

**MINUTES  
REGULAR MEETING  
WINNSBORO TOWN COUNCIL  
MARCH 21, 2023**

**Present:** Mayor John McMeekin; 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.

**Absent:** Mayor Pro-Tem Demetrius Chatman.

The Winnsboro Town Council met in regular session on March 21, 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 Burroughs led the invocation.

**3. APPROVAL OF AGENDA**

Mayor McMeekin stated the agenda needed to be amended to add the following: 12(b) Receipt of Legal Advice - Discussion Concerning Fairfield County Trash Dispute Pursuant to S.C. Code §30-4-70 (a)(2). Council Member Burroughs made the motion to amend the agenda, seconded by Council Member Bartell Prather. ***The motion carried 4-0.*** Motion then made by Council Member Bartell Prather, seconded by Council Member Burroughs, to approve the amended agenda. ***The motion carried 4-0.***

**4. APPROVAL OF MINUTES**

Council Member Bartell Prather made a motion, seconded by Council Member Miller, to approve the Finance Committee minutes of March 7, 2023, and the Regular Meeting minutes of March 7, 2023. ***The motion carried 4-0.***

**5. SPECIAL REPORTS/PRESENTATIONS**

**A.** Swearing in of Municipal Court Judge Shirley Bates. The Clerk performed the swearing in of Judge Bates with many family members and friends present. Council then congratulated Judge Bates and photos were taken.

**6. PUBLIC COMMENT (3 MINUTES): THE TOTAL TIME ALLOCATED TO THIS**

**PUBLIC COMMENT SEGMENT IS 30 MINUTES.**

- Susanna Sharpe – Personal privacy, Town audit and utilities

**7. PUBLIC HEARINGS**

None.

**8. ORDINANCES AND RESOLUTIONS**

**A.** First Reading Ordinance No. 73: Authorizing and Directing the Town of Winnsboro to Enter into an Intergovernmental Agreement Relating to South Carolina Local Revenue Services; to Participate in One or More Local Revenue Service Programs; to Execute and Deliver One or More Participant Program Supplements; and Other Matters Relating Thereto. Mr. Taylor stated this is associated with the changes recently made to business license collections. This was standardized and goes through the Municipal Association. Mr. Clauson further stated this is about the business license tax and, in particular, three different programs the Municipal Association handles, including the Insurance Tax Program, the Brokers Tax Program and the Telecommunications Tax Program. These are being combined into essentially one local revenue source. These programs are in place for the Town, and the Municipal Association collects these. There are no changes to that, but it is being put under one umbrella. Mayor McMeekin stated the nomenclature has been changed, and the Town must update, and Mr. Clauson agreed. Mr. Elliott stated these are standardized forms required of all municipalities. Motion made by Council Member Burroughs, seconded by Council Member Bartell Prather, to approve First Reading of Ordinance No. 73. *The motion carried 4-0.*

**9. MANAGER'S REPORT****A. Ongoing Projects**

- AMI: Mr. Taylor stated the Town is continuing to try to get its new meters installed to be sure the bills are timely and accurate. Per Mr. Peak, he spoke with Rob Watson with Ferguson today, and there is a delay with the possibility now of starting the middle of April. Originally, it was supposed to start in March, then the first of April, and it is now projected to be the second or third week of April. In the meantime, every meter that is changed or installed, Mr. Peak's department is installing the AMI meters. The department is also currently working on a survey of the gas meters to get the index orders for the American gas meters. He has the indexes for the meters that have been installed since 2015. So, everything can be



changed over very simply. This is slower progress, but it should move fairly quickly in April.

- Comprehensive Plan: Mr. Taylor reported there are two planning commission members that are needed in connection with the Comprehensive Plan or any future rezoning the Town may do. Mayor McMeekin stated Council Members can contact the Clerk with any possible members.
- Utilities: In light of the announcement that was made concerning Scout, Mr. Taylor stated maps are being pulled, landowners are being contacted and routes are being looked at to aggressively expand utilities in a rational manner in order to promote good growth. Options are being aggressively pursued. Mayor McMeekin stated he and Mr. Taylor attended the Blythewood meeting, which was a very good meeting and very exciting. Mr. Taylor stated it is hard to overstate how transformational this could be, not just for Blythewood, but for Fairfield County and Winnsboro. Every avenue must be looked into in order to maximize the benefit for the Town.
- Redevelopment Efforts: Mayor McMeekin, Mr. Taylor and Council Member Chatman have met with Representative McDaniel to update her on these efforts in order to get downtown into the position to be revitalized and to pursue additional funding in the future. This includes working with DHEC on properties that are environmentally compromised to working with DOT concerning drainage issues. In light of what is coming with Scout, it is critical to get downtown as attractive as possible. Council Member Miller inquired if there is a timeline on these efforts. Mr. Taylor stated he is reluctant to give a timeline because all the pieces and parts continue to be pulled together. The Town is also dependent on private landowners. The misconception is that downtown is owned by the Town; however, it is privately owned. It is tough to get all the different parties pulled together. Mayor McMeekin stated there is also a meeting next week being planned because Mayor Pro-Tem Chatman is currently in DC. Mr. Taylor stated he is hoping the option discussed at the last Council meeting will be one of the first to move forward.
- Fairfield Joint Water and Sewer Service – Mr. Taylor stated this is finally coming into focus, and several housekeeping items are being prepared, such as insurance and a budget. There is an upcoming meeting on Thursday, and the budget will be discussed. This will be

the beginning of the framework to make this more real moving forward.

Council Member Miller also inquired concerning the dilapidated houses in the Zion Hill area, specifically the Bozard and Peak houses. Per Mr. Clauson, the Bozard house is being worked on by Mr. Wilkes with the local representative, who is the registered agent. He is having a difficult time getting in touch with the agent. The Peak house is also in care of the same individual who is not local and is not responsive. It has been a difficult time catching up with her and also serving her. Council Member Miller inquired of the next steps. Mr. Clauson stated these agents are not even the rightful owner, and this is essentially a legal issue now. It will probably need to be forced to probate. Mr. Taylor stated the problem with some of these properties is ownership is so tangled up on some of the properties and inquired of Mr. Elliott how to proceed. Mr. Elliott stated there is actual and constructive notice. If the person is alive and living in the building, they can be served with actual notice. If the owner is deceased and there is no probate, it would be an easy way to open the probate so service can be done.

## **10. OLD BUSINESS**

**A. Audit Update:** Mr. Taylor stated the initial audit showed that a large amount of money had been lost, and after re-examining, this was found to not be the case. The Town is not where it should be with a balanced budget, but it is nowhere near the shape as originally thought. Per Mrs. Belton, there were actually bookkeeping errors that were made in the Finance Department. She reported this was not overage spending or anything like this. All information was sent to the accountant, and they were able to match all of the bills, checks and all withdrawal entries. Each month, there are reverse entries out, and those entries had not been done, which led to an overstatement of \$733,000 on the expense side. Mrs. Belton is very thankful at this point, and the audit has been reissued with the shortage coming to \$229,127. Included in this is the unbudgeted expense of the trash fee with Fairfield County. The corrected audit will be posted online shortly.

## **11. NEW BUSINESS**

**A. Armory Use Request for Birthday Party.** The Clerk reported the request is for a birthday party on July 1, and the applicant knows this function will be full price along with the insurance. Motion made by Council Member



Burroughs, seconded by Council Member Bartell Prather, to approve the request to use the Armory. ***The motion carried 4-0.***

**B.** Proposed Updates to Personnel Manual. Mrs. Edwards stated about every five years an upgrade is needed to the Personnel Manual. The handouts in the packets are the proposed changes for this year. These include:

- If a certain number of applications are not received per position, the closing date can be extended in order to try to get more applicants.
- Increase the rollover amount of vacation hours from 240 to 360, but the stipulation will be kept that if an employee leaves employment, only the 240 will be allowed to cash out with the proper notice given.
- Holidays: Addition of Presidents' Day, Juneteenth, Columbus Day and Veterans' Day to try to stay in compliance with the County and with the State agencies.
- Part-time employees were being allowed to accrue sick and vacation leave. This had never been done until a part-time employee questioned it. After meeting with the attorney, it was suggested this be removed. Mrs. Edwards then calculated from the date of hire until December 31 the total amount of hours that would have been accumulated. This was then paid out. Starting January 1, this was not in the policy at all.

Council Member Miller suggested that this be incorporated into the upcoming budget, and Mayor McMeekin agreed.

**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.)**

- A.** Receipt of Legal Advice – Potential Contractual Arrangement with City of Columbia Pursuant to S.C. Code §30-4-70 (a)(2).
- B.** Receipt of Legal Advice – Discussion Concerning Fairfield County Trash Dispute Pursuant to S.C. Code §30-4-70 (a)(2).

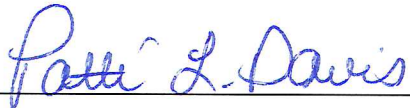
At 6:48 p.m., it was moved by Council Member Burroughs, seconded by Council Member Miller, to exit regular session and enter into executive session to discuss Items A and B above. ***The motion carried 4-0.***

At 7:22, it was moved by Council Member Burroughs, seconded by Council Member Bartell Prather, to exit executive session and return to regular session. ***The motion carried 4-0.***

All discussion in executive session was taken as information only.

**13. ADJOURN**

At 7:23 p.m., it was moved by Council Member Miller, seconded by Council Member Burroughs, to adjourn. ***The motion carried 4-0.***



PATTI L. DAVIS  
TOWN CLERK



JOHN MCMEEKIN  
MAYOR