

**MINUTES
REGULAR MEETING
WINNSBORO TOWN COUNCIL
AUGUST 16, 2022**

Present: Mayor John McMeekin; Mayor Pro-Tem Chatman; Janice Bartell-Prather, Jae Burroughs, Council Members; Jason Taylor, Town Manager; Patti Davis, Town Clerk.

Absent: Danny Miller.

The Winnsboro Town Council met in regular session on August 16, 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 6:15 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 4-0.***

4. APPROVAL OF MINUTES

Mayor Pro-Tem Chatman made a motion, seconded by Council Member Bartell Prather, to approve the Regular Meeting minutes of August 2, 2022. ***The motion carried 4-0.***

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

- Ms. Yvette Howard spoke concerning Code Enforcement.
- Mr. Tony Armstrong spoke concerning the recent shootings in Town.

6. PUBLIC HEARINGS

None.

7. SPECIAL REPORTS/PRESENTATIONS

A. Chief John Seibles – Public Safety Update. Chief Seibles stated there has been an uptick in shooting incidents, and the Department is in the process of addressing these issues. It has been determined that this is a random group of people, a couple of groups, who are retaliating and bouncing from County to City. Major Jackson has been working these cases. There has been an arrest warrant issued for the last shooting on Zion Hill, and he is being located. SLED has been contacted, and their fugitive team is assisting the Department in making this arrest. There are other warrants that have not been obtained. It has been determined that those involved will be arrested and put in jail. Some of those involved are juveniles, and per the Solicitor, they will be charged as adults with attempted murder, which is a felony, and could serve up to 30 years. It appears this all started in April when a young man was killed outside of the Town limits. Some of these appear to be associated with gang activity. The Department has been receiving around 8 calls per month concerning shooting incidents. However, when these are investigated and confirmed, this number usually decreases. There have been several injuries, but to date, there has been no fatality. The injuries come from the kids shooting at one another and not someone taking random shots at innocent citizens. The concern is while they are engaging in this misbehavior that some innocent person will get caught in the middle. The Department is being vigilant and reaching out to the community. The ones involved will not talk, but some from the neighborhoods are talking, including churches. He assures there will be a change with these investigations. He is not naïve enough to think that everything will stop, because it has not been stopped in other communities, but the Department will do everything it can to try to stop this and protect the citizens. Mayor Pro-Tem Chatman inquired what can the Council do to help the situation. He knows there has been a problem with getting officers to come to Winnsboro with them required to be fire and Public Safety. He has seen a lot of departments going to just Public Safety and is this something we need to look into. Mr. Taylor stated we do need to look into this further. There are roughly 270 municipalities in the State of South Carolina with only about four left doing fire. Almost every other one has dropped this function. Mayor Pro-Tem Chatman stated Council needs recommendations on what needs to be done. Being short staffed is not a good thing. The public also knows there are officers out. Chief Seibles stated being a small department puts them at a disadvantage because the other departments pay more money. He has spoken with other surrounding departments who some of the officers have gone to, and there is a different in the pay scale. Mayor Pro-Tem Chatman stated if the request is not coming to Council, they have no way of knowing. Chief Seibles appreciates everything Council has done in the past concerning salaries. He further explained some of the challenges a smaller department faces in getting

applicants. It is also not always about money. Sometimes when an officer gets certified here, they will then go back to their home town when a position becomes available. Also, the officers have to take into consideration what is needed for their family as far as income. Mayor McMeekin stated he knows there is a problem, and we must create a more desirable situation. There are sociological problems underlying, but we want a safe Town and community. Chief Seibles the officers he has are dedicated, and they also have a relationship with the community. Mayor McMeekin mentioned the recent event at Friendship Park, and Chief Seibles was there building those community relations. Mayor Pro-Tem Chatman also inquired concerning why the officers would want to go to the larger counties or cities with larger areas and more crime. Chief Seibles feels the same way. When looking at applicants, he has to look at qualifications and reasons to eliminate applications. Mayor Pro-Tem Chatman stated he has learned in his job that folks just do not want to work and give a company 5 or 10 years. Therefore, we must adapt to this and move forward. Mr. Taylor stated this is the nature of the new work force. There are also things to do beyond just pay, including work environment where employees want to come to every day, including facilities. Risk management is also a huge factor in law enforcement both internally and externally. If a bad work environment is created, there could be internal law suits, and obviously if a bad person is hired and they do something bad in the public sphere, the liability is through the roof. We have to be very careful in who we bring into the department. The Municipal Association has had classes on this, and when you hire someone with a bad background, you also own that bad background if they do something bad in the community. This makes it even more difficult to hire people. We also must develop better relationships with the community so they will communicate when things like this happen so we can get good information to get the criminal off the street as quickly as possible. We also need a better working relationship and better communication with our sister agencies, the Sheriff's Department, the School SRO officer, etc. A meeting was recently held with the School, Public Safety and the Sheriff's Department to figure out how to communicate better. Jurisdictions are being played off of one another. Mayor McMeekin stated we have had a difficult two years for the whole country that we are trying to come out of, and the police department is catching it. Chief Seibles stated the County appreciates Public Safety, and Public Safety appreciates the County. Some of the volunteers of the County also volunteer with the City.

Mayor Jackson stated there have been several shootings within the last couple of weeks. The two young men shot in Chatham Forest were 13 year-old. The shooter had just turned 17 and is being charged with this crime

along with the shooting that took place at a residence. The Department is in the process now of trying to find this person. Major Jackson stated he has known this young man for a long time and remembers him being raised. He never thought he would turn out like this. On Calhoun Street, two individuals were hit. This resulted in nine charges for three people who has jut turned 18. The Thursday night incident should expect an arrest soon. There have been a total of 15 warrants completed. All cases are open cases with more arrests to be made. Mayor Pro-Tem Chatman stated hopefully this will send a message that this will not be tolerated, and Winnsboro is supposed to be a safe community. This is going on everywhere. Mayor McMeekin stated all we are trying for is a safe community.

8. ORDINANCES AND RESOLUTIONS

None.

9. MANAGER'S REPORT

A. Ongoing Projects

- AMI – This project continues to move forward. There have been 1300 meters delivered this past week.
- Armory – Nothing new to report, and we are starting to rent it now.
- Grant Applications – Administration has been spending a large amount of time on this to get our grant prepared for the SCIP funding. It is complete and being reviewed to be sure it is as strong as it can be in hopes to get the \$10M we are applying for to do the water plant upgrades. Mayor Pro-Tem Chatman inquired if there is someone else looking at the application, and Mr. Taylor stated the COG is looking at it. The team primarily consists of Mr. Taylor, the Town engineers, Mr. Clauson, Cyndi and the COG. He believes we have a strong application at this point from an engineering perspective and a regional benefit. Our plant is an older plant dating from the 1940s, rehabbed in the 1980s, and it is again time for upgrades. Mayor Pro-Tem Chatman stated it will be sent for review by those who do not know about the Town to be scored. Mr. Taylor stated the big thing is a transformative project, and he believes this would be transformative for the Town. If we have this additional capacity, it will then open up the entire area for economic development, to include jobs, tax base, etc. In addition, the Town has been doing what it can to help the County with their grant.
- Code Enforcement – The Town was attempting to partner with the County to save some of the cost in taking down houses; however, Mr. Taylor stated he does not believe this will happen. Therefore,

the Town will end up eating some additional costs of taking an additional two or three more houses down. This will slow this progress. Mr. Clauson stated the interviews for the part-time Code Enforcement officer have concluded, and the candidates are being reviewed currently.

- Ordinance Review and Update – We have been working with the City Attorney concerning this. The Town would have the ability where the County would not to more aggressively go after code violations. Hopefully, this will be brought to Council before too long. Mayor Pro-Tem Chatman stated he has noticed with some of the annexations that they are coming into the Town looking a mess. He has also noticed that a large number of these properties are rental properties. He believes before they are annexed, they should be told to bring the properties up to code. Mr. Taylor reiterated that since we have the utilities, we would have a stronger ability to make properties comply in order to keep the properties from continually declining. Mr. Taylor stated some towns put a business license in place for rental property, and this would not be given if the property is not up to code. We do not currently require a business license for rental property, and Mr. Taylor believes this could be done more easily concerning the utilities where a rental inspection would be required before renting the property.
- Comprehensive Plan: Per Mr. Clauson, the COG is still working with the County. Once this is wrapped up, they will then contact the Town.
- Redistricting: Per Mr. Taylor, the annexations will be put on hold until the redistricting is complete. Mr. Clauson stated he has been in contact with the State, and they were given the most recent Town boundaries. There are two routes they can go in how to redistrict. They will do one proposal with the one method of doing the redistricting along with another proposal. They will present both to Council. They did say the annexations would need to be officially halted until this is adopted.
- Utility Expansions: Nothing new to report at this time.

10. OLD BUSINESS

None.

11. NEW BUSINESS

- A.** Creighton Coleman Project. Per Mr. Clauson, Mr. Coleman owns property just outside of the Town limits off of Pumphouse Road with a piece touching the bypass. He wants to have an RV camp park. This is in the County for

development purposes, but it is the Town's jurisdiction for electrical. A Utilities Manual was adopted in 2004 by Resolution, and in that manual, it stipulates that no one can take our power and then resell it. This is what is being proposed by Mr. Coleman. With this development, he will have possibly five Town meters. He will then split those five up and have five different RV lots or camper lots. He wanted to bill each of those five for whatever power they use. He would essentially be reselling our power. This does not coincide with the Town's Utilities Manual, and if something different will be allowed, it will have to be done by resolution. We are trying to figure out how this could be structured that would not put the Town in a bind in the future but would still allow something like this. There is a mutually beneficial solution for this, and we are working with Mr. Elliott to arrive at this. Mr. Elliott stated if the policy is to prevent the resale, the prohibition of that is reasonable. Even if we were to allow the resale for profit, under the law, this would make Mr. Coleman a public utility and subject to the Public Service Commission. Mr. Elliott does not believe Mr. Coleman would want this. As long as the Town is reading five meters and Mr. Coleman is obligated to pay for all the costs and not passing it along at a profit, the Town Council could be comfortable with this arrangement. Mr. Clauson is correct that this could be done by resolution. Mr. Clauson stated Mr. Coleman did want to charge for meter reading at those sites, and this needs to be worked out. He obviously cannot do this. Mr. Elliott will be happy to speak with Mr. Coleman concerning the reasons he does not want to be a public utility.

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.)

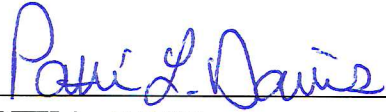
At 6:59 p.m., it was moved by Mayor Pro-Tem Chatman, seconded by Council Member Bartell Prather, to enter into executive session for (a) Receipt of Legal Advice – Discussion Concerning Fairfield County Trash Dispute Pursuant to S.C. Code §30-5-70(a)(s) and (b) Receipt of Legal Advice – Discussion Concerning SCIIP Grant Pursuant to S.C. Code §30-5-70(a)(2). ***The motion carried 4-0.***

At 7:38 p.m., it was moved by Mayor Pro-Tem Chatman, seconded by Council Member Bartell Prather, to come out of executive session and return to regular session. No action was taken in executive session. ***The motion carried 4-0.***


Motion made by Mayor McMeekin, seconded by Mayor Pro-Tem Chatman, to allow the Town Attorney jointly with the Town Manager to craft a new proposal to submit to the County. ***The motion carried 4-0.***

13. ADJOURN

At 7:39 p.m., it was moved by Council Member Burroughs, seconded by Council Member Bartell Prather, to adjourn. ***The motion carried 4-0.***



PATTI L. DAVIS
TOWN CLERK



JOHN MCMEEKIN
MAYOR