



**REGULAR CITY COUNCIL MEETING  
6:30 P.M., Tuesday, August 15, 2023  
Bennettsville Public Safety Complex**

**Minutes**

1. CALL TO ORDER Mayor Prince
2. INVOCATION AND PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE Tyrone Davis
3. ROLL CALL  
Council Tyron Abraham -District 5  
Council Jean Quick-District 4 (not in attendance, at the time) Entered during Public Comments.  
Council Tyrone R. Davis-District 2  
Council Wanda Weaver-District 1  
Council Gregory Scott- District 6  
Council Allen Taylor- District 3
4. APPROVAL/CORRECTION OF MINUTES
  - A. Regular Council Meeting; Tuesday, July 18, 2023- Mr. Davis made a motion to approve the Regular Council Meeting of Tuesday, July 18, 2023. Seconded by Mr. Scott. Mayor Prince abstained.
5. PUBLIC REQUESTS/ PRESENTATION OF PETITIONS
  - A. Employee Anniversaries- Angela Ward, Administration, 25 years; Tammy King, Finance, 26 years; Lori O'Tuel, Purchasing, 11 years; Richard Lanthier, Fire, 6 years; Roger Hale, Public Works, 4 years; Jerusha McArthur, Tourism, Parks & Rec., 4 years; Jaharra Graves, Tourism, Parks & Rec., 2 years; Donald Morgan, Water Treatment, 2 years; Robert Tryon, Police, 1 year
  - B. Nora's Caring Companions Adult Day Care Center (Ms. Nora Jenkins)-Not in attendance. She couldn't make the meeting.
6. PUBLIC COMMENTS  
Patty Brown-Resides at 113 Talon Drive. She stated that Ms. Weaver was her Council representative, and she has an issue with a vacant lot located next to her house. She was told that the lot doesn't belong to the city, nor the county and there's nothing on the lot. However, she would like to keep the lot clean. She talked to Ms. Weaver about it, and they do not know who it belongs to. She would like to find out who they belong to because they need to be held responsible for keeping it clean. It is an eye soar to the neighborhood, and she wants something done about it.

7. SECOND READING AND PASSAGE IN FULL OF ORDINANCES

No Business

8. FIRST READING AND ADVERTISEMENT OF ORDINANCES

A. An Ordinance Amending 152.091 Parking and Storage of certain Vehicles-This item was Moved by Mr. Scott that we table Item 8, First Reading and Advertisement of Ordinances regarding the Parking and Storage of certain Vehicles. Seconded by Mr. Davis. Vote was unanimous.

9. PASSAGE OF RESOLUTIONS

No Business

10. GENERAL BUSINESS DISPENSED BY MOTION

A. The Housing Authority of Bennettsville Board Appointment (James R. Jenkins)- The housing authority has petitioned the Mayor and City Council to reappoint Mr. James R. Jenkins as Commissioner of the Housing Authority of Bennettsville.

Approving Action: A motion to approve the reappointment of Mr. James R. Jenkins as Commissioner of the Housing Authority of Bennettsville. Moved by Mr. Scott. Seconded by Mr. Davis. Motion passes unanimously.

City Administrator, William Simon, Jr. requested that if it's the will of council to discuss City Administrator Personnel Matter and Project X (Business Development Center)these two matters in Executive Session and if you so choose to do so and amend the ordinance to allow that, we place these two items at the end of the meeting , so that we can proceed with section 11 and 12, then go into Executive Session, if its' the will of Council. Moved by Mr. Davis. Seconded by Mr. Scott.

Mr. Taylor asked if this was the proper way to handle it? Mr. Taylor stated, "If we amend the Agenda, it should be done prior to starting the meeting, correct? For the approval of the Agenda? Mayor Prince response was, " We've done it both ways sometimes, Mr. Taylor." Attorney King stated, "Yeah, I think technically you're right to amending the Agenda, but they can also go into Executive Session even when that's not on the Agenda. So, council certainly has the right to go into Executive Session even when it's not on the Agenda. If circumstances arise and need to be addressed. So, yeah." Mr. Taylor then sated, "I'd like to amend that we add one item to that being legal advice per our Attorney and our current Administrator. Along with his two items."

Mr. Taylor amended the motion that we go into Executive Session by adding a third item, that being legal advice from the attorney. Mayor Prince accepted the motion to go into Executive Session to discuss legal matters and Personnel Matters. Moved by Mr. Davis. Seconded by Mr. Scott. Motion passed unanimous.

B. Project X (Business Development Center)-Discuss in Executive Session

C. City Administrator Personnel Matter-Discuss in Executive Session

11. REPORTS AND INFORMATION PRESENTATION

A. Leadership Retreat- - City Administration held its Inaugural Leadership Retreat on July 18, 2023. The following topics were discussed along with any items presented by Council. Making the City of Bennettsville a better place regarding operations. Many items were discussed such as: Branding/Perception of City, Workplace Culture, Employee Morale, General Operations/Workflow, how we approve upon those things, Contracts/Agreements , Recruiting/Retention of all Departments , Downtown Business

Development, Clean City Efforts, Technology, Facilities Management/Operations, etc.

- B. Public Utilities: Discolored Water- City Administrator stated that “The City experienced a problem with one of the pumps at the Lyalls Street Water Treatment Facilities. The pump was shutting on and off because of electrical problems, it stirred up soil in the area causing turbidity.” “This is where you see the colored water. The City Officials flushed the lines for a day and a half.” He thanked those departments that really worked on this. They did an outstanding job and worked through the night.” Mr. Simon said they have learned from this, and one concern was the need for immediate notification. “We know that we have to have a clear and concise communication plan during a crisis.” Mr. Abraham thanked all employees and departments who worked diligently. Mayor Prince also stated that employees worked diligently throughout the night because she saw them flushing fire hydrants.

12. COMMUNICATION BETWEEN CITY COUNCIL AND CITY ADMINISTRATOR

- A. Project X (Carolina Bank)-Executive Session
- B. Downtown Street Façade Update-It should be “Downtown Façade Update” it’s a grant that’s available to business owners to improve and enhance the façade of their particular businesses.
- C. Upcoming Workshop Agenda Items:
- **Grant Updates**-Timelines and amounts on all grants.
  - **Parks & Rec. Master Plan Modifications**-Discussing the changes we would like to see in our parks. Conditions and Economic Development in our area or even with Technology. Lastly, the expectations regarding the parks, recreation and tourism.
- D. Job Fair (August 30, 2023)-Ms. Jaharra Graves, Director of Tourism, Parks & Recreation stated that the City of Bennettsville will be partnering with SC Works PeeDee on August 30, 2023, from 10am-2pm at the Bennettsville Community Center to host a Job Fair. Since there are several vacancies in different departments such as: Planning & Zoning, Police Department, Utility administration, Gas Distribution, Water& Sewer Collection, Electric Distribution, Fire Department and Tourism, Parks & Recreation. The city is encouraging all citizens to come out and learn more about the positions that are available and apply onsite.
- E. City of Bennettsville Facebook Page Update-Mr. Simon stated, “Attorney King is going to continue to advise us legally, just to make sure that we don’t do something that we shouldn’t do or something that’s going to get us in trouble.” He went saying that “There are some occasions where during meetings or even after meetings whenever we post information or stream our meetings live where we have very negative comments. Now, negative comments are okay, and they are fair. However, the comments and language can almost be perceived as defamatory because sometimes names are placed in these post. Sometimes people are fighting back and forth in the post and then sometimes they’re just unfounded accusations and things of that sort. Please understand that when you post information like this on social media, you are creating a digital footprint. A lot of people may not understand that. They think things can be deleted or it’s easy to get rid of something and it’s not. As Municipalities we do have the ability to establish guidelines and terms of use for our digital platform. Facebook already have terms of service that prohibit users from posting defamatory, false, or harmful content. So, that’s already built into social media and that’s for a reason. That’s because it was happening, and they had to take necessary steps to not allow it to happen. We will be working with Attorney King strongly on this that we have a right and to a certain degree and obligation to make sure

that defamatory information or negative information particularly about the city, our brand, and how we proceed it's housed as a digital footprint on our page. So let me say this, "All of our posts are public. If those who choose to use social media wish to share those posts on their particular page and indulge in those comments, that is well within their rights and it's possible to do that now. So, we aren't restricting in our opinion right now until we get more information from Mr. King. Mr. Simon ended by saying that , Our online presence stays safe, is a safe environment , and legal environment. We feel like we're not restricting anyone's free speech. We do meet here every third Tuesday of the month and you can come here and speak during our public comments section." Exercise your choice of thought, continue to exercise your choice of speech, but we ask that you do it in a way that's not defamatory or could not be perceived as violent or otherwise and particularly not on the Facebook page for The City of Bennettsville."

Mayor Prince entertained a motion to go into Executive Session to discuss three matters pertained to legal advice and personnel. Moved by Mr. Davis. Seconded by Mr. Scott. Motion passed unanimously.

Mr. Davis moved. Mr. Scott seconded. Vote was unanimous to exit Executive Session.

Mayor Prince entertained a motion to approve the Administrator and the Assistant Administrator for Project X. Moved by Mr. Davis. Seconded by Ms. Weaver. Motion was unanimous. Let the record show that Mr. Taylor and Mr. Abraham were not in session. Five votes, motion carried.

13. NON-AGENDA ITEMS FROM COUNCIL  
None
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.