the direction to where they need to go,” he said. “It’s not a decision that any of us take lightly but this is what we feel is best for the city and I’m excited to move forward into this project.” Located at 19 N. Erwin St., the new building will be 15,000 square feet with 5,000 square feet per floor. The building will be used for a new city council chamber, municipal court, customer service area, planning and development and other office space. It will be paid for from reserves, transfers and operating revenues. Cartersville City Manager **Dan Porta** is also excited about this new project. “It’s really exciting what we’re planning on doing,” **Porta** said. “This building we’re currently in is outdated and about 40 years old and we need to get up to speed. We’re going to build a new city hall that’s going to be here 40 and 50 years from now. It’s really exciting.”

Council also approved Croft and Associates to provide architecture and engineering services for the future recreation center on Tennessee Street. “The center will consist of 52,000 square feet with three gymnasiums, a gymnastics center, a walking track and fitness rooms,” Cartersville Parks and Recreation Director Steve Roberts said. “The scope of work includes programming/concept design, schematic design, design development, construction documents, construction administration, and CMAR selection assistance. The total cost for these services will be \$1,448,000. This is a budgeted request paid by 2020 SPLOST.” Council member Kari Hodge was thrilled about this. “To have this coming on the north end of town is going to be absolutely wonderful,” Hodge said. “Thank you everyone for your input and I look forward to seeing it happen.” Members of the council also heard updates on the Friendship Plaza capital project as well as approved the creation of a festival zone for all the events the city will have this year. At the end of the meeting, one resident spoke in front of the council asking about helping the homeless in the city. “I believe that Georgia has a lot of this money surplus, let’s take some of that money to fund it to the homeless shelter,” he said.

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Dan Porta
(Articles are in reverse chronological order)**

The Daily Tribune News (GA)
March 8, 2024

Sign-ups underway for Cartersville’s Citizens’ Academy
Author/Byline: David Herron

Cartersville will present its 2024 Citizens’ Academy every Tuesday from April 9 to May 21 from 6 to 8 p.m. “We’re going to go forward with our second Citizens’ Academy,” Cartersville City Manager **Dan Porta** said. “We had one last year and had about 15 participants. “It’s great for people wanting to know anything about the city. Myself and my department heads come and we take them on tours to different parts of our facilities. It’s a great opportunity for anybody in the city to learn about city government and how we operate.” Each week will be something new, including the water department, fire department, economic development, parks and recreation, police department, municipal court.

Cartersville Fire Chief Scott Carter discussed what residents will learn about the fire department. “We will cover all aspects of our fire department. History, operations and future challenges will be a big part of our discussions,” he said. “They will also be hands-on experience from using extinguishers, aerial operations and maybe even cutting up a car or two.” Carter also speaks about what residents will experience. “They will learn that real-life emergency operations is not what you see on TV,” he said. “They will experience real-life fire service by the things they do and spending time with our firefighters, who will answer their questions and share what it is really like. I also hope they walk away feeling appreciated by us as responders because for us it is an honor to serve our community.”

The deadline to sign up is April 3. “This free seven-week course will cover a variety of topics from public safety to recreation programming and include tours of a few city facilities,” the city of Cartersville posted on its website. “Join us and learn how you can help better support and shape our community.” **Porta** spoke more about what he hopes residents accomplish during this project. “It’s an opportunity to get to know more about their city and get to fall in love with more about what we do and to become as passionate as we are,” he said.

Carter also is excited about the academy. “We normally encounter our citizens on the worst day of their lives,” Carter said. “Projects, like this academy, give us an opportunity to spend time with them on a happier occasion. For us, this is a fantastic part of our job. I can't wait to see you in the academy.”

For more information about the academy or to sign up, visit www.cityofcartersville.org.

**Internet – Newspaper Archives Searches
Dan Porta
(Articles are in reverse chronological order)**

The Daily Tribune News (GA)
January 29, 2024

Cartersville conducts Visioning Session meetings

Author/Byline: David Herron

The city of Cartersville held its annual Visioning Session meetings Jan. 26 and 27 at the Cartersville Public Safety Headquarters. “It was a very productive first day for the Visioning Session with the city council,” Cartersville City Manager **Dan Porta** said after the Friday session. “The departments talked about their goals for the next year and the council heard from them about that. We got into some other areas that we wanted to discuss. “We got into some discussion on the old fire station on 19 N. Erwin St. and what to do with that building. We got some progress made on that. We’re looking at the recreation building on Tennessee Street. We’re moving forward on those two parcels about redevelopment. There was a lot of good productivity today.”

During the last part of the meeting on Friday, the council and other city departments discussed numerous topics, including rezoning opportunities, quiet zone updates, golf cart ordinances and public safety. “Some people I have talked to, there is a love-and-hate relationship with golf carts,” Cartersville City Council member Cary Roth said. “Some people love golf carts and some people despise getting behind them.” Roth continued to talk about golf carts. “When I see families on golf carts going downtown with little kids not strapped in with no car seats or anything, I think that is a risk that we’re taking,” Roth said. The city council also discussed homelessness in the city and some of the issues that come with it. “Why couldn’t we build a shelter where they can sleep on cots,” Cartersville City Council member Alyssa Cordell said. “The churches open up when it’s 20 degrees outside and allow them to sleep in there until the weather warms up a little bit.” Members around the table gave their ideas on what they think of the situation and how they believe they could possibly help with the problem.

Also discussed during the session were quiet zones. “We’re looking at January of next year that it’s being installed,” **Porta** said. “We have funding from the SPLOST, the current SPLOST and we’re good to go.” Along with the quiet zones were talks of vehicle laws with big trucks, including transfer trucks.

Roth gave an example of something he saw recently concerning this. “I was standing outside Coconuts and there was a guy just with his music cranked up to the loudest you can have it,” Roth said. “I walked over to him while he was stopped in traffic because of a train. I went over and talked to him. I didn’t introduce myself or tell him who I was. “I reminded him that there is a noise ordinance. He was apologetic and a nice young man but once the train let loose and he moved on, I heard it come back up. I know that it’s an ongoing battle.” The Visioning Session wrapped up Jan. 27.

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Dan Porta
(Articles are in reverse chronological order)**

The Daily Tribune News (GA)
December 7, 2023

Cartersville touts success at State of the City

Author/Byline: David Herron

The Cartersville-Bartow County Chamber of Commerce hosted the State of the City for Cartersville at the Clarence Brown Conference Center Dec. 5. **Dan Porta**, city manager of Cartersville, presented a PowerPoint to the attendees to show the recent success for the city of Cartersville. “I thought the State of the City went very well,” **Porta** said. “The public anticipated that and were very receptive of what we were able to accomplish and things we were looking forward to doing in Cartersville. The new recreation center off of Tennessee Street, the quiet zones downtown, our expansion for our water plant and our growth in our city overall with our other utilities were very well-received and also the branding was very well-received. I look forward to the full launch of that in early 2024 and I’m excited about that new branding piece for the city of Cartersville.”

During the meeting, **Porta** shared the general funds for the city has increased each year since 2019. In fiscal year 2019, it was \$25.87 million, whereas in 2023 it was \$38.65 million. The reserve fund also has increased each year since 2019. The reserve fund was at \$1.15 million in 2019 and four years later the reserve fund is \$15.95 million. Human resources positions also have gone up the last three years. Cartersville is going into the new year with 381 budgeted positions, up 18 from 2020.

The city will be introducing a new recreation center located on Tennessee Street near Porter Street. The center will have three full-sized basketball courts that will be available for a variety of uses, a walking track that will be situated above the gym, a 12,000-square-foot gymnastics center and two 30-by-30 fitness rooms. The city plans on breaking ground in 2024 and opening the facility in 2025.

The next topic was planning and development, which **Porta** spoke about how that helps the city grow in population. The slideshow included eight properties, three of which included Arcadia Apartments, Everton Estates Townhomes and Parkside at Carter Grove. All the properties totaled 1,168 units and 647 lots. “Some of these are already open and people have moved in so there’s a lot of growth coming to Cartersville that you’re going to see,” **Porta** said.

Industrial and commercial facilities will also be coming into Cartersville, including Switch Data Center, QCells Solar Panel Manufacturing and Riverside GMC Renovations just to name a few. There also will be a new water department facility that is under construction on Douthit Ferry Road. This space will allow for engineering, laboratory, administration, distribution, collection and maintenance. Expansions will happen for the water treatment plant. The expansion will see capacity go from 21 million gallons of water a day to 37 million gallons a day. There will be seven new filters and two new basins. The wastewater plant will also see an expansion going

**Internet – Newspaper Archives Searches
Dan Porta
(Articles are in reverse chronological order)**

from 15 million gallons of water a day to 25 million a day. There will be two new clarifiers, two new holding tanks, a new pump station, bioreactor and additional filters.

The success of the My Cartersville app was addressed. The app, which has a lifetime of 3,300 downloads since its launch in March 2021, allows residents to pay their utility bill, submit a concern to city departments, opt in for text alerts, check out job openings, register for recreational activities and access to the city’s event calendar. Seventy-two percent of tickets that were submitted through the app were closed between a zero-to-three-day window.

At the very end of the presentation, the city presented a video previewing its new branding. “2023 was a year dedicated to reimagining the visual identity of Cartersville, the city we call home,” said Logan Bagley, public relations and communications manager for the city of Cartersville, said in a video presented to the attendees. “We jumped into discovery and research, listening closely to our community.”

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Dan Porta
(Articles are in reverse chronological order)**

Daily Tribune News, The (Cartersville, GA)
August 21, 2023

Cartersville millage rates approved

Author/Byline: James Swift

Both the 2023 City of Cartersville maintenance and operation millage rate and the Cartersville City School System millage rate were approved at a joint meeting on Aug. 17. The City millage rate was set at 2.910 mills while the school system millage rate was set at 13.5 mills. The City millage rate does not incorporate the rollback rate. "As a result, the rate of 2.91 mills is considered to be a property tax increase of 21.40% over the rollback rate," City documents read. "The tax increase on a house that has a fair market value of \$200,000 would be approximately \$41.04." At 2.91 mills, the 2023 property tax rate is expected to generate about \$5.4 million for the local government, representing a roughly \$1.1 million increase over the 2022 millage rate collections. The 13.5 school system millage rate is expected to generate about \$23.8 million. The 13.906 millage rate utilized for 2022 resulted in about \$19.1 million property tax revenues for the system. "Cartersville City Schools is committed to providing the best public education for our children and young adults, we believe our system is an integral part of the marketing of this community to business and industry," Cartersville City School Board President Kelley Dial said. "And we feel like our economic development and the quality of our school system is linked."

As for funding streams, Dial said that SPLOST funds cannot be used to cover school personnel costs. "I think about 85% of our budget is personnel costs, indirect and direct," she continued. "We get State dollars for that, but that is never enough — and more often than not, a lot of times we're ordered to pay some indirect costs that they don't pay for at all." The local school system, she said, continues to compete with other markets within the metro Atlanta area for talent. "One good thing that I think came out of the pandemic is we learned just how essential teachers are and other school employees," she said. "We will never be able to match the money some of the metro systems pay, but we do want to be competitive — we feel like we offer things to employees that the metro system schools do, as far as our culture and living in this beautiful town."

The approved FY '24 school budget, Dial said, incorporated a 5.5% raise for all classified and certified personnel within the system. "There are some additional positions because of the new school and also, we have moved from a model where we used the Ombudsman program for our alternative school and other things," she said. "We're moving that on campus in a situation that has caused some additional costs that we also feel like will allow us to serve those students more efficiently and more effectively." Of the approved 13.5 millage rate, Dial said 5 of those mills are withheld by the State for "equalization" funding for other school systems. "That 5 mills is always taken from us," she said. "After hearing comments and after a meeting last week and looking at everything, we felt like we could — while not going all the way back to the rollback rate — roll back some." An initially proposed 13.906 millage rate would have generated about \$24.5 million for the school system. Cartersville City Schools Superintendent Dr. March Feuerbach told The Daily Tribune News that the roughly \$700,00 differential in tax revenues

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Dan Porta
(Articles are in reverse chronological order)**

could be covered using fund balance. Also approved by council members at the Aug. 17 meeting was the 2023 Cartersville Business Improvement District (BID) millage rate, which was set at 0.846 mills. "That is a voluntary tax that the downtown businesses put upon themselves for improvements to the downtown area and to also put in signage and infrastructure and other such things," Cartersville Mayor Matt Santini said. A general obligation parks and recreation millage rate of 0.400 mills was also approved. "The citizens of Cartersville approved a referendum in November of 2014 authorizing the City to issue bonds to be used to pay for renovations and improvements to the parks and recreation buildings and properties," City documents read. "The bonds were issued with a ten-year payback period — in order to make the scheduled bond payments, the City is assessing a property tax millage of 0.400 mills, below the rollback rate of 0.514 mills, for 2023."

2023 represents year nine of the bond period.

"We've upgraded several things at Dellinger Park, the new administration building, the new restrooms out there," Cartersville City Manager **Dan Porta** described a few of the projects funded by the bonds. "We use that money very wisely."

The remainder of the lengthy public agenda included well over three dozen items.

Also garnering council approval on Aug. 18 were dedication and maintenance agreements for the Satterfield Commons Townhomes and the Bend at Pettit Creek Townhomes projects. A construction manager at risk subcontractor agreement negotiated by Reeves Young pertaining to the City's new water department administrative complex was likewise authorized.

An insurance settlement agreement for water damage claims at 53 Goodyear Ave. similarly received council approval, as was a memorandum of understanding (MOU) with Johnson Controls to "perform a preliminary business case analysis that projects the financial benefits of energy efficient facility improvement measures and operational savings projects."

An architectural and engineering services agreement between the City government and CPL for renovations/replacement of the police department's firing range facility also go the OK from council members. Per City documents, that agreement comes out to \$55,205. A \$90,850 engineering services agreement with Goodwyn Mills Caywood was also approved. That contract deals with the replacement of about 3,850 linear feet of water mains in the vicinity of Chestnut Street.

A Douthit Ferry road widening engineering change order also received council approval. "The service proposal will be subcontracted through THC, Inc. and will cover estimates for this year and next," City documents read. "Fees are more than the estimated amount awarded to the City to pay for preliminary engineering, therefore SPLOST funds will be used to cover the fee of \$6,445.26."

An \$18,000 contract with A&M Contracting — to remove asbestos from a City-owned property at 115 Woodland Drive — also was approved. "The proposed work will be part of the Terrell Heights drainage project and will be paid out of the American Rescue Plan Act funds," City

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Dan Porta
(Articles are in reverse chronological order)**

documents read. "To qualify for these funds, our staff feels that this project would help our stormwater division 'manage, reduce and recapture stormwater' drainage resulting in reduced flooding at this location."

Several electric department requests were also approved, including \$34,711 for a new transformer from Solomon Transformer and \$72,000 for two new transformers from low bidder UTB Transformers. A \$27,421 bid from Transformer Network Inc. for yet another transformer was also approved.

The meeting began with Matt Terry being reappointed to the City of Cartersville Alcohol Control Board for a term to expire on Sept. 5, 2027. Becky Carr and Larry Gregory were also reappointed as board members of the City of Cartersville Historic Preservation Commission; their terms are set to expire on Sept. 7, 2026.

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The Daily Tribune News (GA)
August 7, 2023

Cartersville mulls \$8.4M renovation
Author/Byline: James Swift

Every now and then you’ll hear about sports teams wanting to move into new arenas or stadiums — and the City of Cartersville, at least on a local government level, could be following their lead. Per documents prepared by the Kennesaw, Georgia-based firm Croft and Associates, Inc., the municipality is mulling a major overhaul of the old fire station building along North Erwin Street and West Church Street. The total costs projected in the budget comes in at \$8,490,500. That includes about \$1.6 million set aside for renovations and about \$4.6 million locked in for all new construction. “If the 1916 building renovation is done prior to construction of the new addition, the renovation budget should be increased to allow for demolition, stabilization and some portion of the site utilities, infrastructure, design and contractor mobilization,” the document reads. “The budget number for this phase, 1916 renovation, would be \$2,420,000.”

The local government has mulled several different options for the longstanding downtown facility over the last few years. At one point, the old firehouse building was planned to be repurposed as a brewery; the building was also leased out by Phoenix Air. Croft and Associates representative Jim Croft was on hand for a presentation at Cartersville City Hall on Aug. 3, shortly before a regularly scheduled council meeting was held. “We did look at the existing building and took note of the things that would have to be done just to get the building in good shape to be used,” he said. “But we do have a very good building — with a few moves, opening up, really, two walls and raising a portion of the floor what you end with on the main level of the building is something that would be very conducive to use for office.”

If the local government wanted to expand the facility, Croft recommended that the City tear down a portion of the building that was added in the 1970s. “A lot of things would have to be done to create the best use of that building,” Croft said. “If we were to do that, what we would end up with is, essentially, two buildings — one that is the old building and from here over, a new building.” The two facilities, he said, would not be connected except via vertical circulation. “Which would be this stair area,” he added. “So one of the concepts of how we might use this building is for a council chamber or court ... as we build something, let’s do something that certainly enhances downtown, we’ll do something that can be useful for multiple purposes downtown.” The “original” building, he said, could be subdivided. “It’s actually a very efficient office space,” Croft said. “What you see on the second floor, you would come up the stairs or elevator into this pre-function space — this is a large event space for about 300 people.” The proposed renovations could also include an exterior terrace. “This portion of the building looks over downtown,” Croft said. “It’s a great spot for events, especially for things that might be done outside.”

Cartersville City Manager **Dan Porta** said the renovated facilities would sport a similar look — “a seamless route from the old section to the new.” The proposed upgrades, Croft said, would

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expand beyond the current footprint of the existing 19 North Erwin St. structure. “We have room to do that going towards the street,” he said. **Porta** said the historical content of the building would be “salvageable” as part of the renovations process. “From that standpoint, we can kind of gut the inside and make a new inside,” he said. “The thought on this space, this additional wing is somewhere down the road, we’re going to have to do something to figure out what to do with the old civic center — this could be the replacement, have a community space built in upstairs.”

Per Croft documents, the project would retain about \$675,000 in contingency funding. Design costs for the proposed renovations are tabbed at \$560,000, while “site construction” carries a \$500,000 monetary projection. “We have to cut two openings in the existing brick walls and we have to bring one floor up about four feet,” Croft said. “And we end up with two very nice, very useful, very efficient floor plans.” The “basement” level of the facility, he said, would likely be used for mechanical, electrical and I.T. multi-space. “There’s an external access to that floor already and we’ll just use it,” he said. “And it will be a good circumstance for it ... we’re really trying to mimic the scale, the materials, the detailing of the old part of the building.”

The newly sworn-in Cartersville City Attorney Keith Lovell said the refurbished facility would be a tremendous help when it comes to handling municipal court functions. “We’re already having to look at other options for maybe going to court twice or day or something like that,” he said. “Because the room capacity, if everybody shows up, is not sufficient.” Cartersville Mayor Matt Santini said he was impressed by the early concept designs. “I think it’s a great start,” he said. “It’s at least given council something to think about.”

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The Daily Tribune News (GA)
August 7, 2023

Mission Road sewer project completed

Author/Byline: James Swift

Members of the Cartersville City Council approved a litany of items at a public meeting held on Aug. 3, including the closeout of the Mission Road gravity sewer replacement project. “The finally payment to contractor K.M. Davis Contracting Co., Inc. has been processed for payment,” City documents read. “A reconciliation change order was provided that adjusted the final project cost to \$2,319,917.18, representing a \$68,757.12 deduction from the original contract price.”

From there, the council signed off an addendum to the local government’s Georgia Municipal Association customer service training contract. “We had about 18 employees that weren’t able to make it when we had the training in the spring,” Cartersville City Manager **Dan Porta** said. “And we have several new employees, about 40 in total, that will be taking this training ... over the last couple of weeks, we’ve had at least five positive contacts from citizens for improved customer service.”

An updated hydrology study proposal for the Cartersville Fire Department was also approved. The \$12,500 study, to be completed by firm Croft and Associates, pertains to the proposed fire station facility to be constructed along Carter Grove. “The latest study that we are aware of is believed to have been conducted in 2005,” a department summary recommendation document reads. “We reached out to the original firm, but they have been unable to provide us with the data — the public works superintendent recommended updating the study to include all changes to stormwater regulations and best management practices.” The study cost is a budgeted expense.

Speaking of the proposed fire station No. 5 development, the council also approved a professional services agreement for the firm Reeves Young to provide construction manager at risk (CMAR) services for the new facility. “We had four qualified proposals,” said Cartersville Assistant City Manager Freddy Morgan.

The council also heard a first reading of, but took no official voting actions on, a proposed amendment and restatement of the local government’s 1967 retirement plan, which would allow the municipality to move its assets to the Georgia Municipal Employee Benefit System (GMEBS.) “Moving to GMEBS is a win for the City as it reduces our costs to maintain the defined benefit plan offered to our employers hired before Jan. 1, 2017,” a document summary recommendation reads.

Porta said he expects some changes before the council hears a second reading of the proposal later this month. “The costs are going to go down tremendously moving forward,” he said. The council also heard a first reading of — but again took no official voting actions on — a proposed amendment and restatement of its 2017 retirement plan. That proposal would likewise shift plan assets to the GMEBS. “Moving to GMEBS has allowed us to increase the pension plan benefit

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multiplier to 2%, which helps us retain and recruit new employees,” a department summary recommendation reads.

Porta said that plan, initially, was over-funded. “And it’s continuing to be over-funded,” he said. “But the costs of the City and the taxpayers on every budget year will go down as well, for that cost, moving forward — the GMA has managed about 40-plus cities around the state.” The GMA’s annual return over the last 50 years, **Porta** said, hovers around 8.5%. “And that’s higher than our annual return expected on our pension plan,” he added.

Naturally, those changes would require amendments to the City’s existing retirement plan ordinances. “Some are going away because of the disability policy that we set up back in about 2006,” **Porta** said. “We are going to fall under what the GMA plan is for disability and there are some other changes in there that are recommended for your approval.” A parks and recreation department request to purchase a new mulcher head for a skid steer was likewise approved at the Aug. 4 council meeting. “This item will be shared among departments,” City documents read. “Sunbelt Rentals had the lowest quote of \$33,000 — the request is not budgeted but funds are available in the general fund.”

A police department request to pay IDEMIA \$27,634 for a new fingerprint machine was also approved by council members. “Our current fingerprint machine is constantly malfunctioning and is over 10 years old,” City documents read. Cartersville Police Chief Frank McCann said the current unit has been down for a month. “So we had to make arrangements with the sheriff’s office to use their machine,” he told council members.

The payment of an \$8,222.23 Matthews Garage invoice was also approved, as was an electric department request to purchase two pad-mount transformers from vendor Gresco for \$17,902. The public meeting concluded on an unusual note, with Cartersville Mayor Matt Santini responding to unfounded allegations making the Facebook gossip rounds. “At our last meeting, our council passed a moratorium on certain shops,” he said. “Currently, the City of Cartersville ordinance says that adult entertainment establishments can only be in industrial areas, because you can’t totally eliminate them.”

Despite that key caveat, Santini said some individuals have nonetheless sparked a “misinformation campaign” that the local government is trying to lure a strip club to the downtown area. “Some of us have had people reach out to us to ask if it’s true,” he said. “Well, the bottom line is, it absolutely is not true ... but when nonsense gets out there, some people tend to try to spread that. I guess it’s our part to just kind of shut that down a little bit.”

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Daily Tribune News, The (Cartersville, GA)
July 24, 2023

Cartersville revenues exceed budget projections

Author/Byline: James Swift

The City of Cartersville ended May with a general fund net profit of more than \$7.6 million. At that point in the 2023 fiscal year, the City's total year-to-date general fund revenues edged its total year-to-date general fund expenditures by a \$36.6 million to \$28.9 million margin. That same time in 2022, the City's total general fund net profit stood at just \$2.198 million. "The financials are in very good shape 11 months into the fiscal year," commented Cartersville City Manager **Dan Porta** at a July 20 Cartersville City Council meeting.

As of May 31, the City reported the collection of about \$5.2 million in property taxes. The fiscal year 2023 budget only anticipated the local government collecting about \$4.8 million in property taxes throughout the entire year. The local government also outperformed its FY '23 budget expectations when it comes to local option sales tax (LOST) funding. The fiscal year budget projected the City would collect about \$5.6 million from the revenue source. By May 31, however, the local government had already amassed nearly \$7 million in LOST dollars.

The City also eclipsed its projections for revenues stemming from "other taxes." The FY '23 budget predicted \$9.8 million in revenues; as of May 31, the City had actually collected \$10.2 million — and with one more month in the fiscal year to go. Furthermore, the City doubled its projections for revenues stemming from building permit and inspection fees. The FY '23 budget prediction was penciled in at \$500,000; by the end of May, that revenue category had kicked more than \$1 million into the City's general fund coffers. On the expenditure side of the ledger, the City's total year-to-date general fund personnel expenses — as of May 31 — stood at about \$18.8 million. At that same time, the local government's total year-to-date general fund operating expenses were calculated at about \$7.4 million.

As of May 2023 the City's water and sewer fund posted a year-to-date net profit of about \$9.7 million, while the City's gas fund posted a year-to-date net profit of about \$6.9 million. At the end of May, total year-to-date water and sewer fund revenue was calculated at about \$29.3 million, with fund-related expenses chalked up at about \$19.5 million. Once again, the City's actuals outperformed the FY '23 budget projections. About \$14.4 million in water sales were predicted for the entire fiscal year, along with \$7.6 million in sewer sales.

As of May 31, the fund's water sales revenues were tabbed at about \$16.5 million, while sewer sales were listed at \$9.7 million. As for expenditures, the FY '23 budget anticipated about \$16.3 million in water and sewer fund capital expenses. As of May 31, however, the actual amount spent on such expenditures was considerably lower — just \$3.8 for the whole fiscal year up to that point. Total year-to-date gas fund revenues, as of May 31, were listed at about \$42 million, with fund expenses listed at about \$35 million. The '23 FY budget anticipated about \$27.1 million in total gas sales throughout the year. By May 31, however, the fund's total gas sales

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revenues were listed at about \$36.2 million. The fiscal year budget also anticipated about \$19.3 million in natural gas purchase costs. At the end of May, though, the fund had already spent about \$24.4 million on the expenditures.

The '23 FY budget also anticipated about \$6.2 million in capital expenses; as of May 31, the fund had only expended about \$3.1 million in that category for the entire fiscal year up to that point. Total year-to-date electric fund net profit for the City of Cartersville, at the end of May, was tabbed at a little under \$500,000. The year-to-date revenues to expenditures ratio was almost evenly split — about \$51.8 million in money collected and about \$51.4 million money spent.

The City's total year-to-date stormwater net profit, as of May 31, stood at about \$313,000. At that time, the City's total year-to-date solid waste net profit was tabbed at about \$700,000, while the City's total year-to-date fiber optics fund revenue was calculated at about \$1.2 million. The City held about \$10 million in its SPLOST 2020 coffers at the end of May. At that point, the City's 2014 SPLOST account balance was about \$231,991; its 2003 SPLOST account balance was listed at \$60,313.70.

The City of Cartersville concluded May 2023 with about \$202 million in total restricted cash balance and about \$85.8 million in total unrestricted cash balance. "Unrestricted cash increased due to increases in the water, gas, solid waster, stormwater and fiber funds while decreases occurred in the general, grant, electric and garage funds," City documents read. "Restricted cash decreased due to increases in the hotel motel tax, motor vehicle tax, SPLOST 2020, debt service and SPLOST 2003 while decreases occurred in the American Rescue Plan Act, tourism product development and pension funds."

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Daily Tribune News, The (Cartersville, GA)
May 24, 2023

'Quiet zone' debate gets boisterous

Author/Byline: James Swift

A member of the City of Cartersville Alcohol Control Board took the Cartersville City Council to task at a public meeting held on May 18. Businessman David Holt didn't hold back sharing his disdain for the local government's approach to CSX train-spawned noise pollution. In particular, Holt said he wasn't too happy about the amount of time it has taken for the City to get a "quiet zone" implemented along the downtown rail line. "Everyday, my good buddy tells me it'll be next year, it'll be next year, it'll be next year," Holt said during the public comment section at the tail end of the May 18 Cartersville City Council meeting. "I want to invest money, but I'm not going to invest money as long as this is the only place from Atlanta to Chattanooga where they still honk the horn."

Last year, the Cartersville City Council did approve a preliminary engineering agreement with CSX for a "quiet zone." Then Cartersville City Engineer Wade Wilson said the cost of the agreement was tabbed at a little over \$60,000, with financing available through 2020 SPLOST funds. At the April 2022 meeting, however, Cartersville City Attorney David Archer said the local government was likely setting itself up to incur additional expenses. "The contract as drafted provides that if they have cost overruns in doing the engineering work, that they'll send the City a bill," he stated. "And the City's got to pay it within a certain amount of days or they'll stop work."

In 2021, the Cartersville City Council approved an agreement with Atlas Consulting regarding the implementation of "quiet zones" — essentially, railroad crossing improvements that would not require locomotive horns to sound while passing through — along Carter Street, Cherokee Avenue, Main Street, Leake Street and West Avenue. At the time, then City of Cartersville Public Works Director Tommy Sanders said he did not expect the quiet zones to actually come online for "two and a half years."

Holt said the City has noise ordinances on its books — but he contends the local government isn't enforcing them. "I want to know what you're going to do about it to quiet this city down," he continued. "If I want to spend \$10 million, I want to know I'm getting a return on my investment."

Cartersville City Manager **Dan Porta** said there still isn't a "firm date" for when those quiet zone improvements are schedule to take place. "I keep asking the same question," he told Holt. "CSX is holding us up." Continuing, **Porta** said the anticipated costs of the quiet zone upgrade is tabbed at about \$500,000 — per crossing. "I'm 64 now, hell, I'm going to die before y'all get quiet zones in this town," Holt said. "I'm looking to invest in some townhouses, nobody wants to hear these God-dang trains honk their horns ... as much money as we have, why are we still sitting here?" Furthermore, Holt told council members he was tired of hearing "the rednecks with their trucks" and "thumping music" serenading the downtown area. "Why do I have to listen to

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all of this?" Holt's tirade continued. "I've spent \$30 million in this town. I need an answer, and I don't need SPLOST funds ... y'all need to be held accountable to quieting this town." The City of Cartersville, he said, deserved better. "We don't need the trains stopping on the tracks that keeps all these businesses from doing business," Holt said. "I'm sitting here, willing to make a lot of investments, and I can't do it because I live in donkey land with all these trucks and trains and music going on that doesn't need to happen in a downtown. It just simply doesn't need to be here."

Dealing with CSX, **Porta** said, is worse than dealing with the federal government. Holt, however, said he was not satisfied with that response. "I don't mean to disrespect you, but enough's enough," he said. "Instead of buying a bunch of new trucks, why don't you buy some motorcycle cops in here and get them down here and start giving tickets for \$300 a ticket? Then you'll pay for all those trucks you're trying to buy."

Cartersville City Councilman Jayce Stepp told Holt the changes were coming. "I'd fire you if you worked at my company and gave me that answer," Holt replied. Stepp said the funding is there. The hold up, he added, was because of the planning and engineering through CSX. "How does little redneck Rossville, Georgia, get it done and we can't get it done?" Holt continued.

City of Cartersville Mayor Pro Tem Calvin Cooley said that dealing with CSX is "a different animal." "I think we all value your sentiments and feel the same thing you feel," he told Holt. "We are moving forward with this ... hopefully, you will see some progress that satisfies you."

The Daily Tribune News sent a follow-up email to **Porta** regarding any potential updates to the proposed "quiet zone" crossing implementation schedule. He said that CSX engineering consultant STV has requested more details on plans for City sidewalk plans intended to complement the signal work. "When STV approves the plans the City will receive a force account estimate of the cost of work by CSX to be reimbursed by the City and a force account agreement to be signed by the City," **Porta** stated. "It is anticipated the estimate and agreement will be received from CSX in about three months."

From there, **Porta** said that CSX will have to complete preliminary engineering and submit crossing signal designs. A construction agreement with the City would follow, with the actual construction and City signing and marking process taking about six months. Ultimately, **Porta** said he anticipates the quiet zones to be implemented around October 2024. "The estimated time for completion — approximately 16 months," **Porta** stated. "These times are estimates and the activities performed by different entities could affect the final timeframe."

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Dan Porta
(Articles are in reverse chronological order)**

Daily Tribune News, The (Cartersville, GA)
May 24, 2023

General fund revenues up \$6.8M

Author/Byline: James Swift

Data presented by City of Cartersville Finance Director Tom Rhinehart indicates that the municipality saw its monthly general fund revenues increase by more than \$6.8 million in the time span between March 2022 and March 2023. During that one-year window, Rhinehart indicates the City's general fund expenses likewise decreased by nearly \$500,000. From March 2022 to March 2023, the City's local option sales tax (LOST) collections increased from \$4,164,474 to \$5,553,168. During the same period, the local government's building permits and inspection fees likewise increased from \$624,464 to \$939,363.

Year to date, the City of Cartersville's general fund net profit was listed at roughly \$7.9 million at the end of March 2023. At the end of March 2022, the City's general fund net profit stood at less than \$600,000. "This is nine months through the fiscal year, you can see that we're trending very well," said Cartersville City Manager **Dan Porta** at a May 18 council meeting.

During the one-year window, Rhinehart said the City's water and sewer fund revenues went up by more than \$4.6 million — albeit, with fund-related expenses also increasing by \$171,500. Rhinehart attributed that uptick due to a roughly \$205,000 increase in personnel expenses, a \$721,000 increase in operating expenditures and about \$137,000 in increased transfers to the City's general fund. "As of March 31, 2023, a total of \$1,476,199 in capital expenses were funded with Series 2018 water and sewer bond proceeds," City documents indicate. The City's year to date water and sewer fund net profit, as of March 2023, was tabbed at about \$9.6 million. At the end of March 2022, the fund posted a net profit of just \$5.19 million.

The City's gas fund revenues also increased from March 2022 to March 2023 — by more than \$9.8 million. Over that one-year period, the fund's associated expenses also went up by more than \$7.4 million. Rhinehart noted that the cost of gas purchases swelled by more than \$5 million, with increased capital expenses eclipsing \$2 million. "As the mayor likes to point out, our natural gas costs and electric costs have risen and we've passed those costs onto our customers to try to keep rates affordable," **Porta** said. Year to date gas fund net profit for the City of Cartersville was listed at about \$6.1 million at the end of March 2022. A year earlier, the fund's net profit stood at about \$4.1 million.

Rhinehart indicated that the City's electric fund revenues increased by more than \$5.6 million over the one-year period. "Expenses increased by \$4,005,359 due to increased personnel costs (\$203,000), increased operating expenses (\$124,000), increased costs of purchased electricity (\$2.996 million), increased capital expenses (\$468,000) and increased transfers to the general fund (\$215,000)" City documents read. As of the end of March 2023, the fund's total year to date net profit stood at \$752,016. A year earlier, the fund actually posted a year to date net loss of more than \$850,000. "The electric system, we continue to wait on the nuclear plant to come

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online, which will help us get cheaper electricity in the future," **Porta** said, referencing the long planned — and long-delayed — Plant Vogtle project in Waynesboro. "But it has some additional costs and cost overruns that we're trying to bear."

From March 2022 to March 2023, the city's stormwater revenue increased by \$31,687, with fund-associated expenses increasing by \$13,873. Meanwhile, solid waste fund revenues increased by \$378,340 over the one-year period, with fiber optics fund revenues also increasing by more than \$1 million. Whereas the solid waste fund reported a \$20,534 decrease in expenses over the March 2022 to March 2023 timeline, the fiber optics fund reported a \$145,707 increase in associated expenditures.

The City of Cartersville concluded March 2023 with about \$9.4 million remaining in its SPLOST 2020 coffers. \$231,991.10 remained in the City's SPLOST 2014 account, while \$28,558.13 was left in the City's SPLOST 2003 account. From the end of February 2023 to the end of March 2023, the City's total unrestricted cash balance increased from about \$82.7 million to about \$85 million. Over that same period, the City's total restricted cash balance crept from about \$199.1 million to about \$200.8 million.

"Unrestricted cash increased due to increases in the general, water, stormwater, solid waste and fiber funds, while decreases occurred in the electric, gas and garage funds," City documents read. "Restricted cash increased due to increases in the hotel/motel tax, tourism product development, motor vehicle tax, SPLOST 2003, debt service, SPLOST 2020 and pension funds, while decreases occurred in the American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) and the Drug Enforcement Administration (DEA) funds."

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Dan Porta
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Daily Tribune News, The (Cartersville, GA)
March 22, 2023

Cartersville gets clean audit opinion

Author/Byline: James Swift

Christopher McKellar of the firm Maudlin and Jenkins was on hand March 16 for a presentation on findings of the City of Cartersville's fiscal year 2022 financial audit. "Our responsibility as external auditors is to issue an opinion based on the audit about the fair presentation of the financial statements," McKellar said at Cartersville City Hall. "And we did issue an unmodified — or clean — opinion, which means the financial statements present fairly in all material respects." A government-wide analysis found the City of Cartersville to possess roughly \$557 million in total assets, including deferred outflows of resources, at the end of FY '22. McKellar said the City's liabilities, including deferred inflows out resources, totaled about \$214 million — leaving the local government with a net position of approximately \$343 million. "Also, a substantial amount of the net position is composed of a net investment in capital assets in the approximate amount of \$267 million," the report reads. "Restricted net position amounts to approximately \$14 million, leaving unrestricted net position at \$62 million."

Per the report, general revenues — primarily comprised of property tax and sales tax collections — "come to the rescue of the net cost of the functional areas of operation," leading to the local government ultimately reporting a net position change of approximately \$55 million for the previous fiscal year. "We're unique in that we have all bank and utilities, not just water or systems like that," Cartersville City Manager **Dan Porta** commented. "There's a conversation about reserve balances in all of the utilities, but with that ... the general fund has the ability to fall back on other utilities we have to take to other places."

For FY '22, the report indicates that about 49% of the City's general fund expenditures went towards public safety purposes, with another 17% allocated towards "general government" costs. "If you look at the general fund unassigned fund balance as a percentage of expenditures, it's approximately 28.4%," McKellar said. "And then if you look at total fund balance as a percentage of expenditures, it's approximately 38%." McKellar noted that all of the City's proprietary funds posted positive net cash flows for operations. "Which is good," he said, "it can help you support general fund activities."

A review of the City's accounting policies indicated that no "significant or unusual transactions or significant accounting policies in controversial or emerging areas for which there is a lack of authoritative guidance or consensus" were reported in FY '22. Nor did the review observe any "disagreements with management" concerning the application of significant accounting principles or the basis for management's judgements on significant matters. "We had no past adjustments, so all adjustments that were noted by us or the City have been posted to the financial statements," McKellar said.

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As for recommendations, the report does address the City's records retention practices. "During our testing of pension refunds, we noted the City could not locate the signed authorization forms for two payments," the report reads. "We recommend that the City implement controls to have all authorization forms in the personnel files." McKellar noted that those forms were "really old," adding that the authorizations may have simply been misplaced. "It wasn't anything material," he said. "It didn't affect any of the liability or anything like that."

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Dan Porta
(Articles are in reverse chronological order)**

Daily Tribune News, The (Cartersville, GA)
February 22, 2023

Council approves opioid settlement resolution

Author/Byline: James Swift

Members of the Cartersville City Council voted Feb. 16 to approve a resolution allowing Cartersville City Manager **Dan Porta** to sign "all relevant documents" related to a national opioid settlement agreement with several major companies — including Walmart, Walgreens and CVS. "The governmental entity shall, within 14 days of the reference date and prior to the filing of the consent judgment, file a request to dismiss with prejudice any released claims that it has filed," a special district settlement participation form reads. "With respect to any released claims pending in 'In re National Prescription Opiate Litigation,' the governmental entity authorized the MDL plaintiffs' executive committee to execute and file on behalf of the governmental entity a stipulation of dismissal with prejudice."

The approved resolution also involves pharmaceutical companies Allergan and Teva. "By agreeing to the terms of the Allergan settlement and becoming a releasor, the governmental entity is entitled to benefits provided therein, including, if applicable, monetary payments beginning after the effective date," City documents read. "As a releasor, the governmental entity hereby absolutely, unconditionally and irrevocably covenants not to bring, file, or claim — or to cause, assist in bringing or permit to be brought, filed or claimed — or to otherwise seek to establish liability for any released claims against any released entity in any forum whatsoever."

Under the agreement, the City of Cartersville is allowed to use any monies obtained via the settlement "solely for the purposed provided therein." Cartersville Assistant City Attorney Keith Lovell said just how much money the local government can expect to actually see out of the agreement — if any — remains undetermined. "As the settlement sits right now, we don't know how much, but the City would directly receive money from the settlement," he told council members at a work session gathering on Feb. 16. "We have heard, however, that the attorney general's office has a provision in there that would allow the State to opt in and receive all of the money, and then they could distribute it however they wanted to." Lovell said he doesn't expect a decision to come out of the State attorney general's office until at least next month. "If the State decides to distribute it locally or for the money to go directly to the City, we've got to sign off on the settlement," he said. The Bartow County government approved a similar resolution with the five parties in January.

Council members also approved a contract with Womack Custom Homes and JB Henderson Properties, Inc. for the sale of City-owned property at 178 West Main Street. Per City documents, the City is selling the former police station building for \$550,000. "The purchase of the property shall be closed on or before June 16, 2023," the agreement reads. The purchasers of the property have expressed an interest in building a residential development at the site. "As part of the contract, they're going to have to bring back plans as they get further along and make sure council is aware of that and approves those," **Porta** said. The project schedule for the

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Dan Porta
(Articles are in reverse chronological order)**

development of the product pinpoints June 30 as the date for when land disturbance permits may be issued, with the Cartersville City Council tentatively set to consider final construction plans on Aug. 3. The City estimates the project will take until late 2024 to be constructed, with issuance of a certificate of occupancy tabbed for January 2025. Prior to demolition, **Porta** said the City would like to use the existing building as a fire training site. The Cartersville Police Department, he continued, would also like to use the facility for SWAT training before it is razed.

Council members also approved a \$98,700 request from the City water department to pay firm Hazen and Sawyer Engineering to conduct a sewer system evaluation at the Feb. 16 public meeting. City of Cartersville Water Department Director Sidney Forsyth said the evaluation is not a budgeted item, but funding is available for the study via water department revenues. "This is due to the pending industries coming into the city, or the county, rather," he said. "The wastewater plant will be in need of capacity expansion ... it will update our master plan for the wastewater plant and also assess our network."

From there, the council approved another water department request to pay the same firm \$547,000 for engineering services related to westside feeder improvements. "The west side of the water system needs a larger diameter transmission main to improve water distribution system reliability," a department summary recommendation reads. "The route for the proposed 36-inch water main would essentially follow Nancy Creek from Burnt Hickory Road at Highway 113 to Highway 41 at Mac Johnson Road." As was the case with the previous item, Forsyth said the expense is not budgeted, although funding is available through department revenues. **Porta** said the City has discussed a possible cost-sharing agreement with Bartow County, as well as possibly obtaining State or federal funding for the project.

Council also approved a water department request to pay vendor Chalmers and Kubeck \$10,750 to replace an actuator at the municipal water pollution control plant, as well as a gas department request to pay Consolidated Pipe and Supply of Lawrenceville, Georgia, \$8,157 for eight-inch valves.

The council also voted to approve the resignation of Tom Gilliam from his role as the director of the City of Cartersville Parks and Recreation Department at the Feb. 16 meeting. "At the same time, I would like to appoint James Gordy, who retired from us several years ago, as the interim parks and recreation director," **Porta** said. "With an effective date of Feb. 17 ... he will step in and help me work with the parks and rec department as we advertise and successfully find a new director."

**Internet – Newspaper Archives Searches
Dan Porta
(Articles are in reverse chronological order)**

Insurance Newsnet (USA)
January 31, 2023

Georgia city scammed out of \$455K
Author/Byline: The Daily Tribune News

Cartersville City Manager **Dan Porta** told The Daily Tribune News that the local government issued nearly half a million dollars to an individual in Illinois fraudulently claiming to be a contractor last year. "The individual has cashed a total of four checks in the amount of \$455,285.47," **Porta** said in an email statement on Jan. 27. "A stop payment was issued on the fifth check before the individual was able to receive these funds."

In mid-January, The Daily Tribune News obtained documents indicating the City of Cartersville had issued almost \$120,000 to the Illinois resident. In an email statement from late December, **Porta** said the recipient of the ill-gotten check was a person claiming to represent K.M. Davis Contracting Co., a firm that is conducting sewer line improvements along Mission Road. "Based upon email communication with our accounts payable clerk, the address for checks to pay K.M. Davis Contracting Co. were changed to a Naperville, Illinois, address and five checks over a several month period were sent to this address," **Porta** stated in the email.

The City, however, wasn't contacted by an actual representative of K.M. Davis Contracting Co. concerning the missing payments until mid-December of last year. "Chief Frank McCann's investigators are working this case, but as of now it looks like the first check issued to the criminal in the amount of \$119,552.82 is a loss to the City in which I will be filing an insurance claim to, hopefully, recoup most of this loss," **Porta** stated. "The other four checks were cashed within the last 60 days and Ameris Bank (the City's bank) are treating these as fraudulent and state that we should get our money back."

As of Jan. 27, **Porta** said the City is not aware of any arrests being made in connection with the fraud case. "At this time, Truist Bank has notified us they will reimburse us for the first check in the amount of \$119,662.82, but we have not received this reimbursement as of today," **Porta** said. "The remaining three checks were issued through Ameris Bank who the City switched to for banking services and Ameris is pursuing reimbursement for these three checks in the amount of \$335,622.65, but at this time we have not received confirmation of when we will receive reimbursement for these checks."

In the interim, **Porta** said the City's finance department has drafted new internal policies "which will be reviewed and implemented within the next month to help in preventing this from happening again." Despite the incident, **Porta** said the fraud case has not resulted in any slowdowns for the scheduled Mission Road sewer work. "The contractor has received payment for all outstanding invoices," he said, "and has continued to work on this project without any delay."

**Internet – Newspaper Archives Searches
Dan Porta
(Articles are in reverse chronological order)**

The Daily Tribune News (GA)
April 25, 2023

Parks and rec ordinance amendments approved

Author/Byline: James Swift

Members of the Cartersville City Council voted April 20 to approve a series of amendments to the local government’s parks and recreation ordinance. Among other revisions, it changes the hours for public parking within City-owned amenities and prohibits certain activities from taking place on park grounds. “We’re also talking about no drones, no aerial stuff,” Cartersville City Manager **Dan Porta** said. “And also, no metal detecting out there, because we have Indian artifacts.” The amended ordinance also prohibits the use of paragliders and paramotors within City parks. Under the amended ordinance, the parking of vehicles within City-owned amenities between the hours of midnight and 5 a.m. is prohibited.

Yet another revision refines the definition of what constitutes “disorderly conduct” within such amenities, City of Cartersville Assistant City Attorney Keith Lovell noted. Those “breaches of peace” include “jostling or roughly crowding persons unnecessarily,” “causing or risking public inconvenience, annoyance or alarm,” and “making an obscene communication or display.” The council also heard a first reading of — but took no official voting actions on — a proposed amendment to the City’s alcohol ordinance.

The City of Cartersville Downtown Development Authority (DDA) proposes a revision that, per a department summary recommendation document, has “the goal of providing JZ’s Taste of Georgia with a path for keeping their current business open.” DDA Executive Director Lillie Read said the proposed amendment would add “wine and craft beer tasting rooms” as a permitted business type within Cartersville’s downtown district. “The amendment’s going to allow a business under this designation to have 75% of their sales of wine and malt beverages for consumption on premise,” she told the council, “25% of their sales for retail purposes, including package sales off premise.” The City of Cartersville Alcohol Control Board recommended that the proposed ordinance amendment be denied. Cartersville Mayor Matt Santini raised concerns about possible “unintended consequences” arising from the ordinance revision. “I think part of our responsibilities is to make sure that businesses thrive,” he said. “One of the things that I originally proposed was that it would be applicable to businesses that sold exclusively products that were made in Georgia — or some type of restriction, or something that would apply to the intended person to help.” Lovell, however, said that he did not believe that the City could put that in the ordinance. “It might trigger some violations of the Interstate Commerce Clause,” he responded.

The council is slated to hear a second reading of the ordinance amendment — and vote on the item — at a public meeting slated for 7 p.m. on May 4 at 10 North Public Square. The council heard another first reading — for a special use permit request from applicant Duncan Auto Sales, Inc., for property at 401 and 403 North Tennessee St. — on April 20. “The expansion will include additional parking and use of a private garage for repairing cars,” a department summary

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Dan Porta
(Articles are in reverse chronological order)**

recommendation document reads. The City of Cartersville Planning Commission voted 5-0 to recommend the special use permit be approved. “It is paved, there is curb and gutter and sidewalk and asphalt right up to the sidewalk,” City of Cartersville Planning and Development Director Randy Mannino told the council. “There is no development, it is to utilize the existing facility as is.” At the April 20 meeting the council also approved a resolution for the Good Neighbor Homeless Shelter to apply for grant funding via the Georgia Department of Community Affairs. The total grant amount would come in at \$140,000, with half of the funding going towards a men’s shelter and the other half going towards a women’s/families shelter.

Elsewhere on the agenda, members of the city council voted to approve a gas department request to purchase two trucks from Lavonia, Georgia-based Ed Murdock Superstore for \$106,761. “These trucks were to be budgeted in the upcoming year, but with the current shortage of vehicles, we believe these should be purchased now to mitigate long delivery times,” a department summary recommendation document reads. “These are not budgeted in the current year but can be purchased with gas revenues.”

Likewise approved by council was a fire department request to purchase a replacement air compressor from Municipal Equipment Co. for \$57,606.07 — with an extended warranty bringing the total price of the acquisition to \$61,127.61. “This air compressor has a cascade system used to fill firefighters’ self-contained breathing apparatus air bottles,” a department summary recommendation document reads. “This unit will replace one the that has been in service since 2002.” The council also signed off on emergency fire truck repairs totaling a little over \$10,000.

A water department request seeking \$46,882.92 for lift station pump repairs was also authorized. The vendor for the repairs is sole source service provider and manufacturer Xylem Water Solutions USA, Inc. “One of two sewer lift station submersible pumps serving the area east of I-75 on Main Street has failed and needs major repair or replacement,” a department summary recommendation document reads. “It is the water department’s intention to replace this entire lift station within the next fiscal year, as it was not designed for the demand of the development in this area and the current pumps would be inadequate for the new lift station.”

A gas department “actual cost” agreement and resolution was also approved. “On Sept. 15, 2022, the city council approved an actual cost utility agreement with the Georgia Department of Transportation (GDOT) whereas GDOT has agreed to reimburse the City those costs associated with the relocation of existing natural gas facilities within a prescribed easement in conflict with the State Route 293/ Kingston Highway at the Dykes Creek road construction project,” City documents read. “GDOT has since revised the actual cost utility agreement by adding language associated with the Buy America requirements of the federal regulations.”

The revision sees 9.82% of the total construction costs associated with the relocations being reimbursed to the local government. Per City estimates, that comes out to about \$28,614.99. Council members also approved a final adjustment change order related to water treatment plant upgrades. “The contracted price with East Electrical Contractors, Inc. was \$384,660,” a

**Internet – Newspaper Archives Searches
Dan Porta
(Articles are in reverse chronological order)**

department summary recommendation document reads. “The final pay application and change order is for \$334,660.” The \$50,000 decrease represents the “unused contingencies” in the project. “On July 1, 2021, council approved a replacement upgrade to the 2,400-volt switchgear for high service pumps No. 3 and No. 4,” City documents read. “After numerous delays in manufacture and supply, the project has been completed.”

Two items were late editions to the public agenda. One gives the City water department a right of entry for a residence next to a potential water facility. Th other pertains to a proposed feasibility study examining sidewalk expansion in the Mission Road corridor. “We have a contract for us with Southeast Engineering that will do this study for approximately \$17,000,” **Porta** said. “It’s a SPLOST 2020 funded item ... it will actually allow us to get the paperwork necessary to apply for a State Transportation Alternatives Program (TAP) grant later on this year when they open up that window.”

**Internet – Newspaper Archives Searches
Dan Porta
(Articles are in reverse chronological order)**

Cobb Chamber (GA)
October 19, 2022

Croy receives project of the year award from statewide aviation association
Author/Byline: Cobb Chamber

Georgia-based, full-service consulting firm Croy was recently named the Project of the Year award recipient during the Georgia Airports Association (GAA) 2022 Annual Conference, in Savannah, Georgia. Croy received the award in partnership with the Cartersville-Bartow County Airport for runway safety improvements to meet FAA Runway Safety Area (RSA) requirements, the project's second award to-date. "It is such an honor to receive this Project of the Year award from the Georgia Airports Association," said Cartersville City Manager **Dan Porta**. "From the beginning, we knew this project would be a challenging, but necessary one as we have one of the top ten busiest airports in the state. With Croy at the helm, we were able to complete this project with limited negative impact to our airport, which was a huge success."

The Cartersville-Bartow County Airport runway safety improvements project brought the runway up to the FAA Runway Safety Area (RSA) requirements with the use of an innovative new technology, Engineered Material Arresting System (EMAS). EMAS is a passive safety system that quickly de-accelerates an aircraft and brings it to a safe stop in case of an overrun. When needed, the system reduces the RSA demands and successfully brings an aircraft to a safe stop. Additionally, EMAS increases sustainability by reducing the environmental footprint typically needed for airports and by being completely comprised of recycled material. The installation of the EMAS system made the Cartersville-Bartow County Airport only the second airport in the state of Georgia to receive this cutting-edge technology. "At Croy, we consistently push our folks to think outside the box for our clients," said Croy's Executive Vice President Rebecca Collins, PE. "We're proud to work with the Cartersville-Bartow County Airport to find a solution that worked for all parties involved. I'm so proud of our team and this award-winning project."

Earlier this year, the Cartersville-Bartow County Airport was recognized with an Engineering Excellence Merit Award at the annual Georgia Engineering Awards, hosted by the American Council of Engineering Companies of Georgia (ACEC Georgia) and Georgia Society of Professional Engineers (GSPE).

**Internet – Newspaper Archives Searches
Dan Porta
(Articles are in reverse chronological order)**

The Daily Tribune News (GA)
October 1, 2022

City pays \$85K in discrimination settlement

Author/Byline: James Swift

An open records request filed by The Daily Tribune News reveals that the City of Cartersville paid out \$85,000 as part of a United States Equal Employment Opportunity Commission (EEOC) settlement agreement last month. As part of the settlement agreement dated Sept. 1, the local government was ordered to pay \$34,000 to Atlanta-based attorney Andrew Salman and \$51,000 to April D’An Tolbert — the City’s former human resources director. Per the agreement document, Tolbert was entitled to compensatory damages due to “anxiety, humiliation, pain and suffering, embarrassment, mental anguish and severe emotional distress.” An EEOC notice emailed to Cartersville Mayor Matt Santini on April 6, 2021, indicates that Tolbert’s charge of employment discrimination was based on alleged violations of the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) and involved issues of “constructive discharge and reasonable accommodation” spanning from Nov. 6, 2020, to Jan. 20, 2021. The official EEOC charge of discrimination, digitally signed by Tolbert on April 5, 2021, indicates the complainant was hired by the local government for a human resources director position in November 2017. “In early November 2020, I became ill and was hospitalized,” Tolbert stated. “On Nov. 5, 2020, I was released from the hospital. On Nov. 6, 2020, I spoke with the city manager and requested to have the flexibility of working from home. The city manager denied my request and I returned to the office on Nov. 16, 2020.”

On Nov. 18, Tolbert said she requested a meeting with Cartersville City Manager **Dan Porta** — with legal counsel for the local government present. That meeting, Tolbert stated, never happened. “On Nov. 19, 2020, I learned that the employees of the IT department were sent home to work remotely because a spouse of an employee tested positive for COVID-19,” the charge continues. “The city manager did not inform me of this situation and I felt that my health was at risk. As a result, I went on FMLA on Nov. 19, 2020, and was scheduled to return to work on Jan. 19, 2021.” Tolbert indicates she resigned from the position on Jan. 20, 2021, “because the city manager denied my request to work remotely as an accommodation for my disability.”

The documents provided as part of the open records request do not explicitly describe Tolbert’s disability. “The releasor agrees and covenants that the releasor has not and will not at any time apply or reapply for a position of employment or independent contractor relationship with or seek or accept assignment to the releasee, either directly or through a third-party company,” the employment separation terms of the EEOC settlement agreement reads. The settlement also includes a covenant that bars Tolbert from suing the City of Cartersville “upon any claim released herein or participate in any way in any suit or proceeding or execute, seek to impose, collect or recover upon or otherwise enforce or accept any judgement, decision, award, warranty or attachment upon any claim released herein.”

**Internet – Newspaper Archives Searches
Dan Porta
(Articles are in reverse chronological order)**

The settlement agreement also provides that Tolbert will hold the City and its insurers harmless from “any and all claims, liens, Medicare conditional payments and rights to payment, known or unknown.” The settlement agreement also includes several provisions related to confidentiality and non-disparagement. “The releasor will not make any disclosure of any kind to any person or organization concerning the terms of this agreement, the settlement discussions leading up to the agreement, the sums and benefits paid as consideration thereof or the facts underlying the claims against the releasee,” the agreement stipulates. “The releasor further agrees that the releasee will not initiate discussions with others regarding the settlement of this matter and will not make statements to others that indicate, in any way, that the releasor was paid monies as part of the resolution of this matter.”

The agreement further prohibits Tolbert from making any “critical and/or derogatory” comments about the City of Cartersville, its operations or its employees on the internet or social media services. “The releasor acknowledges that such criticism or comments constitute a material breach of this agreement,” the documents state. That EEOC settlement agreement is accompanied by a conciliation agreement signed by both Tolbert and City of Cartersville officials. “The EEOC agrees not to use the above-referenced charge as the jurisdictional basis for filing a lawsuit against the respondent,” the general provisions section of the agreement reads. “However, nothing in this agreement shall be construed to preclude the EEOC from bringing suit to enforce this agreement in the event that the respondent fails to perform the promises and representations contained herein.”

The charging party’s relief section of the conciliation agreement requires any and all references from the respondent to be made to **Porta**, with the condition that “the response to any such reference inquiry will be limited to the charging party’s job position and the dates of employment with respondent.” The agreement also explicitly forbids the City from making reference “to the matters arising under or relating to” the aforementioned EEOC charge. As part of the agreement, the City of Cartersville is required to provide training to all managers, supervisors and human resources staff on Title I of the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990 — with a “special emphasis on reasonable accommodation” — within 90 days of the effective date of the conciliation agreement.

Under the agreement, the City of Cartersville is also required to create a “reasonable accommodation policy” and distribute it to all local government employees. The conciliation agreement also irons out reporting responsibilities for the City of Cartersville in the wake of the EEOC charge. “Within 30 days of completion of the training agreed upon as described in Section III, the respondent shall provide the EEOC with written confirmation that it has provided the training, including by providing a signed acknowledgement by all attendees,” the document reads.

**Internet – Newspaper Archives Searches
Dan Porta
(Articles are in reverse chronological order)**

Daily Tribune News, The (Cartersville, GA)
August 19, 2022

Cartersville, CCSS millage rates approved
Author/Byline: James Swift

Members of the Cartersville City Council voted Aug. 18 to approve the 2022-2023 maintenance and operation property tax rate at 2.910 mills. "The rate of 2.91 mills is considered to be a property tax increase of 12.40% over the rollback rate," a department summary recommendation document reads. "The tax increase on a house that has a fair market value of \$125,000 would be approximately \$16.05." The millage rate was also set at 2.910 in 2021.

Per City projections, Cartersville's net digest increased from \$1,265,793,999 to \$1,467,708,402 over the last year. "If your home is assessed at \$500,000 and you have a homestead exemption, you're only taxed at \$200,000," Cartersville City Manager **Dan Porta** said. "The rollback rate would have been 2.589 mills." The financial toll of exemptions also increased from 2021 to 2022, going from \$93,078,266 to \$110,027,244. "At 2.91, that's \$582 on that \$500,000 assessed value," **Porta** continued. "You divide that over 365 days, that \$582, it's \$1.59 per day."

The City expects to generate \$4,271,031 through property taxes with the 2022 millage rate in place — a roughly 16% increase in collections from 2021.

"Here's what you get for that \$500,000 value," **Porta** said. "What you get coming out of the general fund, you get the downtown development authority, the City funds that, so you have downtown events. You have public works — streets, sidewalks, that we provide everyday. The airport we fund, police and fire, you get those services ... hopefully you never need them, but they're on call 24/7."

**Internet – Newspaper Archives Searches
Dan Porta
(Articles are in reverse chronological order)**

Daily Tribune News, The (Cartersville, GA)
March 16, 2022

Emerson, Cartersville mull de-annexation agreement

Author/Byline: James Swift

Cartersville City Manager **Dan Porta** made an appearance at a March 14 Emerson City Council work session to discuss plans for a proposed intergovernmental de-annexation agreement. The potential property exchange would entail several parcels along Joe Frank Harris Parkway and Allatoona Dam Road near the Cartersville water treatment plant facility. "It's my understanding that years ago when we built that, that was all in Bartow County or Emerson and was not contiguous to the City of Cartersville," **Porta** said. "But over the years we have acquired some different parcels so it makes us now we are contiguous to that water treatment plant."

One of the reasons for the proposed de-annexation, **Porta** said, is to allow the Cartersville Police Department to have legal jurisdiction over the parcels. "There's two separate parcels that are in the City of Emerson," he continued. "We're requesting those two parcels, plus the bigger, shaded area of 11.1 acres and the 1.23 acres down there."

Porta told the council the City of Cartersville has no intentions of selling the properties to any third parties. "The parcel where it's 11.1 acres, that's for a future development or growth of the water treatment plant if we need to do something there," he said. "Where the two acres is, that's actually intake to the river if we ever needed to use that as an additional source of water."

The council took no voting actions on the proposal at the March 14 meeting. "The whole intent, really, is if there ever was an accident out there, we could respond to it," **Porta** said. "We just feel it'd be easier if it was all in the City of Cartersville's name." He said the City intends on keeping the parcels "zero tax burden" properties. "I don't even know, honestly, what you could do with that parcel," **Porta** added.

Even if the City "goes rogue" and pursues development on the parcels, Emerson Assistant City Manager Todd Heath said the floodplain in the area would present a tremendous — if not insurmountable — barrier. "It takes an act of Congress to change that," he said. From there Emerson City Manager Kevin McBurnett said he will continue to work with City of Cartersville officials on the potential de-annexation plans. "If we don't have something prepared for the next meeting I can give you an update as to where we're at," he told the council.

**Internet – Newspaper Archives Searches
Dan Porta
(Articles are in reverse chronological order)**

Daily Tribune News, The (Cartersville, GA)
October 2, 2021

Applicability of vaccine mandates on local governments remains a question mark

Author/Byline: James Swift

Quite a bit of confusion surrounds the Biden administration's proposal for new COVID-19 vaccination mandates. While the mandates would require proof of vaccination for all federal workers — and either proof of vaccination or negative COVID-19 tests for employees working for businesses with more than 100 employees — no clear-cut guidance has been issued thus far for State and local-level government employees.

With more than 300 employees, the City of Cartersville certainly meets the threshold for the private sector mandate. But as Cartersville City Manager **Dan Porta** noted, there is still no indication that the proposed vaccination or testing mandates would be required for City employees. "What I've read thus far is that it may not be applicable," he said. "We're still waiting for the actual guidelines to come out and then we'll see if it's applicable to the City itself." So far, **Porta** said the City has not required COVID-19 vaccinations for its employees. "We've encouraged it, but we are not mandating that employees get vaccinated," he said.

Another opaque aspect of the Biden mandates pertains to third parties hired by local governments — would private companies working for public entities be exempt from the vaccination requirements? "That would be a good question," **Porta** said. "If contractors or subcontractors are required to adhere to it, then yes, we would have to, obviously, have their employees vaccinated. But we have to wait until the guidelines are in place."

As far as potential exemptions, **Porta** said he has no idea what may be recognized as permissible with the proposed mandates in effect. Nor has **Porta** had any correspondence with any State or federal-level officials regarding a possible final rule on the proposed vaccination mandates or what its broader provisions may resemble.

Another unanswered question is a timetable for when the proposed mandates may take effect for the private sector and how long of a grace period those impacted would have to come into compliance. "I've not seen anything at this point in time," **Porta** said. If the local government does fall under the same mandates as private employers, **Porta** said he is unsure how such requirements may impact the City workforce. "If it's mandated across the board for all employers, whether it's a City government or private entities, I don't know if there's going to be much pushback," he said. "Because no matter where they go, almost, they would have to be vaccinated." To date, **Porta** said he has not spoken to any major private sector employers in Cartersville about the possible economic ramifications of the proposed vaccination mandates.

One component of the executive order signed by President Joe Biden earlier this year would require employees of contractors that do business with the federal government to receive COVID-19 vaccinations. Federal data indicates that both private businesses and public entities in

**Internet – Newspaper Archives Searches
Dan Porta
(Articles are in reverse chronological order)**

Bartow County have received more than \$300 million in United States Department of Defense contracts alone from 2000 to 2020. The executive order signed by Biden on Sept. 9 indicates the mandates are applicable for all contractors and subcontractors working for "executive departments and agencies, including independent establishments subject to the Federal Property and Administrative Services Act."

Guidance issued by the Safer Federal Workforce Task Force (SFWTF) last month indicates that federal contractors must ensure that all of their employees have received COVID-19 vaccinations by Dec. 8. For federal government employees, the vaccination cutoff date is set for Nov. 22. "The requirements must be incorporated into contracts awarded on or after Nov. 14," the SFWTF stated on Sept. 24. "Between Oct. 15 and Nov. 14, agencies must include the clause in the solicitation and are encouraged to include the clause in contracts awarded during this time period but are not required to do so unless the solicitation for such contract was issued on or after Oct. 15."

As Bartow County Administrator Peter Olson notes, that raises many questions about who and what constitutes a "federal contractor." "If they tie it to federal grant recipients, we receive several," he said. "Most [Georgia Department of Transportation] money coming into the County is actually pass-through federal money, as well as various law enforcement and fire grants and [Department of Community Affairs] grants." Olson said that neither the DCA or GDOT has notified him of any vaccination requirements being tied to their funding streams. "And of course, [American Rescue Plan Act] money itself is federal funds," he continued. "Not sure that makes us a 'contractor' for the federal government. I tend to think of that as someone with a contract to do something like build a building."

The Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA) has been tasked with oversight of the vaccine mandate requirements. Yet details remain murky on how the enforcement will be carried out or what penalties companies may face for noncompliance. While a final enforcement rule has yet to be published, recent actions by Congress suggest the financial consequences for not adhering to the mandate provisions could be severe. Last month, the United States House of Representatives' Budget Committee approved a \$3.5-trillion bill containing a provision that would allow OSHA to increase civil penalties to as much as \$700,000 for "willful or repeated" violations.

On the local level, however, **Porta** said the City of Cartersville has not heard anything about how the OSHA enforcement mechanism may operate. "Again, it's a lot of unknowns at this point in time," he said. While an act of government as contentious as the vaccination mandate requirements is almost certain to face immediate legal challenges, **Porta** said he does not want to predict how the matter may fare in court. "That would be up to the Supreme Court justices," he said. "Because I have no idea what all information they're going to be looking at if it comes down to that point."

**Internet – Newspaper Archives Searches
Dan Porta
(Articles are in reverse chronological order)**

Daily Tribune News, The (Cartersville, GA)
August 20, 2021

City of Cartersville closes out fiscal year with \$2.2M in profits

Author/Byline: James Swift

Considering the shakiness of the post-COVID economy, City of Cartersville officials couldn't help but be pleasantly surprised by the final financial figures from June. "That's a testament to our department heads and what they've done to hold the bottom line," said Cartersville City Manager **Dan Porta** at Thursday evening's council meeting.

The fiscal year 2021 budget projected about \$26.3 million in general fund revenues. Instead, the local government closed out its final month of FY '21 at \$28.1 million. Wrapping up the fiscal year with about \$25.9 million in total general fund expenditures, the City of Cartersville ended the preceding fiscal year with a net profit of more than \$2.2 million. "The council handed a budget to the City that had zero new jobs, zero pay increases, zero increases in utilities and holding the millage rate steady," Cartersville Mayor Matt Santini said at Thursday evening's council meeting. "It's a fine job by all." Compared to June 2020's numbers, City of Cartersville Finance Director Tom Rhinehart indicated that June 2021's local option sales tax (LOST) revenues — at \$4.26 million — were more than \$300,000 higher. Both property tax and LOST collections beat the City's budgeted projections. In the case of the former, the City closed out FY '21 with \$4.63 million collected (with \$4.1 million projected); as for the latter, Cartersville wrapped up the fiscal year with \$4.6 million in LOST collections — this, with just \$3.7 million anticipated in the FY '21 budget.

On the expenditures side, the City concluded the fiscal year with \$6.68 million in general fund operating expenses, with the FY '21 budget anticipating \$7.3 million. Personnel expenses came in slightly lower than anticipated, while capital expenses — budgeted for \$174,000 — ultimately came in at \$770,347. As for utility funds, water and sewer fund revenues underperformed considerably. Whereas \$41.5 million in revenues were projected in FY '21, the fund only generated about \$23.3 million, with the City shoring up the shortfall with \$22.5 million in reserve funding. Water and sewer fund expenditures, however, also came in below budget projections. The City expected \$41.5 million in expenses, but the final figure came in at only \$29.3 million for FY '21. Most notably, capital expenses, projected at \$22.5 million, only tallied up to \$15.3 million at year's end. Gas fund revenues were only slightly lower than projected — with \$26.1 million budgeted and \$24.9 million actually generated — while the fund's overall expenditures came in about 15% lower than anticipated. The final numbers for the City's electric fund tells a similar story. With \$47.1 million in total revenues, the figures fell slightly short of the \$48.7 million target in the FY '21 budget. Expenditures, however, were also lower than anticipated — \$48.7 million in costs were projected, with the final figure coming in at \$47.4 million. The City's stormwater and fiber optics funds each generated more revenues than the FY '21 budget projected, with both outgrossing their targeted figures by about 2%.

**Internet – Newspaper Archives Searches
Dan Porta
(Articles are in reverse chronological order)**

At the end of June, Rhinehart noted that the City's 2020 SPLOST account contained about \$2.93 million in funding while its SPLOST 2014 and SPLOST 2003 coffers, respectively, held balances of \$304,134.35 and \$49,357.68. As of June 30, City documents indicate Cartersville held about \$50.2 million in total unrestricted cash and about \$183.2 million in total restricted cash. Both figures represent decreases from May; documents cite decreases in gas, solid waste, electric and fiber funds for the overall decrease in unrestricted cash, while decreases in revolving loans, debt service, hotel/motel tax collections and pension funds are cited for the overall decrease in restricted cash.

Rhinehart noted, however, that the figures presented to council members on Thursday night are far from official. "The numbers that I am showing you tonight will change over time," he said, "and some of them will be changed drastically when the auditors actually show up and present their findings."

**Internet – Newspaper Archives Searches
Dan Porta
(Articles are in reverse chronological order)**

Daily Tribune News, The (Cartersville, GA)
August 3, 2021

Floyd County set to terminate inmate labor contract with City of Cartersville
Author/Byline: James Swift

Barring any sudden reconsiderations, Floyd County is on track to terminate its inmate labor contract with the City of Cartersville this fall. Cartersville City Manager **Dan Porta** said the local government received a 90-day severance notice last month. "A couple of my department heads who do have the crews spoke to one of the employees over there, and during COVID, obviously a lot of the prison systems had to reduce the population of inmates," **Porta** said. "My understanding, also, was that Floyd County may have needed some additional crews over their way."

At a work session meeting last month, **Porta** noted that the loss of inmate labor could prove costly for several of the City's departments. "Public works gets two crews a week and that's five to ten, basically," he said. "And the recreation gets one full crew the entire year and during the summertime they get a second crew, so we're talking about a lot of work that's being done at a minimal cost." The last intergovernmental agreement between the two entities was approved by the Cartersville City Council in January 2020.

At that meeting, City of Cartersville Parks and Recreation Director Tom Gilliam indicated that contract would provide for three full-time inmate work crews and one part-time inmate work crew. That contract amount was tabbed at \$237,777.99. The agreement approved by the council was set to expire on Dec. 31, 2022. "I've reached out to them, the County manager, trying to touch base with him to kind of see if there's something else that we can possibly do," **Porta** said. "But I have not received a call back yet." Under the contract approved in 2020, the City of Cartersville agreed to pay Floyd County an \$8.50 per diem rate per inmate assigned to the supervision of a non-security officer. The agreement also gave the City the option to request inmate work crews for "special projects as resources are available," for which the City would be billed \$30.48 an hour with overtime rates set at 1.5 times a correctional officer's hourly rate.

Porta said the City has not yet crunched the numbers on how much the loss of inmate labor may impact the local government's staffing and services. "We'll have to get council approval to make sure we can go out and hire additional personnel because it will amend the overall budget," he said. "Then we'll look forward to filling those slots with City personnel and trying to keep up the good, positive work that we do currently in the city with all the prison crews and with our regular crews."

Porta said it remains an unknown just how much more the City may have to spend in order to make up for the loss of inmate labor. "We're still trying to see if there's some way we can work through this and possibly maintain some of those crews," he said. "Since we're only basically ending the first month of the 12-month year, it's too early to really say what we're looking at." If the cancellation of the agreement is finalized, **Porta** said the City may consider outsourcing

**Internet – Newspaper Archives Searches
Dan Porta
(Articles are in reverse chronological order)**

some of its municipal services to an outside vendor. "There's a number of things we're talking about internally," he said. "We just haven't gotten to that extent to make those announcements or decisions yet."

Porta said one option that isn't on the table is potentially using inmates from the Bartow County Jail as labor. "They had some personnel several years ago, but it was only a person here or there," he said. "We have not had any discussions — plus, with the County, the sheriff's office being short on personnel, I don't know if they would even have the magnitude or the personnel to even address that."

**Internet – Newspaper Archives Searches
Dan Porta
(Articles are in reverse chronological order)**

Daily Tribune News, The (Cartersville, GA)
July 16, 2021

Cartersville City Council approves LMIG application, new program provider contracts
Author/Byline: James Swift

The Cartersville City Council was met with a diverse slate of agenda items at Thursday evening's public meeting, including a public works request to apply for a \$278,091.27 GDOT local maintenance improvement grant (LMIG) to resurface about 4.7 miles of the City's streets. Two dozen local streets are included on the proposed project list, with City of Cartersville Engineer Wade Wilson estimating the total project would cost about \$800,000. "The balance will come from the 2020 SPLOST, this is a budgeted item," he told the council. "This project is much more significant than it has been." The item received unanimous approval across the dais.

The three costliest items listed in City of Cartersville documents pertaining to the project are the resurfacing of Cotton Bend (\$120,000), the resurfacing of Tellus Drive (\$75,000) and the resurfacing of Clearview Drive (\$60,000.) City documents indicate the grant would require a 30% local match.

Elsewhere on the agenda the council approved a series of new parks and recreation department program provider contracts. That includes contracts with ACT I Academy for dance and theater services; Legion Lacrosse for leagues and camps; and Champions Fast Pitch for girls softball camps and clinics only. "All these new program providers will be giving 20% of their gross revenue — including all the non-residents' fees — back to the City," said City of Cartersville Parks and Recreation Director Tom Gilliam. The council likewise voted to approve contract renewals with Cartersville Little League for youth baseball; Southern Soccer Academy for youth soccer and camps; Wire2Wire for running clubs and camps; and Top Shelf Concessions. Under the agreement, Top Shelf Concessions will give 15% of its gross monthly revenues to the City of Cartersville. The other three program providers have also agreed to give the City 20% of their total gross revenues, including all non-resident fees.

A memorandum of understanding between the City and Cartersville Gymnastics Booster Club, Inc. was also approved at Thursday evening's meeting. "The booster club's agreed to pay the gymnastics coaches to travel to competitions, per diem and any travel-related expenses," Gilliam said. "In addition, the booster club will be allowed to hire part-time coaches to assist with the overall gymnastics program and these part-timers will be employees or independent contractors of the booster club." The agreement will be effective through June 30, 2022.

From there the council approved a \$99,400 contract with Rindt-McDuff Associates, Inc. to design and construct a new sewer line crossing Cassville Road at the Pettit Creek bridge. The proposed line would span about 450 feet and connect to a 48-inch sewer interceptor. The non-budgeted item would be paid for via water department operating revenues.

**Internet – Newspaper Archives Searches
Dan Porta
(Articles are in reverse chronological order)**

Members of the council also voted to approve a gas system request to award Southeastern Natural Gas Services of Rome, Inc. a \$161,195.50 contract for a natural gas main extension project near the Core5 Commerce Centre at 75 development along Cass-White Road. "By an engineer's estimate prepared April 15, 2021, we estimated the construction cost of this project to be approximately \$115,883.85," City of Cartersville Gas System Assistant Director Brian Friery wrote in a memorandum dated July 7. "The bid proposal received is significantly higher than the estimate, however this project is fully reimbursable by two separate extension agreements between the City and the developers approved by the council at the regular council meeting dated May 20."

The council also approved a request from the Cartersville Police Department to purchase and install equipment in five patrol vehicles and one unmarked vehicle for an amount not to exceed \$320,000. Under the agreement, the City would pay Prater Ford \$166,044.60 for the five patrol vehicles and Robert Loehr \$27,256 for the unmarked administrative vehicle. City of Cartersville Police Chief Frank McCann said the expenditures are budgeted items that will be paid via the general fund and federal asset forfeiture funds.

Council members also approved a resolution that would rename South Bridge Drive — spanning from U.S. 41 to Erwin Street — in honor of the recently retired Georgia Supreme Court Justice and Bartow County native Robert Benham. "I do want to thank [Cartersville City Manager **Dan Porta**] and Councilman [Calvin] Cooley for their leadership and creative idea of doing this," Cartersville Mayor Matt Santini said.

**Internet – Newspaper Archives Searches
Dan Porta
(Articles are in reverse chronological order)**

Daily Tribune News, The (Cartersville, GA)
July 6, 2021

Cartersville City Council approves \$2.69M GDOT grant
Author/Byline: James Swift

Members of the Cartersville City Council voted Thursday evening to approve the acceptance of a Georgia Department of Transportation (GDOT) grant tabbed at \$2.69 million for proposed improvements at the Cartersville-Bartow Airport. "This is a tentative allocation of funds, the actual contract amount will be based on pre-approved design, planning and engineering costs and/or competitive bids received to accomplish the project," GDOT representative Leigh Ann Trainer wrote in a letter sent to City officials last month. "The department is waiting on the [Federal Aviation Administration] grant award for the federal funds. As soon as received the department will move forward with the contract."

Cartersville City Manager **Dan Porta** said the funding would be used for the installation of a new engineered material arrestor system (EMAS.) The local match for the grant, he said, comes out to just \$1,225. "I thought this was a misprint," Councilman Cary Roth commented.

The installation of the EMAS is part of a larger runway pavement rehabilitation project at the airport. Members of the Cartersville City Council previously approved an array of GDOT grant applications for that project at a meeting last December. "It's about a \$10.5 million project," **Porta** said. "Our portion of that will be about \$850,000, the City and the County's going to put up \$1.5 million of that overall project."

**Internet – Newspaper Archives Searches
Dan Porta
(Articles are in reverse chronological order)**

Daily Tribune News, The (Cartersville, GA)
June 15, 2021

Cartersville earns AA bond rating
Author/Byline: Marie Nesmith

The city of Cartersville earned a AA bond rating from Standard and Poor's.

"My initial reaction was this is very positive news for the city of Cartersville as it shows our citizens that we are a financially sound city as pointed out in the S&P ratings report," Cartersville City Manager **Dan Porta** said. "The new AA bond rating means the work of Tom Rhinehart, finance director, and his finance team, along with city department heads and their staff to improve our financial health, has paid results. This AA bond rating is like having a personal credit rating of 780 plus, which means if the city wanted to issue debt our — interest — borrowing costs would be low."

The city was notified of the designation — which was a two level improvement from 2020's Moody's bond rating — May 26. For **Porta**, various components led to the favorable rating. "I believe that some of the key factors are the strong leadership from the mayor and city council on the vision of the city by allowing us to operate our own utilities — electric, gas, water and sewer, and fiber — and investing in economic development, which has allowed Cartersville to diversify our employment base. Along with city department heads and employees who work hard every day to operate the city in an efficient and effective manner, which has allowed us to build up some cash reserves," **Porta** said. "These factors have helped us to increase our bond rating two steps from an A1 to a AA rating."

According to the S&P report, the rating was based on Cartersville's "strong economy," "adequate management," "adequate budgetary performance," "very strong budgetary flexibility," "very strong liquidity," "strong debt and contingent liability profile" and "very strong institutional framework."

Referring to Cartersville's economy, the S&P report stated, "The city, with a population of 21,507, is in Bartow County in the Atlanta-Sandy Springs-Roswell MSA, which we consider to be broad and diverse. It has a projected per capita effective buying income of 72.5% of the national level, which is below average, and yet a per capita market value of \$126,892, which is strong. Overall, market value was stable over the past year at \$2.7 billion in 2020.

"... We believe the city's tax base will likely grow further as ongoing developments continue and the real estate environment remains strong. Since 2017, its estimated full value (AV) has grown 4.7% annually, which has allowed for its millage rates to remain steady. The median home value in the city increased 65% since 2015 and in the past year alone rose 10.4%."

**Internet – Newspaper Archives Searches
Dan Porta
(Articles are in reverse chronological order)**

Daily Tribune News, The (Cartersville, GA)
April 5, 2021

City of Cartersville gets clean FY '20 audit

Author/Byline: James Swift

The City of Cartersville received a clean opinion concerning the local government's fiscal year 2020 audit at a special presentation last week. "The financial statements do present fairly the financial positions and operations as of and before the year ended June 30, 2020," said Christopher McKellar of the Atlanta-based firm Mauldin and Jenkins, LLC. "The City should be commended for their efforts in preparing the comprehensive annual financial report, as it does go above and beyond the minimum."

For the preceding fiscal year, McKellar said the City's total assets came in at about \$486.6 million, with total liabilities tabbed at \$159.3 million — leaving the municipality with a net position of \$327.3 million. He said net capital assets were tabbed at about \$246.3 million, with the City's unrestricted net position listed at approximately \$73.4 million. "There was an increase in total net position of approximately \$15.5 million," McKellar added. "The general fund revenues for 2020, approximately 76% of total revenues from the general fund were in taxes, which is typical." Cartersville City Manager **Dan Porta** said he was surprised to hear that more than three-fourths of the City's revenues stemmed from tax collections, stating he believes the local government collected just \$8 million to \$9 million in sales tax and property tax in the previous fiscal year.

"You've got other types of taxes in there, too," City of Cartersville Finance Director Tom Rhinehart replied. "The insurance premium tax, that's basically \$1.5 million ... several years ago, for budgetary purposes, we stopped putting in the school system's revenues and expenditures." In total, McKellar said the FY '20 fiscal year general fund tax collections came in at about \$13 million, additionally noting that SPLOST tax collections are listed in a separate fund. As for the City's expenditures, he said about 48% of FY '20 general fund revenues went towards public safety costs. "The general fund fund balance is approximately \$6.8 million, with unassigned being approximately \$2.8 million," McKellar said. "So this works out to the total general fund fund balance being approximately 25% of annual expenditures and unassigned being 10.5%."

McKellar recommended that City officials increase that unassigned amount to 17% to 25%. "So it's something to watch," he said, "to make sure it doesn't get too low." He said all of the City's proprietary funds witnessed increases in cash flows in FY '20, with the exception of the water and sewer fund. "This was due to having a large [capital improvement plan] project that was underway," he said. "So it would be expected that the cash flow would decrease." He said the audit included two non-material adjustments. "The first one there was related to some prior year intergovernmental receivables revenue," he said.

McKellar also noted several "findings" in the FY '20 audit, which pertained to "the worker's comp liability and the calculation and reporting thereof" and "some revenue recognition." He

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Dan Porta
(Articles are in reverse chronological order)**

said the liabilities were understated by about \$43,000. "We just recommend that the City look over that calculation right there at year end," he said. "To make sure that's appropriately calculated." The revenue recognition-related adjustments, he said, largely revolved around receivables and unavailable revenue. That includes a property tax revenues and receivables increase of \$97,000, a revenues received before year-end adjustment of \$285,000 and a \$128,000 adjustment for receivable and unavailable revenues and payables for the local airport. "And then there's an adjustment of \$277,000 to approve the SPLOST revenues and receivables," he said. "Most of these are just year-end adjustments that have to be made, nothing fraudulent that we know of."

McKellar also advised City officials to report retirees' insurance expenditures in the general fund instead of the internal service fund. He also suggested the City review all inter-fund receivables and payables to ensure that "those can be paid back and will be paid back within a year" are classified as inter-fund payables. "If they are longer than a year, they should be reported as advances or if they're not going to be paid back, then they should be transfers between funds," he said. "In this case, it was just one that the inter-fund balance didn't change from year-to-year."

He also reminded members of the Cartersville City Council that the Cartersville Downtown Development Authority is a separate legal entity and should not be reported in the local government's general fund numbers. Rhinehart said that change has already been made for the City's FY '21 financial reporting.

Councilman Gary Fox asked about changes made to the City's pension contributions. "You were behind on your contributions, that has been caught up now," McKellar said. "The worker's comp fund, we've talked about that extensively and I think next year that one will be gone. The revenue recognition? I feel like that one will be gone, as well ... some of these were isolated incidents that probably won't come up every year, and it just happened to be this year it came up."

Internet – Newspaper Archives Searches
Dan Porta
(Articles are in reverse chronological order)

Daily Tribune News, The (Cartersville, GA)
August 29, 2020

New Cartersville city manager sworn in
Author/Byline: James Swift

An employee who has been a City of Cartersville mainstay for over 20 years was sworn in as the municipality's newest city manager at a called council meeting on Thursday afternoon. Members of the council voted unanimously to approve **Dan Porta**'s appointment to the position, as well as the terms of his contract, before Cartersville City Clerk Julia Drake administered the official oath ceremony. "I am looking forward to this opportunity to serve with each of you in this new role," he said. "I live here, I've been here for 23 years and I want to make sure that I continue to serve the citizens and the City."

Porta was joined by his wife Ronda — as well as his two children, Dustin and Colby, their spouses and his five grandchildren — at the swearing-in ceremony. "Obviously, you guys know we have a great group of hard-working employees," he said. "I just want to stand by them and work with them as we continue to move this city forward."

Porta has been the municipality's assistant city manager since 2001. Over that time, he oversaw the creation of several new departments, including Cartersville's human resource and fiber divisions. Among other functions as assistant city manager, he has also been heavily involved in the City's SPLOST projects, risk management and construction efforts and advising organizations such as the Cartersville-Bartow County Airport Authority and the Cartersville Downtown Development Authority.

Outgoing Cartersville City Manager Tamara Brock announced her resignation earlier this month, having accepted a new position with the Georgia Department of Economic Development. Brock said she expects **Porta** to serve the City of Cartersville well as her successor. "He has a great team that will continue to help the City thrive," she said. "They will accomplish great things under the council's leadership in the coming years."

Porta will officially take over as city manager on Sept. 1. "The City of Cartersville decided to not go through an interview process this time," said Cartersville Assistant City Attorney Keith Lovell. "They felt they had a well-qualified candidate in-house."

Porta joined the City of Cartersville in July 1998 as the local government's finance director. He previously spent seven years as the finance director and city manager assistant for the City of Perry in Florida. "I'll say, I'm real proud of you, **Dan**," remarked Cartersville Mayor Matt Santini. "Not just for the 23 years you've been doing a tremendous volume and quality of work for the City, but just for your continued devotion and dedication — when faced with this decision, it was quick, it was obvious and it was overwhelmingly unanimous." Continuing, Santini said **Porta** had the mayor and council's full confidence and support, adding that he's excited to see "the direction that you'll take our city moving forward." **Porta** said he's met with

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Dan Porta
(Articles are in reverse chronological order)**

various department heads over the last week, noting that he plans on sitting down with the members of the city council after the meetings wrap up to outline a set of specific goals for the local government.

Moving past COVID-19, **Porta** said the City will remain abreast of Gov. Brian Kemp's executive public health orders. "Obviously, the industries are important to us, our citizens are important to us," he said. "With this budget that we're currently in, we just started on July 1, we had to do some cutbacks because we weren't sure what to anticipate with COVID." The City's sales tax revenue, he said, hasn't decreased as drastically as anticipated. He considered such to be a good omen for the local government's economic recovery. "If we can put some additional things back into the budget that we had to cut, the city council had to make those tough decisions, if we can do that, I'll work with the mayor and city council to get those items back in there so we can provide additional services to our citizens and our employees," **Porta** added.

Having been a City employee for almost a quarter century, **Porta** said he's well-acquainted with the workings of the municipality's departments. One area he said he'd like to see the local government invest in is new technologies. "We're looking at an automated metering infrastructure program, we'll bring that to city council and see if they want to move forward," he said. "My goal is really to make sure I can provide everything to our City department heads and departments to meet their needs so they can meet the citizens' needs." At the moment, he said he is evaluating prospects for the municipality's next assistant city manager, as well as a public relations specialist position.

Porta holds a bachelor's degree in accounting from the University of Houston-Clear Lake and a master's degree in public administration from Florida State University. Among other professional achievements, he is a credentialed manager under the International City/County Management Association and a certified public pension trustee under the Georgia Association of Public Pension Trustees.

Among those singing **Porta's** praises is Sam Grove, the man who served a 22-year stint as Cartersville's city manager from 1996 to 2018. "He's certainly worked hard for it, and he did a good job when he worked with me," Grove said. "I wish him and the City of Cartersville luck, as always. It's a great city."

**Internet – Newspaper Archives Searches
Dan Porta
(Articles are in reverse chronological order)**

Daily Tribune News, The (Cartersville, GA)
June 22, 2019

Cartersville approves millage, utility rate increases

Author/Byline: James Swift

The Cartersville City Council voted unanimously Thursday evening to adopt its fiscal year 2020 budget — and with it, increases to the municipal millage rate as well as residential gas, water and sewer rates. "The proposed budget is balanced," said City of Cartersville Finance Director Tom Rhinehart at the public meeting. "It includes salary adjustments throughout all our departments ... it includes an increase in health insurance for City employees." He said the key numbers are identical to those presented in the first reading of the budget, albeit it with one change — a \$2,000 reduction in the City's outside agency funding, which ultimately brings the FY 2020 general fund budget to \$26,653,300.

Under the FY 2020 budget, the City's millage rate is set to increase from 3.228 mills to 4.228 mills. The impact on the median Cartersville home valued at \$170,000, Rhinehart said, would be an additional \$68 in City property taxes each year. The total FY 2020 budget comes out to about \$165 million. It includes about \$47.1 million in electric enterprise funds, about \$45.3 million in water and sewer enterprise funds and about \$28.8 million in gas enterprise funds. The three highest-budgeted general fund expenditures are fire (\$7.5 million), police (\$6.1 million) and parks and recreation (\$3.7 million.)

As part of the budget, council also unanimously approved an ordinance amendment increasing the fixed monthly base rates for City gas customers. Beginning July 1, residential customer rates will increase from \$10 to \$15 a month, while the rate for commercial customers will increase from \$15 to \$20. Also receiving unanimous council approval was another ordinance amendment, which increases the base tier rate for residential water customers from \$9.45 a month to \$9.92 — a measure Rhinehart said will result in the average residential customer paying \$2.73 more per month for City services. That ordinance amendment also decreases the sewer rate for customers who live outside the City limits, reducing their monthly charge from \$4.15 to \$3.98. The ordinance also increases the monthly fire service charges for all pipe sizes by 5% and implements the City's first increase in high strength waste surcharges in more than two decades. All of those rate changes are also set to take effect July 1.

A final budget item, a slate of contracts for performing services, was also unanimously approved. Among other contracts, the Bartow County Library System is set to receive \$454,000 while the Bartow-Cartersville Joint Development Authority is set to receive \$200,000. The council also approved a contract agreement for a Downtown Development Authority (DDA) art project, which would be placed under the Church Street Bridge at Gilmer Street. Per City documents, the project is expected to take one and a half weeks to complete and will cost \$6,000, "funded through public/private sponsorships, donations and grants." "Rather than affixing it to the bridge, we have devised a system with public works whereby we will place the murals onto freestanding posts," said DDA Director Lillie Read. "They'd like to start working in July ... the goal is to

**Internet – Newspaper Archives Searches
Dan Porta
(Articles are in reverse chronological order)**

actually do it during summer, so that they can get some of the local children involved with doing a portion of the piece, just painting it, some of it, under supervision of the other artists."

The council also approved a contract with Sunnyvale, California-based cybersecurity firm CrowdStrike. Per City of Cartersville documents, the company helped the municipality address "internal issues" associated with the May ransomware attack. The contract, which is not a budgeted item, is listed as "an amount to not exceed \$40,000."

City of Cartersville Assistant City Manager **Dan Porta** told The Daily Tribune News that the local government could not publicize any additional details of that cybersecurity attack — such as the financial amount demanded by the hackers and whether or not the City paid said ransom — at this time. He did, however, note that the City purchased additional cybersecurity coverage as part of its annual property and casualty insurance renewal — tabbed this year at \$664,253. "The recommendation is going to go with \$1 million in network and information security liabilities," **Porta** said, "the highest amount they offer."

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Dan Porta
(Articles are in reverse chronological order)**

[CB&A Note: Only the information relevant to **Dan Porta** is listed below.]

Daily Tribune News, The (Cartersville, GA)
July 6, 2018

Douthit Ferry widening project on life support

Author/Byline: Neil B. McGahee

In other business, council:

Approved Assistant City Manager **Dan Porta** to continue as a voting delegate to Georgia Public Web and a GPW board member.

**Internet – Newspaper Archives Searches
Dan Porta
(Articles are in reverse chronological order)**

The Daily Tribune News (GA)
May 20, 2018

Cartersville City Council considers future growth, current needs

Author/Byline: Neil B. McGahee

The Cartersville City Council’s Thursday meeting centered around planning for future growth while serving the city’s current needs. In a first reading, T18-04, a zoning request from Trinity United Methodist Church, 814 West Avenue, asked for an electronic sign boundary revision, that would allow the church to replace its existing monument sign for an electronic monument sign. “Right now under the current ordinances, those types of signs aren’t allowed east of the intersection of Henderson Drive and West Avenue,” said Director of Planning and Development Randy Mannino. “The applicant is looking to move the boundary 500 feet east from the Henderson Drive intersection to be able to accommodate electronic monument signs for their church.”

Mannino said the planning and zoning board approved the request, however, because it was a first reading no action could be taken. A second reading will be heard at the June 7 meeting. Derek Hampton, assistant director of the electric system, told the council that the Municipal Electric Authority of Georgia (MEAG), which supplies the City of Cartersville with wholesale power, was asking the city to approve an amendment to their sales contracts to eliminate the comprehensive engineering report (CFR). “MEAG has traditionally submitted the comprehensive engineering report every year,” Hampton said. “They did not have the staff to do it in house, so they had to contract it [to] an outside source, which has cost about \$100,000 a year.” He said they now have enough staff to produce the engineering report in house, using the information contained in MEAG’s annual Information statement.

By producing the report in house, MEAG will be able to reduce their expenditures by \$100,000. “Cartersville Electric System is requesting that council authorize the Mayor and City Clerk to sign the amendment to the power sales contracts,” he said. The request was approved unanimously. Council also approved an intergovernmental agreement with Bartow County to repave Douthit Ferry Road between State Route 61/113 and Old Alabama Road. However, there has been a delay in the widening of Douthit Ferry.

Since the road is in both the city and county jurisdiction, Assistant City Manager **Dan Porta** said, the city and the county reached an agreement that the county would repave the road. “Based on the linear feet that are within the county, we estimated their cost to be \$90,000 and the city’s cost for our part is \$120,000 coming from the 2014 SPLOST funds,” he said. **Porta** said the county plans to pave the road this summer, when schools are out.

The addition of a hotel at the Clarence Brown Conference Center required new considerations. “The Convention & Visitor’s Bureau (CVB) board has approved the hiring of Lyman, Davidson & Dooley, the original architect of the Clarence Brown Conference Center, to provide preliminary architectural work for future expansion at the center,” **Porta** said. “They need to get

**Internet – Newspaper Archives Searches
Dan Porta
(Articles are in reverse chronological order)**

the architect back on board to make some redesigns to accommodate a covered walkway and additional parking that will be necessary due to the hotel.”

Porta said the CVB would like to use tourism product development funds, but approval is needed from the city and the county in order to use those funds. “In order to continue to host more events, additional hotel space, especially adjacent to the Conference Center is needed, therefore, I recommend approval to use tourism product development funds from the city’s hotel/motel tax collections to hire Lyman, Davidson & Dooley,” he said.

Porta made another architectural request asking the council to approve an agreement with Pond & Company, the architectural/engineering firm that was selected in February 2017 for the first phase of the building of the new Gas Department headquarters, storage building, fuel station and recreation pond at 155 Old Mill Road.

The original architectural/engineering services agreement included pre-design work through completion of the building at a cost of \$472,500 plus an additional \$75,000 for construction administration services. As the first phase winds down and the second construction phase begins, a payment of \$75,000 was authorized to Pond & Company. The second phase of the gas headquarters construction, which involves steel and concrete work, was awarded to Balfour Beatty, who submitted a guaranteed maximum price of \$5,517,350, raising the current estimated total project cost to \$10,196,871.

After spending millions, the council got some hopeful news. “In January 2017, the council approved SOL Construction’s \$1.5 million bid to replace two high service pumps at the Water Treatment Plant,” director Bob Jones said. “We have completed that project — it is completely finished — and the pumps have passed the required test period, so tonight I am asking your approval to not spend \$20,062.82, lowering the total cost to \$1,510,982.18.” The request was unanimously approved.

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Dan Porta
(Articles are in reverse chronological order)**

Daily Tribune News, The (Cartersville, GA)
June 17, 2017

Cartersville council approves 2018 budget

Author/Byline: Neil McGahee

As fiscal year 2017 winds down, the Cartersville City Council made final changes to the 2018 budget Thursday. Council approved the second reading of the amended permit fee ordinance that standardizes residential and commercial building permit rates. The new residential rates are calculated by footage multiplied by .0035 while commercial permits are square footage multiplied by .003. "Currently we just let the contractor come in and tell us the valuation," Assistant City Manager **Dan Porta** said. "The new rate structure will follow the International Code Compliance using a per square foot method." **Porta** said the city rates remain lower than surrounding governments because Cartersville only charges for heated square footage whereas other municipalities charge for unheated space, a sizeable difference in assessed fees. **Porta** noted that the last change to the building permit fee was in July 2005.

City Finance Director Tom Rhinehart explained an amendment to the utility ordinance regarding water and sewer rates. "The proposed fiscal year 2017-18 budget includes two increases in the water and sewer fund to help address the maintenance and capital issues of the water fund," he said. "The first is a 7.5 percent increase in the residential water and sewer rates, which will allow the water department to continue the maintenance of the existing water and sewer system as well as update/expand the system to fulfill the needs of existing customers. For residential customers, the water and sewer rate increase equates to 61 cents per 100 cubic feet used for city residents and \$1.12 per 100 cubic feet used for outside-the-city residents. The total estimated increase for a residential water and sewer customer is \$4.09 per month on 7,500 gallons used. "The second change is a 7.5 percent increase in the base monthly water and sewer rates. Currently, the base rate is \$8.18 and the proposed base rate will increase to \$8.79 a month. This equates to an increase of 61 cents a month. These increases are needed to maintain the existing system and plan for any necessary future expansions in the system."

Rhinehart also introduced the amended budget ordinance for fiscal year 2017-18 with "minor tweaks." "Since the budget presentation at the last meeting, solid waste has changed their capital amount to include a front loading garbage truck instead of a recycling truck," he said. "This added an additional \$30,000 to the solid waste budget and will be absorbed through additional lease-pool funding. The second change is in the stormwater funds. They need a work van motor locked up, add a \$37,000 increase to their budget, also absorbed through the lease-pool." As discussed in the May 23 work session, the proposed budget increased by 6.92 percent, or \$10,863,305, over the last fiscal year 2016-17 budget and includes salary adjustments in all departments, no increase in the city's property tax millage rate, school system funding, staff increases, an increase in health insurance premiums for both the city and the employees, an increase in the residential water and sewer rates and an increase in the basic monthly water and sewer rate.

**Internet – Newspaper Archives Searches
Dan Porta
(Articles are in reverse chronological order)**

Daily Tribune News, The (Cartersville, GA)
August 27, 2014

Cartersville DDA named Program of the Year

Author/Byline: Jason Lowrey

In recognition of its efforts to improve the city's center, the Georgia Downtown Association dubbed the Cartersville Downtown Development Authority the Development Program of the Year during its annual conference Aug. 20-22. The DDA won the award in light of its in-house designed master plan and recent promotional activities in the downtown area. DDA Manager Tara Currier said it was an award that was many years in the making. "Well, obviously it's very exciting. I've been on this job for two years and certainly have a little bit of pride in the award myself, but know it has undoubtedly been all the work of the managers and executive directors before my time and wonderful board leadership and elected officials, city council members, mayors and certainly all those who are currently in those roles have played an instrumental role in this award, as well as the countless city departments and city staff. So I hope that it is something that all of the city of Cartersville can be very, very proud of," Currier said.

Describing itself as a "non-profit association that promotes the economic redevelopment of Georgia's traditional downtowns," according to its website, the GDA awards downtown areas each year in its Awards for Downtown Excellence ceremony. Currier said the competition is based on four categories: design, promotions, organization and economic redevelopment, which represent the four ideas of the GDA's Main Street Four Point Approach. Cartersville's submission focused on volunteer efforts, she explained. "We focus on economic development, organization, promotion and design," Currier said. "You can actually submit in any of those categories, so I had submitted information about our volunteer efforts that we've had within our board as well as others in the community."

What put the city over the top to win the Program of the Year award was a combination of factors, Currier believed. The downtown master plan, bluegrass festival and First Friday programs all contributed to the win. "It was sort of a culmination of all these wonderful things that Cartersville has done over the past year and even beyond that really led to us receiving this highest honor that is awarded by the Georgia Downtown Conference," she said.

Cartersville Assistant City Manager **Dan Porta**, who traveled to Decatur for the award ceremony, said the award was "very significant," as it named Cartersville as the top downtown community in the state. He believed it would be a beneficial win for the city. "I think the business owners are pleased with Tara Currier and what she's been doing down there, along with the board of directors and the things that are going on downtown," he said. "I definitely think it's a big plus and it's a great award for the community as well, because they participated, helped us celebrate that success."

Saying the work downtown is never done, Currier looked forward to checking more projects off the master plan's list. The free Wi-Fi network and festival ordinance are two of the most recent

**Internet – Newspaper Archives Searches
Dan Porta
(Articles are in reverse chronological order)**

items knocked off the list, and she said a covered pavilion may be the next project. Ultimately, Currier credited the working relationships among many local organizations as the reason for the DDA's award and continued success. "It's not just me, it's not just the DDA board. It is countless downtown businesses and property owners. It's the chamber of commerce, economic development, [Convention & Visitor's Bureau], certainly [the] mayor and council," she said. "It's just a lot of people working together and I think that this community should be proud that there are so many individuals who have a passion to see progress in downtown and that they are able to work so well together to make downtown the best that it can be."

**Internet – Newspaper Archives Searches
Dan Porta
(Articles are in reverse chronological order)**

Daily Tribune News, The (Cartersville, GA)
May 15, 2013

Officials graduate econ dev. academy

Author/Byline: Matt Shinall

Four area officials graduated earlier this month from the 2013 Georgia Academy for Economic Development. Bartow County, city of Cartersville and the city of Emerson were represented with participants in the Region 1 multi-day training program, which introduced students to the basics of economic and community development. Local graduates from the 2013 academy were Bartow County Environmental Programs Division Head Sheri Henshaw, city of Cartersville Downtown Development Authority Manager Tara Currier, city of Cartersville Assistant City Manager **Dan Porta** and city of Emerson Assistant City Manager Todd Heath. “One of the goals for the multi-day regional academies is to encourage multi-county cooperation,” said Corinne Thornton, director of the Georgia Academy for Economic Development, in a press release. “Many times, the participants discover the issues facing their community are the same as those facing other communities in their region and can then combine limited resources to address the issue.”

The Region 1 academy took place in Rome at the Forum and was comprised of representatives from 12 northwest Georgia counties. Participants included elected officials, public servants, business leaders, educators and social service providers. “Really, it just opened my eyes to the economic development process and how huge organizations go through the site selection process and what they consider to be the product — what the community offers, whether it’s a nice industrial park or good school systems or parks and rec. — and Bartow County has it all really,” Heath said. “So it was largely about how to market that product the community has to offer and basically how to assist in getting better companies and businesses to locate to the area. “I think, in general, the course taught from the government standpoint, how to raise the water for everyone in the community and not just this particular area, but trying to help the entire region.”

For Heath, helping manage the city of Emerson and dealing with the challenges of an aging infrastructure during lean economic times, a program segment guiding participants through the channels and avenues for financial assistance was one of the most impactful sessions. “It was actually a very involved course,” Heath said. “We went over tons of resources. Resources for private business, government, grants, sources for getting grant funds, organizations that offer loan programs — a lot of financial resources. “We also worked on intergovernmental relationships and how not only municipalities can work with counties, but also with the school board or transportation authorities or federal agencies, such as Corps of Engineers or with CSX, basically to develop a better environment for the entire community.” Meeting one day a month beginning in February, the 2013 Georgia Academy for Economic Development covered other areas of importance to economic developers, including tourism product development, quality planning, downtown development, business recruitment, redevelopment and leadership skills. Heath for one feels the course will help with attracting, landing and retaining new businesses and customers for the city of Emerson, including those associated with LakePoint Sporting Community & Town Center.

**Internet – Newspaper Archives Searches
Dan Porta
(Articles are in reverse chronological order)**

The Daily Tribune News (GA)
September 20, 2010

Cartersville's Fire Station No. 3 on the horizon

Author/Byline: Brande Poulnot

While city of Cartersville officials gear up to begin construction on two building projects -- a combined police and fire headquarters building, including Fire Station No. 1, on Cassville Road at Harris Street, and a new Fire Station No. 4 -- they have another project on the way. Cartersville Fire Department's new Station No. 3 would replace its existing facility on West Avenue. Fire Chief Scott Carter said the current building, a prefabricated metal structure that formerly served as a tire store, is showing its age and years of wear, and was not constructed as a fire station. "But the primary reason that we're building a new Station 3 is because of its location," Carter said. "With the 2006 coverage study we had we saw that we needed the station closer down Old Mill Road to increase our coverage area as far as [International Organization for Standardization] is concerned. It provides us a more efficient response, gives us a better efficiency rating."

The project has not yet entered the design phase, but will likely be funded with 2007 Special Local Option Sales Tax dollars, as is the \$9 million public safety headquarters building and the \$1.8 million MLK Jr. Drive fire station. "I anticipate [Station No. 3 costing] slightly more than Fire Station No. 4 because we're going to add an educational wing so the building will be slightly bigger -- a classroom where the kids can come in because we'll teach fire safety programs out of that," Assistant City Manager **Dan Porta** said. "We're looking at some property near Douthit Ferry Road, near [Cartersville] Middle School."

Carter indicated six to seven other sites could be on the radar but the location for Station No. 3 would be farther west than the existing facility, which houses the department's fire safety house, a mobile unit used in elementary school and public fire safety education efforts. "That plan is because this station would be built closer to the primary, elementary schools, of course, than the current location for [No.] 3," he said. "In order to assist the kids -- because I think last year we did nearly 3,400 contacts as far public education is concerned -- in order to make it more efficient and closer to the education buildings and instead of [the students] having to go all the way to Cassville Road or transport all the way across town, we want to build an education wing on this station." The "kid-friendly" fire safety education space would likely contain a puppet show stage and education demonstration areas, such as a replica kitchen. Carter said a construction time frame has yet to be determined, and is dependent on SPLOST collections.

**Internet – Newspaper Archives Searches
Dan Porta
(Articles are in reverse chronological order)**

The Daily Tribune News (GA)
September 17, 2010

Council decides to commission new LEED building

Author/Byline: Brande Poulnot

At its Thursday public meeting, the Cartersville City Council decided to seek certification for a green building it has designed to house police and fire headquarters. Construction is expected to begin in January. The third-party Silver-level Leadership in Environmental Engineering and Design verification will add an extra \$56,500 to the project funded with 2007 Special Purpose Local Option Sales Tax dollars, but Assistant City Manager **Dan Porta** said current economic conditions could free up some of the money set aside to complete the project.

Officials estimate the 53,325-square-foot building at Harris Road and adjacent to Oak Hill Cemetery will run around \$9 million and Fire Station No. 4, which is being constructed on MLK Jr. Drive in conjunction with the headquarters project, will likely cost \$1.8 million. "I just feel based on the downturn in the economy that the bids may come in lower than those projected numbers. Those are conservative estimates anyway," **Porta** said, adding the savings could be used to commission the structure as a LEED-designed building. **Porta**, who recommended the council commission the structure, added LEED buildings, or those constructed within the guidelines and standards of sustainable building practices, often result in more effective and high-performing structures, and cost less to operate through lower utility bills. Officials also are working to secure plans for Fire Station No. 3, which would be located on the west side of the city.

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Dan Porta
(Articles are in reverse chronological order)**

The Daily Tribune News (GA)
August 30, 2010

Public safety headquarters to combine fire, police depts.

Author/Byline: Brande Poulnot

Now in its design phases, Cartersville's new public safety headquarters building will bring the city's fire and police departments into one facility on Cassville Road. It will be a change for both departments, as neither of the existing facilities were designed for their respective functions. City leaders expect land work and construction of the 53,325-square-foot building at Harris Road and adjacent to Oak Hill Cemetery, a roughly \$9 million project funded by 2007 Special Purpose Local Option Sales Tax dollars, to begin in January.

Assistant City Manager **Dan Porta** said architects took their inspiration from the old Goodyear facility in Atco. "Because of that building sitting close to the Atco community, we're trying to make it feel a part of that community and bring in some of those designs of the old building into the new [structure], whether it's a tower that was on the old Goodyear plant," **Porta** said. "We're trying to incorporate some of those old building concept designs to our building itself and give it a feel of that part of the community."

The Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design-designed facility on about 3.5 acres, which will move fire administration operations and Station 1 from the current building at 19 N. Erwin St. and the existing police station from 178 W. Main St., could be operational as early as October 2011, along with what will be Cartersville Fire Department's Station 4, also in its design phase. Those construction projects could go to bid in the next couple of months, **Porta** said.

Move necessitates another fire station, more firefighters With the move, CFD's coverage areas will change, necessitating another fire station. To make that happen, the city has opted to level the old fire station on MLK Jr. Drive and build an updated structure on the less than 1 acre lot; officials acquired more land for that expansion. The department expects to add an engine company; three shifts of four men, or 12 firefighters; and move the existing rescue company from headquarters to Station 4, which will be nearer to Interstate 75 and U.S. 41, high-traffic areas where more accidents occur. "At the outlying stations, Stations 2 and 3, right now they have single companies there. That means four people per day.

At the headquarters station, we're basically running a rescue, tower/aerial company and an engine company," Carter said. "What will happen is at Stations 2 and 3, they will still have a single company in those stations. Headquarters will have an engine company and the aerial company running out of that station. Station 4 will have an engine company and rescue company running out of that station." About 19,000 square feet of the combined facility will be dedicated to the fire department, with the additional area serving both police and fire. "It is very functional and efficient, good, clean lines.

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Dan Porta
(Articles are in reverse chronological order)**

Firefighter safety has been considered," Carter said, adding that all CFD firefighters provided input for the design, which had to be in line with National Fire Protection Association standards. As far as the community is concerned, it is a beautiful building that is built on a 50-year time frame. We began this thing with, 'OK, this structure has got to be able to last 50 years' and I think we're going to be very successful at that." CFD's current facility was constructed in the early 1900s, housing city hall, administrators and police and fire operations, and was renovated in the mid-1990s. "The building was never designed just as a fire station. She's 100 years old and showing her age," Carter said. "There is a little more square footage but it is very similar to what we have now with the exception there is growth space ... The suppression area and the bay area for the firemen is basically the same with a little bit more increase because of the increase in equipment size of the years." The new combined headquarters structure will contain the fire station, offices for fire inspections, investigation and training officials, living quarters for fire suppression staff, equipment storage areas and quartermasters. A room will also be dedicated to reference materials, including construction and fire industry codes and training manuals.

**Internet – Newspaper Archives Searches
Dan Porta
(Articles are in reverse chronological order)**

The Daily Tribune News (GA)
May 11, 2010

Cartersville's web efforts benefit customers, lead to efficiency

Author/Byline: Brande Poulnot

The city of Cartersville's effort to bring customers more Internet options not only benefits residents, but also increases the city's efficiency, Assistant City Manager **Dan Porta** said. In addition to the recently announced Citizen Request Tracker, which allows residents to report problems and request services -- anything from a pothole to applying for rezoning -- about a year and a half ago, the city began accepting utility payments online.

"On the utilities side, we're trying to serve the customers' needs as best as possible. Some people don't want to come in or [want] other options to pay so we're just trying to offer them more ways to pay their utilities that's more convenient to them," **Porta** said. "It also allows us to be more efficient because it's a much faster process, [and it] kind of takes out the human error element of misapplying the funds potentially to a different customer's account. "We're trying internally to be as efficient as possible. We've been doing another thing -- customers pay by check and we've been scanning their checks and sending them to the bank electronically. It's a faster processing time for us. We've been doing that for four years. We were probably the first city and the first utility in north Georgia to start doing electronic check processing. It's just a faster way to process your customers' checks."

More technology, including website offerings, could be on the horizon for the city. "We're just trying to automate as many areas as we can. We're actually adding some credit card swiping machines to the customer service side just to help with any overflow of customers coming in the door," **Porta** said, adding that after early retirement incentives last year, the number of customer service representatives were reduced to two. "The IT guys just continue to make sure we're ahead of the curve and make the customer date is secure. We've never had our fire wall breached."

The city's website also offers city council agendas, information on a variety of topics -- from water ban restrictions to social service resources -- and results of the city's Citizen Survey. Another benefit is a system which allows city officials to contact residents and businesses with public interest messages.

"The city of Cartersville is continually looking for ways to enhance communication with the community," said Rebecca Bohlander, Communications and P.R. manager. "Connect CTY has been an outstanding tool for this since it allows the city to send a message to thousands within minutes, just by making a telephone call. Whether it is utility work, power outages or inclement weather that cancels baseball practice that evening at Dellinger Park, Connect CTY makes it possible to communicate with the residents of Cartersville promptly."

For Tommy Culpepper, chief of the Cartersville Police Department, efforts to increase the agency's web presence also center around the people served by the department. This year,

**Internet – Newspaper Archives Searches
Dan Porta
(Articles are in reverse chronological order)**

Culpepper announced three new services available on the agency's website -- property registration to record serial numbers and other information in the event an item is stolen, a vacation watch request page on which residents can ask for extra patrols via the Internet, and Crime Reports, which offers real-time incident reports of alleged crimes in Cartersville. "More and more people use the Internet for their daily activities and more people want to be able to do it. It's just another venue for people to be able to obtain the same services instead of having to pick up the phone or come by the station," Culpepper said. "It just provides the public a way they can obtain those particular services in the convenience of their own home. It just makes it easier for them and it makes it a little easier for us."

**Internet – Newspaper Archives Searches
Dan Porta
(Articles are in reverse chronological order)**

The Daily Tribune News (GA)
February 20, 2009

Cartersville elected officials told City expenditures are exceeding revenue

Author/Byline: Rebecca Long

Editors Note: An article regarding cost-cutting measures being proposed by Cartersville will appear in the Sunday edition.

In what has become a monthly tradition, Cartersville Finance Director **Dan Porta** updated council members on the financial status of the city at their meeting. In response to the current economic conditions, the city council has started being briefed monthly on the numbers.

Looking at data that is current through the end of 2008, **Porta's** presentation showed that monthly revenue intake was up more than \$200,000 for December compared to 2007 when the city took in \$3,015,069. However, expenditures were also on the rise, as the city spent \$245,043 less than the revenue of \$3,389,920 -- a deficit of more than \$300,000. Year-to-date numbers look somewhat better, as the city was still operating in the black at a \$97,183 profit.

The news for the city's water and sewer system is more worrisome, according to **Porta**. The department is operating in the red -- at about \$1,098,330 less than it is taking in. The main culprits for the deficit are economic conditions and drought restrictions that lessened water use and thus revenues. Asked by Mayor Matt Santini how much the drought could account for costing the city, **Porta** said pre-drought data allowed him to estimate it could be as much as \$1.6 million in water use. "The drought has severely hit these numbers," **Porta** told the council.

One way the city is considering dealing with the deficit is to re-fund some bond issues. Due to have been paid off in 2014 or 2015, the extension of debt service would push the due dates back to 2020. Another solution is to use 1997 Special Purpose Local Option Sales Tax funds to pay for some of the department's recent expenses in connection with the Main Street Streetscape project, which included the replacement of nearly-century-old water lines. The total project cost about \$1.2 million. A grant from Georgia Department of Transportation paid for \$500,000. City Manager Sam Grove said all projects from the 1997 SPLOST have been completed, leaving about \$500,000 that can now be transferred over to help defray the costs. "The water lines would have had to have been replaced anyway," Mayor Pro Tem Dianne Tate said.

**Internet – Newspaper Archives Searches
Dan Porta
(Articles are in reverse chronological order)**

The Daily Tribune News (GA)
October 16, 2008

Cartersville's finance department wins award

Author/Byline: Maia Fox

The City of Cartersville's Finance Department has been awarded a Certificate of Achievement for Excellence for its comprehensive annual financial report. The certificate, given by the Government Finance Officers Association of the United States and Canada (GFOA), is the highest form of recognition in the area of governmental accounting and financial reporting.

"The receipt of the GFOA award recognizes the time, effort and importance that the Finance Department places in reporting the city's financial transactions correctly and in compliance with accounting standards," said **Dan Porta**, assistant city manager/finance manager.

Porta said many agencies apply for the award and it takes many hours just to put together the application. Every year the Finance Department staff members work with an external auditor to review the city's financial records. They receive an auditor's report. The purpose of the annual audit is to show that the city's financial records are correct and trustworthy.

After the external auditors complete their audit, the Finance Department then begins to assemble the Comprehensive Annual Financial Report (CAFR), which includes the auditor's report, financial statements, general information on the city and its financial condition and historical statistical information.

"The purpose of applying for the certificate is to show our citizens and other users of the city's financial information that the City of Cartersville financial report has met the highest standards in our industry," **Porta** said. "[The certificate] shows our citizens and other users of the city's financial information that the City of Cartersville financial report has met the highest standards in our industry."

**Internet – Newspaper Archives Searches
Dan Porta
(Articles are in reverse chronological order)**

The Daily Tribune News (GA)
June 19, 2008

Cartersville to decide on budget
Author/Byline: Rebecca Long

The Cartersville City Council is scheduled to vote tonight on the 2008-2009 budget. Totalling \$169,484,120, the budget is up .14 percent compared to the current year's numbers. That is a difference of \$230,495, according to Cartersville Finance Director **Dan Porta**. "The bottom line is that the budget is balanced," **Porta** said.

Originally the council members were given a budget that totaled \$166,986,870, which would have resulted in a smaller budget for the first time in recent memory. However, requests from the Cartersville School Board for an additional \$997,250 and \$1.5 million in Special Purpose Local Option Sales Tax for the 1873 Courthouse project pushed the proposed budget up to its current amount.

Described by **Porta** as "conservative," the budget shows only slight increases in most departments in comparison to the current year's expenditures. The largest increase is for the purchase of commodities, which will cost an estimated \$4.7 million more than last year. However, decreases in the debt service and capital expenses budgets help deflect the increase of other departments.

The only fee expected to be changed as a result of the budget is the update to the commercial solid waste haulers. According to Public Works Director Bobby Elliott, the fee would change from \$2 to \$2.50 per yard. An ordinance changing the fee will also be considered at the meeting.

**Internet – Newspaper Archives Searches
Dan Porta
(Articles are in reverse chronological order)**

The Daily Tribune News (GA)
June 21, 2003

Governments feel insurance bite
Author/Byline: Unknown

Local governments are finding it harder to provide insurance to its employees in these rough economic times, leading government officials to closely watch their spending. While local government officials said they are shopping for better insurance deals, they are limited to their choices due to the state of the economy right now. "Insurance is getting very expensive," Cartersville Finance Director **Dan Porta** said. "Rates continue to go up."

Rising costs have impacted Adairsville "in a big way," City Clerk Kay Aylesworth said. "Small municipalities cannot afford many more increases." Officials for Bartow County, Adairsville and Euharlee said they have all changed insurance providers recently, but are still seeing rising costs. In Bartow County, Clerk Lane McMillan said the county will pay \$215,000 more in insurance this year, even though the it switched from a PPO plan (preferred provider organization) to a POS plan (point of service). "It would have been more unless we had changed," McMillan said.

Cartersville will pay \$383,000 more than last year, which includes a 26 percent increase in liability insurance, 18 percent increase in medical insurance and a 14 percent rise in workmen's compensation. **Porta** said if it weren't for the increases, the city might not of had to ask for a continued 1 mill property tax to fund capital expenses and other spending items. "We would have been able to afford more," **Porta** said.

**Internet – Newspaper Archives Searches
Dan Porta
(Articles are in reverse chronological order)**

The Daily Tribune News (GA)
December 24, 2002

City: No penalties for errors
Author/Byline: Unknown

Cartersville officials said Monday the city should receive no penalties for financial mishaps the city's accountants discovered in a recent audit. The city was not in compliance with state laws for recording police seizures, as well as improperly recording a \$10 million school bond and inaccurately reporting numerous checks for utility customer payments and \$154,000 in grant proceeds.

Cartersville Finance Director **Dam Porta** and Earl Williamson, the city's certified public accountant, said the city has either corrected or is in the process of correcting the mishaps. "There should not be any penalties at all," **Porta** said. "This [audit] was to draw attention to some things that needed to be addressed."

Vicki Evans, executive assistant to the state auditor, said the agency has not received the city's audit, which is due by Dec. 31. Evans could not comment on any possibilities of penalties given to the city.

Interest rates for the school bond weren't posted in this year's city books, but **Porta** said that has been rectified and will be properly posted in next year's budget. **Porta** said grants were being issued by city departments without notifying the finance department two years ago, but last year the city required all departments to provide the paperwork to finance. The \$154,000 grant proceeds in question were recorded as miscellaneous revenue in the general fund, rather than the water and sewer fund.

**Internet – Newspaper Archives Searches
Dan Porta
(Articles are in reverse chronological order)**

Daily Tribune News, The (Cartersville, GA)
January 6, 2000

Cartersville audit comes up clean - Full Text Unavailable

Author/Byline: Unknown

The 1999-2000 audit report for Cartersville will be presented at Thursday night's city council meeting.

According to City Manager Sam Grove, the audit by Williamson and Co. of Cartersville showed no problems. "There was no unfounded material in the budget," Grove said.

Cartersville finance director **Dan Porta** said the audit came back clean, which was the same as last year. "The city is in good shape," **Porta** said. "We came in under budget in our general fund and in several other departments."

The council also plans to look at a resolution to provide for the issuance and sale of short-term tax anticipation notes to finance the purchase of the Milan property, approximately 225 acres of land off Douthit Ferry Road south of Cartersville Middle School near the Etowah River. "We have a six-month option on the property that ends on Jan. 14," Grove said. "What the council will have to decide is whether they want to extend the option another six months for \$31,000 or go ahead and finance the property at today's interest rate." Grove said the property cost about \$3.2 million and the city has plans to use the property for recreation and possibly a new high school.

**Internet – Newspaper Archives Searches
Dan Porta
(Articles are in reverse chronological order)**

The Daily Tribune News (GA)
April 16, 1999

Road work will have to wait

Author/Byline: Unknown

The extension of Douthit Ferry Road to Burnt Hickory Road will have to wait a little longer. The Cartersville City Council voted to table a \$124,000 contract for the relocation of Georgia Power transmission lines because they felt price tag was too high. Utility lines must be moved to make way for a bridge over Pettit Creek so Douthit Ferry can meet Burnt Hickory near the Bartow County Public Works building. Design work on the bridge is already complete. "One power line would cross the bridge itself, and DOT wouldn't allow that," Assistant City Manager Jerry Milam said.

The mayor and city manager, however, were less than pleased with the price Georgia Power had set for the relocation. "I think we're getting gouged on it a little bit, to tell you the truth," City Manager Sam Grove said of Georgia Power's contract. Grove said equipment and engineering for the relocation project was overpriced. "Our folks tell us there's a 200 percent mark-up on two 95-foot steel poles in the contract," Grove said. Mayor Sam Smith voiced his concern that the contract mentioned no project completion date. "Engineering represents 22 percent of this contract," Smith said. "I just don't feel good at all about this." Grove asked that the council either table the motion or take no action on it. "I would like for you to let us go back and talk to them some more about it," Grove told the council.

In other business, council members approved the purchase of seven hand-held meter reading units for \$28,000. Finance Director **Dan Porta** said the computerized equipment should make the city's personnel more efficient at reading utility meters. Under the current system, meter readers use pad and pencil to record meter information, which is then entered into a computer at City Hall. "With the hand-helds, once the guys enter in the data, all they need is someone to upload that information into the computer," **Porta** said. **Porta** said the units should also make meter readings more accurate. "If a reading is outside the normal range for a utilities customer, the unit will alert the meter reader," he said. "Say they read a meter and it's 10 percent more than it was the last month. The hand-held will beep and let the reader know there's a discrepancy." **Porta** said he anticipates going to the new hand-held units on July 1.

The council approved \$25,000 to extend a current study of water and sewer rates by Thomson Environmental Network Inc. to include a study of impact fees. Water Department Director Jim Stafford said Thomson would figure out what new customers should be charged to hook on to city water and sewer. "They'll look at the cost to put in water and sewer lines and build plants to provide those services," Stafford said. "They'll figure out how much it costs the city for one person to tap on, and they'll have an accountant crunching numbers to find out what the impact fees should be -- what's fair and what's feasible."

**Internet – Newspaper Archives Searches
Dan Porta
(Articles are in reverse chronological order)**

The city and county are working together on the impact fees, Stafford said, as the county has agreed to allow the city to charge impact fees on county residents who hook on to city water. Stafford said the amount of an impact fee for an individual residence or business would depend on the amount of service it required. "It's fairly complicated," he said. "That's why we're paying for this study. If somebody says our impact fee is too high, then we have to justify it." The council also approved a \$49,000 bid from Jackie Dovers Electric Service of Cartersville to ground some electrical outdoor lighting at Dellinger Park.

Parks and Recreation Director Greg Anderson said a fence at Dellinger's softball fields became energized two years ago. Though no one was hurt, the city began grounding the outdoor lighting at its recreational sports venues to avoid having people get shocked. "This is a potentially dangerous situation, and we want to try to correct that," he said. Anderson said the city's electric department has been unable to do the rest of the grounding at Dellinger because of its heavy workload.

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The Daily Tribune News (GA)
September 18, 1998

Chamber letter ruffles feathers

Author/Byline: Unknown

Cochran insists letter not an endorsement, but some think otherwise. The Cartersville-Bartow County Chamber of Commerce says a letter for a member bidding on city insurance was a reference for a vendor and not an endorsement of one chamber member over another. But two local agents who are members of the chamber and sent in proposals don't see it that way.

In July, the City of Cartersville sent out a request for proposals on health, dental and life insurance and accidental death and dismemberment, long-term disability and short-term disability policies. The Shaw Agency, Starr Mathews and New York Life, all local agencies, and several firms outside of Bartow County sent proposals by the August 18 deadline.

In the stack of those proposals, The Shaw Agency, which did get the city's medical and dental insurance business last week, included a notebook telling about their agency and 14 letters from clients about The Shaw Agency, including one from the Chamber of Commerce.

Scott Hankins of The Shaw Agency said he asked for the letters. "An agent can talk about how good you are all day, but it's much more convincing with letters of reference," Hankins said. Elyse Cochran, president of the Cartersville-Bartow Chamber of Commerce, said, Starr Mathews perceived the letter as an endorsement of The Shaw Agency. "We do not send letters of endorsement," Cochran said. That could lead to picking one member over another, she said. "We never endorse one chamber member over another." She said the letter was sent as a letter of reference for a company that provides services for the chamber. "We always send letters of reference for vendors," she said.

Hankins agrees that this letter, like the other 13 sent, are just letters of reference. "The Chamber of Commerce did not single out one firm from among the agencies," he said. But, he added, it is an endorsement to do business locally. "The only endorsement that we would ever ask of any business is that they buy as many products and services as possible from local business," Cochran said.

The Sept. 4 letter on Cartersville-Bartow County Chamber letterhead is addressed to Mayor Sam Smith, members of the City Council and the City of Cartersville. "The Shaw Agency, Inc. has handled the employee benefit plan for the Chamber of Commerce employees for many years and I would highly recommend their services," the first sentence reads. The letter continues, telling about work Hankins did in 1994 creating and developing the Blue Cross Blue Shield of Georgia health insurance plan for members of the chamber and that now over 200 business in Cartersville and Bartow County are covered, including the chamber.

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The third paragraph states, "As you will remember, Scott Hankins was 1996 Chairman of the Chamber of Commerce and in this role lead the effort to develop and launch Forward Bartow. This program has already has a major impact on the City of Cartersville and Bartow County and will for many years into the future. One of the major components of Forward Bartow is the construction of the new chamber building, which has been a major factor in the revitalization of Downtown Cartersville."

The letter concludes by stating that Buy Bartow is another major component. "This is a community effort to encourage organizations in Cartersville and Bartow County to do as much business as possible on a local basis. Please support our local business community when you make decisions concerning your employee benefit plan."

Bill Kelley, the manager of Starr Mathews, said, "I think the letter speaks for itself and on the surface is an inappropriate endorsement of one member of the chamber over the other." Ron Goss, a local agent with New York Life, said, "I am a member and support the chamber. However, I feel the letter was slanted and the chamber should not put one member above another." But after Kelley called Cochran about the letter with The Shaw Agency's proposal, she offered to write a letter of reference for Starr Mathews, too, because the agency is also a vendor of the chamber. Cochran said Kelley declined. He confirmed that and said he told Cochran "I would not have asked you to do that."

Dan Porta, the city's financial director and the man who reviewed the proposals, said he didn't pay much attention to the letters of reference. He had already contacted some of The Shaw Agency's clients for references. "By the time the letters came in, recommendations had already been made," he said. **Porta** had recommended that the city use McBurnett & Szabolcsi to provide Cigna medical and Guardian dental insurance. The city, however, selected The Shaw Agency as its agent. That, **Porta** said, was his second choice. He said he had initially chosen McBurnett & Szabolcsi because they could provide services in-house. He said The Shaw Agency later stated it could provide those services in-house.

Hankins said, "I believe the decision of the city was based first on doing business locally, expected levels of service and desire to move business around." The city's short-term disability, long-term disability, life and accidental death and dismemberment insurance will be provided by agents with Hilb, Rogal and Hamilton Company in Atlanta.

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The Daily Tribune News (GA)
September 11, 1998

City changes insurance

Author/Byline: Unknown

All 45 retirees from the City of Cartersville will continue to receive the same insurance coverage they've been getting, following a decision by the Cartersville City Council Thursday night. The city has dropped employee group health insurance with Great West through the Starr Mathews Agency of Cartersville because policy renewal rates with Great West increased by 70 percent. Renewing the policy wasn't feasible due to budgetary restraints, according to the council.

Rather than select another health plan through Starr Mathews, the council voted unanimously to go with Cigna Health Care of Georgia and other insurance providers through The Shaw Agency, also of Cartersville. "From time to time, it's my experience that changing vendors to get a better product or service is what the city should do. It's not a reflection on Starr Mathews," said City Manager Sam Grove after the meeting. Shaw will begin enrolling city employees next week.

City Finance Director **Daniel Porta** had repeatedly recommended McBurnett & Szabolcsi Inc. of Marietta as the agency providing Cigna medical and Guardian dental insurance. His recommendation was based on the agency's ability to provide a number of in-house services, including COBRA and HIPAA compliance.

However, Grove favored Shaw because they were local, convenient to city employees and were willing to offer the same in-house services offered by McBurnett & Szabolcsi Inc. Mayor Sam Smith also expressed a preference for Shaw.

At first, The Shaw Agency could only provide COBRA and HIPAA compliance through a third agency at an additional cost. Then last week, they notified the city that they had decided they, too, could provide the same in-house services offered by McBurnett & Szabolcsi Inc..

In the work session prior to the council meeting, **Porta** expressed doubt that Shaw could adequately provide the in-house services, since they had never done it before and again recommended McBurnett & Szabolcsi. During the council meeting, **Porta** presented Cigna Agent Neal Ortkiese to the council, as well as Les Szabolcsi of McBurnett & Szabolcsi Inc. Ortkiese said Cigna had a working relationship with McBurnett & Szabolcsi, Inc., but did not have a working relationship with The Shaw Agency, even though they both are Cigna carriers.

Szabolcsi told the council that he and his wife lived in Bartow County, were long-time members of the Cartersville-Bartow Chamber of Commerce and considered themselves "local." The mayor allowed representatives of other agencies to make five minute sales presentations to the council as a result. Scott Hankins, a partner at The Shaw Agency, addressed the council, reminding them that Shaw had been a corporate entity in Cartersville for 35 years. He pointed out that his agency is located only two blocks from city hall. City employees could talk to an insurance agent face to

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face when they had questions or problems with their medical insurance, he said. He also said he had attempted to work with Cigna "from the very beginning" and had Ortkiese acknowledge he had, as a Cigna agent, met him or seen him several times at insurance meetings.

Grove prompted the council to make a motion to go with Shaw and completely ignore the recommendation to go with McBurnett & Szabolcsi that **Porta** had made. When the council unanimously voted to adopt the policy offered by Shaw, **Porta** left the meeting with Ortkiese, Szabolcis and other McBurnett representatives. Yet after the meeting, **Porta** said the decision to go with Shaw was fine with him. "I was looking at the services the city needs and who could provide good benefits to the employee," he said. He also said after the meeting that he is satisfied that Shaw can provide the necessary in-house services.

Cartersville budgeted \$111,002 per month for employee health insurance. Great West was asking for \$141,652 per month for medical, dental, disability and life insurance. The policy adopted by the council costs the city \$110,363 per month. That monthly premium breaks down as follows, Cigna medical \$85,394.48, Guardian Dental \$7,128.73, BMA short- and long-term disability and life \$6,390. Added into the monthly amount are termination fees. HRH Insurance Agency of Atlanta will be providing the city with short-term disability, long-term disability, life and AD&D insurance through BMA, even though local insurance agencies submitted coverage proposals.

To demonstrate how much lower HRH is compared to the local proposals, **Porta** provided a chart on the short-term disability. For 14 days accident, 14 days sickness, 6-month benefit period and \$150 maximum benefit in short-term disability, the individual would pay premiums of \$11,524 through HRH compared to \$15,190 or \$15,714 through local agencies. Cartersville's employee health insurance policy with Great West expires at the end of September. The city is required to pay a \$221,347 termination fee to Great West.

Grove explained after the meeting that the fee serves as a bridge between the termination of the Great West policy and the activation of the new policy, insuring uninterrupted insurance coverage. The termination fee has been divided and included in city employees' weekly insurance premiums so that it will be paid over the course of the year. "It will make employee premiums a little higher this year, but will work out to their favor once it's paid off," Grove said.

Research Compiled by: Amanda Dillabough
 Colin Baenziger & Associates

Public Records Exemptions

Enclosed please find a copy of the response documents for your public records request. The following information is provided to explain the process employed to review and produce the response documents.

| Reason | Description | Pages |
|-----------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------|
| PII Firefighters - F.S. 119.071(4) (d)2.d. | <p>The home addresses, telephone numbers, dates of birth, and photographs of current or former firefighters certified in compliance with s. 633.408; the names, home addresses, telephone numbers, photographs, dates of birth, and places of employment of the spouses and children of such firefighters; and the names and locations of schools and day care facilities attended by the children of such firefighters are exempt from s. 119.07(1) and s. 24(a), Art. I of the State Constitution.</p> | 20 |
| PII City Attorney - F.S. 119.071(4) (d)2.w. | <p>The home addresses, telephone numbers, dates of birth, and photographs of current county attorneys, assistant county attorneys, deputy county attorneys, city attorneys, assistant city attorneys, and deputy city attorneys; the names, home addresses, telephone numbers, photographs, dates of birth, and places of employment of the spouses and children of current county attorneys, assistant county attorneys, deputy county attorneys, city attorneys, assistant city attorneys, and deputy city attorneys; and the names and locations of schools and day care facilities attended by the children of current county attorneys, assistant county attorneys, deputy county attorneys, city attorneys, assistant city attorneys, and deputy city attorneys are exempt from s. 119.07(1) and s. 24(a), Art. I of the State Constitution. This exemption does not apply to a county attorney, assistant county attorney, deputy county attorney, city attorney, assistant city attorney, or deputy city attorney who qualifies as a candidate for election to public office. This sub-subparagraph is subject to the Open Government Sunset Review Act in accordance with s. 119.15 and shall stand repealed on October 2, 2029, unless reviewed and saved from repeal through reenactment by the Legislature.</p> | 21 |
| PII Human Resources - F.S. 119.071(4) (d)2.h. | <p>The home addresses, telephone numbers, dates of birth, and photographs of current or former human resource, labor relations, or employee relations directors, assistant directors, managers, or assistant managers of any local government agency or water management district whose duties include hiring and firing employees, labor contract negotiation, administration, or other personnel-related duties; the names, home addresses, telephone numbers, dates of birth, and places of employment of the spouses and children of such personnel; and the names and locations of</p> | 25 |

schools and day care facilities attended by the children of such personnel are exempt from s. 119.07(1) and s. 24(a), Art. I of the State Constitution.