

**MINUTES  
WORK/PLANNING SESSION  
WINNSBORO TOWN COUNCIL  
AUGUST 24, 2021**

**Present:** Mayor John McMeekin; Mayor Pro-Tem Demetrius Chatman; Janice Bartell Prather, James M. Burroughs, Danny Miller, Council Members; Jason Taylor, Town Manager; Patti L. Davis, Town Clerk.

**Others Present:** Chris Clauson, Assistant Town Manager; Kathy Belton, Finance Director/Assistant Town Manager; Jeff Shacker, Field Services Manager, Municipal Association of South Carolina; Chief John Seibles, Public Safety; Jeff Cisney, Water Plant; Kirk Culbreth, Wastewater; Trip Peak, Gas, Water & Sewer; William Medlin, Electric.

The Winnsboro Town Council met in work/planning session on August 24, 2021, at 6:15 p.m. at the Winnsboro Women's Club. In accordance with the South Carolina Code of Laws, 1976, Section 30-4-80 (e), as amended, the following persons and/or organizations have been notified of the time, date and location of this meeting: The Independent Voice of Blythewood and Fairfield, The Country Chronicle and four hundred ninety-two other individuals.

**1. CALL TO ORDER**

Mayor McMeekin called the Work/Planning Session to order at 6:21 p.m.

**2. APPROVAL OF AGENDA**

Motion made by Mayor Pro-Tem Chatman, seconded by Council Member Bartell Prather, to approve the agenda. ***The motion carried 5-0.***

**3. FORM OF GOVERNMENT**

**A. Roles and Responsibilities of Council and Staff.** Mayor McMeekin requested for Mr. Shacker to introduce himself. Mr. Shacker stated he is one of two Field Service Managers with the Municipal Association. He sees many familiar faces tonight. He has known Mr. Taylor for around 24 years, and he knows Mr. Clauson from when he worked at Chapin before coming to Fairfield County to get their Planning Program set up. Mr. Shacker further stated the Municipal Association is a non-profit organization and was established back in the 1930s by the cities to represent the cities in Columbia. At this time, the cities were dependent on the State for the resources needed to operate. The Association started because the cities felt they would be better represented by a single voice in Columbia. The Association has evolved and grown over time, and there are a number of programs that the Town of Winnsboro participates in as a City and as staff

members. Winnsboro is also a part of the Municipal Association's insurance programs, and the Association provides educational opportunities. The Field Services Program has been put in place in order to bring the resources of the Municipal Association to the cities. Mr. Shacker stated an evening like tonight is the best opportunity for him to do this. He has been with MASC for 8-1/2 years. Prior to this, he was with the City of Newberry for 12 years and at the Upper Savannah COG before that.

Mayor McMeekin stated he had spoken with Mr. Shacker about having this meeting because most towns, in the month of January, have a Planning Meeting. The Town has not done this for some time, and Mayor McMeekin wanted to do this because it is important for everyone to be on the same page and to understand the organization's structure and functions. He feels now is a good time to go over these things with new leadership in place to see where we are and where we need to be. Mr. Taylor stated there are a lot of things we need to look at initially. First, on the agenda is the Form of Government, including the Roles and Responsibilities of Council and Staff. A Council Meeting is a very formal structured meeting with no opportunity to have a give and take. So, we are trying to keep this meeting very informal, and the department heads are also present in order to have a dialogue when needed. Mr. Taylor has requested for Mr. Shacker to be the moderator in order to keep the discussion progressing.

Mr. Shacker then discussed the Form of Government. The three forms of government in South Carolina, which were established in 1975 by the Local Government Act (Home Rule), include the Mayor/Council form (strong Mayor form), Council form and the Council/Manager form of government. This is codified in Title 5 concerning municipalities and Title 6 covering counties and municipalities. Winnsboro has the Council/Manager form of government. There are 271 cities in South Carolina, and the majority operate on the Mayor/Council form of government. South Carolina is a state of small cities and towns. The most prevalent form of government nationally is the Manager form of government. Further, most corporations have a board of directors and employ a professional CEO to run the company. These principles were needed for Municipal Government, and this is where the Manager plan of government came from. In all three forms of government, Council's lane is policy, legislation and priorities, and the legislative and policy making authority cannot be delegated. In the Manager form of government, everyone has a specific job. A new Council member does not get a job description, and instead, they have to figure it out. Only Council can appropriate money by the budget, which is adopted by ordinance. The Manager has an obligation statutorily to prepare the

budget for Council. Mr. Shacker stated one of the most important roles of Council is strategic leadership with direction. Individuals tend to make decisions to benefit themselves, and a Council's role with the community is to make decisions that are in the best interest of the community. Mr. Shacker feels it is very important to go through a strategic planning process to identify priorities and then receive regular updates on where those projects stand with the achievement of the goals and to revisit these goals every year. It is hard to plan for every possible situation, so you have to constantly revisit and be in a mode of constant improvement. The Council does not do Municipal government, it oversees Municipal government. It can be difficult for Council to wrap their arms around the idea of strategic leadership if the City is not engaged in this when they come onto Council. It is also important for Council members to understand what their lane is and to stay in that lane for the legislative functions and policy functions. It must be remembered that a Council member cannot function unless they are attached to the body, unless Council has delegated some task or authority to a single Council member. The only time a Council member has authority is when they are in a Council meeting. Anytime a quorum of Council gets together, notice must be provided under FOIA, there must be an agenda, there must be minutes prepared and the public must have access. In terms of the Manager's responsibility, they are responsible for preparing the annual budget for Council's consideration, responsible for hiring and personnel decisions for all positions except for him or herself, the Municipal attorney and the judge. One of the unique things about the Manager form of government is that it is the only one out of the three forms where the Municipal Clerk is appointed by someone other than the Council. In the Manager form, the Manager appoints the Clerk. No matter what the form of government, it works well when everyone understands their role and their responsibilities. Municipal government is a team sport, and there is no one individual in Municipal government that can accomplish anything on their own. Therefore, Council members are dependent on their teammates in order to be effective. Mr. Taylor interjected that while a Council member cannot be fired, they can put a town in a situation where it can be sued. Mr. Shacker agreed this is a great point, and anytime Council operates outside of its scope of authority, the Council member may also be subject to personal liability. Title V Chapter 13 is the section that deals with the Manager form of government. It does not have a lot of discussion about Council, but Chapter 7, which applies to all Municipal governments regardless of the form of government, really goes into Council's authority. It states that the full powers of the Municipality are invested in the Council unless otherwise provided by law. One would then go to Chapter 13 to see the limitations on Council's authority. It states that

Council is prohibited from dealing with employees under the direction of the Manager. It also states that all administrative affairs of the city are under the direction of the Manager. Mr. Shacker feels that the Town of Winnsboro has worked well in the past and continues to work well together. Referring to the strategic leadership portion of the handout, the really highly effective cities have highly effective Councils, and highly effective Councils are focused on the future and are future seeking. They also have a vision that is made into goals. Within the goals, there should be more specific objectives, tasks and how they will be achieved. The tasks must be clearly defined, clearly assigned to someone and a deadline given for completion. The Manager's job will be to hold staff accountable, and a definite metric should be assigned to the goals. Council's role would be making sure that the goal is obtained and adopting it. Regular updates should be given, possibly through quarterly work sessions, so the small problems can be dealt with or priorities adjusted. Council also should be focusing on relationships, in that they should be seen, be at events, people know the Council members and there are relationships with counterparts. Mayor McMeekin stated the Intergovernmental Meetings were regularly held prior to COVID. Mr. Shacker stated this is a really important thing for Councils to do and to be able to have effective meetings, basically scripted with no surprises. The meetings are business meetings to deal with the business of the city. The image needs to be portrayed that Council is completely in control, all on the same page and professional. Mayor McMeekin stated the Council does work together well and gets along well, and he feels we are fortunate in this sense. He further stated the hope is to produce a strategic plan with talking with the department heads and the Manager and his staff and start moving down the road with everything functioning as well as possible for our departments. He wants to create a town people want to live in and they take pride in. We must prioritize, get a checklist and start going through these items, while also dealing with any problems that may arise. This is the beginning of the process and communication. Mayor McMeekin wants to concentrate on the important things our citizens want us to do and want us to be. 0

Mr. Taylor stated we do need a focused plan to achieve where we want to go and what kind of community we want to be. We also have to find a way to put dollars behind what is being proposed. One of the ways we will do that is to make sure the Town is healthy and thriving. Winnsboro is different than a lot of towns in the fact that it has government functions and enterprise functions, with the majority of the budget comprised from the enterprise functions of the Town's utilities. If the utilities can be gotten to where they need to be, the Town will have the money to put behind the

plans to make the community better. When he walked in the door, Mr. Taylor tried to assess the situation, and he found the City has great potential with great assets; however, we must be a little smarter in how the assets are treated so the benefit can be maximized. In talking with the department heads, a recurring theme in each department seems to be personnel, and there have already been discussions concerning a class and comp study. The other piece to this is making sure the facilities and equipment are where they need to be. Mr. Taylor stated the water department has caught his eye very quickly because money is being lost, and a municipality should never lose money with water. Also, the Town went into debt to access 10M gallons of water out of the Broad, and per Mr. Cisney, currently the Town is only pumping out about 1.9M during the hot months. Mr. Taylor stated close to 2M is being pumped, but the plant needs to be running 24 hours a day, which means additional personnel and investing some money into the plant. Water is being purchased from Columbia, and instead of making \$1M per year, the Town is losing money. There are things like this that need to be reversed so money will be available to put behind the projects Council wishes to do in order to make Winnsboro a more attractive place. Mr. Taylor inquired of Mr. Shacker what some of the other towns have done to be successful, but first, we will speak concerning the government functions of the Town, which includes Public Safety, Planning Department, etc. Mr. Taylor asked for Chief Seibles to give a brief discussion of his department and the challenges he is facing.

#### 4. GOVERNMENT FUNCTIONING

**Public Safety:** Chief Seibles stated the primary problem facing the department at this time is the personnel issue. The Town has to compete with the Sheriff's Department and other surrounding agencies for personnel. These other agencies do one job whereas Public Safety handles two jobs consisting of fire and police. After an applicant is hired, they must attend the Academy for 12 weeks to get certified. On the fire side, this will take eight weeks of training for certification. New hires can be utilized in dispatch while awaiting certification; however, if they cannot pass the certification, they must be let go. He is finding that some of the younger guys are talking after being hired by Public Safety and attracting others to apply. At this time, Chief Seibles stated he has three new applicants. He also informed Council of the hiring processes and what it entails. Council Member Miller inquired how many officers the department has. Per Chief Seibles, he should have 20 but right now he has 15. Mayor McMeekin opined there is generally a high turnover rate.

**Planning and Zoning:** Mr. Taylor stated Planning and Zoning is a department that sometimes gets overlooked. However, when talking about the vision and moving forward, the Planning and Zoning Department, when working properly, is incredibly important. Cities that are moving in the right direction have strong Planning and Zoning Departments. If developers are basically left to decide what the future of the town will be, they will put forth whatever they can get the most profit from. The Town must be responsible for this aspect in order to make sure the community is sustainable moving forward. In addition to being the Assistant Town Manager, Mr. Clauson is heading up the Planning and Zoning Department. Mr. Taylor asked for Mr. Clauson to further explain this department and also touch on the Strategic Plan. Per Mr. Clauson, a Comprehensive Plan is prescribed by law, and currently the Town does not have this document. The document the Town has is a Strategic Plan, and this plan is from 2006. Since it does not have all the criteria needed, it does not meet the requirements of State law. Essentially, Council should be taking the strategic vision from this plan or put their strategic vision into the plan. It is a planning document that should be looking 20 years forward and is supposed to be done every 10 years with a review every 5 years. There are pieces of the actual plan that were in the Strategic Plan, such as natural resources, community resources, demographics, economics, transportation and resiliency. This is a document that needs to be done quickly. Mr. Taylor stated this can also drive dollars for the Town. Mr. Clauson agreed stating this is a clear roadmap for where the Town wants to go. If a project or idea is not highlighted in the Comprehensive Plan, any request for federal dollars will probably not even be entertained. There are other planning documents that should also reflect the Comprehensive Plan as well, in particular, a hazard mitigation plan. This 20 year outlook should include as much or as little as is wanted, but this can be a comfort to developers or any individual looking to locate a business here. They will usually look to this document first to identify the goals and vision of the Town. This is essentially the planning document for the City and the current Comprehensive Plan does not meet the requirements. The Comprehensive Plan is the City's wish list, a 20 year outlook with clearly defined goals and objectives. This document includes a future land use map and infrastructure, and it is critical that this is a clearly articulated plan. The Town's zoning ordinance, done in 2012, should comply with the Comprehensive Plan, which is where the zoning ordinance gets its power. Mr. Shacker stated it is very critical to address the Comprehensive Plan as the law requires a future land use element. Mayor Pro-Tem Chatman stated he is glad to see consistency being shown with the zoning requirements, and this is being noticed by the residents. Mayor McMeekin is optimistic that the Town is on solid ground and has a solid team. With this in place, we can get to where we need and want to be. The dream is to get the Town functioning better, cleaned

up, getting it to a more livable place and having the departments functioning the way they should. Mr. Clauson further stated we should have a streetscape project and a long range rural transportation plan. Everything the City wants to do should be in the Comprehensive Plan. This is important because the projects are put out there and then the dollars can flow in the right direction. If the projects are not out there, the funding will not be found.

Mr. Taylor stated he gets more requests concerning downtown redevelopment and inquired of Mr. Shacker concerning downtown redevelopment and what is the formula to execute on this objective. He knows some towns will essentially buy and then resell, and this is similar to what the County does with the production of a spec building. Mr. Shacker believes the downtowns are a niche environment, and each must figure out what their particular niche is. To create product, he believes the local government must get aggressive and get involved. Lexington is a good example of this technique. (At 7:47 p.m., Council Member Miller excused himself from the meeting.) Mr. Shacker also feels downtown living is important. Newberry has an organization that assists with downtown development, which is Main Street SC. There is public space that the Town needs to control with streetscapes, but then there is the exterior of the buildings that need to look good. Mr. Taylor further stated that industries also look at the quality of life in the areas they are looking to join.

## 5. ENTERPRISE FUND

Mr. Taylor then transitioned the discussion to the Enterprise Fund, which includes the utilities. The enterprise funds are there to make money. There are currently only four towns that have electricity, gas, water and sewer, and this is one of Winnsboro's biggest assets. In looking at planning, we must see how we can strategically invest in order to gain more customers. Blythewood is a great potential revenue source for water distribution. He further explained that Mr. Cisney runs the water plant, Mr. Culbreth is running the wastewater plant and Mr. Peak handles all the collection and distribution along with the gas.

**Water:** Mr. Cisney stated coming into the water treatment plant, it seemed that it was on its last leg. There were pump problems at all the pump stations, and the department has been fighting those fires. The pumps are back up now. The goal is to get redundancy in all of the pumps and to get optimization in the treatment plant to use less chemicals to achieve the quality of water that has always been achieved. He has gone through records since the 90's, and there has always been a high water quality. There were, however, some problems here and there along the way. As Mr. Taylor stated, we want to get

to where we are fully staffed. There are four operators right now who have a license to run the plant, but six operators would be ideal to achieve 24-hour operation. The department has to compete with the surrounding areas, but this does not include the small cities. It competes with Columbia, Rock Hill, etc. as far as salaries. Mr. Cisney stated he has a wonderful bunch of guys, and the wastewater treatment plant also helps out when they can. He is hopeful to get to full staffing and be able to run the plant 24 hours a day thereby using the Town's water for Blythewood with a savings of at least 50% of what it being paid to Columbia. Mr. Taylor agrees that the Town has the capacity and need to get out of this situation with the water plant. Mr. Cisney stated a lot is going on at the water plant right now, including building a new bleach system to try to get away from the chlorine gas because it is right in the middle of Town. The plant has been lagging for a while, and Mr. Cisney is trying to bring it into the 21<sup>st</sup> century. There are better ways to do things that are not necessarily more expensive. Mr. Taylor inquired if obtaining two additional employees would allow the plant to be run 24 hours a day, and Mr. Cisney stated he believes it will. Mr. Taylor appreciates Mr. Cisney working on the efficiencies.

**Wastewater:** Mr. Culbreth believes we are all on the same page, and the biggest problem is staffing. This plant was built back in 1948 with a major upgrade in the late 70s with the Clean Water Act. The new plant went online in the 80s. There have been smaller upgrades since then, but there are still a lot of issues with the plant and, in fact, it is running off of a lot of the older equipment. Mr. Culbreth realizes that funding is hard to come by, but he stated something must be done because DHEC requirements must be met. Per Mr. Taylor, this area is heavily regulated, and if there is a violation, it will cost. Mr. Culbreth stated it would be ideal to have at least two more operators. There are three operators at the present time, and all are able to retire. However, he feels the main issue in his department are the needed upgrades and infrastructure. Mr. Taylor inquired of the capacity the plant can treat versus the amount that is actually treated. Mr. Culbreth stated the capacity is 1.6M gallons and currently around 800,000 is being treated. Mr. Taylor pointed out this puts us in good shape to handle the Town.

**Collection/Distribution and Gas:** Mr. Taylor stated that gas is a huge moneymaker. Per Mr. Peak, there could be improvements, but to get water to Blythewood, this was pretty well thought out 20 years ago. There is a good infrastructure system in Blythewood. However, the infrastructure is lacking in Winnsboro. There are pressure issues, dirty water issues, firefighting issues, etc. Mr. Peak dealt with a hydrant issue recently, and this particular hydrant is from 1917. The mill was built in 1912, and most of the water lines are still

1912 water lines. He hears all the time "why don't we just replace the hydrant". He can replace the hydrant, but the hydrant will only flow 100-200 gallons a minute because of the old water lines. As far as infrastructure to Blythewood, it is there once Mr. Cisney can get staffing and the plant is up and running 24 hours a day. Mr. Peak stated for 34 years, the gas system has been his pride and joy, and the gas system continues to have profit. However, he did go back to do some research. A lot of reports required, and he found the following historical data: The gas system was built in 1963. Every 10 years, the number of mains must be reported. From 1960 to 1969, there were 40 miles of main with around 800 customers. From 1970 to 1979, the Town added about 12 miles to the gas system with around 100 more customers. From the late 80s to the 90s, the system was extended about 43 miles in that 10 year stretch. During this time, the department had 15 employees and was very aggressive. Fairfield County basically belongs to Winnsboro as far as gas. No one else can encroach in Fairfield County on gas unless permission is given. The only other entity in Fairfield County is a little part in Mitford where Chester is allowed to come in and serve because it is so far away. Fairfield County, however, is ours to extend. We aggressively expanded and put in gas lines everywhere. In that 10 year stretch, over 700 customers were picked up. From 1990 to 2000, the Town was still in that aggressive expansion mode and picked up another 37 miles. In that 20 year stretch, the Town picked up around 80 miles and basically tripled the size of its system. We then went to Blythewood with water. This was a very wise move that the Town made, but the same staffing structure was kept and no additional staffing was added. The staffing, in fact, started to fall off and has continued to get smaller. From 2000 to present, 8 miles is all that was done, and most of this was done because of industry. We picked up about 50 residential customers in the past 20 years. Expansion needs to continue, and this can be done once the staffing issue is handled. With 15 staff, there was a supervisor, two foremen (a foreman over gas and a foreman over water/sewer), and then the technician staff. Right now, the department is down to one working director and six technicians and is trying to maintain. There is water at the end of Smalltown Road and water at the end of Longtown Road, which is nearly 30 miles of territory the department has to cover. Mr. Peak does not know how many total miles of water the Town has, but it has 140 miles of gas. There are probably around 300 miles of water. Sewer basically is in the Town with some in the industrial park. The staff needs to increase to meet the needs and continue to grow. Mr. Peak said if we were to move in areas like Ridgeway, the sky is the limit. About 60 miles of the extension that was done years ago included 2 inch mains, and the cost at that time was about \$300,000. That sounds like a lot of money, but is not a lot when it is stretched over 20 years. If the Town can get back to being aggressive along with also having the needed staff to do the

— maintenance and to get out there and continue expansions, especially on gas, the sky is the limit. For a quick analysis, Mr. Peak stated if he picked up 200 residential customers, it would more than offset what the bill would be. Mayor McMeekin would like to see the Town move into this direction because money spent in infrastructure will benefit the citizens down the road. They will recoup the savings. He will also not worry about his phone ringing when the competition is mad. Mr. Taylor inquired if gas is a reasonably easy and cheap thing to expand. Per Mr. Peak, when the last expansion was done, everything was done in-house, so it is fairly cheap. With water, permits must be submitted to DHEC and engineers must be hired. With gas, we are our own in-house engineers. We design the system, build it and install it. Mr. Taylor stated the gas is cheap and easy to expand, sewer is expensive to expand, water is a little easier and electric is a little tough because of the assigned territories. Mr. Taylor also inquired of the total number of lines. Per Mr. Peak, water is around 300 miles, 140 miles of gas lines, so around 500 miles of lines with only 8 staff to maintain these lines. Currently, Mr. Peak stated he has himself, 6 technicians and a clerk. At one time, there were 15 employees to maintain and install. Mr. Culbreth stated at that time, there were dedicated workers just for gas. Mr. Taylor stated the Town has an impressive system, we just need to make sure it is maintained and that it has the needed staff. Currently, Mr. Peak said there are only two employees who are fully trained and qualified with everything involved with gas. He had three and one left to go to Dominion.

— **Electricity:** Mr. Taylor stated Mr. Medlin has recently received meter reading and asked Mr. Medlin to discuss how many meters must be read each day. Mr. Medlin stated right now that would be about 600 per day. There should be 5 full-time employees and 1 part-time. As of this Friday, we will be down to 2 meter readers. He has two employees that have been hired pending their physicals and will be working within the next 2-3 weeks; however, meter reading is way behind at this time. They have roughly a little over 10,000 meters to be read per month, including gas, water and electric. Again, as Mr. Peak stated, the water system is 30 miles long and includes a lot of areas with no gas or electric. We do have some meters that stand by themselves with either water or electric or gas. It is a very large territory that has to be read, and at the present time, we do not have the staff for it. Hopefully, sometime in the next 8 weeks, there will be 1500 meters out of Blythewood turned over to the AMI System. There should be a briefing on this September 7. The rest of the AMI System needs to be financed as quickly as possible. Power was turned on in Winnsboro February 1, 1904, so the Town has been in the electric business for 117 years. We are sitting in the power house dating back to 1912. It was the power house prior to being the Library. There are a lot of challenges

in the department, including a staffing problem. By the time someone is put through 4 years of training, the department has around \$15,000 invested in their education and at least another \$4,000 in climbing gear and tools. So, easily there is over a \$20,000 investment in an employee. Mr. Medlin stated he does not have competition from other counties, but instead, the competition is Fairfield Electric Coop, Dominion, Duke and the private contractors. If someone is trained for CDL, they can be offered more money and will walk out the door. The department has a very inexperienced crew at the present time with one qualified lineman returning on Friday. It is hard to run a department with 2 qualified lineman in the field and 3 trainees. Another setback is that not only line work is done, but also tree trimming, which is unheard of in an electric department. Usually, there are contractors or tree crews who do this work. A lineman will not want to trim trees, and they can go elsewhere where they won't have to do this and make more money. Roughly, the Town has 100 miles of primary line. When Mr. Medlin started, there were about 70. There are a lot of secondary lines scattered throughout the County. All of this work is being done with basically 7 people in the department plus himself. So, manpower is the biggest issue for the department. Over the years, some load has been lost, but it has been holding steady for the last 5-7 years. We have been up around 23 MW and now around 16 MW. Some large hits were felt when Plastec went out of business along with some other businesses. There is a lot of expansion that the department would like to do, mainly upgrades and moving lines to serve other lines. As Mr. Cisney discussed, you always want redundancy in every system you have. We are limited on where we can serve because of the 1976 Territorial Act, which left the municipalities out. On the north end, we are blocked in by Fairfield; the south end, we are blocked in by Dominion. We are left with some areas out near the reservoir and around Town, but there is a very large block of property between here and the interstate. Mr. Medlin was discussing with Mr. Clauson that the Town could get all the way to the exit. Mr. Taylor inquired if this would need to be annexed. Per Mr. Medlin, this is already unassigned territory, so if we can put a line in, we can take it. However, annexation would be a great thing to have. Some of the municipalities have really grown in this State, such as Orangeburg and Rock Hill. If you ever become a Rock Hill or Orangeburg water customer, you become in the city limits, so then you can expand your territory on your electric system and everything else that has been blocked in. The Town does need to work on as much annexation as it can get done. He is, however, not referring to a neighborhood with 800 houses because there would be a lot of work to integrate it back into our system. Instead, raw property needs to be looked at with a lot of this being along the bypass and between Winnsboro and the interstate. We need to have the assets ready to move into that if there is growth, and we need to market this same area. Some other issues are

equipment, as some of the department's equipment dates back to 2000, 2006 or 2007. That is 15 years on this equipment that is being relied upon, and it needs to be replaced. One line truck in the fleet dates back to 1991. There needs to be a plan in place with a steady way of rotating the equipment in and out. A bucket truck has to have cables changed out every 7 years. Somewhere around that 7 years or shortly after, that bucket truck needs to be replaced. Repairs are also costly to the older equipment. At least every 8-10 years, we need to be buying a bucket truck or a digger, because these need to be replaced. This equipment is very expensive at almost \$300,000 per truck. However, this is the price of doing business. Mr. Peak referred to the discussion concerning annexation and inquired if the whole Town of Winnsboro was annexed, will that then become our territory. Mr. Medlin stated it would not, because we could not go to Dominion to make them get out. Per Mr. Hacker, you can serve unassigned. Assigned territory, as long as it is not a premise served at the time of annexation, can be served. Per Mr. Medlin, there are some things that can be done to go into other territories. For instance, if Winnsboro Mills was annexed and a natural disaster came through and took it out, the Town would not have to allow Dominion to go back in and serve. We could serve it if it were in the City limits at that time. Mr. Medlin also stated the Mt. Zion building has started using electricity. Mayor McMeekin stated we are in a capital intense business and a labor intense business. What we cannot do, which we may have done, is allow things to slip and get behind. So, we have to catch up and get moving. Any funds obtained need to be put into the existing structures which will save our customers money on the other end.

Mr. Taylor stated he hopes this meeting has been informative, and this is only the tip of the iceberg with some immediate challenges in order to stabilize the Town's utilities. We need to invest in the utilities and look to see where we can get returns with more efficiency. By doing this, we will be helping our customers so that the system can continue to be expanded, thereby being able to improve downtown, Public Safety and other things. We hope this has been thought provoking, and if there are any questions, he urged Council to call him. He also looks forward to moving forward. Mayor McMeekin stated he is only one vote and any Council Member can speak with Mr. Taylor. We are all here to work together, and he is optimistic. He feels we have a good team, and he thanked everyone for coming out to the meeting. Mr. Culbreth stated he would like for all Council Members to visit the plant just to see what they do. Mr. Taylor echoed this in saying that Council can contact him if they wish to visit any of the plants in the future. Mayor Pro-Tem Chatman stated he is glad his phone is not ringing as much concerning the bills. Mr. Medlin stated as the AMI system goes online, a lot of utility theft this will revealed that we never knew was taking place. Mr. Peak also looks for increased revenue when

the system goes online along with a savings from employees to wear and tear on the equipment. The new meters will pick up every drop that goes through. Short discussion concerning the new system ensued. Mr. Medlin stated this will be a very robust system that the Town is getting, and we should be in good shape. Hopefully, in the next few years, it will be expanded. Mayor McMeekin thanked Mr. Shacker again for coming tonight as they have been talking about this for a year or so. Hopefully, in January another planning session can be done. Mayor McMeekin appreciates their conversations and guidance. Council Member Bartell Prather stated this has been a very good meeting, and she has learned a lot. She also does plan to visit the plants.

**6. ECONOMIC REVITALIZATION**

See discussions above.

**7. ADJOURN**

At 8:16 p.m., it was moved by Council Member Burroughs, seconded by Mayor Pro-Tem Chatman, to adjourn. ***The motion carried 4-0.***



PATTI L. DAVIS  
TOWN CLERK



JOHN MCMEEKIN  
MAYOR