



**REGULAR CITY COUNCIL MEETING
6:30 P.M., Tuesday, January 17, 2023
Bennettsville Public Safety Complex**

Minutes

1. CALL TO ORDER Mayor Prince
2. INVOCATION AND PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE Gregory Scott, Sr.
3. ROLL CALL
Mayor Price stated let the record show all members of council are in attendance.
4. APPROVAL/CORRECTION OF MINUTES
 - A. Regular Council Meeting; Tuesday, November 15, 2022- Mr. Scott made a motion to approve the Regular Council Meeting minutes of Tuesday, November 17, 2022. Mr. Davis seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.
5. PUBLIC REQUESTS/ PRESENTATION OF PETITIONS
 - A. Employee Anniversaries for December 2022 & January 2023-Mr. Alderman stated the Employee Anniversaries for December 2022 are Mike Belcher, Water & Sewer, 15 years; QuShika Lucas, Administration 10 years.
January 2023-Ricky Huckabee, Wastewater Plant, 15 years.
 - B. Annual Employee Anniversaries for December 2022 & January 2023 -Mr. Alderman stated the Annual Employee Anniversaries for December 2022 are Fredericka Miller, Police, 11 years; Earnest Floyd, Electric, 2 years; Angela Sellers, Water Treatment, 2 years; Thomas Catoe, Fire, 1 year; Demetrius River, Police, 1 year.
January 2023 are John Crowley, Utility Billing, 21 years; Tasha Townsend, Purchasing, 21 years; Ricky Huckabee, Wastewater, 15 years; Kim Peterson, Police, 6 years; and William Griggs, Fire, 6 years; Larue Fine, Public Works, 1 year.
6. PUBLIC COMMENTS
Buster L. Causey Jr. stated he was in attendance about, “A piece of property he owns on Breeden/Crosland Street. He received a letter from Code Enforcement saying that the property had to be cleaned up. I wanted to speak to someone about it and was directed to come to City Council. So, I did. I was spoke to by some of you and was told that they would get with me and discuss this matter. In the meantime, he still has not heard from anyone and reached out again, with the same response, I will get with you.” Now a contractor has come on his property tore down his trees and fence, dug holes and left it looking like a war zone. He went saying, “ I am holding the City of Bennettsville, Code Enforcement and Council fully responsible for anyone that goes on my property and gets hurt. You’re liable because I had that property grown up with trees around the edge of it, fence around the edge of it and not allowing anyone to get in there to get hurt. Now you have opened it up for a liability suit on me. “Which in turn, I hold you responsible.” Causey said he has asked for someone to talk with him but all he can get is someone will get with him. “Getting with me ain’t getting it now. It’s time to sit down and talk. I require someone to come and let’s talk. I don’t want it to get dirty, but it’s getting dirty now.”

Pamela Best asked why her issues haven’t been resolved? She stated that she has been coming over a year and a half. It has been 4 different Animal Patrol officers. She warned us about a dog attack that happened in Cheraw, where a kid almost died. She went on saying she felt as if animals were being neglected. Therefore, she went to the

Humane Society. Lastly, she feels as if citizens should be fined by Animal Patrol Officer when they are not doing as Ordinances require.

7. SECOND READING AND PASSAGE IN FULL OF ORDINANCES

No Business

8. FIRST READING AND ADVERTISEMENT OF ORDINANCES

No Business

9. PASSAGE OF RESOLUTIONS

No Business

10. GENERAL BUSINESS DISPENSED BY MOTION

A. Request to purchase Trash Boom Truck- Bill Parrish- Bill Parrish, requesting approval for an emergency purchase of a trash boom truck because the frame has broken on the older boom truck. He said the department was down, and it was imperative to them. The truck is in the capital plan for the upcoming fiscal year. Parrish also mentioned that there was a three-month build time for the vehicle. Due to being down a vehicle and the holidays, the Public Works is behind and wanted to let the citizens know this, and they were trying to get back on schedule.

Approving Action- A motion to approve an emergency purchase of a trash boom truck for an amount of \$216,000.00. Moved by Mr. Davis. Seconded by Mr. Taylor. Motion passed unanimously.

B. Mutual Aid Agreement-Chief Miller- Assist Chief Williams stood in for Chief Miller requesting approval of a Mutual Aid Agreement with Chesterfield County Sheriff's Office.

Approving Action- A motion to approving a Mutual Aid Agreement with Chesterfield County Sheriff's Office. Moved by Mrs. Weaver. Seconded by Mr. Abraham. Motion passed unanimously.

C. Approval to Sell 102/104 West Main Street, 032-41-06-004- The property located at 102/104 West Main is currently owned by the city and several parties have expressed an interest in purchasing it. The procedure for selling property is to request proposals, award a bid, and convey the property by Ordinance. I recommend we begin the process with approval to solicit proposals for the sale of the property.

Approving Action- A motion authorizing staff to advertise for the bidding process for 102/104 West Main Street. Moved by Mrs. Weaver. Seconded by Mr. Abraham. Motion passed unanimously.

11. REPORTS AND INFORMATION PRESENTATION

No Business

12. COMMUNICATION BETWEEN CITY COUNCIL AND CITY ADMINISTRATOR

A. Executive Session to Discuss MPD Electric Cooperative Proposal- Mayor Prince entertained a motion to go into Executive Session to discuss MPD Cooperative Proposal item from Mr. William Fleming, Jr. Moved by Mr. Davis. Seconded by Mr. Taylor. Motion passed unanimously.

Mr. Taylor moved. Mr. Davis seconded to exit Executive Session. No motions were made no votes were taken.

13. NON-AGENDA ITEMS FROM COUNCIL

Mr. Abraham thanked all employees and wished everyone a Happy New Year! Started out asking council members to meet with Department Heads and City Administrator so that team building strategies can be set up. This idea will help employees and citizens of the community. Next, he stated that "We need to stop trying to please individuals and start working together as a team. The good old person system needs to stop! It's about our

citizens!” He went on asking, “what is the plan when Max contract run out? How does the organizational chart go then on? Who will step-up temporarily? Until we find someone permanent for the position, Mrs. Ward step-up, then who will step-up in Mrs. Ward place? He stated that, “Council needs to find out now, not wait until the time come and figure it out , what we going to do?” Lastly, he mentioned looking into giving an exit interview, so we will know what the problem is and why an employee is leaving. “Change starts with us, and now is the time for change. If we don’t get on the ball and work together, I’m afraid we will have caution tape wrapped around our city.”

Ms. Quick stated Christmas decorations was embarrassing and how poorly they looked.

Mr. Davis thank all employees for what they and ow they make up this great city with the all the hard work they do. He welcomed all to 2023. He sent condolences to all the families that have bereavement during this time. Mr. Davis asked Max who is responsible for Holly’s position now that she’s gone (Planning and Zoning Manager) because he’s getting a lot of calls pertaining to her position. When people call, they need to know who to talk to. Mayor Prince stated considering that Max finds someone temporarily that can do some of the work until the position is filled. Mrs. Weaver suggested asking the young lady who interviewed for Finance Director. Mrs. Ward, replied and stated, “She reached out to her and at the time she was not interested.”

Lastly, Mr. Davis agreed with Mr. Abraham on looking for someone to replace Max position. Mr. Davis stated, “Meaning bringing someone in and let Max start training them and therefore when he gets ready to retire, we will already have somebody ready to move in the position.”

Ms. Weaver followed up on Mr. Davis comment by saying, “It should be someone in the office now cross training that can do Max’s job.” She believes that’s why we are in a bind now, apparently because there was no cross training to do Holly’s job. Next, she mentioned working together and getting things done. She agreed with Ms. Quick on getting better Christmas decorations and decorating downtown better. Following, she mentioned getting a committee together to help decorate the city. She told citizens to get with her in February about decorating for Christmas, so she can do whatever it is she needs to do. Lastly, she wanted to know what was going on with Causey and his property. She said he contacted her, and she went to see the property. Mayor Prince said she had also talked with Mr. Causey several times. The city had approved money to hire contractors to clear up overgrown lots that our Public Works Department could not handle. She stated a letter went out to everyone and it gave so many days as a grace period to get it done themselves or otherwise, the city would handle it. Mayor Prince felt there were legitimate concerns by the council but didn’t have all parties involved in the issue. Lastly, the Mayor stated, “ I like to deal with the facts coming from the people involved.” “So, let’s pause because we are dealing with hearsay. Let’s pause and have a session where we can invite all people and iron it out.”

Mr. Scott thanked all employees for working so hard and being so faithful to the city. He stated, a lot of work needs to be done, but a lot of has been done. Some things are looking a lot better with the abandoned houses and buildings when riding around the city. Stated Ms. Graves has been doing excellent work all year long and do not to give up on her. Lastly, he stated that we need to be proactive about things. He asked Max about adding Crooked Creek to the Workshop. Lastly, he mentioned putting mobile homes back on the “Mill Farm” area. It was once denied. However, he would like to bring it back to the table. He requested that he get information on an Ordinance about the standards.

Mr. Taylor stated that “Non-Agenda Items are Non-Agenda Items for a reason, if it’s not on the agenda and we want to speak about it was brought up by Mayor Prince, that it should be added. if a couple of Council members had an issue about a citizen that owns a property in this town that was brought to them and felt that it had not been resolved, cared enough to be here twice to speak said he didn’t have a resolution” he didn’t think that was “show boating.”

Mayor Prince stated she was frustrated with how slow the government works. Next, they

plan on looking at Ordinances for downtown buildings. Maybe looking into finding funds for building facades, anything that can be done to improve store fronts.

Mr. Max Alderman, City Administrator and Director of Public Utilities stated that “it had been difficult times in the past two years with the pandemic.” He stated staff left and took a lot of equity with them, and the city has not recovered. “It has been extremely difficult on the remaining staff members, myself included. I don’t know the details about what every department head has done. You are totally right about this time for a change.” He we on saying, “Unfortunately, we don’t have the luxury of hiring additional people, more than we have now.” Alderman said he had pondered it for a long time and asked himself what he would in October of 2024? He then gave council the letter and hoped it would help them start the change process.

Mr. Alderman announced that he was stepping away from his two positions. In a letter, which he handed to the Mayor Dr. Carolyn Prince and all council members , it said “ In accordance with Section 2 (c) of my Employment Agreement dated October 31, 2016, please let this serve as my “ one hundred and eighty (180) days written notice” of resignation of my employment with the city as City Administrator and Director of Public Utilities. My last day of employment with the city will be July 16, 2023.

14. ADJOURN
Mayor Prince

Public Comment Policy:

Citizens desiring to speak at any regular meeting must provide a written request to notify the City Clerk prior to the agenda deadline. Citizens interested in commenting at a regular meeting, shall sign in to speak and limit comments to no more than 3 minutes.

Mission Statement:

To utilize all available resources for the development of plans, programs, and projects to improve services to the citizens of Bennettsville and establish and maintain an active role in economic and community development.