



**REGULAR CITY COUNCIL MEETING
6:30 P.M., Tuesday, May 17, 2022
Public Safety Complex**

MINUTES

1. CALL TO ORDER Mayor Prince
2. INVOCATION AND PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE Gregory Scott
3. ROLL CALL
Mayor Prince stated that all are in attendance.
4. APPROVAL/CORRECTION OF MINUTES
 - A. Regular Council Meeting, Tuesday April 19, 2022-Mr. Davis made a motion to approve the minutes for Regular Council Meeting; Tuesday April 19, 2022. Ms. Quick seconded. Motion passed unanimously.
 - B. Special Meeting: Tuesday, April 26, 2022-Mr. Scott made a motion to approve the minutes for Special Meeting; Tuesday, April 26, 2022. Mr. Davis seconded. Motion passed unanimously.
5. PUBLIC REQUESTS/ PRESENTATION OF PETITIONS
 - A. Employee Anniversaries-Timothy Hood, Police, 20 years; Michael David, Planning & Zoning, 5 years
 - B. Annual Employee Anniversaries-Wade Cheves, Fire, 18 years; William (Kell) Hall, Police, 17 years; Julian Kimrey, Wastewater, 14 years; Marques Stanton, Public Works, 7 years; Morris Smith, Gas, 18 years; Grover "Pete" Wilkes, Administration, 4 years; Billy Smith, Public Works, 4 years; Tammy Hamer, Human Resources, 1 year

6. PUBLIC COMMENTS

Christopher Taylor-Owner of Reassign Blessing downtown. His reason for being in attendance was to speak on Tourism Parks/ Recreation Department. He stated, "I have had a business here for 8 years it has not always been a pleasant experience dealing with administration and other businesses. We weren't welcome warmly and I tried my best to fit in." He went on saying he did everything he could possibly do to be apart of the community and faced several problems. However, since reaching out to the new Director, she has communicated and expressed so many things with him. He stated that, "he loves how she handled herself and she's doing an amazing job. I believe she is the fresh blood that we need because this town has got to do something".

Wes Parks- Expressed his continuous concern about the unwillingness to acknowledge the fact that the City of Bennettsville has misappropriated over \$950,000.00 in Hospitality tax funding. He went on saying, "It is designed to advance Tourism, Art, Culture and improve the quality of life within our community. He has had no response since his initial communication in March from the City. The city maintained a Financial Partnership with an active Downtown Association made up of engaged volunteers downtown property business owners through open communication." Lastly, "the financial commitment and communication decreased significantly in the last 10 years and so has the appearance of our downtown. Hartsville 2021 current Hospitality tax budget and the most recent publicly available Hospitality Tax benefits budget for Bennettsville, which is 2017-208 for comparison."

Heath Harpe-Thinks the budget process has been hijacked by some outside forces and allegations. He went saying, "to imply that the administration has been doing something wrong is

grossly incompetent and flat out wrong.” He agreed with Mr. Parks that Bennettsville need some things downtown, as well.

Donna Ridges- A downtown business owner for over 25 years in multiple buildings and do have a couple of properties downtown, as well. She went on stating an email that was sent by another business owner on the Merchant Board that was a “very slanderous, meltdown dissertation” she doesn’t condone nor agree with anything that was said in that email. The things that were said in that email were almost like a “personal attack against the new Director of Tourism, which those issues should have been dealt with the previous director that we had,”. Ridges stated she stop going to the meetings because she felt like it was a wall setup where “we couldn’t talk to you, but the Director could come and talk to you for us to relay back whatever you said.” Ridges also stated, “that in certain things she doesn’t need someone to talk for her because she can talk for herself.” Lastly, Ridges stated since the appointed Director has been there, she appreciates the vibe downtown. People are coming in from all over. They are attending Food Truck Friday, as well as patronizing new businesses. She loves the direction the new Director is going, and we are meeting lots of new people, getting lots of foot tractions and the locals are even coming out more because they are enjoying what’s been happening.

Gloria Gregg- a citizen that is concern about the trailer that’s next door to her on 106 ½ Red Bud St. Ms. Gregg stated, “A limb has fallen in the top of the trailer over 3 ½ years ago and nothing has been done about it. It has created rats, roaches, snakes, cats, dogs and people hiding. Tree limbs have grown up in the trailer. Her house insurance has gone up and the value has gone down! It looks like a jungle around that lot. I am asking that you all please try to do something about this matter.”

Pamela Best- mentioned it’s still an ongoing problem at a certain address that she’s mentioned over some time. A child was bitten by a dog. However, she met with 3 officers about the issue, and they were aware of it. She has contacted Humane Society and no one there will talk to her.

7. SECOND READING AND PASSAGE IN FULL OF ORDINANCES

- A. An Ordinance to Adopt Special Property Tax Assessments- Included in the packet is an agenda item from Planning and Zoning requesting approval of an Ordinance to Adopt Special Property Tax Assessments for rehabilitated historic properties. First reading was approved on April 19, 2022.

Approving Action: Mayor entertained a motion to approve Second Reading of An Ordinance to Adopt Special Tax Assessments for rehabilitated historic properties. Moved by Mr. Taylor. Seconded by Mr. Abraham. Motion passed unanimously.

- B. An Ordinance Providing for Fire Department Fees Cost Recovery- Included in the packet is an agenda item from Chief Burks requesting approval of an Ordinance to allow “for the recovery of costs by fees from users of fire protection and emergency Medical Services.” First reading was approved on April 19, 2022.

Approving Action: Mayor Prince entertained a motion to approve Second Reading of An Ordinance Providing for Fire Department Fees Cost Recovery of Fire Department service fees. Moved by Mr. Davis. Seconded by Mr. Taylor. Motion passed unanimously.

8. FIRST READING AND ADVERTISEMENT OF ORDINANCES

No Business

9. PASSAGE OF RESOLUTIONS

No Business

10. GENERAL BUSINESS DISPENSED BY MOTION

- A. Animal Control-Chief Miller- At the April 19, 2022, Regular Meeting Chief Miller reported that his Animal Control Officer was planning to retire, and he wanted “to give members time to think about replacement options, etc. Moving forward after May 2022.” He also stated he would provide recommendations. Included in the packet is an Agenda item from Chief Miller with his recommendations. Chief Miller stated that he would recommend that we move Animal control back under Ms. Swann, for Code Enforcement.

Approving Action: Mayor Prince entertained a motion to move the position for Animal Control Officer to Planning and Zoning with the job descriptions and pay grade for that department and not as a Certified Police Officer and the details of job description and the time factor will be worked

out between you and the Administrator. Moved by Mr. Taylor. Seconded by Mr. Scott. Motion passed unanimously.

- B. Section 504/ADA Transition Plan- Angela Ward- Included in the packet is an agenda item from Angela Ward requesting council “approval of the Implementation of the attached Section_504/ADA Transition Plan.” Angela will review this item.

Approving Action: Mayor Prince entertained a motion to approve the Section 504/ADA Transition Plan. Moved by Mr. Scott. Seconded by Mr. Davis. Motion passed unanimously.

- C. Director of Tourism, Parks & Recreation Appointment- At the January 18, 2022, Regular Council Meeting, during the non-agenda discussions, the Council approved a motion to “make Jaharra Graves the Director of Tourism, Parks, & Recreation.” At the request of the council, the City Attorney reviewed this motion and advised the council to agenda this item at the May meeting for ratification, if desired, of the previous action taken to fill this position.

Approving Action: Mayor Prince entertained a motion to ratify the hiring that was done. Moved by Mrs. Weaver. Seconded by Ms. Quick. Motion passed unanimously.

- D. Housing Authority Appointment- Included in the packet is a request from Rebecca Brigman, Executive Director, The Housing Authority of Bennettsville, to consider re-appointing Ms. Ellen Doris Sumpter as a Commission of the Housing Authority for the term of 8/22/2022 to 8/21/2027.

Approving Action: Mayor Prince entertained a motion to re-appoint Ms. Ellen Doris Sumpter as Commission of the Housing Authority for the term of 8/22/2022 to 8/21/2027. Moved by Mr. Abraham. Seconded by Mr. Taylor. Motion passed unanimously.

- E. Public Works Department Salary Increases- At the Special Meeting on April 26, 2022, the Council approved “a motion that Mr. Alderman will bring to us at our next Regular scheduled meeting a proposal for the pay increase of \$2.00 across the board for Public Works.” I have prepared the proposal and recommend the council go into Executive Session to discuss the details, if desired.

Mr. Abraham made a motion that we enter Executive Session. Seconded by Mr. Davis. Mayor Prince stated, “To discuss personnel issue that include compensation and salaries for the Public Works employees.” Vote was unanimously.

Leaving Executive Session, Mr. Taylor moved. Mr. Davis seconded. Mayor Prince stated, “it was unanimous decisions, moving on to the next Agenda item.”

11. REPORTS AND INFORMATION PRESENTATION
No Business

12. COMMUNICATION BETWEEN CITY COUNCIL AND CITY ADMINISTRATOR
No Business

13. NON-AGENDA ITEMS FROM COUNCIL

Mr. Scott-Thanked all employees for what they do and how they serve the citizens. Department Head are doing good on their monthly reports. However, #9 on the Public Works report states, “Attendance with drivers has continued to cause issues within the department and lack of being able to replace them.” Scott asked, “What does this mean?” People taking leave and we have no one to replace them while they are out. Mr. Parrish clarified that.

Mrs. Weaver- mentioned receiving over \$7000.00 from DataMax was good. She stated that the Director of Tourism-Parks/Recreation is doing a great job. She’s willing to help in anyway she’s needed.

Mr. Davis- Thanked all employees for what they do, and they are doing a wonderful job. His soul is here for helping people and that’s what they are here for.

Ms. Quick- She stated congratulations to Jaharra Graves on her new position.

Mr. Abraham- Thanked all employees for what they do. Asked Chief Miller to congratulate Officer

Rivers on the Spotlight of the month along with what the department does. Great job on the Fire Safety. The response time and how they respond to calls, it's just a great job! Also, keep in mind that our Strategic Planning, so we can move forward with that. Lastly, coming together with our County, SCDOT, School District and Stakeholder. If we could host a meeting, kind of a unity meeting to get together, talk and brainstorm how we can work together because at the end of the day, it's all about the citizens and without the citizens, we can't operate. Change is now.

Mayor Prince-Mentioned when the Fire Department showed up for the Lemonade Stand the little girl was so delighted. She had her picture taken with the Firemen. It's the little things that people remember. She went on saying, working together whether it be County, School District, DOT, whoever is the key to our survival. All of agencies are small and facing budget issues. Lastly, she thanked all employees for what they do.

14. ADJOURN
Mayor Prince

Public Comment Policy: Citizens desiring to speak at any regular meeting must notify the City Clerk prior to the agenda deadline. Citizens interested in commenting on regular meeting agenda items, 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 of Bennettsville and establish and maintain an active role in economic and community development.