



**REGULAR CITY COUNCIL MEETING
6:30 P.M., Tuesday, November 21, 2023
Bennettsville Public Safety Complex**

Minutes

1. CALL TO ORDER Mayor Prince
2. INVOCATION AND PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE Tyrone Davis
3. ROLL CALL
District 5-Tyron Abraham
District 4- Jean Quick
District 2-Tyrone Davis
District 6- Gregory Scott
District 1- Wanda Weaver
District 3-Allen Taylor
4. APPROVAL/CORRECTION OF MINUTES
 - A. Regular Council Meeting; Tuesday, October 17, 2023- Mayor Prince stated she wanted two things edited on the minutes from October. On page 4, second paragraph on number 13. This is in regard to the St. Michael United Methodist Church. “We have a dedication and unveiling for South Carolina historical marker on Sunday, October 22, 2023 @ 4PM.” This is the correction, “The existing building was first used for a service on October 23, 1923. In 1919 the plans for the new church were approved and under construction by local artisans and the architect was the first African American Architect, South Carolina State College.”
Mr. Davis made a motion to approve the Regular Council Meeting of Tuesday, October 17, 2023, with corrections as noted. Seconded by Mr. Scott. Motion passed unanimously.
5. PUBLIC REQUESTS/ PRESENTATION OF PETITIONS
 - A. Employees Anniversaries- Sammy Crosland, Police, 25 years; Thomas Dew, Jr., Fire, 13 years; Danny Locklear, Wastewater TRT, 12 years; Teddy Stubbs, Fire, 10 years; Jacob Stott, Water & Sewer, 8 years; Sierra Jones, Utility Billing, 5 years; Richard Hayes, Fire, 3 years; Frankie Cummings, Water & Sewer, 2 years; Timothy Hagan, Fire, 2 years; Caleb Herndon, Fire, 2 years; David Hoover, Wastewater TRT, 1 year; Jacob King, Police, 1 year.
Employee Anniversaries (December)- QuShika S. Lucas, Administration, 11 years; Fredericka Miller, Police, 12 years; Angela Sellers, Water TRMT, 3 years; Thomas Catoe, Fire, 2 years; Christy Overstreet, Finance, 1 year.

- B. New Hires & Promotions- Jessica Miles-Promotion/ Public Works Administrative Assistant; Kimya McQueen-Assistant Director of Parks, Recreation & Tourism.

6. PUBLIC COMMENTS

Pamela Best-Stated, "I want to give Mr. Simon a shout out for sending me a text because he didn't notice me at the last meeting. I was on vacation, but I'm back." I asked him, "If I could sit down with him and our new Animal Control officer and I know he will make that happen. I have no question." She walked around to show all Council members a video she had. She reiterated the importance of animal control.

Yvette Douglas-Spoke about District 3 no longer being in the city. She mentioned that "District 3 is now in the county, and we need to do what is right and at this point." She was bringing the attention to the board, so they would know. She went on saying that the last race was so much trouble, when citizens went to vote, votes were mixed up. No one knew where to go. The new map wasn't clear. She ended by saying, "We need somebody in that seat to represent, so we can move forward to make this city better. I'm coming to the board and bringing it to you guys to let you know that we as citizens know that it's not any longer in the city and so I'm asking you all to please take care of that and I'll keep coming back until I get an answer. We want to do things right. We want to be transparent, and we have to do that. Having integrity and being honest. Thank you."

7. SECOND READING AND PASSAGE IN FULL OF ORDINANCES

No Business

8. FIRST READING AND ADVERTISEMENT OF ORDINANCES

No Business

9. PASSAGE OF RESOLUTIONS

A. South Carolina Department of Transportation, SC 9 Bus. (Cheraw Street) Bridge-This resolution is asking, the South Carolina Department of Transportation ("SCDOT") proposes to construct, reconstruct, alter, or improve the certain segments of the highway(s) in the State Highway System referenced above which are located within the corporate limits of the City of Bennettsville (hereinafter, "the City"). WHEREAS, the City wishes to authorize the construction and improvements of the aforesaid highway(s) in accordance with plans to be prepared by the SCDOT ("the Project Plans").

This resolution will allow them to go forward with that and whenever finalized plans come in, Mr. Simon will make sure that he shares with citizens when they will begin and how the management plan is going to reroute traffic.

Mayor Prince entertained a motion that Highway 9 Business replace bridge over Crooked Creek. Mr. Taylor moved. Mr. Scott seconded. Motion passed unanimously.

10. GENERAL BUSINESS DISPENSED BY MOTION

A. Holiday Schedule for 2024-REVISED to add Juneteenth-Mayor Prince entertained a motion to approve the revised 2024 Holiday Schedule. Moved by Mr. Davis. Seconded by Mr. Abraham. Motion passed unanimously.

B. Hiring Practice Procedures Discussion-Item will be discussed in Executive Session because it deals with a Personnel matter. Mayor Prince entertained a motion to go into Executive Session to discuss a Personnel matter. Moved by Mrs. Weaver. Seconded by Mr. Taylor. Motion passed unanimously.

Exiting Executive Session, Mrs. Weaver Moved. Mr. Taylor seconded. The vote was unanimous.

11. REPORTS AND INFORMATION PRESENTATION

A. Boards and Commissions Vacancies-

Board of Architectural Review/Tree Committee – promotes the purpose and objectives of the City’s Historic district ordinance, review and recommend to City Council the designation of individual historic properties and districts and construction or demolition pertaining to or affecting duly designated historic properties. The term of office for each member shall be two years. **Three (3) vacancies.**

Board of Zoning and Housing Appeals – shall have the powers and duties to hear and decide appeals of decisions made by City Administration. The term of office for each member shall be two years. **Three (3) vacancies.**

Planning Commission – shall hear proposed amendments to the zoning ordinance and map pursuant to SC Code 6-29-760(A). The term of office for each member shall be three years. **Three (3) vacancies.**

B. **Business Report (New)**

- Lemae’s Beauty Salon (Beauty Salon) 118 B Liberty Street

12. COMMUNICATION BETWEEN CITY COUNCIL AND CITY ADMINISTRATOR

A. **Recognition of Service**

Mr. Simon stated, “On behalf of The City of Bennettsville, we thank you both for your service.” “It’s been a pleasure working with the both of you. I’ve learned so much from each of you, as well as the remaining council members. So, on behalf of the city, we want to celebrate you. We say thank you. Thank you for your accomplishments. Thank you for all you’ve done. Lastly, he presented Dr. Carolyn A. Prince and Ms. Delores Jean Quick with a plaque.

- The Honorable Dr. Carolyn A. Prince stated she would wait until Non-Agenda Items from Council to speak.
- The Honorable Mrs. Jean Delores Quick- Ms. Quick thanked everyone, including her district. She stated, “I enjoyed serving and I’m going to miss it, but I’m here for y’all. I want to see Bennettsville like it was a long time ago. I want to do everything I can to help out. Sorry about the crying. Excuse me, I love y’all.”

13. NON-AGENDA ITEMS FROM COUNCIL

Mr. Taylor thanked all employees, council and mayor for what they do. He stated, “It’s been a long, good year. I’m thankful for what we’ve done. Thank you to the employees especially that make us who we are. So, with that being said, I hope everybody has a safe and Happy New Year and Merry Christmas.

Mrs. Weaver stated, “We have Christmas trees downtown that we’re selling. We’ve got 2 or 3 left. They’re \$55 for any business or individual that needs one, let me know. We’re also decorating the windows downtown for Christmas. If anybody’s interested in helping to do that, get in touch with me and I’ll show you where to go.” She wished everyone a Merry Christmas! Next, she stated, “Saying goodbye to Jean and Mayor Prince, I would like to welcome new Mayor elected Leith Fowler and Councilman Bill Jennings and I look forward to working with you.”

Mr. Scott had a few questions about the Wastewater Plant report. Mr. Simon replied he didn't have the report with him; however, a report was filed with DHEC. Fire Department report stated that issues with engine forty-one. It has been down without service until further notice. Mr. Scott asked, "Are we pouring out more money than what the equipment is worth?" Next, he wished everyone a Happy Holiday. He then congratulated and thanked those who were recognized for their services and dedication over the years. He ended by saying have a blessed Thanksgiving and Christmas.

Mr. Davis thanked all employees that make up this great city and the hard work that they do. Next, he thanked Mayor Prince and Ms. Quick for services. He thanked Ms. Quick for the 12 years she served on City Council. He stated, "I want to say I love you and appreciate all the work you've done and what I've grown to love you and the way you have helped me along the way as a young Councilman coming up." Lastly, he wished everyone a Happy Thanksgiving and Merry Christmas. Stay safe and eat a lot!

Ms. Quick stated, "I will miss you all. Love y'all. Thank you."

Mr. Abraham wished everyone a Happy Holiday. He stated, "I will miss Mayor Prince and Ms. Quick. I just want to say it was hard working and serving with working on council with the both of you. And as you close one chapter, God will open up another." He ended by saying, "May he send you help from the sanctuary and grant you support from Zion. May he remember all your sacrifices and accept your burnt offering. May he give you the desire of your heart and make all your plans succeed and that comes from Psalms 22.

Mayor Prince stated, "I want to thank the citizens of Bennettsville that elected me as the first African American woman to be Mayor of this city in more than 200-year history. It has been an honor to represent the city and to work along with the City Council and employees. I can truly say I've learned how all the departments operate and provide services to our citizens. On January 2, 2020. I was sworn in and just two months later, COVID-19. We tend to forget that and that put everything on hold for about a year and a half. We were shut down. We didn't operate, except for essential workers and of course essential employees like Fire and Police Department. However, we accomplished a lot in 2 ½ years." Next, she stated, "We initiated full transparency for all City Council Meetings. Live streaming of meetings on the city's social media platforms. We provide the opportunity for citizens to speak at Regular Council Meeting for 3 minutes. We train Administrative Staff to prepare proposals and grants. Access to the International codes of Ordinances and to be used as a platform to amend some of the Ordinances that we say needed to be strengthened or have more detailed than what was currently on the books. We successfully negotiated the voluntary Buyout Program for homes damaged during Hurricane Florence and that's still in process. We were given the opportunity to support and approve an application for National Competitive Grant that will win and I'm claiming it. When funded will provide monies to build homes because the people that work with us on the Resiliency Plan saw the need for creating housing so that people that would accept the buyout would not be displaced or be forced to leave the community and we all know that housing has been a big issue. So, I thank all of you for supporting that." The city own a piece of land that have been vacant, Abraham looked up the information on how long the land has been sitting there. "So, it will be put good use. Next, Mayor Prince added that there are some more things in process such as, Infrastructures being upgraded, including installing electronic utility meters, replacing water distribution pipelines, and upgrading the Firestone area."

Mayor Prince stated to Mr. Scott that, "We finally got the proposal funded to do the planning study for Crooked Creek. It took this team and 30 years later because Crooked Creek had always

been an issue for flooding. So now, we know the process is set in motion. City government runs very, very slow. The initial proposal was in 2019 and here it is 2023 to actually get the planning grant for that. So, down the line, there'll be some resolution to Crooked Creek, but it all began through this council. We the revitalization of the Main Street Program.” We had an approved first Strategic Plan and people were considering the Comprehensive Plan as a Strategic Plan. Those are two different documents, and we were able to agree under the leadership of Dr. McCoy that helped us with that. That you have a map for the future. She ended by saying, “Those are a few of the accomplishments we had in 2 ½ years with this council. I am pleased to be able to say my leadership style is different, but it has been very effective. I’m looking forward to attending the meetings as a citizen and asking questions and say things that I couldn’t do as a Mayor.” My love for the city, I was born and raised here, and I want things to get better.” She hopes everyone have a safe holiday and enjoy time with their family and friends.

In conclusion, Mayor Prince ended by saying Assistant Chief Greg Williams will be retiring. We are losing a valued employee. She thanked everyone and stated it was an interesting journey and she has plans.

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.