

CITY OF BARNWELL, SOUTH CAROLINA

**MINUTES of the SPECIAL CALLED MEETING of BARNWELL CITY COUNCIL
FEBRUARY 27, 2024 – 5:15 pm**

MEETING LOCATION:
130 Main Street, Barnwell, SC 29812

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

Council Members Present: Mayor Ron Still, Mayor Pro Tem Kinlaw, and Councilmembers Alicia Davis, Louis Claytor, and Jana Myers

Council Members Absent: Councilmember Wanda Highsmith

Others Present: City Administrator Lynn McEwen, City Attorney Thomas Boulware, Clerk & Treasurer Kim Vargo, Fire Chief Phillip Delk, and Assistant Fire Chief Scotty Hankins

The People Sentinel was informed of the meeting but no one from the press was present.

CALL TO ORDER

Mayor Still called the meeting to order.

CONSIDERATION OF PRINCIPAL AMOUNT AND REPAYMENT TERM OF 2024 GENERAL OBLIGATION BOND AND ACCEPTANCE OF PROPOSAL FOR THE PURCHASE THEREOF

Mayor Still stated that a General Obligation Bond was needed to finish the construction of the fire department and Council packets included information on fire station expenses, bid received for the General Obligation Bond, and millage rate increases to cover payment of the bond. Administrator McEwen said that approximately \$4.2 million was received for the project through state and local grants, federal ARPA money, and interest. Expenses are anticipated to be \$5.2 million so she is recommending that we borrow \$1 million. Any additional expenses would have to come from savings. If the City borrowed \$1,000,000 for 7 years, an additional millage of 13 mills would be needed to pay the yearly bond payments. This would increase property taxes on a \$150,000 owner occupied house by \$78 a year. Councilmember Myers said she was not involved in the three meetings that discussed the bond and wanted to know if the public was made aware that there would be a tax increase for this. Mayor Still stated that all three meetings were open to the public. Discussion followed. Councilmember Myers said that she has talked to the city attorney and reviewed the information but since she has not talked to a bond attorney it would be irresponsible of her to vote on something that she was not involved in, so she was going to abstain from voting. Councilmember Davis asked if there was another way to get the money instead of raising taxes. Administrator McEwen stated all funding options have already been explored. Mayor Still said to keep in mind that we only received one bid with a repayment option of 5 or 7 years. We had

Barnwell City Council Meeting Minutes
February 27, 2024

hoped to get a 10 year option to keep the tax increase down but it did not happen. Councilmember Davis said she was all for the fire station, but she was concerned about raising taxes. Mayor Still said that none of them wanted to increase taxes but it was necessary to complete the project. Mayor Pro Tem Kinlaw agreed with Councilman Claytor that there really was not a choice but to move forward. If the project had to be stopped it would cost more in the future to complete it. Councilmember Davis asked how much time was there to decide. Attorney Boulware said there was a time limit on the bid and the closing date was set for March 14th. Councilmember Claytor made a motion to accept the City Administrator's recommendation to set the GO Bond limit at \$1,000,000 and amortize it for 7 years with a interest rate of 4.37% and to accept First Citizens Bank's proposal for the City's 2024 General Obligation Bond in the principal amount of \$1,000,000 with repayment over 7 years at an interest rate of 4.37%. The motion was seconded by Mayor Pro Tem Kinlaw. Mayor Still, Mayor Pro Tem Kinlaw, and Councilmember Claytor voted for the motion. Councilmember Davis voted against the motion. Councilmember Myers abstained from voting. The motion passed 3 to 2.

ADMINISTRATOR'S ADDITIONAL UPDATE

Administrator McEwen stated that the current trash collection contract was up in September. She is sending out a request for proposal tomorrow. This will allow plenty of time in case problems arise and it has to be rebid.

ADJOURN

Councilmember Davis made a motion to adjourn. The motion was seconded by Mayor Pro Tem Kinlaw and unanimously approved.

Submitted by:



Kim Marie Vargo, Clerk & Treasurer

Barnwell City Council Meeting Minutes
February 27, 2024