

**MINUTES  
REGULAR MEETING  
WINNSBORO TOWN COUNCIL  
MAY 2, 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 May 2, 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**

Mayor McMeekin led the invocation.

**3. APPROVAL OF AGENDA**

Council Member Burroughs then made a motion, seconded by Council Member Bartell Prather, to approve the agenda. Mayor Pro-Tem Chatman stated he sees Ordinance 76 and Ordinance 77 on the agenda and inquired if these are being read before the budget meetings since the budget meetings are usually done before the first reading. Mayor McMeekin stated the budget meeting is right after the regular meeting. Mr. Taylor stated the budget can change drastically after first reading. Because of the time factor, this was placed on the agenda to get the first reading out of the way. A Budget Work Session had been scheduled for last Thursday, and the Public Meeting was held instead. Certain assumptions have been made to put together the budget for first reading and now direction will be taken from Council. ***The motion carried 5-0.***

**4. APPROVAL OF MINUTES**

Mayor Pro-Tem Chatman made a motion, seconded by Council Member Bartell Prather and Council Member Burroughs, to approve the Regular Meeting minutes of April 18, 2023, and the Finance Committee minutes of April 18, 2023. ***The motion carried 5-0.***

**5. SPECIAL REPORTS/PRESENTATIONS**

**A.** Matt Plyler, Manager for South Carolina and Georgia, Enterprise Fleet Management – Mr. Plyler stated this is a division of the rental car company, and the company works with a lot of cities, counties and other government entities in State of South Carolina, Georgia and throughout the country. Mr. Plyler stated the company has around 600,000 vehicles that are managed commercially and on the government side. There are 2,000 plus government entities nationwide with about 60,000 fleet just on the government side. In South Carolina, which has been one of the fastest growing segments in the government space, there are about 75 clients with the ultimate goal of reducing the overall total cost of ownership with necessary things such as vehicles. When these initial conversations happen, the entities fleet is usually very old with 15-20 years or more of age to their vehicles. The concept is shown to rotate vehicles more often and having newer vehicles that actually saves money. With having newer vehicles, this allows capture of resell, lowered operating expenses with maintenance and fuel which ultimately lowers the overall total cost of ownership. Mr. Plyler then discussed the breakdown of the Town's fleet. There are 50 vehicles showing because there are 20 or 30 that do not decode VIN's in their system because of the age of the vehicle. Some of those would need to be dealt with first. The Town has a lot of different manufacturers, which is not surprising. The average age is around 15 years. Most of the vehicles, 29 out of the 50, are actually greater than 10 years or older. Older vehicles typically have more mileage on them, and these are the ones that are causing most of the downtime issues. Some may be spare vehicles that are not needed, so the discussion will be to try to right-size the Town's fleet to make sure there are no vehicles that are not needed. Everything is handled for the client from start to finish. The analysis shows a savings for a 10-year period of around \$553,000 by phasing into a 3-5 year cycle on the Town's vehicles. This is not a program that will be placed on the Town for it to handle. Part of the partnership comes with acquiring the vehicles for the Town, funding the vehicles, having maintenance programs available or utilizing some of the local partners in the area and then selling the vehicles at the end. This program has technology and software and a team of people to help facilitate it. The team is comprised of local people who specifically strategize how to follow the plan and also adapt the plan if needed. A fleet of 50 vehicles is being analyzed currently. Some of the vehicles with low mileage are recommended to get rid of; however, everything is a recommendation and can be tweaked a number of different ways. The current fleet cycle based on the trends of acquiring vehicles today is about 17 years. Average age is 15 years, but it takes about 17 years to cycle through the vehicles. The

proposal is to be on the 3.5 to 4 year cycle. The concept is to have newer vehicles that will reduce the overall cost to operate them. The company does not do ambulances or fire engines. The recommendation would be to replace 26 vehicles in the first year, with increase in capital and decrease in operating expense. Electrification is also beginning to be a part of the conversation. Mr. Plyler believes this will not happen for a while, but some clients are starting to look at this; however, the infrastructure still has to be in place. Mr. Plyler then explained how the 10-year savings is calculated. By 2027, the Town would be all in with this program. By then, the maintenance would be drastically lower on a fixed maintenance program. It is also important to point out the net sustainable impact. This is after full implementation into the program or the last 5 years of the 10 year model. The Town would be replacing vehicles more often. Mayor McMeekin stated this is, of course, a lot to digest. Mr. Plyler stated he would be happy to answer any additional questions during this process. Their goal is that the Town feel comfortable with the plan. He would also suggest reaching out to some of their clients to better understand the process. Mayor McMeekin inquired of the top 5 local partners, and Mr. Plyler stated the government space has really taken off within the last 6 years or so. Most of the clients are 5-6 year clients, and include the City of Beaufort, Town of Blacksburg (similar in size to Winnsboro's fleet), City of Marion, City of Mullins, Colleton County, City of Savannah and Town of Bluffton. The company works with clients who have 20 vehicles all the way up to 600 or 700 vehicles; however, the concept stays the same whether it is a small or large fleet. Most of the government and commercial clients fall between 30 and 90. Mr. Plyler stated he would be happy to get a list of contacts for administration to contact. Mayor McMeekin stated he believes this would be wise, and it is a fluid market with no idea what the next year will bring. The combustion engine manufacturer is still subsidizing the EV parts of their businesses. The industry is moving in that direction, but it is not sustainable yet. Mr. Plyler states there is a division of the team that focuses on electrification. Some people are ready to make it happen right now and others are not ready. Also, a vehicle is not just bought from a dealership. The company has the ability to do this, but instead it takes it further than that. The order can be done directly through the manufacturer with a lead time of around 9-12 months. The benefit is that the Town would not be subject to what is sitting on the lot. Ford and GM are not doing as much government business currently because government usually gets a really good buy, so the manufacturers have no incentive to put vehicles in the government space versus the retail space. Council Member Miller inquired if they deal with the Municipal Lease Program. Mr. Plyler stated all funding is done within the company through an open-ended equity lease. There are no mileage restrictions or wear and tear restrictions. Enterprise Fleet

Management is a privately held family-owned business, and every lease is funded internally versus working through a third party. Mr. Plyler also stated the company is an awarded contract for Sourcewell, which is important as a lot of government partners utilize Sourcewell for supplies. The benefit is they have done the due diligence already and the price is set. Mayor McMeekin stated a lot of research will need to be done concerning this decision. Mr. Plyler stated every vehicle is set up on its own individual lease, and the Town will have the capability to get out of the program at any time.

**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.** Second and Final Reading Ordinance No. 74: An Ordinance Annexing into the Town of Winnsboro a 0.36 Acre Tract of Land, Located at 185 Columbia Road, Winnsboro, SC, Owned by Robert E. Few, in Fairfield County, Not Already Within the Winnsboro Town Limits, and Including All Adjacent and Abutting Rights-of-Way. Tax Map No. 126-03-19-008-000. Motion made by Mayor Pro-Tem Chatman, seconded by Council Member Bartell Prather, to approve Second and Final Reading of Ordinance No. 74. Mayor McMeekin reiterated Mayor Pro-Tem Chatman's comments from the last meeting to be sure the annexed properties are meeting the Town's codes and that the owners are being told what will be expected of them. ***The motion carried 5-0.***

**B.** Second and Final Reading Ordinance No. 75: An Ordinance Annexing into the Town of Winnsboro a 0.48 Acre Tract of Land, Located at 125 Pine Street, Winnsboro, SC, Owned by Jeremy Cook, et al., in Fairfield County, Not Already Within the Winnsboro Town Limits, and Including All Adjacent and Abutting Rights-of-Way. Tax Map No. 126-03-18-002-000. Motion made by Council Member Burroughs, seconded by Council Member Bartell Prather, to approve First Reading of Ordinance No. 75. ***The motion carried 5-0.***

**C.** First Reading Ordinance No. 76: An Ordinance Adopting a Budget Proposed by the Town Manager, Containing Estimates of Proposed Revenues and Expenditures by the Town of Winnsboro, for the Fiscal Year Beginning July

1, 2023, and Ending June 30, 2024, and Declaring that the Same Shall Constitute the Budget of the Town for Such Fiscal Year. Motion made by Council Member Bartell Prather, seconded by Council Member Burroughs, to approve First Reading Ordinance NO. 76. ***The motion carried 5-0.***

- D.** First Reading Ordinance No. 77: An Ordinance to Provide for the Levy of Taxes for Ordinary Town Purposes in the Town of Winnsboro for the Fiscal Year Beginning July 1, 2023, to Provide for the Expenditures Thereof. Motion made by Mayor Pro-Tem Chatman, seconded by Council Member Burroughs, to approve First Reading Ordinance No. 77. ***The motion carried 5-0.***
- E.** Resolution No. 2023-04: A Resolution Authorizing the Mayor and Town Council to Execute an American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) Stormwater Infrastructure Program Subrecipient Agreement Between the Town of Winnsboro and the South Carolina Office of Resilience to Fund a Stormwater Infrastructure Improvement Project that Will Mitigate the Impact of Future Disasters. Motion made by Mayor Pro-Tem Chatman, seconded by Council Member Burroughs, to approve Resolution No. 2023-04. Mr. Taylor stated this is the grant concerning Fortune Springs Park commonly referred to as a SCOR grant obtained through the American Rescue Money. This Resolution must be passed so the Town can move forward and expend the money on the park. Mayor Pro-Tem Chatman inquired if this is for drainage in the park, and Mr. Taylor stated this is correct. The park had a lot of work done in the past, but unfortunately, the drainage was never addressed correctly. This then undermined a lot of the hardscapes that were built causing them to start deteriorating, and this must be addressed. It was the hope to do more than just drainage, but it has to be bid out to see how the funds can be used most effectively. Mayor Pro-Tem Chatman stated there are similar situations with other parks in the State. Mr. Taylor stated the same landscape architect designed Finley Park, and there are similarities in the hardscapes, the fountains, etc. Also, a lot of similar problems are seen in the two parks. Mayor McMeekin stated brilliant architects and landscape designers build things that are wonderful and lovely but are tough to maintain. ***The motion carried 5-0.***

## **9. MANAGER'S REPORT**

### **A. Ongoing Projects**

- AMI: The water meters are being installed and by the end of this week, it will be started everywhere in Town. Mr. Clauson also stated the company will be in Town tomorrow to start sampling some

locations for the gas meters. Mayor McMeekin inquired if there is an estimated timeline on completion. Per Mr. Clauson, the contract states 2-3 months. Mayor McMeekin stated then it should be done before the cold weather.

- Code Enforcement/Zion Hill: A structure burned today on Zion Hill. No one was hurt, but there was some smoke damage to surrounding houses. Council Member Miller stated it was an older house that was damaged from a property that sits in front. Mayor McMeekin stated he saw a video of the vinyl siding melting, but he did not know which house was burning. Mayor Pro-Tem Chatman stated it was lucky that it was only the one structure and did not spread to other houses because of the wind; and the Fire Department did a great job. Council Member Miller stated there are some houses that really need to come down. There is talk about this but no movement. The Bozard house and the Peay house need to be addressed, and the doors and windows are open to these structures. Mr. Clauson stated Mr. Wilkes is here tonight, and the properties have been posted. The Bozard house is on West College and is the one that was never properly probated. Mr. Elliott stated he believes these properties can be taken down. Council Member Miller hopes this can be done in a timely manner. Mr. Clauson stated these are two separate former owners, but they are both in care of the same individual now who resides in Texas. Mayor Pro-Tem Chatman inquired concerning the complaints made by the citizens. Mr. Clauson stated the department has been working through the list, and the problem is getting someone to actually respond. Hearings are being held with a local committee so that recommendations can be made for the best way forward. In some instances, the house can be sured up at least and stabilized. This is being attempted; however, some individuals fail to respond. Mayor Pro-Tem Chatman inquired what is done with individuals who have a repeat cycle with them knowing how long before they can do something with the property, and Mr. Clauson stated fines are being put forth currently and statements stating if the property is not fixed within a certain period of time, there will be a fine. We are trying to work with each individual property owner, because we do not want to be punitive. We want the property fixed. Mayor McMeekin stated we want to follow through judiciously but as quickly as we can.
  
- Utilities: Mr. Peak and Mr. Taylor continue to discuss how to expand gas over to Ridgeway, looking at the best routes and getting funding identified in the existing budget. Additional funds are being sought

for utility expansions. Also, Mr. Taylor stated he is sure Council has heard the complaints about the taste and smell of the water. The Town is trying to deal with this, and potentially, it is probably coming from an algae bloom in the reservoirs, for which carbon is being added to deal with that, or it is coming from the tanks, which have not been cleaned for some time. The cleaning of the tanks will cost about \$40,000 and this is in the existing budget under a professional line item. The water has been tested by DHEC and is safe. DOT has also been paving some of the roads; however, in their grinding down of the surfaces, they have hit some of the Town's gas pipes causing issues. A number of houses were without gas which necessitated the department going out to reset pilot lights and deal with hot water heaters, etc. This will be charged back to DOT for the cost of repairs. Mayor McMeekin stated he has not noticed a difference in the taste or smell of the water, and Mayor Pro-Tem Chatman stated he believes it is more with the commercial customers. Mr. Peak stated he and Mr. Cisney have been trying to figure this out, and he feels the best course of action is to attack both issues. It could be a tank issue because of the warmer weather and then turning back cool again, or it could be the algae bloom from the reservoir. Mr. Cisney has been very diligent with the plant increasing the carbon process with the treatment to try to combat the algae bloom problem, and there are two possible contractors in discussion to do a flushing program on the tanks. One dives in to clean the tank while it is still in service, and the other company requires the tank to be down to flush and clean it.

- **Redevelopment Efforts:** Mr. Taylor reported there was another well attended Town Hall with a lot of good comments. The next step is to start identifying which projects to tackle. A committee will now be put together to take a look at the public's suggestions and identify some of the partners we will have to deal with, such as DHEC or DOT, to try to identify a path forward for a project that will hopefully be a catalyst to get downtown more attractive. Mayor Pro-Tem Chatman stated this will be a fast-moving train to show what will be done with the \$500,000 in order to get more funding. Both meetings were well attended and included a lot of good ideas. The Town Manager will come up with a plan with ideas that were given by the community so everyone will know what is going on. Input has not been sought from the community in the past. Mayor McMeekin agreed that they were both good meetings.

- Ordinance Review and Update: A lot of what came out of the public meetings concerned encouraging the kind of growth that the Town wants to see and save the things that need to be saved. Mayor McMeekin stated it really is heartening to get input from the community and to see how much people really want something to happen. They are really interested and have expectations, and we must deliver. We also want more funding.
- Board and Commission Appointments: Mr. Clauson stated no applications have been received, but some have reached out for interest. There are three vacancies on the Planning Commission and one on the Zoning Board of Appeals. The Historic Preservation Board will have five seats if this ordinance is pursued. Mayor McMeekin stated he has sent a lot of names to Mr. Clauson.
- Fairfield Joint Water and Sewer Service: The next meeting is scheduled for May 9, and hopefully, some solid numbers should be known. Mayor McMeekin stated a draft cost analysis will be received on May 9, and Mr. Taylor stated this is critical to moving forward. The cost of the plant must be known, the timeline for construction and the cost of operation to maintain. Mayor McMeekin stated the Technical Committee has been reorganized, which includes Kyle Crager who is an engineer, along with Mr. Taylor, Laura Johnson and Robert Arndt from Ridgeway. It will, therefore, consist of people from the County and both Towns. Mr. Crager will be in charge, once the numbers are received, to vet, validate and go through with a fine-tooth comb so a cost analysis can be done of each plant. This project is moving forward and inflation is also moving forward.
- Public Safety Department Update: Chief Lawrence stated legislation passed last year and became effective January 1, 2023. S.C. Code Section 23-23-85 consists of 9 different policies, one concerning the use of force. When Chief Lawrence took over as Interim Chief, he noticed the policies had not been updated in 13 years, so the department was out of compliance with SLED. He contacted Chris Radcliff from the Municipal Association, and he compiled the 9 policies, which consisted of 161 pages, received approval through the S.C. Criminal Justice Academy, and now the department is in compliance with SLED and the State. Moving forward, it will be able to apply for grants within the Police Department. Each officer had to read and sign the policies. The Academy was pleased that the policies were approved since they had not been approved in so long. Chief Lawrence also received a call from Sheriff Lott last week, and



he is replacing Chief Reggie Burgess on the S.C. Advisory Board for Gun Control. He will be on the Board with Sheriff Lott, Sheriff Dorsey from Chester County and Chief Skip Holbrook. Chief Lawrence will have a hand in speaking for law enforcement for everything moving forward to legislation. Also, he will be serving on another committee approving grants for law enforcement throughout the State, so hopefully some grants can be received to help in this community. Finally, there was a fire at 411 West College today, and this did not appear to be arson. It was an abandoned residence, and it appeared someone had been on the premises possibly smoking. With the wind being how it was today, it spiraled out of control, and some of the surrounding houses were seared by the fire. Everyone did a great job, especially Oren Gadson, Melinda Martin and Chance Risener, and the County also assisted. Council congratulated Chief Lawrence on his appointments. Mr. Taylor stated it is very good for the Town to be involved with these types of boards.

- Grants Update: When going through the budget, Mr. Taylor made sure grant matches were addressed. The Town has done pretty well with grants this year, including the following: \$500,000 from the legislative delegation, \$500,000 carbon feed grant for the water plant, \$625,000 generator for the sewer plant, \$440,000 for Fortune Springs and the \$10M SCIIP Grant for upgrading the water plant, which is transformational. This will increase the water treatment capacity from 4M gallons to 6M gallons. The hope is that additional grants will be received moving into next year. Mayor McMeekin stated a grant is being applied for to get improvements to Friendship Park. Mr. Taylor stated he spoke with our Representative, and she is going to see if she can move this forward.

#### **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.)**

At 7:19 p.m., it was moved by Mayor Pro-Tem Chatman, seconded by Council Member Bartell Prather, to go into executive session for: Receipt of Legal

Advice: Consultant Contractual Services Pursuant to S.C. Code §30-4-70(a)(2). ***The motion carried 5-0.***

At 7:28 p.m., it was moved by Council Member Miller, seconded by Council Member Burroughs, to exit executive session and return to regular session. ***The motion carried 5-0.***

Mayor Pro-Tem Chatman made a motion to authorize the Town Manager to enter into a consulting agreement with Tompkins, Thompson and Brown, seconded by Council Member Burroughs. ***The motion carried 5-0.***

**13. ADJOURN**

At 7:29 p.m., it was moved by Council Member Miller, seconded by Mayor Pro-Tem Chatman, to adjourn. ***The motion carried 5-0.***



PATTI L. DAVIS  
TOWN CLERK



JOHN MCMEEKIN  
MAYOR