

**CITY OF BARNWELL, SOUTH CAROLINA**

**MINUTES of the SPECIAL CALLED MEETING of BARNWELL CITY COUNCIL  
July 8, 2020 – 2:00PM**

MEETING LOCATION:  
130 Main Street, Barnwell, SC 29812  
Live feed from Facebook Live for Public

Barnwell City Council met in a Special Called Meeting with Mayor Rivera presiding.

Council Members Present: Mayor Marcus Rivera, Mayor Pro Tem Pickens Williams Sr., Billy Dozier, James Moody, and Robert Pattillo

Council Members Absent: None

Others Present: City Administrator Lynn McEwen, Clerk & Treasurer Kim Vargo, City Attorney Thomas Boulware, and Chief of Police Brian Johnson.

Jonathan Vickery with the People Sentinel was also present.

**CALL TO ORDER**

Mayor Rivera called the meeting to order. Mayor Pro Tem Williams led in prayer.

**APPROVAL OF AGENDA**

Councilman Dozier made a motion to approve the agenda. The motion was seconded by Mayor Pro Tem Williams and unanimously approved.

**PUBLIC COMMENTS**

Bernadette St. John – Ms. St. John works in Home Health Administration and is very concerned about making masks mandatory for everyone. Ms. St. John feels that it will put the business owners in the role of police having to make sure the people that come in the stores are wearing masks. She has a 23-year-old daughter with downs syndrome and asthma who will not wear a mask and that will put them in a bad situation. She has not seen the evidence that masks are

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needed or effective against the virus. Ms. St. John respectfully asked Council not to make masks mandatory.

Mr. Miller – Mr. Miller stated that he agrees with Ms. St. John. He owns a restaurant in Blackville and said that it is not feasible to require his employees to wear masks for 6-8 hours per day. He said there have been studies that show masks are not beneficial and can cause harm.

Ms. Padgett – Ms. Padgett stated that she is against making masks mandatory. She agrees with the Ms. St. John and Mr. Miller. She stated that it is against the law to require people to wear masks. It is in violation of State Code Section 16-7-0110 Article 3. She will shop out of town if masks are mandatory. She asked why the meetings are scheduled at a time when most people are working and are unable to attend to voice their opinions. Mayor Rivera stated that typically Special Called meetings would not have any public comment. It would just be Council discussing the matter at hand. It would be open to the public but there would be no public comment. The meetings and minutes are available online. The regular scheduled meetings are at 5:30 in the afternoon and are open for public comment.

**TO DISCUSS AND CONSIDER AN EMERGENCY RESOLUTION ENCOURAGING  
INDIVIDUALS TO WEAR FACE COVERINGS IN RETAIL, FOODSERVICE  
ESTABLISHMENTS AND IN PUBLIC CITY OWNED BUILDINGS**

Mr. Boulware stated that Council will vote first on the resolution-agenda item number 4. If it is passed, they will not vote on the ordinance-agenda item number 5. If it fails, they will move to item number 5. Administrator McEwen read the resolution encouraging individuals to wear face coverings. Mayor Rivera stated that he is opposed to the resolution because this is what we are doing now. Councilman Dozier asked if there is an expiration date for the resolution. Administrator McEwen stated that it would be in effect during the declared emergency. Councilman Moody stated that he had a lot of calls from the citizens in his district, and everyone but one person wanted masks to be mandatory. Therefore, he is opposed to the resolution. Mayor Rivera gave statistics about the virus and its effect on Barnwell County. Mayor Pro Tem Williams stated that it is his understanding that this is not a mandate. He stated that he wanted to give an example that he thinks compares to what we are talking about. If we have a water main break, we advise people to boil their water before consumption. They know the risks involved if they do not boil their water. However, we do not send authorities out to reprimand them or fine them for not boiling their water. Mayor Pro Tem Williams stated that he is in favor of the resolution, not the ordinance. Councilman Dozier asked if the resolution is passed and conditions get worse, can we come back and pass the Ordinance making it mandatory. Mr. Boulware stated that they could. Councilman Dozier stated that citizens in his district do not want masks to be mandatory. Mr. Dozier stated that he would vote in favor of the resolution. Mr. Pattillo stated that he is in favor of the resolution. Mayor Pre Tem Williams made a motion to vote on the resolution. The motion was seconded by Councilman Dozier. The resolution was

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approved with a vote of 3 -2, with Mayor Pro Tem Williams, Councilman Dozier, and Councilman Pattillo voting in favor of resolution and Mayor Rivera and Councilman Moody voting against the resolution.

**TO DISCUSS AND CONSIDER AN EMERGENCY ORDINANCE TO REQUIRE  
INDIVIDUALS TO WEAR FACE COVERINGS IN RETAIL, FOODSERVICE  
ESTABLISHMENTS AND IN PUBLIC CITY OWNED BUILDINGS**

This item was not discussed since the resolution was approved.

**ADJOURN**

There was no further business and the meeting was adjourned.

Submitted by:

  
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Kim Marie Vargo, Clerk & Treasurer