



**REGULAR CITY COUNCIL MEETING
6:30 P.M., Tuesday, June 20, 2023
Bennettsville Public Safety Complex**

Minutes

1. CALL TO ORDER Mayor Prince
2. INVOCATION AND PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE Tyrone Davis
3. ROLL CALL
All Council Members are in attendance along with Attorney King and both City Administrators Max Alderman and William Simon, Jr.
During this time Mrs. Angela Ward, Assistant Administrator introduced and welcomed Mr. William C. Simon, Jr. as the City of Bennettsville New City Administrator.
4. APPROVAL/CORRECTION OF MINUTES
 - A. Regular Council Meeting; Tuesday, May 16, 2023-Mayor Prince and Mr. Abraham had a few editing errors, with the necessary corrections approval of minutes. Moved by Mr. Davis. Seconded by Mr. Scott. Mr. Abraham abstained.
5. PUBLIC REQUESTS/ PRESENTATION OF PETITIONS
 - A. Employee Anniversaries-William Parrish, Public Works, 35 years; Christopher Burks, Fire,10 years. The two were in attendance to receive their certificate and check. They were thanked for their years of service for the City of Bennettsville.
Chief Chris Burks stated he was chosen out of the entire state of 45 people to write an essay and attend a class to learn leadership specifics to being a Fire Chief.
Mr. William Parrish stated he has been with the City of Bennettsville for 35 years and he has enjoyed it! He worked for the Fire Department for almost 29 years and then went to Director of Public Works and he enjoyed the ride and road. Thank You!!
 - B. Employee Annual Anniversaries-Michael Leggett Water Treatment, 22 years; Debra Griggs, Pubic Works, 16 years; Scot Williams, Water & Sewer,14 years; Terry Powers, Electric, 9 years; Michelle Hodges, Finance, 8 years; Talisha McCall, Municipal Court, 6 years; Don Galloway, Public Works, 6 years; Joel Oliver, Wastewater Plant, 3 years; Brain Matthews, Water Treatment, 2 years; Dozier Rhames, Police, 2 years; Richard Woodham, Water & Sewer 2 years; Evan Coble, Fire,1 year; Michael Armfield, Public Works, 1 year; Chaka Ray, Utility Billing,1 year
6. PUBLIC COMMENTS
Neal Fair-Stated he attended a Workshop and one of the Council members asked a young lady who is an employee, “Why is people leaving the City or quitting?” He went on saying “I have never heard a Council Member ask the Chief that question.” “His staff is lower than it has ever been and still have some still leaving, but I have never heard that question asked.” Back to some months ago, a lady came to the podium and said, “ I was disrespectful”, but she wasn’t in attendance. He stated, “They was disrespectful” out in the lobby during a meeting when people had applied for a job and interviews were held there were some people being disrespectful, but nothing was done. The issue was blamed on the “Mayor for kicking people out, but the Chief should have kicked them out for being destructive and everything else, but what they did was call some reporter here.”

Pamela Best- Asked, “Do I get a certificate for coming here for 2years?” Ms. Best stated that, The City is basically paying people to do jobs they are not doing.” She went on walking around

to each Council Member table to show them a video she captured. She mentioned that she has called Animal Control and left several voicemails. No one ever responds. Lastly, she stated, “ If I did see a dog and tried to call someone and say, I’m going to have him to stop. He’s vicious, will someone come here? It’s an emergency.”

Willie Covington-Stated it was his first time coming to a meeting and he wanted to talk about Shady Rest area. Mr. Willie stated, “ If you start on McLeod Street, the creek is full of trees. Whoever own this creek or the City, somebody needs to get that creek cleaning done.” “ The city come in and tear down houses. Now, nobody cleans it up. If you look in the city, Shady Rest looks the worse. Why can’t we come together and get Shady Rest clean? This is something that needs to be done. If y’all help us, we will help y’all. If y’all don’t help us, then what are we going to do? It’s like y’all want us out of Shady Rest. Lasty, Mr. Willie ended by saying, I’m 63 years old, I’ll be 64 next month and I’m not able to go out and buy a new house. I’m not moving out of Shady Rest; I’m not going to do it.” He pleads that council members ride around to see how terrible it looks. If you can tear down houses, you can keep the lot clean. We are in this together.”

Vancy Brown- mentioned the growth of bushes and how lighting is needed.

Linda Adams-A resident from Miles street. She stated that 500 & 502 Miles Street houses are falling in and one of the houses have a pool and all kinds of animals come from over there to her door. On Broady and Cook Street you have to pull out in the road to see because of the bushes that have grown up.

7. SECOND READING AND PASSAGE IN FULL OF ORDINANCES

No Business

8. FIRST READING AND ADVERTISEMENT OF ORDINANCES

A. An Ordinance Amending 152.022 to allow Mobile homes in the Test Area- Included in the packet is a copy of a previous item requesting reinstatement of the Mobile Home Test area (the Mill Farm from Burchill St. to West St./Burch to Barhill St.). At the Regular Meeting on May 16, 2023, the Council approved a motion to reinstate the Mobile Home Test Area. This Ordinance Amendment will add 152.022 A-3 Multi-Family Residential (B) permitted uses. (10) Dwelling, manufactured Housing provided the homes meet the requirements in the Ordinance. This applies to the Mobile Home Test Area only, from Burchill St. to West St./Burch to Barnhill St.

Approving Action: A motion to approve 1st Reading of an Ordinance Amending 152.022 to reinstate the Mobile Home Test Area. Moved by Mr. Davis. Seconded by Mr. Scott. Motion passed unanimously.

B. An Ordinance to provide for Adoption of a Redistricting Plan- Included in the packet is an ordinance providing for adoption of a redistricting plan prepared by the SC Revenue and Fiscal Affairs Office. A public Hearing was held at 6:00 PM on June 20, 2023, and Second reading will be scheduled for June 27, 2023, at 6:00 PM. The benchmark and draft plan maps were displayed at the Bennettsville Community Center prior to the Public Hearing.

Approving Action: A motion to approve 1st Reading of an Ordinance Adopting the 2023 Redistricting Plan. Moved by Mr. Taylor. Seconded by Ms. Weaver. Mr. Taylor, Ms. Weaver, Ms. Quick and Mr. Scott voted in favor. Mr. Abraham, Mr. Davis, and Mayor Prince abstained. Motion carried.

9. PASSAGE OF RESOLUTIONS

No Business

10. GENERAL BUSINESS DISPENSED BY MOTION

A. RFP for Personnel Policy, Salary Survey, Job Description Review- Included in the packet is a proposed Request For Proposals (RFP) to solicit bids for a firm to conduct a Personnel Policy, Salary Survey, Job Description Review. The document was reviewed and discussed at the June 13, 2023, Workshop.

Approving Action- A motion to approve the RFP for a Personnel Policy Review , Salary Survey, Job Description Review and Authorization for staff to Agenda the bids for award of a contract. Moved by Mr. Abraham. Seconded by Ms. Quick. Mr. Taylor, Mr. Abraham, Mr. Davis, Mayor Prince, and Mr. Scott voted in favor. Ms. Weaver abstained. Motion carried.

11. REPORTS AND INFORMATION PRESENTATION

A. Public Service Committee Report-Public Service Committee met on May 30th. Members of that committee would be Ms. Quick, Mr. Abraham, Mayor Prince, Mrs. Denise Miller (Planning & Zoning), Mr. Michael David (Planning & Zoning), Mr. Chet Polson (Planning & Zoning) and Jaharra Graves (Tourism, Parks & Recreation). They did an orientation for Mrs. Miller to see how things are working. They found some resources and information that Mrs. Miller made herself acquainted with. Next, they discussed the International Ordinances. There were some questions about the structure of buildings, the outside appearance in the downtown area and they were notified in an April Workshop that there were Ordinances that covered those issues. Mrs. Miller has posted that information on the City Website under Planning and Zoning. A link to the International Ordinances that cover a lot of things that citizens were concerned about. How exterior structure look, damaged frames, old damage of broken frames, coloring, and awnings that go on frames. The City Ordinances does not cover that, and they are looking at a need to develop an ordinance, A City Ordinance that would address these issues. They are working on the language for that and to have it reviewed by our attorney to make sure the city is in compliance with the International Code of Ordinances, since they have the highest definition of what needs to be done. So, when that particular ordinance is brought to the city, Mayor and Council will look over it and make an amendment, vote on it and if it is passed, then they will put in place a process for letting the property owners know what needs to be done. Next, they discussed the Streetscape Project that has been almost three years in the making. Mr. Mike Hannah, the Engineer, will make a presentation at July meeting, with his recommendations for things that were listed in the original Streetscape Project. Moving on to the City Annual Fireworks Show will be on Saturday, June 24th. Lastly, a discussion about residential grass mowing. Citizens had comments and concerns during the meeting. It is a problem in our city, we are aware of it and part of the problem is the lack of personnel. We have vacancies in that department. A discussion was held on the feasibility of contracting out for grass cutting. Mrs. Miller and Mr. Parrish are working on that and trying to decide and get quotes for that to be done. In conclusion, Mr. Abraham stated, "It's not fair that citizens try to keep their houses and their property clean and then a person buys a property next to them and won't keep it up. We just got to get with our county about putting it on the taxes and that they be responsible. We need to come up with a way We need to stay on top of that because that's the only way we're going to be able to do it, to get the funding because if they own the property, they need to clean it up." Ms. Quick stated, "She thinks council needs to get together and decide some of the things we like to see downtown and go for. Go and work on them. It may happen or may not, but it's not going to happen if you don't."

12. COMMUNICATION BETWEEN CITY COUNCIL AND CITY ADMINISTRATOR

No Business

13. NON-AGENDA ITEMS FROM COUNCIL

Mayor Prince-Shared a proclamation that was from June 12th-18th as National Men's Health Week., Ms. Patricia Sullivan asked for this to be done. Mayor Prince presented it to Mr. Abraham to present it to Ms. Patricia Sullivan.

Mr. Taylor-None

Mr. Scott-Thanked all employees for what they do. He recognized the Employee Anniversaries and appreciated them for their years. He asked citizens to not give up on them and keep them in prayer, but make sure they as citizens do what they are supposed to do by attending meetings and voicing your opinion. Lastly, he mentioned the City Annual Fireworks Show and how it's Free and how everyone always come out and have a good time.

Ms. Weaver-None

Mr. Davis- Thanked all employees for the work they do. He acknowledge Bill Parrish and Chief Burks for their years of service. He thanked eleven of his constituents that came out to the meeting to fight for Shady Rest. He ended by saying, "It's a process and we are going in the right direction."

Ms. Quick- Stated that council are going to make some things happen.

Mr. Abraham-Stated that he wanted a full Financial Audit to be conducted. He was not asking for it to accuse anyone of any wrongdoing, but because of the change in leadership from the top that he thinks it would be fair and necessary that we consider having a full audit completed. Next, he asked, "That all Council Members come together and work together because at the end of the day, it's not about us, it's about the citizens." He went on to say that council need to find better ways to improve our city. Help find some solutions. It won't happen overnight, but it's going to take work Then, he mentioned as council we need to be out researching, bringing more activities. Lastly, he stated on, "Last Friday, I drove down Broad Street and I said, "Wow!" I drove slowly and I counted the cars that were from the Courthouse square down to the railroad track, and it was 87 cars, all from out of town and my thing is, we need to do something. We need to assist Ms. Graves and we need to come up with creative ways and ideas to get some of that revenue

that's coming into our city. We need to look at having different activities, different events." Our McDonald's is one of the busiest McDonald's on the East Coast. In conclusion, Mr. Abraham said, "We are , you know, we are in a valley, and everything is growing up around us and we need to step up! It bothers me to go to other cities and they don't have the people coming through. When I was a little boy, I had more then in this city than we have right now. So, that's just some of my concerns. We need to think of incentives to encourage small businesses to be a part of Downtown Bennettsville." To end, he said, "I'm asking again to send invitations to our County Council, School Board, SCDOT, churches, Senators, and Pastors to see if they will send a Representative to our meetings." He thanked all the citizens that came out, watching via FB ,all employees, the Mayor for the Proclamation for June Men's Health Awareness Month, congratulated all graduates form Marlboro County High School, Marlboro Academy, and all our surrounding schools. "We have great, great students in our city."

Mayor Prince-Again thanked Chief Burks for improving himself in his line of duty. She stated, "It seems like every year, you're giving or weaving the city, but on behalf of the work that the Fire Department, chief, and staff do in terms of fire prevention and keep educating themselves so they can do better. Secondly, she mentioned the Fireworks Event, the food trucks, games, water slides and entertainment that will be held on Saturday, June 24. She went saying that housing and weatherization is something that's been on her agenda since she's been with the city. Lastly, she asked Attorney King about the deeds to properties 102 & 104 West Main Street, "Is it a working process? It has been approved." She wanted to know how much longer the process is because the owners are ready to go to work. Attorney King, replied, "He spoke with Mr. Alderman about this last week, and he'll start that process right away."

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.