



**REGULAR CITY COUNCIL MEETING**  
**Tuesday, January 18, 2022, 6:30 P.M.**  
**Public Safety Complex**

**Minutes**

1. CALL TO ORDER Mayor Prince
2. INVOCATION AND PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE Tyrone Davis

3. ROLL CALL

Mayor Prince stated let the record show all members are in attendance.

4. APPROVAL/CORRECTION OF MINUTES

A. Regular Council Meeting: Tuesday, November 16, 2021 – Mr. Taylor made a motion to approve the Regular Council Meeting minutes of Tuesday, November 16, 2021. Mr. Scott seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

5. PUBLIC REQUESTS/ PRESENTATION OF PETITIONS

A. Council Member Taylor Swearing-In- He was sworn in by a dear friend, Chastity Rummage with his wife Ashely and his son, Tripp in attendance.

B. Employee Anniversaries – Mr. Alderman stated the employee anniversaries for December 2021 and January 2022 are Fredricka Miller, Police, 10 years; John Crowley, Utility Billing, 20 years, Tasha Townsend, Purchasing, 20 years, Kim Peterson, Police, 5 years, and William Griggs, Fire, 5 years

C. Annual Employee Anniversaries- Mr. Alderman stated the annual employee anniversaries for December 2021 and January 2022 are Mike Belcher, Water & Sewer, 14 years, QuShika S. Lucas, Administration, 9 years, Earnest Floyd, Electric, 1 year, Angela Sellers, Water Treatment, 1 year, Ricky Huckabee, Wastewater, 14 years, Rysheme Moore, Public Works, 1 year

6. PUBLIC COMMENTS

- Donald Andrews-Interim Superintendent for Marlboro County School District thanked the council for reaching out to him to come and speak. He wants to reassure the community and council of the position moving forward he plans to build relationships with the community and continue to move the school system forward. He asked that suggestions be offered because he wants to collaborate with the city, county, etc. He truly believes in our Board of Education. Lastly, he stated, “Our children are our future and I see bright things for our future.”
- Waddell Thomas- He wanted to know why is he paying for trash pickup and not receiving the services? He feels as if a refund should be given because he is paying for a service and he’s not receiving it.
- Pearlie Lawson- She commend the city for the flyer, Become a “City Ambassador”. City Ambassadors will join as Volunteers helping the City with Events, Projects, Community Service and Greeting Visitors. She plans to be a part of the “City Ambassador”, as well. Another point she wanted to mention was the redistricting. She wanted to ensure that the city also offer the opportunity for the citizens in those districts in the city to be able to see and view those matters. She doesn’t know how far in process we are, but she would like for the community to have an opportunity to be sure that districts are not packed and cracked, and gerrymandering does not take. Gerrymandering is when you’re taken a one race peak and packing them all in one district. Lastly, she also commended all the council for the work they do.
- Whitney Best-stated, “just a touch on what he said (Waddell Thomas) there are certain areas in Bennettsville that the police don’t go, the trash don’t go” there are limbs in certain areas that are known and picked up and others that aren’t. She went on saying that she finally received her letter from the previous meetings, which she read.
- Crystal Huntley- stated the letter that was supposed to be sent out to her was never received. Mayor Prince stated the letter was returned due to the wrong address. Crystal then stated her

address is 846 Salem Rd. Her issue is with the affiliates of the city. She feels as if the city is not working together as a community. The issue is repetitive. Lastly, all she wants is cooperation.

7. SECOND READING AND PASSAGE IN FULL OF ORDINANCES

- A. Included in the packet is an agenda item from Planning and Zoning requesting approval of an Ordinance annexing 117 Hwy 15-401 By-Pass. First reading was approved on November 16, 2021.

Approving Action: A motion to approve second reading of an ordinance annexing 117 Hwy 15-401 By-Pass in the city of Bennettsville. Moved by Mr. Abraham. Seconded by Mr. Taylor. The motion passed unanimously.

8. FIRST READING AND ADVERTISEMENT OF ORDINANCES

No Business

9. PASSAGE OF RESOLUTIONS

Mr. Alderman stated, “approval of the premium pay must be done by resolution. That is when you get to that point. This is what this item is designed for tonight. Assuming that you would approve them an option and I would add it, but that’s not the case, but you just know that when you get to the point if at that special meeting it will be presented as required by the Municipal Association. That required by all the financial organizations and retirement and just everyone requires an approval by motion. After hearing what you’ve discussed in the workshop. I’ll sum it up and suggest a motion from what I heard and what I understand. A motion authorizing the administrator to review option 9 of the AECOM recommendation for corrections and/or any errors and present the revised document showing the three-tier risk list at a Special Meeting at 5:30 on Thursday, January 20<sup>th</sup>.” Mayor Prince stated, “it’s been moved by Mr. Taylor. Seconded by Ms. Quick, that we authorize the administrator review option 9. Make corrections as necessary and present that to us at a special call meeting 5:30, Thursday, January 20, 2022, here in this building. All in favor let it be known by raising your right hand. Mayor Prince asked Mr. Abraham if he was abstaining or voting against? He answered, “I’m voting against.” The record show that Mr. Abraham voted No, and the other council members voted in favor.”

10. GENERAL BUSINESS DISPENSED BY MOTION

A. Mayor Pro Tempore Election- Mayor Prince stated by law we are required to elect a Mayor Pro Tempore immediately after any general election of the council this should come from the membership of term or for not more than two years. The floor is open for nominations. Mr. Abraham nominated Mr. Allen Taylor. Mr. Davis seconded. Passed unanimously.

B. Standing Committee Appointments- Mayor Prince asked Council Weaver to serve on the same committees as Sandy Donaldson did, the executive and finance committee. Ms. Weaver agreed.

C. Rezoning Request for 108 Cottingham Blvd-Included in the packet is an agenda from Planning and Zoning with a request from Mr. Fred Artibee to rezone property located at 108 Cottingham Blvd. On behalf of FNA Management to rezone property located at 108 Cottingham Blvd, Bennettsville, and shown more specifically on the Marlboro County Tax Map 32-47, Block 3, Parcel 44, consisting of approximately .54 acres and zoned A-3, Multi-Family Residential District to C-2, Highway and Neighborhood Commercial.

Mr. Scott stated he had a comment or maybe it’s a question. His issue is the city could never get anyone to cut the grass, so by rezoning this property, “Will the city be able to cut the grass and make it look more attractive?” Mrs. Swann, answered, “no sir”. He went on asking, “what would be the city’s advantage for rezoning?” Holly responded, “Well, the advantage would be for the property owner from commercial to being vacant.” He would be able to sell as commercial rather than residential. If he can’t sell, we still can’t make him clean it.”

Action: A motion was made to reject the rezoning request for 108 Cottingham Blvd and authorization for staff to prepare for rezoning ordinance moved by Mr. Scott. Seconded by Davis. Mr. Taylor voted against at this time.

D. Board Appointment-Mayor Prince appointed Mr. Glen Bunch to Board of Zoning and Housing Appeals.

E. Municipal Judges Appointments- City Code Section 34.01 (A) states that “There is hereby established a Municipal Court which shall be a part of the unified judicial system of the

state.” and Section 34.02 (A) states that “The Court shall be presided over by the City Judge who shall be appointed by the council for a term not to exceed four years and shall receive compensation as determined by Council.” At the regular meeting on January 16, 2018, the city council approved a motion to appoint Judge Larry Rogers as Municipal Judge “for a term of four years with an effective date no later than March 1, 2018.” Also, at a special meeting on March 1, 2018, the City Council approved “a motion to appoint Dominica Stuckey as Assistant Judge.” Then at the regular meeting, on January 15, 2019, the city council approved “a motion to revise the structure of Municipal Court to include equal scheduling of Judges responsibilities and equal pay rate of \$26, 000. Annually to become effective March 1, 2019.

Approving Action: Mr. Abraham made a motion to table item 10-E Municipal Judges Appointments. Mr. Taylor seconded. The motion passed unanimously.

F. City Attorney Appointment- City Code Section 31.05 states that “The Council may appoint a City Attorney who shall be a lawyer of good and reputable standing who shall hold office at the pleasure of Council “On January 16, 2018, the Council approved “a motion to appoint Mason King of the Jennings Law Firm, as City Attorney for a term not to exceed four years.”

Approving Action: Mr. Taylor made a motion to continue with the contract for the city attorney, not to exceed four 4 years. Seconded by Ms. Quick. The motion passed unanimously.

#### 11. REPORTS AND INFORMATION PRESENTATION

A. Redistricting Update- The SC Revenue and Fiscal Affairs office regarding redistricting the City Council Districts. Mayor Prince stated that the state handles the redistricting for the city. Mrs. Swann, Planning and Zoning manager went on saying that District 1 had 1,651 residents, which was a gain of 481 people over the other district. For redistricting, the number needs to be 1,170. The total population for the City of Bennettsville is 7,020 and does not include the prison population. Lastly, Swann stated, “We are not in a hurry because we don’t have an election coming up, so they have kind of put us on the backburner for now”. However, there would be many public hearings.

B. Public Service Committee Meeting on November 8, 2021- Mayor Prince mentioned there are some things that need to be looked at. Another Public Service Meeting should be held sometime next week.

#### 12. COMMUNICATION BETWEEN CITY COUNCIL AND CITY ADMINISTRATOR

A. Budget Workshop; February 8, 2022; 6:30 PM- Max stated he would present the draft budget for 2022-2023.

#### 13. NON-AGENDA ITEMS FROM COUNCIL

Mr. Taylor thanked all employees and acknowledged that the city makes them who they are. He went on thanking all departments for their hard work, especially the electric crew for their hard work during the snow last week. He recognized special departments because so many contribute to those types of situations, from the Administrator down. Especially, the strained electric crew. It is a total of 7 in that department and they tend to get a lot of criticism. However, that criticism can be a little bit unwarranted. In two days, they answered about 195-200 calls less than 40 hours. The electric crew did the best they could do to try and restore power safely during the storm and he thanked them for what they do. Not only that department, but everybody. Mr. Alderman interjected and stated, on behalf of the electric crew, he wanted to thank Mr. Taylor for those comments because they worked straight 15 hours.

Mr. Scott thanked all employees for what they do. He thinks the city has some of the best workers in the state and they deserve to be commended for what they do. He went on saying that council does things because they care. Scott stated, “we are here to see that our constituents’ opinions are heard. It’s not just Councilman Scott opinion. Majority of the time when I’m speaking, I want the people that I represent opinions to be heard. That’s why we are so passionate because we aren’t just saying what one council person wants. We are talking about what our constituents are telling us what’s important for them”. Additionally, he said, “let us not forget about those who are less fortunate than us, those who don’t have shelter or other things. Sometimes when we are snuggled up in our own home, we forget about those less fortunate. We must remember them also”. Next, Scott asked City Administrator Max Alderman with the engineering company about Crooked Creek, do we have any more revenue to go towards that or how do we stand there? Max response was, “Yes, sir. I have some great news. The latest information from the Department of Resilience State are the ones that have an update. The storm

water study. The grant is just at its final approval, and we are waiting for a letter of award for that grant, and it could come any day.” Mayor Prince interjected to say, “that this is not to do the work, but just the study only.” Lastly, Scott asked if the buyout and rebuilding of the home’s locations, how many was approved? It was said 40, but we don’t know how many of those were approved. Ms. Swann mentioned she received an email today from the Office of Resilience and they are recommending to the committee that we get approved and we should know something by Thursday.

Ms. Weaver thanked the guys for power. Far as everything else, she’s learning and look forward to working with all of you.

Mr. Davis thanked all employees and those that worked during the storm.

Ms. Quick stated she read the Strategic Planning book from the beginning to the end. It was exciting and she’s ready to make some things happen.

Mr. Abraham thanked all employees for what they do. He really appreciates it. He wished everyone a Happy New year. He continued to ask that we look at our Public Works Department. They are in need. They are short staff and they’re trying to do what they can to make sure that we don’t get complaints. Abraham stated, “he asked for a copy to see what the CDL diver starting pay and it was \$13.82, so he went to ask two other companies about their CDL driver’s starting pay and it was \$24.00 per hour, so the city needs to look at doing something in the Public Works Department. He went on saying it’s hard getting CDL drivers especially when the pay is like this. Next, he wanted to find out about filling the position at the Tourism, Parks & Recreation. Mayor Prince interjected, and stated, “I have a recommendation. She wanted to entertain a motion that we hire Miss. Jahara Graves as the Director and then open the position for an Assistant Director. She’s done a tremendous amount of work in a few months, she picked up in the absence of Mrs. McNiel.” She went on to say, “some of you may not know but we were at the brink of losing our status for Main Street, South Carolina for a lot of different reasons that I won’t go into, but as soon as she found out, she was in touch with the state director.” City Administrator, Max Alderman replied, “he would suggest that you let him discuss filling that position with Jaharra and consider it during the budget process. “Lastly, Mr. Abraham made a motion to go ahead and make Jahara Graves the Director of Tourism, Parks & Recreation. Mr. Davis seconded. Ms. Quick, Mrs. Weaver and Mr. Taylor voted against. The motion passed.

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.