

**MINUTES
REGULAR MEETING
WINNSBORO TOWN COUNCIL
JANUARY 18, 2022**

Present: Mayor John McMeekin; Mayor Pro-Tem Demetrius Chatman; Danny Miller, Janice Bartell Prather, Jae Burroughs, Council Members; Jason Taylor, Town Manager; Scott Elliott, Town Attorney; Patti L. Davis, Town Clerk.

The Winnsboro Town Council met in regular session on January 18, 2022, at 6:15 p.m. at the Winnsboro Women's Club. In accordance with the South Carolina Code of Laws, 1976, Section 30-4-80 (e), as amended, the following persons and/or organizations have been notified of the time, date and location of this meeting: The Independent Voice of Blythewood and Fairfield, The Country Chronicle and four hundred ninety-two other individuals.

1. CALL TO ORDER

Mayor McMeekin called the Regular Meeting to order at 6:16 p.m.

2. INVOCATION

Council Member Bartell-Prather led the invocation.

3. APPROVAL OF AGENDA

Council Member Bartell-Prather made a motion, seconded by Council Member Burroughs, to approve the agenda. ***The motion carried 5-0.***

4. APPROVAL OF MINUTES

Council Member Bartell-Prather made a motion, seconded by Council Member Burroughs, to approve the minutes of the Regular Meeting of December 7, 2021, Finance Committee of January 4, 2022, and the Regular Meeting of January 4, 2022. ***The motion carried 5-0.***

5. PUBLIC COMMENT (3 MINUTES): THE TOTAL TIME ALLOCATED TO THIS PUBLIC COMMENT SEGMENT IS 30 MINUTES.

Mr. Tony Armstrong signed to speak concerning the recent power outage. Although we knew the storm was coming, no one has the ability to know the outcome. He thanked everyone who worked during the storm and inquired if there is a plan going into the next storm this weekend. He inquired about potential shelters and communication for possible boil water alerts. He is hoping so and that the plan will be rolled out in a timely manner ahead of the storm.

6. PUBLIC HEARINGS

None.

7. SPECIAL REPORTS/PRESENTATIONS

A. Annual Audit Report – FY 2020-2021, Mr. Bill Hancock, The Brittingham Group. Mr. Hancock stated a presentation was just given to the Finance Committee, which included more in-depth material. He will now present to full Council, and if Council needs further information, he can, of course, dig deeper. Mr. Hancock directed Council to the following:

- Page 2: Pages 1-3 include the overall opinion on the financial statement taken as a whole. At the top of page 2 is the most important thing that the Town can get, which is a clean and unmodified opinion. The financial statements were found to be correct in all material respects with no needed modifications.
- Page 59: This represents another report with opinions issued covering the internal controls over the financial reporting and how the Town did in maintaining its compliance with external rules that it has to operate under. The firm found no recommended changes to the internal control system. The Town has an adequate system in place to include a system of approval, execution and a system of review. No errors were found resulting from this system.
- Page 60: The Town must be in compliance with many different laws, contracts, regulations, ordinances, grants, etc. One issue was found this year, and this description is on page 61. This is the first compliance issue since the firm has been doing the work for the Town of Winnsboro. It has been fixed and procedures put into place to prevent this from happening again in the future.
- Page 19: This is an analysis and comparison of the general fund's budgeted results versus the actual results. The budgeted amounts are shown both in revenue by source and expenditure by department along with the actual results and the variance. Around \$880,000 was projected in revenue from licenses and permits. The actual was \$572,000 which is about a \$300,000 shortfall. Licensing and permitting were reduced because the economy had slowed. There was a change in the fund balance of -\$1.5M, and this is the first time in a while the Town has experienced this. This will need to be addressed in the upcoming budget. A large part of this is the transfer that was required to the utilities fund, and this was required due to overtime payments and supplies to keep the utilities running this past year because a lot of people were working from home.

Mr. Hancock stated he wanted to give the above details, and if Council needs further information or has questions, he would be glad to provide it. With no questions

heard, Mr. Hancock stated administration can be contacted if Council has any further questions or he can be contact directly.

8. ORDINANCES AND RESOLUTIONS

- A.** Second and Final Reading Ordinance No. 1: An Ordinance Annexing into the Town of Winnsboro a 0.31 Acre Tract of Land, Located at 200 US Hwy 321, Winnsboro, SC, Owned by the Town of Winnsboro, in Fairfield County, Not Already Within the Winnsboro Town Limits, and Including All Adjacent and Abutting Rights-of-Way. Tax Map No. 125-04-03-002-000. Motion made by Council Member Bartell-Prather, seconded by Council Member Burroughs, to approve Second and Final Reading of Ordinance No. 1. Council Member Miller stated he has noticed there are a lot of annexations of land not to include residences and inquired if there is a cost to the Town for this process. Per Mr. Taylor, it does not cost the Town anything to annex land and is actually less cost associated with vacant land as opposed to occupied land. Council Member Miller further inquired if there are attorney's fees associated with this and if the attorney is looking over the documents. Mr. Taylor stated it is all being handled in-house. Mr. Elliott stated it is a simple form of annexation by consent of the landowner, and Mr. Taylor stated it is called a 100% annexation petition where the owner of the property is in agreement and Council is in agreement. Mr. Taylor, Mr. Clauson and Mrs. Davis are heavily involved in the process, and there are some who request annexation that is not possible. Mayor McMeekin stated this is a legitimate question because past attorneys charged \$500 per annexation. ***The motion carried 5-0.***
- B.** Second and Final Reading Ordinance No. 2: An Ordinance Annexing into the Town of Winnsboro a 0.41 Acre Tract of Land, Located off Hudson Street, Winnsboro, SC, Owned by the Town of Winnsboro, in Fairfield County, Not Already Within the Winnsboro Town Limits, and Including All Adjacent and Abutting Rights-of-Way. Tax Map No. 126-02-09-036-000. Motion made by Council Member Burroughs, seconded by Council Member Bartell-Prather, to approve Second and Final Reading Ordinance No. 2. ***The motion carried 5-0.***
- C.** Second and Final Reading Ordinance No. 3: An Ordinance Annexing into the Town of Winnsboro a 0.25 Acre Tract of Land, Located at 44 Eleventh Street, Winnsboro, SC, Owned by the Town of Winnsboro, in Fairfield County, Not Already Within the Winnsboro Town Limits, and Including All Adjacent and Abutting Rights-of-Way. Tax Map No. 145-01-24-013-000. Motion made by Council Member Bartell-Prather,

seconded by Council Member Burroughs, to approve Second and Final Reading of Ordinance No. 3. **The motion carried 5-0.**

- D.** Second and Final Reading Ordinance No. 4: An Ordinance Annexing into the Town of Winnsboro a 0.26 Acre Tract of Land, Located at 465 Pine Street, Winnsboro, SC, Owned by David Henry Shirley & Wendy Gaye Luce, in Fairfield County, Not Already Within the Winnsboro Town Limits, and Including All Adjacent and Abutting Rights-of-Way. Tax Map No. 145-01-02-003-000. Motion made by Council Member Burroughs, seconded by Council Member Bartell-Prather, to approve Second and Final Reading Ordinance No. 4. **The motion carried 5-0.**
- E.** Second and Final Reading Ordinance No. 5: An Ordinance Annexing into the Town of Winnsboro a 0.52 Acre Tract of Land, Located at 1014 Oak Street Ext., Winnsboro, SC, Owned by Harriet & Abigail Hodge, in Fairfield County, Not Already Within the Winnsboro Town Limits, and Including All Adjacent and Abutting Rights-of-Way. Tax Map No. 145-01-23-027-000. Motion made by Council Member Bartell-Prather, seconded by Council Member Burroughs, to approve Second and Final Reading Ordinance No. 5. **The motion carried 5-0.**
- F.** First Reading Ordinance No. 6: An Ordinance Annexing into the Town of Winnsboro a 0.57 Acre Tract of Land, Located at 134 Hunstanton Drive, Winnsboro, SC, Owned by Addlie and Darlene Mincey, in Fairfield County, Not Already Within the Winnsboro Town Limits, and Including All Adjacent and Abutting Rights-of-Way. Tax Map No. 145-01-21-007-000. Motion made by Council Member Burroughs, seconded by Council Member Bartell-Prather, to approve First Reading Ordinance No. 6. **The motion carried 5-0.**
- G.** First Reading Ordinance No. 7: An Ordinance Annexing into the Town of Winnsboro a 1.68 Acre Tract of Land, Located at 116 Cornwallis Drive, Winnsboro, SC, Owned by Church Trustees Bethel Assoc. Reformed Presbyterian, in Fairfield County, Not Already Within the Winnsboro Town Limits, and Including All Adjacent and Abutting Rights-of-Way. Tax Map No. 106-00-04-004-000. Motion made by Council Member Burroughs, seconded by Council Member Bartell-Prather, to approve First Reading Ordinance No. 7. **The motion carried 5-0.**
- H.** First Reading Ordinance No. 8: An Ordinance Annexing into the Town of Winnsboro a 0.9 Acre Tract of Land, Located at 101 Rice Street,

Winnsboro, SC, Owned by Keith and Lois Helms, in Fairfield County, Not Already Within the Winnsboro Town Limits, and Including All Adjacent and Abutting Rights-of-Way. Tax Map No. 126-02-01-018-000. Motion made by Council Member Burroughs, seconded by Council Member Bartell-Prather, to approve First Reading Ordinance No. 8. Council Member Miller inquired who is reviewing the maps and the rights-of-way concerning the annexations and if the legal ramifications are understood. Per Mr. Taylor, the staff is looking at all the annexations to make sure they are contiguous to existing Town borders, and all of this is reviewed before bringing to Council. Council Member Miller inquired if the legal ramifications are understood, and Mr. Taylor stated this is understood. The County Assessor's maps are primarily used to be sure the property is acceptable for annexation. There have been many requests that are not contiguous, and these are not brought to Council. **The motion carried 5-0.**

- I. First Reading Ordinance No. 9: An Ordinance Annexing into the Town of Winnsboro a 48.92 Acre Tract of Land, Located at South Congress Street, Winnsboro, SC, Owned by Chris Central Ministries, Inc., in Fairfield County, Not Already Within the Winnsboro Town Limits, and Including All Adjacent and Abutting Rights-of-Way. Tax Map No. 126-03-16-006-000. Motion made by Council Member Miller, seconded by Council Member Bartell-Prather, to approve First Reading Ordinance No. 9. Mayor Pro-Tem Chatman inquired concerning this property, and Mr. Taylor stated this is the old Country Club golf course property. Mayor McMeekin stated he believes there are three parcels of land, and this was the only portion not in the Town limits. Mayor Pro-Tem Chatman wants to be sure that anyone around this property knows they can also be annexed. **The motion carried 5-0.**
- J. First Reading Ordinance No. 10: An Ordinance Annexing into the Town of Winnsboro a 0.26 Acre Tract of Land, Located at 180 Pine Street, Winnsboro, SC, Owned by Wendy Luce, in Fairfield County, Not Already Within the Winnsboro Town Limits, and Including All Adjacent and Abutting Rights-of-Way. Tax Map No. 126-03-17-005-000. Motion made by Council Member Burroughs, seconded by Council Member Bartell-Prather, to approve First Reading Ordinance No. 10. **The motion carried 5-0.**
- K. First Reading Ordinance No. 11: An Ordinance Annexing into the Town of Winnsboro a 0.25 Acre Tract of Land, Located at 520 Poplar Street, Winnsboro, SC, Owned by Heyward Mattox, in Fairfield County, Not Already Within the Winnsboro Town Limits, and Including All Adjacent

and Abutting Rights-of-Way. Tax Map No. 145-01-13-003-000. Motion made by Council Member Bartell-Prather, seconded by Council Member Burroughs, to approve First Reading Ordinance No. 11. ***The motion carried 5-0.***

- L.** First Reading Ordinance No. 12: An Ordinance Annexing into the Town of Winnsboro a 0.22 Acre Tract of Land, Located at 650 8th Street, Winnsboro, SC, Owned by Jian Ni and Huaxiang Shao, in Fairfield County, Not Already Within the Winnsboro Town Limits, and Including All Adjacent and Abutting Rights-of-Way. Tax Map No. 145-01-14-002-000. Motion made by Council Member Bartell-Prather, seconded by Council Member Burroughs, to approve First Reading Ordinance No. 12. ***The motion carried 5-0.***
- M.** First Reading Ordinance No. 13: An Ordinance Annexing into the Town of Winnsboro a 0.5 Acre Tract of Land, Located at 565 Columbia Road, Winnsboro, SC, Owned by Jian Ni and Huaxiang Shao, in Fairfield County, Not Already Within the Winnsboro Town Limits, and Including All Adjacent and Abutting Rights-of-Way. Tax Map No. 145-01-16-009-000. Motion made by Council Member Burroughs, seconded by Council Member Bartell--Prather, to approve First Reading Ordinance No. 13. ***The motion carried 5-0.***
- N.** First Reading Ordinance No. 14: An Ordinance Annexing into the Town of Winnsboro a 0.23 Acre Tract of Land, Located at 290 Oak Street, Winnsboro, SC, Owned by Jian Ni, in Fairfield County, Not Already Within the Winnsboro Town Limits, and Including All Adjacent and Abutting Rights-of-Way. Tax Map No. 126-03-22-016-000. Motion made by Council Member Burroughs, seconded by Council Member Bartell-Prather, to approve First Reading Ordinance No. 14. ***The motion carried 5-0.***
- O.** First Reading Ordinance No. 15: An Ordinance Annexing into the Town of Winnsboro a 0.21 Acre Tract of Land, Located at 290 Cedar Street, Winnsboro, SC, Owned by Jian Ni, in Fairfield County, Not Already Within the Winnsboro Town Limits, and Including All Adjacent and Abutting Rights-of-Way. Tax Map No. 145-01-06-002-000. Motion made by Council Member Burroughs, seconded by Council Member Bartell-Prather, to approve First Reading Ordinance No. 15. ***The motion carried 5-0.***
- P.** First Reading Ordinance No. 16: An Ordinance Annexing into the Town of Winnsboro a 0.15 Acre Tract of Land, Located at 525 Columbia

Road, Winnsboro, SC, Owned by Yugeng Wu, in Fairfield County, Not Already Within the Winnsboro Town Limits, and Including All Adjacent and Abutting Rights-of-Way. Tax Map No. 145-01-16-011-000. Motion made by Council Member Bartell-Prather, seconded by Council Member Burroughs, to approve First Reading Ordinance No. 16. ***The motion carried 5-0.***

Q. First Reading Ordinance No. 17: An Ordinance Annexing into the Town of Winnsboro a 0.14 Acre Tract of Land, Located at 330 Cedar Street, Winnsboro, SC, Owned by Nathan Cooke and Yuling Wu, in Fairfield County, Not Already Within the Winnsboro Town Limits, and Including All Adjacent and Abutting Rights-of-Way. Tax Map No. 145-01-08-006-000. Motion made by Council Member Burroughs, seconded by Council Member Bartell-Prather, to approve First Reading Ordinance No. 17. ***The motion carried 5-0.***

R. First Reading Ordinance No. 18: An Ordinance Annexing into the Town of Winnsboro a 0.44 Acre Tract of Land, Located at 230 Pine Street, Winnsboro, SC, Owned by Yuling Wu, in Fairfield County, Not Already Within the Winnsboro Town Limits, and Including All Adjacent and Abutting Rights-of-Way. Tax Map No. 126-03-20-002-000. Motion made by Council Member Burroughs, seconded by Council member Bartell-Prather, to approve First Reading Ordinance No. 18. ***The motion carried 5-0.***

S. First Reading Ordinance No. 19: An Ordinance Annexing into the Town of Winnsboro a 0.1 Acre Tract of Land, Located at 465 Columbia Road, Winnsboro, SC, Owned by Yuling Wu, in Fairfield County, Not Already Within the Winnsboro Town Limits, and Including All Adjacent and Abutting Rights-of-Way. Tax Map No. 145-01-08-011-000. Motion made by Council Member Burroughs, seconded by Council Member Bartell-Prather, to approve First Reading Ordinance No. 19. ***The motion carried 5-0.***

T. First Reading Ordinance No. 20: An Ordinance Annexing into the Town of Winnsboro a 0.24 Acre Tract of Land, Located at 470 Poplar Street, Winnsboro, SC, Owned by Yuling Wu, in Fairfield County, Not Already Within the Winnsboro Town Limits, and Including All Adjacent and Abutting Rights-of-Way. Tax Map No. 145-01-02-007-000. Motion made by Council Member Burroughs, seconded by Council Member Bartell-Prather, to approve First Reading Ordinance No. 20. ***The motion carried 5-0.***

- U. First Reading Ordinance No. 21: An Ordinance Annexing into the Town of Winnsboro a 0.19 Acre Tract of Land, Located at 485 Poplar Street, Winnsboro, SC, Owned by Yuling Wu, in Fairfield County, Not Already Within the Winnsboro Town Limits, and Including All Adjacent and Abutting Rights-of-Way. Tax Map No. 145-01-03-005-000. Motion made by Council Member Burroughs, seconded by Council Member Bartell-Prather, to approve First Reading Ordinance No. 21. **The motion carried 5-0.**
- V. First Reading Ordinance No. 22: An Ordinance Annexing into the Town of Winnsboro a 0.26 Acre Tract of Land, Located at 545 Columbia Road, Winnsboro, SC, Owned by Yuling Wu, in Fairfield County, Not Already Within the Winnsboro Town Limits, and Including All Adjacent and Abutting Rights-of-Way. Tax Map No. 145-01-16-010-000. Motion made by Council Member Bartell-Prather, seconded by Council Member Burroughs, to approve First Reading Ordinance No. 22. **The motion carried 5-0.**
- W. First Reading Ordinance No. 23: An Ordinance Annexing into the Town of Winnsboro a 0.22 Acre Tract of Land, Located at 750 4th Street, Winnsboro, SC, Owned by Yuling Wu, in Fairfield County, Not Already Within the Winnsboro Town Limits, and Including All Adjacent and Abutting Rights-of-Way. Tax Map No. 126-03-21-002-000. Motion made by Council Member Bartell-Prather, seconded by Council Member Burroughs, to approve First Reading Ordinance No. 23. **The motion carried 5-0.**
- X. First Reading Ordinance No. 24: An Ordinance Annexing into the Town of Winnsboro a 0.3 Acre Tract of Land, Located at 785 4th Street, Winnsboro, SC, Owned by Yuling Wu, in Fairfield County, Not Already Within the Winnsboro Town Limits, and Including All Adjacent and Abutting Rights-of-Way. Tax Map No. 126-03-18-007-000. Motion made by Council Member Bartell-Prather, seconded by Council Member Burroughs, to approve First Reading Ordinance No. 24. **The motion carried 5-0.**
- Y. First Reading Ordinance No. 25: An Ordinance Annexing into the Town of Winnsboro a 0.3 Acre Tract of Land, Located at 780 4th Street, Winnsboro, SC, Owned by Yuling Wu, in Fairfield County, Not Already Within the Winnsboro Town Limits, and Including All Adjacent and Abutting Rights-of-Way. Tax Map No. 126-03-21-001-000. Motion made by Council Member Burroughs, seconded by Council Member

Bartell-Prather, to approve First Reading Ordinance No. 25. ***The motion carried 5-0.***

9. MANAGER'S REPORT

- A.** Post and Courier Articles Dated January 5, 2022, and January 12, 2022. Mr. Taylor stated this item is offered as information concerning the Governor's efforts to beef up the Ethics Commission.
- B.** AMI Update. Per Mr. Taylor, the AMI system is going quite well. Mr. Medlin is overseeing much of this and will give Council an update. Per Mr. Medlin, the system is currently about 41% complete with around 687 being installed. There was another shipment today of the radios the department has been waiting on. There now should be enough to complete the Blythewood area in the next few weeks. The supply chain had been slow, but it is getting better. There are 989 meters left to do. There have been three complaints so far, and these were taken care of. Council Member Miller inquired if the data is being collected and if the testing will begin soon, and Mr. Medlin stated the billing office has not started collecting the data yet, and it will be tested soon. Concerning the weekend storm, Mr. Medlin stated at some point, all customers were lost on the power outage. Some breakers were lost at the substation requiring replacements. On Monday morning, after the electric department working a 20-hour day, there were about 800 customers out. Most of these were corrected on Monday. There remains about 30-35 scattered throughout the whole system. There was a lot of damage at the reservoir, and a contract crew was enlisted from North Carolina. Water is now being pumped from the reservoir to the plant. Mr. Taylor stated there was a period where a number of people were without water, either very low water pressure or no water. When the reservoir went down, this proved to be problematic because this required heavy concentration to get this power back up so as not to cascade and all the water go down. This did expose some weaknesses in the system, and DHEC had cited us for not having sufficient backup generators. This was clearly shown throughout this storm that backup generators are needed. Mr. Medlin stated there was also some equipment breakdown as far as the trucks, and these are getting repaired. Again, the crews put in two 20 hour days and did great work. Mr. Medlin also appreciates the contractors and the customers. Once power was restored, the customers were very thankful. Mr. Taylor stated Public Safety was also manning the phones and information was being shared via Facebook. He was attempting to get information out to the public as quickly as possible. People appreciated knowing where the crews were working and that everything was being done to address the outages. Mr. Medlin feels the

Town should definitely expand on its Facebook coverage and the web page. Mr. Taylor stated the Facebook page was showing the amount of the public being reached by the posts, and he feels this was a very good thing. Council Member Miller stated he hopes we can expand on getting the message out to people, possibly using texts and emails. Per Mr. Taylor, the County Emergency Services was contacted, and a reverse 9-1-1 was also done. Council Member Miller inquired if this can be done for the upcoming storm, including contractors on standby, and Mr. Taylor stated he is definitely in contact with the County. Mr. Medlin stated there are no contractors on standby as this is something prior administration did not want to deal with. However, this has been discussed today. Council Member Miller thanked Mr. Medlin and stated the people in the communities really appreciate it. Mayor McMeekin stated he tried to forward all the updates coming from Mr. Taylor on Facebook to get the word out, and he also appreciates the work that was done. It is good to find out where our deficiencies lie to be able to work on these going forward. Mr. Medlin stated it was definitely a joint effort with the whole utility department, including sewer and water. There were, however, no gas problems during this storm. Mr. Taylor also stated Mr. Johnson is doing a great job with the clean up already, and Mr. Medlin stated he was also assisting the work crews.

Council Member Miller stated he had a question for Mr. Taylor. Mayor McMeekin inquired if it was a question related to an item on the agenda and further stated that Council needs to stick to the agenda. If the item is not on the agenda, a motion can be made, approved by a super majority of Council, to add it, or it could be placed on the agenda for next time. Council Member Miller stated he has some questions he wishes to have an update on. Mayor McMeekin stated legally Council has to stick to what is on the agenda. It has operated loosely in the past, but agenda items need to be given to the press beforehand. Mayor Pro-Tem Chatman inquired what if they have a concern from a constituent, and Mayor McMeekin stated to contact Mr. Taylor or himself beforehand to get it added to the agenda. Mr. Elliott stated Council does need to stick to the agenda, and the agenda can be modified. Mayor McMeekin stated it can be modified at the beginning of the meeting, otherwise, the agenda must be followed. Council Member Miller inquired if questions could fall under new business, and Mayor McMeekin stated only if an item is listed on the agenda. Discussion ensued concerning Council Members asking questions and the proper and legal way for this to be done. This was discussed at the last meeting which Council Member Miller was not present for. Council Member Miller stated he wanted to ask questions about the dilapidated houses and the salary study. Mayor Pro-Tem Chatman made a motion to add to the agenda a report for the dilapidated houses and the salary study. Mayor McMeekin

stated a motion has been made to amend the agenda, and asked for Mayor Pro-Tem Chatman to specifically state what the motion is for. Mayor Pro-Tem Chatman stated dilapidated properties for Zion Hill and the salary study. Council Member Miller seconded this motion. ***The motion carried 5-0.*** Mayor McMeekin stated this is the legal way of handling this, and Mayor Pro-Tem Chatman stated before this goes into effect, he would like some training. On the class and comp study, Mr. Taylor stated a preliminary report has been received that has a few missing pieces. It does indicate what was thought, especially concerning the Town's utility departments, that the pay is not the standard. This will have to be addressed in the near future. There are some areas, however, that the job duties appear to not be correct, so these positions will need to be discussed further. Mayor Pro-Tem Chatman stated this is exactly what he wanted to know, and he feels that each employee should be personally talked with to understand their job duties in detail. Mr. Taylor agreed and stated in a small town, the employees wear a lot of hats. Hopefully, the full clean report will be ready for Council at the next meeting or the following meeting. On the dilapidated houses, the Town must have a more comprehensive approach than just handing out tickets. While this is a part of it, there must be a larger plan with public private partnerships. While at the County, Mr. Taylor was involved with reforming how the Forfeited Land Trust was handled. So many of these properties are owned by the County or the Forfeited Land Trust, which is a subdivision of the County and is treated slightly different. Typically, the properties go into the Forfeited Land Trust and are sold to someone, possibly even out of state. That owner has the idea that it will be fixed up, but when they look at the property and realize it is more than they want to take on, then it just sits and continues to be dilapidated. The property is oftentimes returned to the Forfeited Land Trust or a tax sale, so it is a vicious cycle. Mr. Taylor stated he just had a discussion concerning this matter to work toward the Town forming some type of development arm so it could acquire the properties, with Council's blessing, and break this cycle. Once the properties are acquired, we could then work with a private developer, such as Habitat for Humanity. They will then come in with a lot ready with water, sewer, gas and roads. Habitat for Humanity has a process in place to find a suitable homeowner who can then be responsible for the property. A more comprehensive approach such as this needs to be brokered instead of just relying on ticketing. Mr. Taylor stated ticketing will not get us to where we want to be. Another example is the house that burned down on Main Street. This could drag on for months if the Town had not obtained ownership and is now contemplating tearing the structure down. Mayor Pro-Tem Chatman stated when the meetings were held concerning Zion Hill, the meetings were well attended. Those citizens are now wondering what is going on. Mr. Clauson

stated the COG is going through the process to submit to the State to modify the grant. They did not get the response that was hoped for, and the last count was about nine properties. There was a great response and community presence; however, the people who attended the meetings did not own the dilapidated properties. A number of the owners are actually out of town, and there are even more in the Forfeited Land Commission. If those can be obtained by the Town, as Mr. Taylor alluded to, this would be a good thing. Mr. Taylor stated there is the potential at present for the Town to almost take down an entire block inside the area. There is also some existing property with the chance to obtain additional property around it thereby doubling or tripling the area, and at that point, working with an entity such as Habitat for Humanity, the Town could potentially redevelop an entire block. Mr. Clauson further stated once the COG gets approval, they will be able to move forward with the nine properties. There is also the changing out of the street lights pending, which would cover the entire Zion Hill community, along Garden Street, cemetery area and all the way to and including Fortune Springs. The lighting will then consist of LED bulbs. There will also be playground equipment upgrades in Martin Park, which will be a great asset. Mayor Pro-Tem Chatman inquired concerning the cameras. Mr. Clauson stated this has been a hassle because there were so few contractors who responded. He believes something can be done internally. Council Member Miller thanked Mr. Taylor and Mr. Clauson for the information. He also stated that Council as a whole does not set the agenda and inquired when he would have the opportunity to ask questions. Mr. Elliott stated he believes the agenda is set around Friday afternoon. These are very good questions, and the reason why it is important to have these items on the agenda is if they had been on the agenda, there might have been a member of the public who would have liked to have heard the responses concerning the dilapidated houses and would have liked to come to the meeting. With the most flexibility in the Manager's Report, Mr. Elliott suggested that if a Council Member has a concern, they should contact the Manager to put the item on the agenda. It will then be published, and the person who is concerned about the dilapidated house might want to come to the meeting to hear what is said. Even though the Manager seems to be up-to-date on all matters, he may need a day or two to prepare a report or gather his thoughts before presenting to Council. To accommodate the Freedom of Information Act, which is what the Chair is concerned about, and to accommodate Council's interest, if Council could just let the Manager know, that item could then be put on the agenda. Mayor McMeekin stated Council Members will never be shut out and instead, we just want to do it the right and legal way. However, we have a couple of responsibilities. First, by law we must publish what is on the agenda to give everyone the right to come to the meeting and to additionally inform the press. In

addition, whatever a Council Member has a question about, this can be added to the agenda before it is published. Mayor McMeekin also stated there will be an upcoming training session. Mayor Pro-Tem Chatman stated typically he gets most of his phone calls the day of the meeting, and he does not understand why a Council Member cannot have a moment to bring up concerns that have been received from constituents. Mayor McMeekin stated at the beginning of the meeting, if there are concerns that are not listed on the agenda, it can be added to the agenda by a super majority. We are not trying to shut down information or any Council Member, but we want to do things the right way for Council and the citizens and do everything that is legally correct. Council Member Miller stated we do strive to do this, but it is important to understand there has to be an opportunity for Council Members to ask questions. There may be a question that comes up while the Manager is making his report. The report may have been good, but it did not answer the question. When a presentation is given, usually the last thing the presenter says is are there any questions. Mayor McMeekin stated Mr. Shacker will be coming to give a presentation to be sure we are simply doing things the right way. Council Member Miller inquired concerning the questions from the media portion of the agenda. Mayor McMeekin stated Winnsboro was the only Town he knew of that had this item on the agenda, and it has been removed. The media can ask any questions after the meeting. Again, Mayor McMeekin stated he is not here to suppress anybody but only to do it the correct way to make sure the public and press are informed. Council Member Miller stated he feels his questions are being suppressed.

- C.** Updated Meeting Dates. Mr. Taylor stated the updated 2022 Meeting Dates was provided to Council with new dates to include:

February 22 – Ethics Training (to include Freedom of Information Act and other things Council must stay in compliance with)
March 8 – Budget Work Session (to meet with Council to discuss priorities)
March 22 – Budget Work Session
April 12 – Budget Work Session
April 26 – Budget Work Session
May 3 – 1st Reading of Budget
May 17 – 2nd Reading of Budget and Public Hearing

These are tentative dates and can be changed if needed. There is some cushion in case more time is needed for any reason.

10. OLD BUSINESS

None.

11. NEW BUSINESS

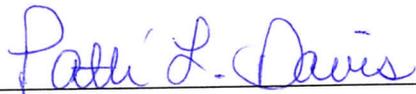
None.

12. EXECUTIVE SESSION: (The following statement is provided in compliance with the South Carolina Freedom of Information Act: Subsequent to Executive Session, Council may take action on matters discussed in Executive Session.)

No executive session needed.

13. ADJOURN

At 7:28 p.m., it was moved by Council Member Burroughs, seconded by Council Member Bartell-Prather, to adjourn. ***The motion carried 5-0.***



PATTI L. DAVIS
TOWN CLERK



JOHN MCMEEKIN
MAYOR