

**MINUTES
REGULAR MEETING
WINNSBORO TOWN COUNCIL
NOVEMBER 2, 2021**

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

Absent: Jae Burroughs

The Winnsboro Town Council met in regular session on November 2, 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 Regular Meeting to order at 6:15 p.m.

2. INVOCATION

Mayor McMeekin led the invocation in Council Member Burroughs' absence.

3. APPROVAL OF AGENDA

Council Member Miller made a motion to amend the agenda to add under New Business the Zion Hill Prevention Save the Kids request for Thanksgiving baskets, seconded by Mayor Pro-Tem Chatman. ***The motion carried 4-0.***

4. APPROVAL OF MINUTES

Approval of Minutes was inadvertently omitted; therefore, the minutes will be added to the next agenda for approval.

5. MAYOR'S COMMENTS

Mayor McMeekin stated he is getting pulled in a lot of directions being a member of the COG, Chairman of the Joint Water Sewer Service along with serving on the Chamber Board as ex-officio. He volunteered to do this a couple of years ago. He has now asked Council Member Bartell-Prather to take his place on the Chamber, and she has accepted. She is involved in downtown and has a business downtown, and Mayor McMeekin thanked Council Member Bartell-Prather for accepting this appointment. Also, a request has been made by Ms. Penny Renwick for the Town to fly the commemorative Vietnam 50th anniversary flag. Ms. Renwick lost her father in Vietnam and has provided the flag to the Town for this purpose. This is something that has been done in the

past and is given to Council for information. Mayor McMeekin inquired if anyone saw that the Summerton water plant has been in the news lately with not being up-to-date and also a possible conflict of interest. There is a Town Council member who has had to hire an attorney to defend him. He further stated we want to be sure that our water plant is up and running well so we do not have any problems such as this. Finally, Senator Fanning made the announcement of funds around \$5M for water and sewer infrastructure for Kershaw, Fairfield, Chester and Lancaster Counties. Mayor McMeekin will let Mr. Taylor elaborate more on this in the future.

6. PUBLIC COMMENT (3 MINUTES): THE TOTAL TIME ALLOCATED TO THIS PUBLIC COMMENT SEGMENT IS 30 MINUTES.

No one signed to speak.

7. SPECIAL REPORTS/PRESENTATIONS

None.

8. ORDINANCES AND RESOLUTIONS

- A.** Second and Final Reading Ordinance No. 10192021-A: An Ordinance Annexing into the Town of Winnsboro a 0.28 Acre Tract of Land, Located at 430 A&B Poplar Street, Winnsboro, SC, Owned by Debra Matthews, in Fairfield County, Not Already Within the Winnsboro Town Limits, and Including all Adjacent and Abutting Rights-of-Way. Tax Map No. 145-01-02-010-000. Motion made by Mayor Pro-Tem Chatman, seconded by Council Member Bartell-Prather, to approve Second and Final Reading of Ordinance No. 10192021-A. ***The motion carried 4-0.***
- B.** Second and Final Reading Ordinance No. 10192021-B: An Ordinance Annexing into the Town of Winnsboro a 0.28 Acre Tract of Land, Located at 445 A&B Poplar Street, Winnsboro, SC, Owned by RDJ Properties LLC, in Fairfield County, Not Already Within the Winnsboro Town Limits, and Including all Adjacent and Abutting Rights-of-Way. Tax Map No. 145-01-03-003-000. Motion made by Council Member Bartell-Prather, seconded by Mayor Pro-Tem Chatman, to approve Second and Final Reading of Ordinance No. 10192021-B. ***The motion carried 4-0.***
- C.** Second and Final Reading Ordinance No. 10192021-C: An Ordinance Annexing into the Town of Winnsboro a 0.34 Acre Tract of Land, Located at 122 Forest Hills Drive, Winnsboro, SC, Owned

by RDJ Properties LLC, in Fairfield County, Not Already Within the Winnsboro Town Limits, and Including all Adjacent and Abutting Rights-of-Way. Tax Map No. 126-04-06-006-000. Motion made by Council Member Bartell-Prather, seconded by Mayor Pro-Tem Chatman, to approve Second and Final Reading of Ordinance No. 10192021-C. **The motion carried 4-0.**

- D.** First Reading Ordinance No. 11221-A: An Ordinance Annexing into the Town of Winnsboro a 0.09 Acre Tract of Land, Located at 103 Bryant Street, Winnsboro, SC, Owned by Linda Spivey, in Fairfield County, Not Already Within the Winnsboro Town Limits, and Including all Adjacent and Abutting Rights-of-Way. Tax Map No. 126-02-02-007-000. Motion made by Council Member Bartell-Prather, seconded by Mayor Pro-Tem Chatman, to approve First Reading of Ordinance No. 11221-A. **The motion carried 4-0.**
- E.** First Reading Ordinance No. 11221-B: An Ordinance Annexing into the Town of Winnsboro a 0.76 Acre Tract of Land, Located at 109 Cornwallis Drive, Winnsboro, SC, Owned by William & Lori Black, in Fairfield County, Not Already Within the Winnsboro Town Limits, and Including all Adjacent and Abutting Rights-of-Way. Tax Map No. 125-02-04-003-000. Motion made by Council Member Bartell-Prather, seconded by Mayor Pro-Tem Chatman, to approve First Reading of Ordinance No. 11221-B. **The motion carried 4-0.**
- F.** First Reading Ordinance No. 11221-C: An Ordinance Annexing into the Town of Winnsboro a 0.36 Acre Tract of Land, Located at 114 Cornwallis Drive, Winnsboro, SC, Owned by William Spires, in Fairfield County, Not Already Within the Winnsboro Town Limits, and Including all Adjacent and Abutting Rights-of-Way. Tax Map No. 106-00-04-005-000. Motion made by Mayor Pro-Tem Chatman, seconded by Council Member Bartell-Prather, to approve First Reading of Ordinance No. 11221-C. **The motion carried 4-0.**
- G.** First Reading Ordinance No. 11221-D: An Ordinance Annexing into the Town of Winnsboro a 0.27 Acre Tract of Land, Located near 114 Cornwallis Drive, Winnsboro, SC, Owned by William & Allison Spires, in Fairfield County, Not Already Within the Winnsboro Town Limits, and Including all Adjacent and Abutting Rights-of-Way. Tax Map No. 106-00-04-006-000. Motion made by Council Member Bartell-Prather, seconded by Mayor Pro-Tem Chatman, to approve

First Reading of Ordinance No. 11221-D. ***The motion carried 4-0.***

- H.** First Reading Ordinance No. 11221-E: An Ordinance Annexing into the Town of Winnsboro a 0.78 Acre Tract of Land, Located at 146 Dunn Street, Winnsboro, SC, Owned by Shawn Wilson, in Fairfield County, Not Already Within the Winnsboro Town Limits, and Including all Adjacent and Abutting Rights-of-Way. Tax Map No. 126-04-09-011-000. Motion made by Council Member Bartell-Prather, seconded by Mayor Pro-Tem Chatman, to approve First Reading of Ordinance No. 11221-E. ***The motion carried 4-0.***
- I.** First Reading Ordinance No. 11221-F: An Ordinance Annexing into the Town of Winnsboro a 0.55 Acre Tract of Land, Located at 205 Hunstanton Drive, Winnsboro, SC, Owned by Melvin Johnson, in Fairfield County, Not Already Within the Winnsboro Town Limits, and Including all Adjacent and Abutting Rights-of-Way. Tax Map No. 145-01-22-011-000. Motion made by Council Member Bartell-Prather, seconded by Mayor Pro-Tem Chatman, to approve First Reading of Ordinance No. 11221-F. ***The motion carried 4-0.***
- J.** First Reading Ordinance No. 11221-G: An Ordinance Annexing into the Town of Winnsboro a 0.17 Acre Tract of Land, Located at 295 Holly Circle, Winnsboro, SC, Owned by Christopher Pullen, in Fairfield County, Not Already Within the Winnsboro Town Limits, and Including all Adjacent and Abutting Rights-of-Way. Tax Map No. 145-01-07-003-000. Motion made by Mayor Pro-Tem Chatman, seconded by Council Member Bartell-Prather, to approve First Reading of Ordinance No. 11221-G. ***The motion carried 4-0.***
- K.** First Reading Ordinance No. 11221-H: An Ordinance Annexing into the Town of Winnsboro a 0.29 Acre Tract of Land, Located at 323 Forest Hills Drive, Winnsboro, SC, Owned by Iris Kelly, in Fairfield County, Not Already Within the Winnsboro Town Limits, and Including all Adjacent and Abutting Rights-of-Way. Tax Map No. 126-04-12-008-000. Motion made by Mayor Pro-Tem Chatman, seconded by Council Member Bartell-Prather, to approve First Reading of Ordinance No. 11221-H. ***The motion carried 4-0.***
- L.** First Reading Ordinance No. 11221-I: An Ordinance Annexing into the Town of Winnsboro a 0.48 Acre Tract of Land, Located at 978 Newberry Road, Winnsboro, SC, Owned by Bobby Lyons, in Fairfield

County, Not Already Within the Winnsboro Town Limits, and Including all Adjacent and Abutting Rights-of-Way. Tax Map No. 107-03-02-009-000. Motion made by Council Member Bartell-Prather, seconded by Mayor Pro-Tem Chatman, to approve First Reading of Ordinance No. 11221-I. ***The motion carried 4-0.***

- M.** First Reading Ordinance No. 11221-J: An Ordinance Annexing into the Town of Winnsboro a 0.37 Acre Tract of Land, Located at 105 Rice Street, Winnsboro, SC, Owned by Robert Smith, in Fairfield County, Not Already Within the Winnsboro Town Limits, and Including all Adjacent and Abutting Rights-of-Way. Tax Map No. 126-02-01-017-000. Motion made by Mayor Pro-Tem Chatman, seconded by Council Member Bartell-Prather, to approve First Reading of Ordinance No. 11221-J. ***The motion carried 4-0.***

9. MANAGER'S REPORT

- A.** Council Member Pay. Per Mr. Taylor, there was a mistake made on Council Members' pay and requested for Mrs. Edwards to give further information. Per Mrs. Edwards, there was a small error in payroll in that duplicate pay was received by Council Members for the meeting of October 14. Therefore, there will not be another paycheck for Council Members until December. Usually in June at the end of the year, there will be one check with no insurance, so this check will, of course, include the insurance. Mayor McMeekin stated this happened one time before a couple of years ago. Council Member Miller inquired if it would be possible to catch this up at the end. Mayor McMeekin stated it could be caught up anytime; however, Mrs. Edwards stated it would be cleaner to keep it in the quarter. The 15th was a new payroll date and the 14th was the cut-off, so the meeting on the 14th was counted on both checks. Mayor Pro-Tem Chatman inquired if there would be a check in November. Per Mrs. Edwards, there will be one in November instead of two. Mayor McMeekin requested for Mrs. Edwards to look into the question of taking care of this in the quarter, and it can be brought up for further discussion at the next meeting if needed. Mr. Elliott stated this should be fine as long as it is taken care of in the quarter.
- B.** Mr. Taylor wanted Council to be aware that a DHEC violation was received at the wastewater treatment facility. It is not a consent order, so there are no fines associated with it. However, it could become a consent order if it is not dealt with. The violation is primarily citing cloudy water, with the effluent that is being put into the creek being cloudier than DHEC would like, along with an odor problem. These are reasonably minor citations;

however, there are additionally two filters and a generator which are big ticket items. The total for all issues on this violation to be taken care of is around \$556,000. Notification has also been received in the past that a generator would have to be provided as a back-up power source. This is needed at the wastewater treatment facility and at the pump stations. The hope is that there will be time to get a CDBG grant for this. Once this type of notice is received, it does put the Town at the top of the list to qualify for a grant. There was a 15 day deadline to respond to this, and the response has been done. Mayor McMeekin stated he would be glad to do anything he can to assist with getting this grant, because there will be a lot of major expenditures for the Town coming up shortly.

10. OLD BUSINESS

None.

11. NEW BUSINESS

- A.** Recommendation for Employee Appreciation and COVID Shot Incentive. Mayor McMeekin stated he has been working toward this and having conversations with the Municipal Association to include the legal aspect. He also spoke with Mr. Elliott to be sure the Town is proceeding properly in addition to speaking with the Town Auditor, Mr. Bill Hancock. He, therefore, has three sources to confirm the Town is going down the right road, because going down the wrong road would lead to problems with the Ethics Commission, the Attorney General and the media. He wanted to make sure everything was being done properly as he feels this is his responsibility. The Finance Committee had a meeting tonight, and Mayor McMeekin then asked for Mrs. Belton to present the information. Per Mrs. Belton, she is asking for approval for the employee appreciation and the COVID incentive shot. All full-time employees would receive a \$1,500 incentive, part-time would be \$500 and all of the employees are eligible for a \$500 vaccination incentive. Each employee would present necessary proof to personnel for verification. Mayor McMeekin stated HPIAA regulations would need to be followed. Council Member Miller inquired of the individual amount totals, which Mrs. Belton reiterated, along with a hand-out which was provided to Council. This includes 79 employees at \$126,500 and five part-time employees at \$2500. If all employees are vaccinated, this would be a total of 84 employees at \$42,000. Also, in this proposal is a \$200 incentive for the volunteer firemen which would be an additional \$2,800. Per Mayor McMeekin, the Town is not doing any mandates. This would be \$1,500 for every employee, and each employee who has been vaccinated would also get a \$500 bonus. There are people sitting on the fence, and hopefully, this will be an encouragement. If someone chooses not to get vaccinated, they would end up with \$1,500. Mayor Pro-Tem Chatman inquired

concerning the part-time and temp employees and if they work pretty much as a full-time employee. Mrs. Belton stated yes and no. She has a part-time employee who works as needed, and sometimes over the course of the year, she could work three to four months total. Then, there are some who come in a day and a half a year. Mayor McMeekin stated, as discussed in the Finance Committee, the Town participated with SC Cares the first of the year and gave the Town's employees a portion of these funds. This is actually a second bonus. Mayor Pro-Tem Chatman stated to elaborate, the Town took care of its Public Safety employees in that they received a salary increase which is permanent and affects their retirement, plus they received a bonus. Also, the funds from the American Rescue Plan are not being used for these bonuses. The Town is strictly using its own money in the budget. Council Member Miller stated Council had a work session where it was discussed the Rescue funds would be utilized for the AMI. He further thought the Town's funds would be used, as Mrs. Belton stated, but it was discussed in the meeting as well that Council would be doing the same incentive as was done last year. He felt it was discussed, and this was his understanding. Council Member Miller then made a motion to provide the same. Mayor McMeekin stated the recommendation should first come from the Finance Committee, and all the expenses that will be coming ahead for the Town should be reviewed. Also, Mr. Hancock will be coming in to talk with Council concerning this. The Town is skirting on the edge of some things with its audit report. Council Member Miller understands this, but it was indicated that the Town had \$14M in the fund balance so that it would be able to take care of the employees. That is what was said in the work session, that there was \$14M, so there were enough funds to cover this. Mayor McMeekin stated he recollects saying, and the minutes can be pulled, that a bonus would be given. However, Council Member Miller stated he said the same amount as last year. He further stated the Mayor may not have agreed with what he said, but it was discussed. It was not voted on, and we are now here today to vote on it. He would like to make a motion, and stated he has a right to make a motion, that the bonus for the employees be the same as last year, a total of \$4,000. Mayor McMeekin stated there will be a recommendation from the Finance Committee shortly, and then asked if there was a second to Council Member Miller's motion. Mayor Pro-Tem Chatman seconded the motion. ***The motion failed 2-2 with Mayor McMeekin and Council Member Bartell-Prather voting nay.*** Per Mr. Elliot, a split vote fails. Mayor McMeekin requested for Mayor Pro-Tem Chatman to give the recommendation of the Finance Committee. Mayor Pro-Tem Chatman stated the recommendation was for \$1500 for full-time employees, \$500 for part-time employees and a \$500 vaccination incentive for all employees. Mayor McMeekin stated this does not take a second because it is a recommendation by the Finance Committee. ***The***

recommendation failed 2-2 with Mayor Pro-Tem Chatman and Council Member Miller voting nay. Discussion ensued concerning timing of getting the money out and the possibility of having a special meeting, which Council Member Burroughs may or may not be able to attend. Council Member Bartell-Prather recommended Council have another meeting. After hearing from Mrs. Belton and Mrs. Edwards, the consensus was that it could be brought up at the next regular Council meeting. Council Member Miller stated, since he voted in the affirmative for the original motion, he now wished to make another motion that the same incentive be done as last year in the hopes that Council will reconsider this time and vote for what was given to the employees last year and what was said that we were going to give the employees, what was budgeted to give the employees, the same incentive which was a total of \$4,000. Mayor McMeekin inquired if this is the same recommendation he just made, and Council Member Miller stated it is. Mayor McMeekin requested for Mr. Elliott to give the legal aspect of this. After thinking this through, Mr. Elliott stated it could be a motion to reconsider. Although he is not sure what would be accomplished, it could be reconsidered to see if the vote has changed. Council Member Miller is correct in that he has a right to make that motion although this is usually done after some passage of time. Mayor McMeekin stated there has been a motion to reconsider and inquired if there is a second. Mayor Pro-Tem Chatman seconded the motion to reconsider. Council Member Miller stated he feels the employees deserve this and other cities gave \$5,000/\$6,000 and even \$7,000 to their employees. Our employees have made significant sacrifice working through the pandemic. Some are COVID recipients, and they have gone through a lot as have all of us. He feels the funds are available, and it is not like we do not have the funds. Council Member Miller feels we can be wise and just do the same thing. If we say we love and care about the employees, then that is what we should be focusing on because it is about their families. Council Member Miller feels they have been looking for it because they heard about it and that this has been discussed. He feels the employees want it to make sure that their families have the opportunity to have a good Christmas. He is just trying to understand what would be the reason not to. Mayor McMeekin stated he spoke with Mr. Hancock today, and we are running close on some things with transfer of money, etc. We are getting to the edge, and we have covenants that require we maintain funds. We are looking at taking a little over \$16,000 from the general fund, and once we start going any deeper, we could get in trouble with the bond covenants. Mr. Elliott agreed that it could be considered in default. Mayor McMeekin stated Mr. Hancock will be coming to address Council soon concerning this. We have a lot of money, but some of it we have to hold. We must follow the laws, rules and regulations of the bonds, what we can and cannot do

and go beyond what is in our heart. Mr. Hancock could not be here tonight, but he will be here soon to go over everything and tell us where we are. Right now, we were looking at taking a little over \$16,000 from the general fund. We have a lot of money in the account; however, not all of it can be spent. A lot of it is going to be spent in the near future on needed items. The water plant must be accelerated. So, what we cannot do is put ourselves in a position with our bond structure/covenants and make sure we are thinking about the big picture. We do want to do everything we can for our employees. The Town is doing more than Mt. Pleasant and other cities. Council Member Miller stated they do not have the infrastructure or the quality of employees that we have. Mayor McMeekin stated he does not want to be the one to bankrupt the Town and cause the bonds to default. Council Member Miller stated we are all responsible for doing what is right with the Town of Winnsboro, and we want to do right by our employees. This has nothing to do with water and sewer. We did what we needed to do for water and sewer by putting the AMI program in place to try to make sure the existing issues are fixed. This is why the whole amount of \$791,000 was put into the AMI system so that it could free up some of the general fund to be able to do the incentives that we said we were going to do for the employees. Council Member Miller acknowledged the items that have been discussed and stated those items were budgeted for, and the Town of Winnsboro has always been in compliance with the budget. There is nothing greater than the employees who help to generate the funds for the budget, and they work hard and have gone through a lot. Council Member Miller questioned why we cannot do what we said we would do. Mayor McMeekin is not trying to change anything and feels there were just different interpretations. Mayor Pro-Tem Chatman stated it was never known how much funds would be received from the American Rescue Plan, so this is freeing up \$1.5M of the Town's funds. It was a relief when this came in. He feels we have a lot of employees who are grossly underpaid, and he hears these complaints. So, we do need to do right by the employees because they work hard, especially the garbage group. They do a great job and are the most underpaid people with the Town. Once taxes hit, they do not take home much. The cost of food has also risen. These are his reasons for wanting to support this. The pandemic was not here two years ago, and everything has increased. Mayor McMeekin stated the Town knew it would get the funds at some point, and the AMI system was discussed during the budget process last year. Mayor McMeekin stated he discussed this with then Mayor Gaddy and Mr. Wood, and they wanted to apply the money toward the AMI system. There was every intention of doing this, and the upcoming American Rescue Plan was one thing that sold them on the system. Mayor Pro-Tem Chatman again stated the amount the Town would get was not known. Mayor McMeekin agreed with this

statement but stated it was going to be applied to the AMI system which made it seem more feasible. Now, the Rescue funds are being applied because it is cleaner. There will be about \$4M on the total AMI system, which will leave \$2.5M. There is the hope of getting funding from other sources. In addition, some departments need new trucks, and the water plant must be brought up-to-date because of the amount of money being spent to the City of Columbia to purchase water. The budget will have to be reviewed because what was allocated to spend for water was \$750,000 when actually over \$100,000 per month is being spent. Council Member Miller stated we are all for the same, and this is why it was put in the budget and why the additional funding is being used for the AMI system to free up other funding. All that is being asked is to reconsider your vote for the employees that work for the Town of Winnsboro. Plans have been made and he has been receiving calls. Everyone is concerned about the same thing, including the budget and saving the Town's money. We also want to take care of the people who work for us. Mayor McMeekin agrees with this but stated we have to balance everything. He is asking for everyone to consider that we cannot put ourselves at the edge. Council Member Miller states he does not believe what is being discussed will put the Town on any edge. It has been stated that the Town has a \$14M balance. The Town also has an unqualified review from the auditor, and we presented a balanced budget for this year. He is asking that the employees be considered as it would not be that much more money. Mayor McMeekin stated he spoke with the auditor today, and these are the auditor's words, not his. So, there is a motion on the table. **The motion to reconsider passed 3-1 with Mayor McMeekin voting nay.** Mayor McMeekin called for the vote by a show of hands. Initially, Council Member Bartell-Prather hesitated, but she then stated she would be changing her vote to go with Council Member Miller. Further discussion ensued, and Mayor McMeekin inquired from Mrs. Belton how much additional money this is. Council Member Miller stated the vote has been cast and the motion is approved. Council Member Miller further stated Mayor McMeekin was out of order since the vote has already been cast. Mayor McMeekin stated the motion carries and asked for Mrs. Belton to get this additional information to Council. The auditor will still be attending Council to go over everything.

- B.** Zion Hill Prevention Save the Kids request for \$200 to go toward Thanksgiving baskets for the less fortunate, which will be distributed on November 19, 2021. Mayor McMeekin stated the necessary paperwork has not been completed, and if this is turned in, the request is being made for \$200. Mayor Pro-Tem Chatman made a motion to approve the request for \$200, seconded by Council Member Bartell-Prather. **The motion carried 4-0.**

12. EXECUTIVE SESSION: (The following statement is provided in compliance with the South Carolina Freedom of Information Act: Subsequent to Executive Session, Council may take action on matters discussed in Executive Session.)

No executive session needed.

13. ADJOURN

Prior to adjourning, Mayor Pro-Tem Chatman stated as the annexations are coming in, some people qualify and are not actually aware that this is being done. He inquired if a flyer could be made to be sent out to the public and the churches. During the last election, some people thought they were in the Town but were not. He feels everyone should be made aware so all will have the same opportunity. Mr. Taylor stated we do want to make everyone aware of the process. It was in the newspaper twice because Mrs. Ball was nice enough to run the article, and there was a huge response. Mayor Pro-Tem Chatman requested this also be done in the Fairfield Post and the Country Chronicle. Mr. Taylor further stated that possibly it could be put on the bills going out. The driving factor in this has been the excellent service of the Streets and Sanitation Department. The borders of the Town are very erratic, and we are attempting to clean this up. This would make service delivery much more rational. Mayor Pro-Tem Chatman stated there is a large elderly population, and it would help to get the word out by reaching out to the churches.

At 7:11 p.m., it was moved by Council Member Miller, seconded by Mayor Pro-Tem Chatman, to adjourn. ***The motion carried 4-0.***



PATTI L. DAVIS
TOWN CLERK



JOHN MCMEEKIN
MAYOR