

BARNWELL COUNTY COUNCIL
October 10, 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 for their regularly scheduled Council meeting on October 10, 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 Kevin Gantt, Kathy Rhoad, Stuart MacVean, and Laura McKenzie with the People Sentinel.

The meeting was called to order, the pledge of allegiance and invocation were given and a quorum was declared. Councilman Houston moved to approve the agenda. Councilman Kenner seconded the motion and it passed. Councilman Creech moved to approve the September 19th Council meeting minutes. Vice Chairman Kinlaw seconded the motion and it passed. Chairman Jowers welcomed everyone to the meeting and asked for public comments. There were none.

SRNS Update

Stuart MacVean said SRNL was taking several initiatives at SRS such as opening physical spaces to encourage collaboration, upgrading the badge office, expanding exercise facilities, and renovating the cafeteria. They were promoting and encouraging volunteer involvement, creating partnerships with the Community Reuse Organization and the SC National Guard, as well as improving infrastructure to prevent a backlog of deferred maintenance by replacing older equipment to create cost savings.

SCDOT Update

Kevin Gantt said the 12 cent tax would be landmark to the DOT's focus on making progress on the four biggest areas that the DOT had identified in respect to infrastructure; Primary Rural Road Safety, Conditions of Pavements, Bridges and Interstate Widening. With SC being the 4th largest state maintained system, the additional revenue would be integral in reversing the 30 years of neglect caused by a lack of funding.

TRMC Update

Kathy Rhoad said progress was underway in preparing the site located between Bamberg and Barnwell for construction of the 8.6 million dollar free standing 24/7 ER facility which would be equipped with a diagnostic imaging department that would include a CT scan, ultrasound, and x-ray imaging equipment. September of 2018 was the anticipated date of completion and approximately 35 new jobs would be created.

Administrator's Update

Administrator Williams said the Emergency Management Department, with assistance from LSCOG, had applied in 2015 for and recently received approval for a \$90,000 grant to purchase four generators. The two new fire tankers were picked up and were located at the Hilda and Barnwell Rural fire departments. The Barnwell voting precinct was moved from the National Guard to the Barnwell Health Department.

Financial Update

Administrator Williams reviewed the financial report.

Committee Reports

Boards and Commissions

Councilman Harper nominated Scott Church to the Airport Commission for District 3. Councilman Harper moved to appoint Brett Bell to the EDC Board At Large seat. Councilman Buckmon seconded the motion. Councilman Houston referred to minutes dated December 9, 2014, January 13, 2015, and September 19, 2017 in which Councilman Sloan, Councilman Jowers, Councilman Buckmon, and Councilman Harper had used Districts when making appointments to the At Large seats on the EDC Board. Chairman Jowers said he had admitted to making appointments by District to the EDC Board At Large seats in the past and that those appointments violated Ordinance 2014-9-306-O. Councilman Houston asked if those members were illegally on the Board and Chairman Jowers confirmed that they were. Councilman Houston said although Ordinance 2014-9-306-O did not specify using Districts when making appointments, it also did not prohibit it and that historically Council had used Districts when appointing to At Large seats on all Boards and Commissions including the EDC Board. Councilman Kenner said that in the past Council had respected the District lines and those Council Districts that crossed school district lines and that it had been relatively a gentlemen's agreement. Councilman Buckmon said he did not see the rush in making an appointment if changes in the Ordinance were needed but that there was a motion on the floor. Councilman Houston said he was previously going to make an appointment to that At Large

seat but Chairman Jowers had asked for him to wait and he did not understand the rush now for Councilman Harper to make an appointment to the same seat. Councilman Houston said if the appointment was going to be made; it needed to be considered as a District 29 seat. Chairman Jowers said that would be in violation of the Ordinance and called for a vote as an At Large seat only. A roll call vote was requested and the motion passed.

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

Councilman Creech nominated Sam McKay for the At Large seat for the Airport and moved for a vote on the previous nomination of Tina Gray for the Museum Board for District 7. Councilman Buckmon seconded the motion and it passed.

Government, Science / Tech. & Regulatory Matters, Transportation, Safety, Finance, Housing, Judicial, Health Care, Personnel - No reports were given.

Services

Councilman Buckmon said there would be 100% percent participation in recycling for District 45.

Economic Development

Councilman Kenner said he was absent from the September Council meeting and asked how the SCA agreement had come about and its effect the ongoing lawsuit with the EDC. Chairman Jowers said the Agreement was the one Council discussed in 2014 and that the Attorney representing the County in the EDC lawsuit had reviewed and found no conflicts with it, so it was placed on the September agenda and was included in Council packet on the tablets. Councilman Houston said he had received his tablet Monday and had been unable to review the Agreement. He asked Councilman Creech prior to the vote if the Agreement was the same as the current agreement the County had with the SCA and Councilman Creech had said it was and that it should be on Councilman Houston's tablet. Councilman Houston said the Agreement was not the same, as it was for \$60,000 and Mr. Boyleston was now employed by the SCA. Councilman Houston said that Mr. Boyleston had given Councilman Creech a Proposal for the EDC Board's consideration and that Chairman Jowers had provided everyone on Council with a copy of it except Councilman Kenner, Councilman Buckmon and Councilman Houston. Councilman Creech said the EDC Board, Councilman Harper and himself were the only persons he knew of that had seen the Proposal and it had not been pursued because Mr. Boyleston wanted to talk to the Mayors first. Councilman Creech said it was Councilman Houston's responsibility to review his packet and that Mr. Smith had informed him that the Agreement was the same one that Councilman Houston had brought forth in 2014 during a secret meeting. Councilman Houston clarified that the Agreement had been brought forth during a meeting between Danny Black, Councilman Jowers and Councilman Smith and that he was in New York with Councilman Sloan and Administrator Williams at the time. Upon his return, Councilman Jowers and Councilman Smith asked him to meet with Danny Black. He sent out an email and Councilman Jowers declined attending as he knew what the meeting was going to be about. Councilman Kenner, Councilman Buckmon and Councilman Smith did attend. This caused a quorum and notice had not been sent to the media. Chairman Jowers said the matter was a dead issue and the agreement had been voted on and approved.

New Business

Inclement Weather Policy

Councilman Creech moved to approve the Inclement Weather Policy. Councilman Buckmon seconded the motion and it passed.

Solar Farm Revenue

Council Creech said the Personnel Committee recommended that some of the Solar Farm revenue be discussed in the Finance Committee's preparation of the '18-'19 budget to help increase employees salaries. Councilman Buckmon said it was important to make sure that enough revenue was also set aside to make the bond payment.

Sale of Surplus Property

Councilman Creech said the Personnel Committee recommended that surplus equipment be sold instead of traded in with proceeds designated to a surplus account for the purchase of new equipment for the department that had sold the surplus equipment. Councilman Buckmon moved to approve the Personnel Committee's recommendation. Councilman Creech seconded the motion and it passed.

Approval of Job Descriptions for Clerk to Council/Administrative Assistant and Custodian

Councilman Creech moved to approve the revised job descriptions for the Clerk to Council/Administrative Assistant and Custodian. Councilman Buckmon seconded the motion. Councilman Buckmon said at the time of the dissolution of the Deputy Administrator's position, the duties were assigned to the Administrative Assistant, the Public Works Administrative Assistant, the Business Manager, and the Administrator. The Administrative Assistant, nor the Public Works Administrative Assistant received a pay increase for the additional duties assigned. Councilman Buckmon confirmed with Councilman Creech that the duties assigned to the Administrative Assistant were included in the revised job description. Councilman Houston asked if a pay increase was being considered because of the duties not listed in the previous job description. Councilman Buckmon said the Administrative Assistant had been with the County seven years, had received no pay increase except for a 3% cost of living, that the closest wage comparison was Bamberg County which paid \$10,000 more than Barnwell County for the same position and in the other Counties, the salaries for that position were even greater. Councilman Buckmon said such wage differences were not the fault of the new Council as they were trying to increase employees' salaries, that a comparison needed to be done and needed to be fair to everyone. Councilman Creech suggested the agenda item be tabled until after Executive Session and withdrew his motion. Councilman Houston move to table the matter until after Executive Session. The motion was seconded and it passed.

Resolution Related to Purchase of Front Loader Truck

Councilman Harper moved to approve this Resolution. The motion was seconded and it passed.

Request from the Town of Hilda

Vice Chairman Kinlaw moved to approve the request from the Town of Hilda concerning building inspections. The motion was seconded and it passed.

Councilman Creech moved to enter into executive session. The motion was seconded and it passed.

Executive Session

No action was taken in Executive Session.

Open Session

Coming as a recommendation of the Personnel Committee, Councilman Creech moved to approve the revised job descriptions for the Clerk to Council/Administrative Assistant and the Custodian. Councilman Buckmon seconded the motion and it passed.


Councilman Creech moved to have personnel matters related to Public Works, Administrators Office, Business Manager, Sheriff's Department, Emergency Management, Auditors Office, Treasurers Office Clerk, and Clerk of Court turned over to the County Administrator. Councilman Buckmon seconded the motion and it passed.

Councilman Creech moved to have the Personnel Committee recommendations turned over to the Finance Committee for discussion at their next meeting. Councilman Buckmon seconded the motion and it passed.

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

The meeting adjourned at 9:00 pm.


Kim Futrell, Clerk of Council


Charles Lowell Jowers Sr., Council Chairman