

**MINUTES
REGULAR MEETING
WINNSBORO TOWN COUNCIL
FEBRUARY 8, 2024**

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 February 8, 2024, at the Winnsboro Town Hall. 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 Voice of Blythewood and Fairfield, The Country Chronicle and other individuals associated with the distribution list of the Town of Winnsboro.

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

Mayor Pro-Tem Chatman made a motion, seconded by Council Member Burroughs, to approve the agenda. ***The motion carried 4-0.***

4. APPROVAL OF MINUTES

Council Member Bartell-Prather made a motion, seconded by Mayor Pro-Tem Chatman, to approve the Regular Meeting minutes from January 16, 2024, and the Finance Committee minutes from January 16, 2024. ***The motion carried 4-0.***

Council Member Miller arrived at 6:16 p.m.

5. SPECIAL REPORTS/PRESENTATIONS

None.

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. 99: An Ordinance Annexing into the Town of Winnsboro a 0.86 Acre Tract of Land, Located at 217 11th Street, Winnsboro, SC, Owned by Gordon Memorial United Methodist Church, Inc., in Fairfield County, Not Already Within the Winnsboro Town Limits, and Including All Adjacent and Abutting Rights-of-Way. Tax Map No.: 145-01-30-005-000. Motion made by Council Member Bartell-Prather, seconded by Mayor Pro-Tem Chatman, to approve Second and Final Reading Ordinance No. 99. ***The motion carried 5-0.***

9. MANAGER'S REPORT

A. Ongoing Projects:

Code Enforcement: There has been a recent delinquent tax sale, and many of the properties the Town was pursuing for Code Enforcement have now changed ownership. The Town acquired two properties in the Zion Hill area. Mayor McMeekin inquired if the Town got the main properties being looked at, and Mr. Clauson stated the Town got both of those properties. Some of the properties brought a good deal of money. Mr. Taylor stated the hope is if someone is willing to invest this much in the property that they will be willing to clean it up. Mr. Taylor stated another property that was being pursued both for downtown redevelopment along with Code Enforcement issues is the old Vicky's Hype Hair building owned by Ms. Boyles. This property is under contract to be sold. Mr. Elliott spoke with Ms. Boyles, and the closing should be next Thursday. She shared Mr. Elliott's letter with the prospective buyer, so the buyer is aware of the issues with the property. Mr. Elliott is anticipating that the buyer will start applying for building permits. Ms. Boyles stated she would contact Mr. Elliott after the closing. Mr. Taylor stated there is a certain urgency with getting the issues with this building remediated. The buyer of the Wells Fargo building was also in Town Hall recently, and the issues associated with the Vicky's Hype Hair building are affecting his redevelopment efforts. He is urging the Town to do something to remediate the water problems caused by the crumbling roof of Ms. Boyles' building. It is, therefore, important to get these Code Enforcement issues taken care of in order to proceed with redevelopment of downtown as these are all tied together. Mayor Pro-Tem Chatman stated staff needs to keep in behind this matter, and Mr. Elliott stated if he does not hear from Ms. Boyles, he will reach out to her. Mayor McMeekin stated the Town does not want to be going round and round. Mr. Taylor stated unfortunately this is where we find ourselves with a lot of properties because of the tax sales and other issues.

Utilities: As many already know, Mr. Russell Wright, wastewater operator, is no longer with the Town, and this position is being advertised. There is an employee at the wastewater plant who holds an A license, Mr. Robyn Pavlakovich, and he will be the acting Interim. This is a difficult position to fill, but there are several in-house possibilities. Mr. Taylor further stated everything seems to be going smoothly on the SCIIP Grant for the upgrades to the water plant. There is a mandate to not buy Chinese equipment, and this is causing some issues. Some of the pieces of equipment are only manufactured in China, and the State law prohibits the use of Chinese manufactured parts. The grant is moving forward for the generator at the sewer plant. There was a DHEC inspection this past Tuesday, and there were a few issues which will be addressed. They should be giving a full report of the findings soon.

Redevelopment Efforts: As stated above, Mr. Taylor has continued to meet with the purchasers of the Wells Fargo building. They continue to be interested and want to move forward and have expressed their concerns of some of the surrounding buildings. They are also looking to invest in additional properties in and around Town. Mr. Taylor asked for Mr. Elliott to give an update on the Thespian Hall building. Mr. Elliott stated the Town now has a fully executed contract, and Mr. Jack James will do the closing. A survey and some title work will be needed, and there is a built-in 60-day inspection period. This may prove to be longer than is needed, and this process has begun. Mr. Taylor stated staff has also met with Mr. Gregory Sprouse of the COG. Mr. Taylor, Mr. Sprouse and Mr. Clauson walked the Town in anticipation of possibly getting a CDBG grant also for downtown revitalization. The focus for this would probably be utilities, upgrading water lines, etc. A lot of the buildings downtown do not have sufficient water service to support sprinkler systems, which can keep them from being redeveloped. The Town will be going after CDBG funds for downtown drainage issues and upsizing water lines to support sprinkler systems.

Fairfield Joint Water & Sewer Service: The Town has reached out to the COG in the hopes that they can bring value to this process. Meetings are being held with Mr. Britt Poole and Mr. Gregory Sprouse to see how they can help facilitate moving the process forward as quickly as possible and incorporating some ideas of the Town to expand the existing sewer plant to potentially bridge the gap of running out of sewer capacity and the new plant being built.

Grants Update: There are several very good grants updates. The existing grants seem to be going well, and in particular, the SCOR grant discussed at the last Council meeting, the roughly \$440,000 for Fortune Springs Park, the granting authority has granted the Town another \$1.8M. They looked

at the project and were impressed with the project and; therefore, they have granted the additional money. Most of the money is for drainage and things like that, but it will at least get the park where it needs to be so those things can be done and not be undermined by water as has happened in the past. Just earlier today, it was announced the Town has received the PARD Grant in the amount of \$54,000 to redo Friendship Park. Mr. Taylor thanked the Legislative Delegation, Senator Fanning and Representative McDaniel, because this is where this funding comes from. Mayor Pro-Tem Chatman will put this information out into the community since it is in District 3. Mr. Taylor stated there will be a match with this grant; however, an in-kind match can be done. The Town can remove all the asphalt and prep the site in order to use this toward the match. Mayor McMeekin stated staff has been working toward this for a long time. Mr. Taylor stated this is very much needed as this is a well-used park.

10. OLD BUSINESS

None.

11. NEW BUSINESS

A. Request for Public Funds - Fairfield Farmers and Artisans Market Request for Sponsorship for Upcoming 2024 Season. Mr. Taylor stated the Farmers' Market is a great plus for the Town and also helps with downtown revitalization by bringing people downtown. The Market has some struggles to try to keep it going, and they are here to make a request of Council. Mrs. Jamie Vaine, representing the Market, stated they very much appreciate all the revitalization efforts, and the Market is proud to be a part of this. The Market faced many challenges last year, and it continues to face these challenges this year as well. The request is being made for the Town to sponsor the Market in any way possible and any help the Town can give would be very much appreciated. A program has been started to promote the downtown restaurants through the Market along with offering food stamps, SNAP and Healthy Bucks. The Market took on the Ag and Art last year, and even though this is a State-wide event and County event, it is bringing people to the Town. The Market relies on support from the community to help pay the rent, insurance and help advertise. This cannot be accomplished on the vendor fees alone. Mayor McMeekin opened the floor for discussion and stated the Town would not be able to contribute toward the AG and Art event as this is a County event. Mayor Pro-Tem Chatman inquired what the Town has done in the past, and Mayor McMeekin stated this has not been done in the past. He suggested maybe \$250 and stated for Council to give their thoughts. Council Member Burroughs stated Council usually gives \$750 for these types of

requests, and we could at least do this amount. Mrs. Belton stated this amount would work. Mayor Pro-Tem Chatman stated the Market is in Town and benefits the citizens. Council Member Burroughs made a motion, seconded by Mayor Pro-Tem Chatman, to approve the request in the amount of \$750.00 to support the Market for the year 2024. ***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.)

- A.** Economic Development/Contractual Matter - Discussion Concerning Downtown Revitalization Pursuant to S.C. Code §30-4-70(a)(2).
- B.** Receipt of Legal Advice – Discussion Concerning Trash Dispute Pursuant to S.C. Code §30-4-70(a)(2).
- C.** Receipt of Legal Advice – Discussion Concerning FJWSS Territory Pursuant to S.C. Code §30-4-70(a)(2).
- D.** Receipt of Legal Advice – Discussion Concerning Ongoing Litigation Pursuant to S.C. Code §30-4-70(a)(2).

At 6:35 p.m., motion made by Mayor Pro-Tem Chatman, seconded by Council Member Bartell-Prather, to exit regular session and enter into executive session for the above listed items. ***The motion carried 5-0.***

At 6:53 p.m., motion made by Council Member Bartell-Prather, seconded by Mayor Pro-Tem Chatman, to exit executive session and return to regular session. ***The motion carried 5-0.***

Mayor McMeekin stated there was no action taken in executive session, and all discussions were for information only.

13. ADJOURN

At 6:53 p.m., Council Member Miller made a motion, seconded by Council Member Bartell-Prather, to adjourn. ***The motion carried 5-0.***



PATTI L. DAVIS
TOWN CLERK



JOHN MCMEEKIN
MAYOR