

**MINUTES
REGULAR MEETING
WINNSBORO TOWN COUNCIL
JANUARY 17, 2023**

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

The Winnsboro Town Council met in regular session on January 17, 2023, at the Winnsboro Women's Club Building. 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. Council Member Miller made a motion, seconded by Council Member Burroughs, to amend the agenda to discuss the use of the Old Armory under new business. ***The motion to amend carried 5-0.*** Mayor McMeekin then called for the vote on the original motion to approve the agenda. ***The original motion carried 5-0.***

4. APPROVAL OF MINUTES

Council Member Bartell Prather made a motion, seconded by Mayor Pro-Tem Chatman, to approve the Regular Meeting minutes of January 3, 2023. ***The motion carried 5-0.***

5. SPECIAL REPORTS/PRESENTATIONS

A. Gene Stephens, Chamber of Commerce: Discussion Concerning Upcoming Events and Introduction of Tracy Benson. Mr. Stephens thanked Council for the opportunity to speak tonight. He then formally introduced Council to Tracy Benson. Ms. Benson started in May of last year and has done an amazing job getting into the community. Ms. Benson said she is happy to be in Winnsboro and cannot wait to see some positive changes in downtown. Ms. Benson then passed out calendars to Council for the

upcoming events. In the past, the Chamber has done one concert in May; however, this summer there will be a concert series with one in May, June and July. Bands have been booked and other details have been handled. Mr. Stephens also wanted to discuss the Christmas Parade. There was an issue that arose, and he spoke with Mr. Taylor and Mayor McMeekin concerning this. There was a group that entered the parade with a lot of vehicles, and they were honoring those who had passed away. There were some complaints concerning this, and Mr. Stephens wanted Council's guidance on a couple of the rules. First, Mr. Stephens wanted Council's input on handing out candy instead of throwing candy. In addition, there are no rules to stop a group from being in the parade, and he wanted further guidance on this. Mayor Pro-Tem Chatman stated he inquired concerning this matter because he received several calls from constituents stating it should have been solely a Christmas parade about Santa Claus. He was not present for the parade and was only responding to calls that he received. Further, he feels a Christmas parade should be solely about Christmas. He further suggested that Mr. Stephens provide the rules to Council so they can be reviewed. Mayor McMeekin stated the Jaycees used to handle the parade and inquired concerning the rules that are in place. Mr. Stephens stated he believes there is an ordinance concerning throwing candy and other rules were handed off to him by the prior Chamber President. Mayor McMeekin does not believe the Council should micromanage this, and he is all for handing out the candy. He also agrees with Mayor Pro-Tem Chatman, and he too had comments concerning the parade and keeping it centered as a Christmas parade. Mayor Pro-Tem Chatman also asked for Mr. Stephens to be sure that Council is getting all of the notifications concerning grand openings and other happenings in the Town. Mr. Stephens stated he has checked and he is on the list, but he will investigate this further. He has also been in touch with the Town's website, and the events will be on the website as well as the County's website. Council Member Miller reiterated that the rules be sent to the Clerk, and she will disseminate to Council.

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

No one signed to speak.

7. PUBLIC HEARINGS

None.

8. ORDINANCES AND RESOLUTIONS

- A.** First Reading Ordinance No. 72: An Ordinance Granting Consent to Application for Franchise for Cable and Video Service and Setting Franchise Fee. Mr. Taylor stated this is a good thing wherein a company is entering into this area for video/cable services and hopefully internet services. With doing this, they must apply to the Secretary of State, and the Secretary of State would collect either 3% or 5% for this service. The Secretary of State would then pay the Town, and this will represent additional revenue. Mayor McMeekin stated the company contacted him as well as Mr. Taylor several months ago. Competition in this area will be good for the Citizens of Winnsboro, and we want to make sure everything is done properly and fairly. Mr. Taylor stated he does not believe there is a franchise fee charged to the current companies, and he will be looking into this and possibly bringing this back to Council. Motion made by Mayor Pro-Tem Chatman, seconded by Council Member Burroughs, to approve First Reading of Ordinance No. 72. ***The motion carried 5-0.***
- B.** Second and Final Reading Ordinance No. 65: An Ordinance Annexing into the Town of Winnsboro a 0.7 Acre Tract of Land, Located at 435 A and B Pine Street, Winnsboro, SC, Owned by Donald J. and Carol H. Anderson, in Fairfield County, Not Already Within the Winnsboro Town Limits, and Including All Adjacent and Abutting Rights-of-Way. Tax Map No. 145-01-02-001-000. Motion made by Mayor Pro-Tem Chatman, seconded by Council Member Bartell Prather and Council Member Burroughs, to approve Second and Final Reading of Ordinance No. 65. ***The motion carried 5-0.***
- C.** Second and Final Reading Ordinance No. 66: An Ordinance Annexing into the Town of Winnsboro a 0.2 Acre Tract of Land, Located at 355 Cedar Street, Winnsboro, SC, Owned by Sandra P. Durst, in Fairfield County, Not Already Within the Winnsboro Town Limits, and Including All Adjacent and Abutting Rights-of-Way. Tax Map No. 145-01-09-004-000. Motion made by Council Member Burroughs, seconded by Council Member Bartell Prather, to approve Second and Final Reading of Ordinance No. 66. ***The motion carried 5-0.***
- D.** Second and Final Reading Ordinance No. 67: An Ordinance Annexing into the Town of Winnsboro a 0.25 Acre Tract of Land, Located at 120 Dunn Street, Winnsboro, SC, Owned by Maureen Lewis, in Fairfield County, Not Already Within the Winnsboro Town Limits, and Including All Adjacent and Abutting Rights-of-Way. Tax Map No. 126-04-09-002-000. Motion made by Council Member Bartell Prather, seconded by Council Member Burroughs, to approve Second and Final Reading of Ordinance No. 67. ***The motion carried 5-0.***

- E.** Second and Final Reading Ordinance No. 68: An Ordinance Annexing into the Town of Winnsboro a 0.93 Acre Tract of Land, Located at 608 Washington Street, Winnsboro, SC, Owned by Don Cathcart Powell, in Fairfield County, Not Already Within the Winnsboro Town Limits, and Including All Adjacent and Abutting Rights-of-Way. Tax Map No. 126-01-12-021-000. Motion made by Mayor Pro-Tem Chatman, seconded by Council Member Bartell Prather, to approve Second and Final Reading of Ordinance No. 68. ***The motion carried 5-0.***
- F.** Second and Final Reading Ordinance No. 69: An Ordinance Annexing into the Town of Winnsboro a 0.22 Acre Tract of Land, Located at 750 8th Street, Winnsboro, SC, Owned by Beacon Real Estate Investments, LLC, in Fairfield County, Not Already Within the Winnsboro Town Limits, and Including All Adjacent and Abutting Rights-of-Way. Tax Map No. 145-01-13-002-000. Council Member Burroughs recused himself concerning this item and left the meeting. Motion made by Council Member Bartell Prather, seconded by Mayor Pro-Tem Chatman, to approve Second and Final Reading of Ordinance No. 69. ***The motion carried 4-0 with Council Member Burroughs recused.*** Council Member Burroughs then rejoined the meeting.
- G.** Second and Final Reading Ordinance No. 70: An Ordinance Annexing into the Town of Winnsboro a 0.2 Acre Tract of Land, Located at 540 A Poplar Street, Winnsboro, SC, Owned by Robert J. Ford, et al, in Fairfield County, Not Already Within the Winnsboro Town Limits, and Including All Adjacent and Abutting Rights-of-Way. Tax Map No. 145-01-13-005-000. Motion made by Mayor Pro-Tem Chatman, seconded by Council Member Bartell Prather, to approve Second and Final Reading of Ordinance No. 70. ***The motion carried 5-0.***
- H.** Second and Final Reading Ordinance No. 71: An Ordinance Annexing into the Town of Winnsboro a 0.2 Acre Tract of Land, Located at 540 B Poplar Street, Winnsboro, SC, Owned by Robert J. Ford, et al, in Fairfield County, Not Already Within the Winnsboro Town Limits, and Including All Adjacent and Abutting Rights-of-Way. Tax Map No. 145-01-13-006-000. Motion made by Council Member Bartell Prather, seconded by Mayor Pro-Tem Chatman, to approve Second and Final Reading of Ordinance No. 71. Mayor McMeekin stated it must be ensured that addition these additional properties will not overwhelm the employees because they do a good job. ***The motion carried 5-0.***
- I.** Resolution No. 2023-1: A Resolution Appointing the Town's Representatives on the Fairfield Joint Water and Sewer System

Commission. Mayor McMeekin stated one of the Town's ex-officio members is the Town Manager and the second one is the Mayor or a member of Council. He currently serves as the Chairman of the Joint Water Sewer Service, and it will be up to Town Council to determine this. Mayor McMeekin then recused himself from this vote and left the meeting. Mr. Taylor stated currently he and the Mayor serve on the Joint Water/Sewer Authority. Kyle Crager is also the joint appointee who is appointed by the County and the Town, who is also being reappointed. The County is also putting forth Mr. Crager's name again because he is willing to serve and a good member of that board. The Clerk stated all these names are included in the Resolution, and if Council agrees, it will simply take passing the Resolution as submitted. Mr. Taylor stated the Mayor does serve as the Chair of the Joint Water/Sewer Authority, and Mr. Elliott stated he does a nice job. Mr. Taylor agreed and it is quite a job representing the Town and helping to push forward the water/sewer plant. Mr. Taylor further stated the By-Laws of the Joint Water/Sewer Authority encourage that the Chairman/Mayor and the County Administrator/Town Manager be on this board. Motion made by Council Member Burroughs, seconded by Council Member Miller, to approve Resolution No. 2023-1. ***The motion carried 4-0 with Mayor McMeekin recused.***

- J.** Resolution No. 2023-2: A Resolution to Approve Charter Communications Pole Attachment Agreement. Mr. Taylor stated this is essentially a pairing with the earlier franchise agreement. The pole fee is in addition to the franchise fee. This agreement is already in place with the other providers. Mr. Elliott stated Mr. Medlin had him negotiate back and forth with their Connecticut counsel, and the agreement is improved as far as the Town is concerned. Mr. Taylor stated it is basically a \$16 fee per pole per year. Mayor Pro-Tem Chatman inquired of the number of poles, and Mr. Medlin stated probably about 60. We need to go back and look at the other provider agreements because they have a lot more than this currently. The agreement that was drawn up for Spectrum will be used as a model with renegotiations with the other providers. Motion made by Mayor Pro-Tem Chatman, seconded by Council Member Burroughs, to approve Resolution No. 2023-2. ***The motion carried 5-0.***

9. MANAGER'S REPORT

A. Ongoing Projects

- **AMI:** Mr. Taylor stated this is something that is being pushed forward and is critical. As part of this transition, our meter readers know the Town is moving to an automated system, and this makes

it very hard to get and keep meter readers. Finance is struggling with getting the bills out on time. Mr. Taylor, Mrs. Belton, Mr. Medlin and Mr. Peak have met to look at all options, including contracting out for the meter reading, which would be a short-term contract. Currently, AMI is providing the water meter, which would take care of the water and the sewer, but that still leaves the electric and gas that are problematic. So, contracting out for the meter readers was discussed, and Mrs. Belton has one other option she wanted to discuss with Council, which is essentially doing an estimated bill. Mrs. Belton stated a target amount will be set, such as 1400 kwh for electric, 150 therms for gas and 3,000 gallons on water. The estimated bill will be set up for 30 days. It will be important that the customers understand once this is done, it will not be exact. Some of the bills will be more and some will be less. This will be done to try to get some of the billing on the system so the customers can pay for that amount. Then, once an actual read is received, a truing up would be done. Hopefully, this process will allow the meter readers a chance to catch up. Again, these will be estimated bills and some will be lower with some others being higher. Without the actual reading, we have been unable to bill. The Town has never done estimated billing since Mrs. Belton has been here. However, this is an emergency situation, and this is being looked into to try to minimize the impact for the Town as well as being fair to the customers. This would be for two, possibly three, billing cycles. This will be for cycle 1 (Winnsboro area) and cycle 2 (area out further into the County). We understand that some of the bills will be more than what the customer normally pays, but when the actual reading is done, it will be offset. Mayor Pro-Tem Chatman stated instead of getting a 57, 68 or 70 day bill, a 30 day bill will be received. Mr. Taylor stated it is not a perfect solution, but it is something that is being looked at to come up with some type of solution. Mrs. Belton stated payment plans will also be available. Mr. Taylor has also instructed Mrs. Belton to have a dedicated person to answer the phone when customers call in to be able to answer questions. Mayor McMeekin stated he would entertain a motion to the effect that whatever management deems appropriate to solve the problem will be done. Mr. Elliott stated the agenda would have to be amended, and he does not believe a motion is needed. Mayor McMeekin stated management is in charge of this process. Mr. Taylor stated he only wanted to make Council aware that solutions are being discussed, and if Council gets calls, they should know what is going on. Council Member Miller stated a message needs to be sent to the customers to apologize and then set the record straight with what will be done.

Mr. Taylor stated there are 11,000 meters to be read per month, and this is almost impossible with 2-3 staff members. He also agreed that communication is critical. Mayor McMeekin stated Facebook and the Town's website can also be utilized. He further stated Dominion is also having to contract out for meter readers. Dominion has gas and electric and Fairfield Electric has electric. Winnsboro has gas, electric, water, sewer and sanitation, and we are one of six municipalities out of around 274 in the State that does all these services. It is good that we have these services, but it can be challenging at times. Dominion is having the same problem because as they switch over, they are unable to hire meter readers. Mayor Pro-Tem Chatman stated he was speaking with a constituent today, and the key thing is communication. Mrs. Belton stated there will be a notice put in with the bills to explain to the customers what is being done along with contact information if they have questions. Mayor McMeekin reiterated this should start with an apology. Mr. Taylor also pointed out that the Town is losing by not being able to bill on a regular cycle because it will not get the base monthly rate. Mayor Pro-Tem Chatman stated being able to find workers is a big problem, and there are many who work from home now. Mr. Taylor agreed it is currently a tough work force. Mayor McMeekin stated there have been several detrimental factors in this process from COVID to the chip shortage. We had hoped to be where we needed to be by now.

- Code Enforcement – No new update at this time.
- Comprehensive Plan – Data is being collected by the COG.
- Utilities – No new update at this time other than what has been stated.
- Ordinance Review and Update – There will be a few more code enforcement type items that will be brought back to Council.
- Redevelopment Efforts – Mr. Taylor stated this has finally started to come into focus. The money has been received from the State (\$500,000), and some real estate has also been donated to the Town. This includes about 13 properties, with possibly five more in the future. We want to move forward with the money and the assets to develop a Redevelopment Corp, which has been shown to be the most successful route. This can be a more successful way to handle this with cutting through some of the procurement processes that are associated with a local government. This would be more flexible

to take some of these building and redo them in order to market them to get people back downtown. In speaking of utility expansion, the low hanging fruit in expanding would be revitalization of downtown. This is a good way to expand our utilities by getting people into the empty buildings and revitalize the downtown at the same time. The Mayor has the responsibility of setting up the committees, and there is one needed to start looking at the path forward for redevelopment since we currently have assets and cash. Mayor McMeekin agreed that he will be setting up the committees, and he will be appointing Mr. Chatman to Chair the committee. Mayor Pro-Tem Chatman inquired concerning the paving of the roads. Mr. Taylor stated Liberty is close to his house, and he drives by the cones. They have been out there and done some work. Mr. Clauson stated the last email stated within 2-3 weeks, and Mr. Taylor stated they will reach out again. Mayor Pro-Tem Chatman also stated riding through various communities, he is not sure what kind of pipes are underground, but there is water flowing in places and tearing the roads up. Mr. Taylor stated there are a number of these problems, and the Town does have an old system. This will be put on the list. Mayor McMeekin stated he will also mention this at the next COG meeting if the engineer is present.

- Mr. Taylor also reported there have been two new officers hired. Interim Chief Lawrence stated since he has been hired, he has tried to get new experienced officers into the community. He then introduced Officer McCoy who comes from the Sheriff's Department and has a fire background, and Dalton Risener, who is new to law enforcement. He comes from the Laurens County Detention Center, so he has experience dealing with inmates. He will be going to the Criminal Justice Academy soon, and he has currently been working in the dispatch area.

10. OLD BUSINESS

None.

11. NEW BUSINESS

- A.** Request of Action – Gas, Water and Sewer Department – Request to Approve an Additional Allocation of Funds to Purchase a Pump Station to be Placed at PS#3 (\$42,834.50). Mayor Pro-Tem Chatman briefly discussed what was being requested and that the request was approved in the Finance Committee to refer to full Council. Motion made by Council

Member Burroughs, seconded by Council Member Bartell Prather to approve the Request of Action as stated. ***The motion carried 5-0.***

- B.** Request of Action – Gas, Water and Sewer Department – Request to Approve an Additional Allocation of Funds to Purchase a Used Vehicle to Replace Fleet Work Truck with Over 280,000 Miles with a Broken Head Gasket (\$27,000.00). Mayor Pro-Tem Chatman again briefly discussed the request and that this request was also approved in the Finance Committee. Motion made by Council Member Bartell Prather, seconded by Council Member Burroughs, to approve the Request of Action as stated. ***The motion carried 5-0.***
- C.** Request of Action – Streets and Sanitation Department – Request to Approve the Allocation of Funds to Purchase a Used 2009 Ford F-750 Chipper Truck to Replace the 1999 GMC (\$74,980.00). Once again, Mayor Pro-Tem Chatman briefly discussed the request and that this request was also approved in the Finance Committee. Motion made by Council Member Burroughs, seconded by Council Member Bartell Prather, to approve the Request of Action as stated. ***The motion carried 5-0.***
- D.** Armory Discussion – Mayor McMeekin stated the Armory has certain rules, and staff is currently in the process of revising these rules. The rules list what can and cannot be done and how it should be done. Birthday parties are one thing that is not allowed. We know there should be some things that are not allowed, but now a lady wants to celebrate her 100th birthday, and she cannot rent the armory. Mayor McMeekin stated he does not understand why this is not allowed, and this is something that will be looked into. This will be, more or less, a special exception for this 100th birthday party. That is what is being brought before Council. Mayor McMeekin stated there would need to be a motion for this use of the Armory. Mayor Pro-Tem Chatman made a motion, seconded by Council Member Burroughs, to allow the use of the Armory on March 11, 2023, for the 100th birthday party. Council Member Miller wished to add that any other birthdays could make a request that would be brought to Council for consideration. Mayor McMeekin stated he hopes once the rules are revised this should not have to be done. Mr. Taylor stated staff would like guidance in this regard, because we are constantly having to interpret whether something should be allowed or not allowed. This also goes for the parade and/or the use of the Armory. The rules are being revised and then will be brought to Council so we are not constantly having to figure this out. These rules should be clear and fair. ***The motion carried 5-0.***

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 7:10 p.m., it was moved by Mayor Pro-Tem Chatman, seconded by Council Member Bartell Prather and Council Member Burroughs, to enter into executive session for: (A) Employment Matter – Municipal Judge Applicant Selection Pursuant to S.C. Code §30-4-70 (a)(1). ***The motion carried 5-0.***

At 8:14 p.m., it was moved by Mayor Pro-Tem Chatman, seconded by Council Member Burroughs, to come out of executive session and return to regular session. ***The motion carried 5-0.***

Mayor McMeekin stated everything was taken as information only.

13. ADJOURN

At 8:14 p.m., it was moved by Council Member Miller, seconded by Council Member Bartell Prather, to adjourn. ***The motion carried 5-0.***



PATTI L. DAVIS
TOWN CLERK



JOHN MCMEEKIN
MAYOR

RECUSAL STATEMENT

Member Name: Joe Burroughs

Meeting Date: 1-17-23

Agenda Item: Section 8 Number: F

Topic: 2nd reading Ord #69
750 8th St. annexation

The Ethics Act, SC Code §8-13-700, provides that no public official may knowingly use his office to obtain an economic interest for himself, a family member of his immediate family, an individual with whom he is associated, or a business with which he is associated. No public official may make, participate in making, or influence a governmental decision in which he or any such person or business has an economic interest. Failure to recuse oneself from an issue in which there is or may be conflict of interest is the sole responsibility of the council member (1991 Op. Atty. Gen. No. 91-37.) A written statement describing the matter requiring action and the nature of the potential conflict of interest is required.

Justification to Recuse:

Professionally employed by or under contract with principal

Owns or has vested interest in principal or property

Other: _____

Date: 1-17-23 _____

Member

Approved by Parliamentarian: _____

RECUSAL STATEMENT

Member Name: John McMeekin

Meeting Date: 1-17-23

Agenda Item: Section 8 Number: I

Topic: Res. 2023-1 appointing town representatives to FJWSS

The Ethics Act, SC Code §8-13-700, provides that no public official may knowingly use his office to obtain an economic interest for himself, a family member of his immediate family, an individual with whom he is associated, or a business with which he is associated. No public official may make, participate in making, or influence a governmental decision in which he or any such person or business has an economic interest. Failure to recuse oneself from an issue in which there is or may be conflict of interest is the sole responsibility of the council member (1991 Op. Atty. Gen. No. 91-37.) A written statement describing the matter requiring action and the nature of the potential conflict of interest is required.

Justification to Recuse:

Professionally employed by or under contract with principal

Owns or has vested interest in principal or property

Other: voting on member to the FJWSS

Date: _____


Member

Approved by Parliamentarian: _____
