

CITY OF BARNWELL, SOUTH CAROLINA

**MINUTES of the MEETING of BARNWELL CITY COUNCIL
May 2, 2022 – 5:30PM**

MEETING LOCATION:
130 Main Street, Barnwell, SC 29812

Barnwell City Council met in Regular Session with Mayor Rivera presiding.

Councilmembers Present: Mayor Marcus Rivera, Mayor Pro Tem Peggy Kinlaw, and Councilmembers Brad All, Ryan Bragg, Alicia Davis, James Moody, and Ron Still

Councilmembers Absent: None

Others Present: City Administrator Lynn McEwen, City Clerk & Treasurer Kim Vargo, City Attorney Thomas Boulware, Police Chief Lamaz Robinson, and Fire Chief Tony Dicks

Mr. Jonathan Vickery of the People Sentinel was also present.

CALL TO ORDER & PRAYER

Mayor Rivera called the meeting to order. Councilmember Davis led in prayer.

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

Council led the pledge of allegiance.

APPROVAL OF THE AGENDA

Mayor Pro Tem Kinlaw made a motion to approve the agenda. The motion was seconded by Councilmember Moody and unanimously approved.

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STUDENT RECOGNITION

There was no student recognition, but Mayor Rivera recognized college graduate Marcus McKethan as the third football player from Barnwell to be drafted into the NFL.

BUSINESS/ORGANIZATION RECOGNITION

New Jerusalem Day Care was recognized as the business of the month.

UPDATE FROM BARNWELL COUNTY FIRST STEPS ED

Ms. Tricia Gordon, Executive Director, updated Council on Barnwell County First Steps. They have been in Barnwell County since 1999 and are currently under the umbrella of Barnwell School District #45 and operate out of the old Presbyterian Church on Franklin St. They offer a variety of programs to families and partners to support the healthy development of children from birth through age five.

PUBLIC COMMENTS

Mr. Ben Kinlaw, Barnwell County Councilman, said on April 22nd they launched Keep Barnwell County Beautiful. He wanted to commend City Administrator Lynn McEwen for her work with getting grants from Palmetto Pride for the City. The goal is to beautify the County through education, enforcement, and engagement. Southern Carolina Alliance applied for and received a two-year grant, and their beautification coordinator is working with County Council. The County would like someone from each of the municipalities to sit on a committee. It does not have to be a member of Council.

Ms. Barbara Christian informed Council that the date for the Sundial Festival has been changed due to the weather. It will be held on the Circle, October 3rd from 9am-3pm. They are looking for sponsors.

APPROVAL OF THE EMPLOYEE INSURANCE RENEWAL PROPOSAL

Mr. Sam Plexico, from Southeastern Insurance Consultants LLC, informed Council that there would be an 4.5% increase in medical coverage for the City's July 1, 2022, renewal with BCBS of SC. There is no rate increase for vision and dental. This has been the first rate increase in medical insurance since 2017. The plan is considered a Grandmothered Health Plan for the Affordable Care Act. Discussion followed about looking into the State Health Plan. There is a three-month lead time to switch to the State Health Plan. The BCBS plan is on a month-to-month basis. Councilmember Davis made a motion to approve the BCBS insurance renewal for July 1,

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2022, with the City paying 100% of the increase. The motion was seconded by Councilmember Still and unanimously approved. A representative from PEBA will be contacted to get additional information about the State Health Plan.

PRESENTATION OF THE CITY OF BARNWELL FY 2021 FINANCIAL AUDIT

Mr. Neal Crider of McGregor & Company presented the fiscal year ending September 30, 2021 financial statements. He referred to the independent auditor's report and informed Council that there were no reportable findings. The auditor's report presented a clean opinion, they found the financial statements were presently fairly in all material respects. He explained the difference in accounting for the business type activities-Water and Sewer Fund and governmental activities-all other funds. He reviewed the financial highlights for the year. The General Fund had an increase in fund balance of \$466,960. The Water & Sewer Fund had a decrease in net position of \$7,457. The net position in the Water and Sewer Fund includes deductions for depreciation and pension expenses. Mayor Rivera thanked Mr. Crider.

APPROVAL OF THE MINUTES OF THE APRIL 4, 2022, SPECIAL HEARING AND REGULAR SCHEDULED CITY COUNCIL MEETING

Councilmember Moody made a motion to approve the minutes of the April 4, 2022, special hearing and regular scheduled City Council meeting. The motion was seconded by Councilmember Davis and unanimously approved.

SECOND AND FINAL READING OF ORDINANCE 2022-01 – AMENDING SECTION 2-55 OF THE BARNWELL CITY CODE OF ORDINANCES

Councilmember Moody made a motion to read Ordinance 2022-01 by title only. The motion was seconded by Mayor Pro Tem Kinlaw and unanimously approved. Administrator McEwen read the ordinance by title only. Councilmember Bragg made a motion to approve the second and final reading of Ordinance 2022-01. The motion was seconded by Councilmember All and unanimously approved.

APPROVAL OF DONATING THE INITIAL FILL UP FOR THE YMCA POOL

Councilmember Moody said that he is a member of the Barnwell County Council Recreation Committee. The opening date and ribbon cutting for the 150,000-gallon pool will be in June. The pool will be open free of charge. He is asking the City to donate the initial fill up for the pool at an estimated cost of \$313.00. Councilmember Still made a motion to approve donating

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the initial fill up for the YMCA pool. The motion was seconded by Mayor Pro Tem Kinlaw and unanimously approved.

APPROVAL OF DEPARTMENT HEAD HIRING PROCESS

Councilmember Still said that as they have been going through the hiring process for a new Recreation Director, he has seen flaws since there seems to be no consistency. He presented a detailed policy for hiring department heads that he would like Council to review. Discussion followed. Councilmember Davis said that there is currently a process in place. She would like the finance and salary committee to meet to compare the two processes. Councilmember Moody made a motion to table this item until it goes through the finance and salary committee. The motion was seconded by Councilmember Davis and unanimously approved.

APPROVAL OF CITY ATTORNEY'S DECLARATORY JUDGEMENT

Barnwell County is asking for ownership of the section of Main St between Jefferson St and Jackson St by a declaratory judgement. The County must own it to spend CTC funds on it for repaving and striping. SCDOT does not want to take responsibility of this road and the City also has never owned it. City Attorney Thomas Boulware said the City does not mind giving title to the County since we have no ownership, but the City needs some assurance that the street is going to be properly designed and maintained by the County. Attorney Boulware presented an answer from the City on the declaratory judgement. Councilmember Still made a motion to approve the City Attorney's answer to the declaratory judgement. The motion was seconded by Councilmember Moody and unanimously approved.

COMMITTEE REPORTS

Water and Sewer (Councilmember Brad All) – No Report

Sanitation and Streets (Mayor Pro Tem Kinlaw) – Administrator McEwen informed Council that S&S Disposal will begin using an automated truck. The new truck has an arm that the driver controls. The arm picks up and empties the carts. Since the arm is only on one side of the truck this will require changes in the collection process. The citizens on many of the secondary streets will have to pull their carts to the opposite side of the street instead of placing them in front of their houses. Discussion followed about the problems that this new procedure will cause.

Parks, Recreation and Tourism (Councilmember Alicia Davis) – No Report

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Police (Councilmember Moody) – Police Chief Robinson updated Council on monthly activity and the Hoops for Cops community event.

Fire (Councilmember Ryan Bragg) – Fire Chief Tony Dicks provided Council with a written monthly activity report which was read by Councilmember Bragg.

Finance and Salary (Councilmembers Ryan Bragg and Alicia Davis) – No Report

Building and Planning (Councilmember Ron Still) – Mayor Rivera said that there are too many blighted and delapidated buildings and the City has got to come up with a way to hold the owners accountable and to clean up these properties. Councilmember Still suggested a workshop to set up priorities.

ADMINISTRATOR'S UPDATE

- Make a Difference Day will be this Friday from 10am to noon and 2pm to 4pm. Volunteers are asked to stop by City Hall to get instructions and pick up their supplies. She updated Council on the Litter Crew statistics for the month.
- The lot has been cleared for the Joey Zorn Well Project.
- The Stevenson case has been settled.
- A new bid request has been sent out for the asbestos abatement and demolition of the old sheriff's building. The bids are due Thursday, June 9, 2022 at 2pm.
- The Wall St Market will be the second Saturday of each month. The Farmers Market will begin June 9, 2022 at Fuller Park from 8am to noon. The Independence Day Celebration will be held Thursday, June 30, 2022 from 6pm to 10 pm at Veteran's Park.

EXECUTIVE SESSION: CONTRACTUAL

Councilmember Still made a motion to go into executive session. The motion was seconded by Councilmember Davis and unanimously approved.

Council returned to regular session.

Councilmember Bragg made a motion to accept the short-term proposal with the County of Barnwell for Municipal Clerk of Court services. The motion was seconded by Councilmember Davis and unanimously approved.

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ADJOURN

There was no further business, and the meeting was adjourned.

Submitted by:



Kim Marie Vargo, Clerk & Treasurer

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