



**REGULAR CITY COUNCIL MEETING  
6:30 P.M., Tuesday, March 15, 2022  
Bennettsville 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 that all council members are present.

Before the meeting started Mayor Prince welcomed Bill Parris back. On behalf of council, she gave her condolences to the family of Precious McLain, the young lady who lost her life due to a tragic accident, a senior at the High School, well-known and loved. We offer condolences to the students at the High School. She gave 30 seconds of silence.

4. APPROVAL/CORRECTION OF MINUTES

A. Regular Council Meeting; Tuesday, February 15, 2021- Mr. Davis made a motion to approve the Regular Council Meeting; Tuesday, February 15, 2021. Mr. Scott seconded. The motion passed unanimously.

5. PUBLIC REQUESTS/ PRESENTATION OF PETITIONS

A. Employee Anniversaries-Mayor Prince thanked all employees for their hard work. Katrina Brigman, Police Department, 9 years; Teddy Brigman, Police, 24 years; Holly Swann, Planning /Zoning, 21 years; David Hamilton, Public Works, 1 year; Bradley Grice, Public Works, 1 year; Joshua Goff, Police, 1 year; Griffin Norris, Water and Sewer,6 years; Steven Wilkes, Utility Billing, 9 years; De' Aaron Smith, Police, 7 years; John Cartwright, Electric, 3 years; Jordan Smith, Water Treatment, 2 years

B. Annual Employee Anniversaries-None

6. PUBLIC COMMENTS

- **Larry Jones-** Thanked Mr. Tyrone and Mr. Abraham for doing a walk through on Sunday on Gordon St. The residents feel as if their light bills are getting high and everybody on that block for last past 3-4months light bills have been \$400 and \$500. Mr. Abraham and Mr. Davis talked to all the residents and now the residents would like to know, “What’s going on with all of these high light bills”. He went on saying that “the poor people can barely make it now.” Mr. Jones own property in the city and county. The light bills forced him to move to Marlboro Court. Lastly, he stated, “Mr. Tyrone told him ways to save, but they don’t see any relief in sight.”
- **Wes Parks-** Address the board as a resident, Hospitality and Tourism related business owner about the city’s use of the Hospitality Tax funds in prior, current, and upcoming budgets. He sent Max Alderman and Mayor Prince information on the allowable use of tax city’s financial audit reports. Showing how funds were used. Parks cited Article 7, Section 6 -1-730 of the South Carolina Code of Laws that said revenues must be used for tourism-related expenses and/or other uses not to exceed 50% of prior year hospitality tax revenues. Parks said in a period from May1, 2012 to April 30, 2021, of the \$2,622,916 in tax collections that only \$605,898 was used for tourism-related expenses. City officials transferred \$2,213, 200 to the general fund. “That is a clear violation of Article 7 South Carolina Code of Laws,” Park said. “It’s apparent rather than use the funds for the intended purpose, the funds were used to balance the budget at the expense of improving the quality of live here.”

In the letter that was read to council, stated he was unaware of any action taken by the council to amend the internal hospitality ordinance to allow for any transfer to the general fund, so all that transfer may be in violation of the ordinance as adopted. He stated that the SC Department of Transportation indicated that 10,200 cars/trucks come through Broad

and Main Street each day or 3.5 million cars/trucks a year. Lastly, Parks asked the council to delay the first reading until the million-dollar excess transfer issue could be resolved. He suggested making a budget amendment to move expenses from the general fund to the American Recovery Act fund prior to end of this fiscal year. Mayor Prince said that Park's letter and documentation had been forwarded to the city's attorney and to the auditors.

7. SECOND READING AND PASSAGE IN FULL OF ORDINANCES

A. An Ordinance Amend the City Sign Ordinance- Included in the packet is an agenda item from Planning and Zoning requesting approval of an Ordinance Amending Title XV: Land Usage Appendix A: Sign Regulations to allow animated signs with permit approval in U-1, Industrial District, of the City of Bennettsville's Code of Ordinances by deleting (N) and adding (P) in Sign Characteristics: Animated.

Approving Action: A motion to approve 2<sup>nd</sup> reading of an Ordinance Amending the Sign Ordinance to allow Animated Signs. Moved by Mr. Abraham. Seconded by Ms. Quick. The motion passed unanimously.

B. An Ordinance Amending the 2013 Bond Refinance Ordinance- Included in the packet is a copy of the amended and restated fifth Supplemental Ordinance Authorizing the issuance and sale of combined utility system 2013 revenue bonds. First reading was approved on February 15, 2022.

Approving Action: No motion was made to have second reading and passage of an ordinance to amend the 2013 bond refinance ordinance.

8. FIRST READING AND ADVERTISEMENT OF ORDINANCES

A. An Ordinance Rezoning 117 First Avenue- Included in the packet is an agenda item from Planning and Zoning with details of a request from Mr. Woodrow Blair to rezone property located at 117 First Avenue. The request and authorization for staff to prepare the rezoning ordinance was approved on February 15, 2022.

Approving Action: A motion to approve 1<sup>st</sup> reading of an Ordinance Rezoning 117 First Avenue from A-4 to C-2. Moved by Mr. Taylor. Seconded by Ms. Quick. The motion passed unanimously.

B. An Ordinance Adopting the FY 2022-2023 Annual Budget - Included in the packet are the proposed Annual Budget documents for FY 2022-2023, including the Budget Overview, Ordinance, department O& M budgets, Business and Hospitality Tax Funds, and the 5 Year Capital Plans. I will review the documents.

Approving Action: A motion to approve First Reading of an Ordinance Adopting the City's Annual Budget for FY 2022-2023. Mr. Davis tabled. Council decided to have another workshop to discuss the budget. Seconded by Mrs. Weaver. The motion passed unanimously.

9. PASSAGE OF RESOLUTIONS

A. A Resolution Authorizing Submission of a CDBG Grant Application - Included in the packet is a Resolution required by the South Carolina Department of Commerce Authorizing an application for a \$1,000,000 grant. This is a budgeted projected but due to the economic environment we are seeing significant construction cost increases. The SCDOC has increased the grant amount from \$750,000 to \$1,000,000 and our match will increase from \$90,000 to \$145,200. Our match is funded from ARPA funds. The project description is included in the packet. Moved by Mr. Scott. Seconded by Mr. Taylor. The motion passed unanimously.

10. GENERAL BUSINESS DISPENSED BY MOTION  
No Business

11. REPORTS AND INFORMATION PRESENTATION  
No Business

12. COMMUNICATION BETWEEN CITY COUNCIL AND CITY ADMINISTRATOR  
A. FY 2022-2023 Budget Calendar, Public Hearing 6:00 PM, April 19, 2022, 2nd Reading and Adoption; 6:30 PM Regular Meeting April 19, 2022.

B. Executive Session to discuss a Personnel matter- Ms. Weaver presented a motion to go into Executive Session. Mr. Taylor seconded. The motion passed unanimously.

Council went into Executive Session for over an hour to discuss a personnel matter. Mr. Taylor made a motion to proceed out of Executive Session. Seconded by Mr. Davis. No decisions were made.

### 13. NON-AGENDA ITEMS FROM COUNCIL

Mr. Taylor thanked all employees. He mentioned he was glad to see Bill & Holly back after being out on leave. He went on to read the letter that Wes Park wrote and didn't have time to finish during public comments.

Mr. Scott thanked all employees. He went on saying, especially the dedicated ones that have been here with the City of Bennettsville for years and how they care about the city. He stated, "to the citizens of Bennettsville, we don't want you all to give up on your city," if we work together and get on one accord, it can be done.

Mrs. Weaver congratulated all employees on the Anniversary list. She would like for the banners downtown to be removed from the poles because they are Christmas banners. If we don't have anymore, don't put anymore up.

Mr. Davis thanked all employees and department heads. Congratulated Officer Robert Miller for his 24 years of service at the Police Department.

Ms. Quick stated she would like to see the banners removed and get things in the making so that we have a nice Christmas this year.

Mr. Abraham thanked all employees. As well as the Human Resource department for getting out Premium pay checks. He stated that, "we as a Council need to work together to be able to gain the trust and the respect of the citizens. A lot of citizens are giving up because they feel that nothing is going to change." Lastly, he mentioned if we just hold on and work together things can change.

Mayor Prince thanked all employees. She stated that we are going to try and do the best we can for our city and citizens.

### 14. ADJOURN

Mayor Prince