

BARNWELL COUNTY COUNCIL
February 14, 2017 - Council Meeting Minutes

Pursuant to the Freedom of Information Act, the news media was notified & notice was posted 24 hours prior to the meeting.

Barnwell County Council met on February 14, 2017 at 6 pm. Attending were Chairman Lowell Jowers Sr., Vice Chairman Ben Kinlaw, Councilman Harold Buckmon, Councilman Jerry Creech, Councilman Don Harper, Councilman Freddie Houston Sr., Councilman David Kenner, Administrator Pickens Williams Jr., County Attorney JD Mosteller and Clerk to Council Kim Futrell. Also in attendance were Danny Black, Tommy Boyleston, Todd Highsmith, Matt Mullen, Roger Phillips, Greg Shore, Attorney Simmons, and Laura McKenzie with the People Sentinel.

Public Hearings were held to receive comments prior to the 3rd Readings of Ordinances related to Amending the FILOT Agreements for Barnwell Solar, Blackville Solar, Blackville Solar II, Crossroads Solar, Edison Solar, and Richardson Solar. There were no public comments.

The meeting was called to order, the invocation given, and a quorum was declared. Motions were made to approve the agenda and the minutes for the January 10th and January 13th Council meetings. The motions were seconded and they passed. Councilman Harper presented Resolutions to each of the Fire Departments in appreciation of the volunteer firefighters. Chairman Jowers welcomed everyone to the meeting and asked for public comments. There were none.

Updates

Review of the '15-'16 Audit - Todd Highsmith detailed the findings of the '15-'16 audit saying that the County had received an unqualified clean opinion. Councilman Houston moved for acceptance of the '15-'16 Audit. Vice-Chairman Kinlaw seconded the motion and it passed.

Southern Carolina Alliance - Danny Black reviewed ongoing and prospective projects and said the SCA would be giving updates on projects in the region to each County on a quarterly basis. In reference to a 2013 SCA Service Agreement, Councilman Creech asked Mr. Black which two Council members first approached him in 2013 regarding the SCA assisting the EDC. Mr. Black said he was approached by several Council members, including Councilman Houston who asked if something happened what the SCA would do. Mr. Black said the 2013 Services Agreement stipulated at the time, if Council dissolved the EDC and wanted the SCA to take over responsibility, the County would need to provide and pay for the staff. Mr. Black said he was approached by Councilman Sloan and Councilman Smith and had a meeting with four others, including Councilman Houston. Councilman Creech reiterated his question and Mr. Black said Councilman Houston and Councilman Sloan. Councilman Houston clarified that he had been in New York and after learning a meeting had taken place, approached Mr. Black. Mr. Black said he remembered having a meeting in which Councilman Smith, Councilman Houston, and others were present and it was at that meeting he was asked about and rejected the SCA maintaining County property.

Heritage Healthcare - Roger Phillips announced that Heritage Healthcare, a non-profit formed by Med Tide Medical, would be opening an urgent care on Reynolds Road by mid March. Phase I operations would be weekdays, 5 pm to 9 pm and phase II would be weekend hours and if needed, normal business hours. Councilman Kenner asked Mr. Philips if Heritage Healthcare and Low Country Health Care had been in discussion. Mr. Philips said he had not been in contact with Low Country Health Care outside of the initial Healthcare Committee meetings and his goal in forming Heritage Healthcare was to provide after hours urgent care. Vice Chairman Kinlaw asked if Heritage Healthcare would be a competitor to Low Country Health Care as the County had invested \$140,000 in an x-ray machine located at Low Country Healthcare. Mr. Phillips said, since Heritage operational hours would be when Low Country was closed, he did not think so.

Medshore - Greg Shore gave details on the new partnership between Medshore and Priority Ambulance. Attorney Mosteller asked Mr. Shore if Council needed to adopt a Resolution of due diligence because of the existing contract and Mr. Shore said nothing in the contract between Medshore and the County was changing.

YMCA - Matt Mullen said the Barnwell YMCA had just celebrated its 2nd year anniversary and had Head Start programs in Barnwell, Blackville and Williston. Its membership of 2,500 +, was double its original goal with 30% of the adult members and 60% of 100 + children in the after school programs receiving financial assistance.

Administrator's Update - Administrator Williams said the transfer station damaged by the F2 Tornado had been removed with plans underway to build a new station and the Landfill would be selling 300 tons of scrap metal. The Fire Coordinator would be purchasing a new tanker, and the Certificate of Occupancy was issued for the new jail building. In response to Chairman Jowers' question about e-waste at the Landfill, Administrator Williams said that as of July 2011 the Counties did not have approval to dispose of e-waste at lined landfills such as 3 Rivers and the cost to dispose was \$500 to \$600 of dollars per ton.

Financial Update - Administrator Williams reviewed the financial report.

Committee Reports

Boards and Commissions - Councilman Houston said a majority of the Committee members at the January Transportation Committee meeting requested that Willie Walker, who had previously served on the Committee for District 3, be appointed again to serve on the Committee as Chair. Councilman Houston nominated Mr. Walker to serve on the Transportation Committee for District 1, replacing Mr. Stroman. Councilman Kenner moved to appoint E. Mitchell Lebby to serve on the at large 2 seat on the Museum Board. The motion was seconded and it passed. Councilman Houston moved to appoint Vice Chairman Kinlaw to the Elected Official Seat on the LSCOG Board. Councilman Kenner seconded the motion and it passed. Councilman Houston moved to appoint Chairman Jowers to the Southern Carolina Alliance Board. The motion was seconded and it passed.

Finance, Government, Science Tech. & Regulatory Matters, Housing, Safety – No reports given.

Transportation – Vice Chairman Kinlaw said there were 305 roads in the County and that 73 of those roads were paved. He said upkeep of paved roads cost more and, as mentioned by Councilman Creech in previous meetings, Council needed to begin setting aside funding. Councilman Houston mentioned that the contractors patching the State roads were doing a poor job and Vice Chairman Kinlaw said he had the SCDOT's contact's name and would be contacting him.

Judicial – Councilman Buckmon said the move to the new jail facility would be complete within the month. In response to Chairman Jowers' question about the County serving hot meals to inmates when the kitchen was being moved, Councilman Buckmon said the Statute was rigid. Regarding Detention Center employees having to wait 45 days to be paid, Councilman Creech said also it was due to State law.

Services – Councilman Buckmon said the money gained from the sale of the scrap metal would go to offset the approximate \$23,000 cost to repair a Landfill vehicle that was damaged due to fluid being put in the wrong receptacle. Councilman Buckmon moved to send out for bid the proposal he had distributed to Council in November concerning privatizing Landfill services. Councilman Creech seconded the motion. Councilman Houston said Council needed more input before it was sent out for an RFP. Councilman Attorney Mosteller suggested before sending out an RFP for bid, Council discuss in detail what they wanted to be in the RFP. Councilman Buckmon withdrew his motion and asked Council to send in details they would want to be included in the RFP.

Healthcare – Councilman Creech said the Healthcare Committee had met on January 31st to talk with local doctors and nothing had come of it. The Committee would continue to explore behind the scenes to encourage better healthcare in the County. Councilman Kenner asked that Council be included in discussions so as not to have competing or dual efforts that may detrimentally affect the other. Councilman Creech said he would keep everyone informed. Council discussed patients not being able to utilize the x-ray equipment which was purchased by the County and located at Low Country Health Care unless they switched their patient records to Low Country Health Care. Councilman Creech said it was due to a clause in the contract between Low Country Health Care and the County. Administrator Williams and Attorney Mosteller were asked to look into it.

Economic Development - Councilman Creech said the Airport Board, at his request, prepared an estimate to determine how long they could continue operating without the County subsidizing. Their estimate was that as of February 2021 their account would be closed and the County would need to begin subsidizing. Councilman Kenner asked for clarification. Councilman Creech said if the Airport paid the County back the \$14,000 per year in addition to the two Airport employee salaries, with the current hangar and fuel rates, they would be broke February 2021 and the County would need to begin paying salaries. Councilman Houston asked Councilman Creech to look at the Airport surplus in the County audit. Councilman Creech moved to approve the 3rd Reading of Ordinances to Amend the FILOT Agreements for Barnwell, Blackville, Blackville II, Crossroads, Edison and Richardson Solar Farms Councilman Houston seconded the motion. The motion passed.

Personnel Committee - Councilman Creech said Personnel Committee agenda items would be discussed during the Executive Session.

Old Business

3rd Reading of Ordinances to Amend the FILOT Agreements for Barnwell, Blackville, Blackville II, Crossroads, Edison and Richardson Solar Farms – This agenda item was handled during the Economic Development portion of the agenda.

2nd Reading of an Ordinance to Modify the Duties and Powers of the Barnwell County Economic Development Commission and to Dissolve the Barnwell County Economic Corporation - Councilman Creech moved to approve the 2nd Reading of this Ordinance. Councilman Harper seconded the motion. Councilman Houston said Council had more control over the EDC than ever and asked what would be gained by its adoption. He said its adoption would be creating issues, damaging relationships that had been re-built with the municipalities and that with the passing of the Capital Project Sales Tax, the County needed a good working relationship with the municipalities to move forward on the projects. Councilman Creech read from a draft ordinance in which the SCA, for \$60,000, would pay the EDC director and staff's salaries and operating expenses. Councilman Creech said the total operating income loss for the EDC for 2015 was \$560,436 and that from the report from EDC Director Boyleston, dated July 1, 2016 to February 9, 2017, the loss was \$159,164.45. Councilman Creech said while the EDC Board worked well together, the County could not keep pouring money into an open pit. Councilman Kenner asked if the figures Councilman Creech stated represented an ongoing loss or during the time the current Board was in place. Councilman Creech said the loss of \$159,164.45 was during the current Board. Councilman Kenner agreed with Councilman Houston's comments and said the County and the Municipalities needed to work together to accomplish projects set forth in the CPST and did not need to create any unnecessary conflicts. Councilman Buckmon said the County could not keep losing money but also could not damage the relationship with the Municipalities. He said he was working on a solution and he would be talking with each of the Council members before the 3rd reading of the Ordinance. Councilman Houston said during the Economic Development Report Councilman Creech said the County would need to begin subsidizing the Airport in 2021 because it would not be able to support itself, yet the EDC which was not costing the County money was being considered to be dissolved. Councilman Houston said the County needed to work with both agencies and suggested that the Airport raise the cost of fuel as it was already the lowest priced in the area. Councilman Creech said he wanted to do what was best for the County to save money. Chairman Jowers said he was not saying to do away with the EDC but to put it under the SCA as they had more money for marketing. Chairman Jowers referred to the projects brought to the County by the SCA which Mr. Black spoke about in his update. Councilman Houston said the County was already paying the SCA for marketing, that the EDC had been involved in those projects also, and that new prospects coming into the County sought out the local EDC office to find available properties. Chairman Jowers said he did not believe the County needed to pay such a high price for a separate organization to act as a rental agency to show properties, noting that many of the businesses left without paying. A roll call vote was requested.

Chairman Jowers-Yes	Councilman Creech-Yes	Councilman Houston-No	Councilman Kinlaw-Yes
Councilman Buckmon-Yes	Councilman Harper-Yes	Councilman Kenner-No	

The motion passed.

New Business

1st Reading of an Ordinance Related to Utility Lines Under County Maintained Roads. - This Ordinance was read in name only.

A motion was made to enter into Executive Session. The motion was seconded and it passed.

Executive Session

Personnel Compensation - No action was taken in Executive Session.

Open Session

Councilman Creech moved to refer the personnel increases to the Finance Committee to make sure the County had the money to cover them. The motion was seconded and it passed. Councilman Creech moved to approve the recommendation that if smokers that are covered by the County's health insurance are more than 60 days late paying the additional \$40 fee for smokers, they be sent a registered letter reminding them of the amount due and that their insurance policy will be cancelled.

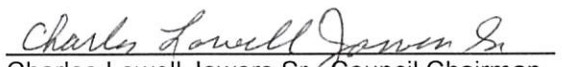
A motion was made to adjourn. The motion was seconded and it passed.

The meeting adjourned at 8:30 pm.

Respectfully submitted,


 Kim Futrell, Clerk of Council




 Charles Lowell Jowers Sr., Council Chairman