

CITY OF BARNWELL, SOUTH CAROLINA

**MINUTES of the MEETING of BARNWELL CITY COUNCIL
March 7, 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, and Councilmembers Brad All, Ryan Bragg, Alicia Davis, James Moody and Ron Still

Councilmembers Absent: Mayor Pro Tem Peggy Kinlaw

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

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

CALL TO ORDER AND INVOCATION

Mayor Rivera called the meeting to order, and Councilmember Still led in prayer.

APPROVAL OF THE AGENDA

Councilmember Moody made a motion to approve the agenda. The motion was seconded by Councilmember All and unanimously approved

STUDENT RECOGNITION

None

BUSINESS/ORGANIZATION RECOGNITION

None

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PUBLIC COMMENTS

Ms. Barbara Christian was concerned about animal control. Since the retirement of Officer Drayton Gantt, she was informed that there would no longer be an animal control officer. Officers that were on duty would perform this function. She said that she also volunteered for the animal shelter, so she knew the amount of work Officer Gantt did. She had several questions about the feasibility of this and if all the officers would be trained in this area. Councilmember Moody asked Ms. Christian to give him her list of concerns and he would have the Police Chief address them. Ms. Christian also said she was on the Sundial Festival committee. The festival will be held this Saturday, March 12th, on the Circle from 9:00 to 3:00. There will be over 60 vendors and activities planned throughout the day, including an Easter egg hunt for the children.

Mr. Stephen Hunter said he was a new resident to the City. He wanted to know how the public could find out what is on the agenda for Council meetings. Administrator McEwen informed him that the agenda is posted in City Hall and on the City website the Thursday or Friday before the Monday meeting. He said he was very excited about being asked to be on the Mayor's advisory committee but was taken back about the subject at the last Council meeting. He felt that the disagreement was all about one word and wished that the elected officials would have worked it out before the meeting.

REQUEST FROM HEALING PARTNERS ON THE FARMER'S MARKET

Ms. Pam Rush and Ms. Dawn Snead came before Council to request a collaboration between the City and Barnwell County Healing Partners in the operation of the farmer's market. Ms. Rush explained that Healing Partners began in 2012 as Eat Smart, Move More. In 2019 they received funding from Duke endowment to improve access to healthy foods and improve opportunity for safe and active play. This funding has been approved for another three years. They worked with the City in the past to create the farmers market and funded the manager for the first two years. The City then took over funding. There has not been a manager for the last few years and basically there is only one farmer. They presented a Healing Partners Farmers Market Enhancement Plan. They would like to reenergize the market by funding the manager for this season. They would also like to do demonstrations on how to prepare foods found at the market. Discussion followed. Councilmember Moody raised a question about the days and times. The hours had to be set times, but Ms. Snead said the hours of operation could be changed to what was most beneficial to the vendors. Councilmember Still raised a concern about the safety of getting out of the Fuller Park parking lot into traffic. Administrator McEwen said she could talk to SCDOT about possible solutions. The City could also add some caution signs during market times. Councilmember Still also asked what they would be looking at for next year. Next year they would like the funding to be split 50-50 between the City and Healing Partners, possibly

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\$4,500 from the City. Councilmember Davis made a motion to accept the proposal to collaborate with Healing Partners for the farmer's market. The motion was seconded by Councilmember All. The motion passed unanimously with Mayor Rivera recusing himself from the vote because he is a member of Healing Partners.

REQUEST FOR REDUCTION IN CONTRACT FOR THE BBSA FOR 2022

Mr. Brad Whitehead, BBSA Vice President of Baseball, provided Council with the BBSA 2021 financial information. He was requesting a reduction in the City's proposed fee \$5,500 for use of the LPSC. The opening ceremony would be held March 28th and the season should run through May 20th. All Stars will start in June. They would like to see netting put up for foul balls in the quadraplex and along Hagood Ave. Mr. Whitehead explained their expenses and funding sources in detail. He would like to see a reduction in the fee and have the fee set for more than one year. Discussion followed. Councilmember Bragg had to leave the meeting due to an emergency. Councilmember Still made a motion to reduce the contract price for BBSA use of the LPSC to \$4,000 a year for the next three years with the option of them returning to Council if their funding situation changes. The motion was seconded by Councilmember All and unanimously approved.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES OF FEBRUARY 7, 2022, REGULAR SCHEDULED CITY COUNCIL MEETING

Councilmember Davis made a motion to approve the minutes of the February 7, 2022, regular scheduled City Council meeting. The motion was seconded by Councilmember Still and unanimously approved.

FIRST READING OF ORDINANCE 2022-01 AMENDING SECTION 2-55 OF THE BARNWELL CITY CODE OF ORDINANCES

Councilmember Moody made a motion to table since Councilmember Bragg requested this, and he had to leave because of an emergency. The motion was seconded by Councilmember All and unanimously approved.

Attorney Boulware asked to be excused due to a prior commitment.

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DISCUSSION ON THE CITY'S HEALTH PLAN

There had been discussion and questions about the possibility of changing the City's Health Plan from BCBS to PEBA. Administrator McEwen gave Council an update on the results of a survey given to employees about the existing health plan. Preliminary information has been received from PEBA but there are still many questions that need to be answered. Administrator McEwen's recommendation is to wait for more information. If we wait until January to change plans, employees will not lose the amount they have already contributed to their deductible. This will also allow time to get the July rate increases for BCBS and any rate increases for PEBA. Discussion followed. It was decided that this needed to be looked into but wait for the additional information needed to make an informed decision.

COMMITTEE REPORTS

Water and Sewer (Councilmember All) – Director Philip Stanley informed Council that he had purchased a 20' trailer for the WWTP to help haul off sludge.

Sanitation and Streets (Mayor Pro Tem Kinlaw) – The County transportation committee has agreed to have Byrd St repaved by next spring.

Parks, Recreation and Tourism (Councilmember Davis) – Councilmember Davis stated that basketball season has ended. She wanted to thank everyone for their participation and for all of the volunteers. The lights keep getting left on at the basketball court at Fuller Park. Mayor Rivera said that effective tomorrow the court would be closed for two days. If the players continue to leave the lights on, they will be shut down for a week.

Police (Councilmember Moody) – Police Chief Robinson stated that his department only had \$500 budgeted for community events and most of it has already been used. They are going to have a community event in April. Councilmember Moody asked the Chief to let them know how much was needed to fund these events. The Chief also updated Council with police activity for the month.

Fire (Councilmember Bragg) – Fire Chief Tony Dicks provided Council with a written report for activity for the month.

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

Building and Planning (Councilmember Still) – No Report

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ADMINISTRATOR'S UPDATE

- Make a Difference day will be Saturday, March 26th, from 8 to 12.
- An ARPA meeting has been scheduled for this Thursday for Council and the ARPA committee members.
- An item on the County agenda has the County taking over Main St from Jefferson St to Jackson St. SCDOT said it was the City's, but we have no record of it and the City has never owned any streets. The County will take it over so they can get it paved and striped.
- The Sundial Festival will be held this weekend.

Councilmember Moody asked when the splash pad would be open. Administrator McEwen said it was scheduled to be open May 1st but if the weather continues to be warm, it could be opened earlier.

EXECUTIVE SESSION (1) DISCUSSION OF PROPOSED INDUSTRIAL DEVELOPMENT (2) PERSONNEL-PARKS & RECREATION HIRING DISCUSSION

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

Council returned to regular session.

ADJOURN

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

Submitted by:



Kim Marie Vargo, Clerk & Treasurer