

**CITY OF BARNWELL, SOUTH CAROLINA**

**MINUTES of the MEETING of BARNWELL CITY COUNCIL  
October 7, 2024 – 5:30PM**

MEETING LOCATION:  
130 Main Street, Barnwell, SC 29812

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

Councilmembers Present: Mayor Ron Still, Mayor Pro Tem Peggy Kinlaw, and Councilmembers Louis Claytor, Alicia Davis, Ricky Dixon, Wanda Highsmith, and Jana Myers

Councilmembers Absent: None

Others Present: City Administrator Lynn McEwen, City Attorney Thomas Boulware, Clerk & Treasurer Kim Marie Vargo, Police Chief Michael Butts, and PRT Director Tommy Elkins

Ms. Alexandra Whitbeck from the People Sentinel was also present.

**CALL TO ORDER**

Mayor Still called the meeting to order. Councilmember Highsmith led in prayer.

**PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE & CIVILITY PLEDGE**

Council led the pledge of allegiance and the civility pledge.

**PUBLIC COMMENTS**

Mr. Craig Ridgeway said there is a speeding issue on Galilee Rd especially around shift changes. He appreciates the response from the police department over the weekend but more needs to be done. He feels that if more tickets are issued word will get around and help alleviate the problem. Police Chief Butts said they are aware of the problem and are looking into it.

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Ms. Deborah Coleman said she believes that during the business license process people are being treated differently because of their color. Some businesses get their license right away while others have to wait longer and jump through hoops. Mayor Still said the procedure is different for different types of businesses and she can set up a meeting with staff for any questions she may have.

Mr. Kelly Odom said he was trying to open a business and was questioning some of the City's policies. He has been trying to comply, but the process has been delaying him.

Mr. Adrian Miller said he needed guidance in the process to develop some land he bought in Barnwell. Administrator McEwen told him to set up a meeting with her.

#### **APPROVAL OF THE MINUTES OF THE SEPTEMBER 9, 2024, REGULAR SCHEDULED CITY COUNCIL MEETING**

Councilmember Claytor made a motion to approve the minutes of the September 9, 2024, regular scheduled City Council meeting. The motion was seconded by Councilmember Dixon and unanimously approved.

#### **APPROVAL OF THE MOU WITH AMERIPRO HEALTH**

Council was presented with a memorandum of understanding between the City and AmeriPro Health to house one of their ambulances in the fire department for a backup ambulance. Mayor Pro Tem Kinlaw made a motion to approve the MOU. The motion was seconded by Councilmember Dixon and unanimously approved.

#### **APPROVAL OF THE INTERGOVERNMENTAL AGREEMENT WITH THE COUNTY**

Council was presented with an intergovernmental agreement with the County to provide Municipal Clerk of Court duties while the current Municipal Clerk of Court is on leave. Mayor Pro Tem Kinlaw made a motion to approve the agreement. The motion was seconded by Councilmember Claytor and unanimously approved.

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**FIRST READING OF ORDINANCE 2024-6 “AN ORDINANCE TO AMEND CHAPTER 20, ARTICLE VI, OFFENSES AGAINST PROPERTY TO ADD SECTION 20-166 CAMPING, SECTION 20-167 BEGGING, AND SECTION 20-168 LOITERING OF THE CITY OF BARNWELL, SOUTH CAROLINA, CODE OF ORDINANCES”**

Councilmember Dixon made a motion to read the ordinance by title only. The motion was seconded by Councilmember Claytor and unanimously approved. Administrator McEwen read the ordinance by title only. Councilmember Dixon made a motion to approve the first reading of Ordinance 2024-6. The motion was seconded by Councilmember Claytor and unanimously approved.

**FIRST READING OF ORDINANCE 2024-7 “AN ORDINANCE TO AMEND CHAPTER 22, PARKS AND RECREATION OF THE CITY OF BARNWELL, SOUTH CAROLINA, CODE OF ORDINANCES”**

Mayor Pro Tem Kinlaw made a motion to read the ordinance by title only. The motion was seconded by Councilmember Claytor and unanimously approved. Administrator McEwen read the ordinance by title only. Mayor Pro Tem Kinlaw made a motion to approve the first reading of Ordinance 2024-7. The motion was seconded by Councilmember Claytor and unanimously approved.

**APPROVAL TO APPLY FOR THE FY 2025 RECREATIONAL TRAILS PROGRAM GRANT**

Administrator McEwen sent in a pre-application for a FY 2025 Recreational Trails Program Grant. The state has approved the pre-application, and she is asking for approval to apply for the grant which is due in February. This is a state grant that requires a 20% match. Matching funds will come from hospitality taxes and possibly grant funds from Axis 1. Councilmember Claytor made a motion to approve applying for the grant. The motion was seconded by Councilmember Highsmith and unanimously approved.

**APPROVAL OF THE UPDATED POLICE DEPARTMENT PURSUIT POLICY, USE OF FORCE POLICY, AND THE HIRING AND TERMINATION POLICY**

Council was presented with updated police department policies on pursuits, use of force, and hiring and terminations. Councilmember Dixon questioned why the selection process for new officers had to be approved by the Administrator. Administrator McEwen said the Administrator position had to approve all new hires for all departments. Councilmember Highsmith questioned some of the language in the pursuit policy. Police Chief Michael Butts said the language in the policy came directly from the SC Criminal Justice Academy.

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Councilmember Claytor made a motion to approve the updated policies. The motion was seconded by Mayor Pro Tem Kinlaw and unanimously approved.

### COMMITTEE/DEPARTMENT REPORTS

Water and Sewer (Councilmembers Claytor & Myers) – No Report

Sanitation and Streets (Councilmembers Davis & Myers) – Councilmember Myers is pursuing funding options for crosswalk upgrades. The City has rented a street sweeper for a month. There will be no more mosquito spraying this year.

Parks, Recreation and Tourism (Councilmembers Dixon & Highsmith) – PRT Director Tommy Elkins said all sports were back running this week after being postponed last week due to the storm. Scheduled events include the Turkey Trot, November 16<sup>th</sup>, Christmas Downtown, December 7<sup>th</sup>, and basketball registration is ongoing until January 3<sup>rd</sup>.

Police (Mayor Pro Tem Kinlaw & Councilmember Dixon) – Councilmember Dixon along with other Councilmembers thanked all law enforcement, fire departments, electric companies, and all personnel for their work during the storm. They also thanked everyone for attending the First Responder Banquet. Police Chief Butts gave a report on monthly activities. He said they have purchased three speed signs that will help with speeding.

Fire (Mayor Pro Tem Kinlaw and Councilmember Claytor) – Fire Chief Philip Delk gave a report on monthly activities and storm responses. He thanked all of the career and volunteer firefighters who helped during the storm. Citizens must obtain a burning permit before they can burn any debris. October is Fire Safety Month and the elementary school children have been touring the fire station.

Finance and Salary (Mayor Pro Tem Kinlaw & Councilmember Davis) – Councilmember Davis said she gets a lot of questions from people about business licenses because they are still confused about what they need even after getting the information from city hall. She would like to see updated policies. Councilmember Dixon said he would like to give new business owners a list of steps to follow to open a business in the City.

Building and Planning (Councilmembers Claytor & Highsmith) – No Report

Downtown Revitalization (Councilmembers Dixon & Myers) – Councilmember Myers said they are seeking guidance from Aiken for facade grants. The final draft of the mural was received and will go through a coloring and software process. She will let Council know when they receive an installation date. Questions came up about City approval. Administrator McEwen said the zoning ordinance did not address murals, but it could not be an advertisement. She said she thought there was discussion that the design would be brought back to Council. The Mayor and

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Mayor Pro Tem agreed. Councilmember Myers said they could bring it back to Council but there is nothing in place that allows for Council approval. It is up to the building owner. Councilmember Dixon said the mural was tastefully done.

### ADMINISTRATOR'S REPORT

- SCDOT will have crews coming to clean up the storm yard debris from the right of ways. Citizens need to be patient and not block the sidewalks.
- The Barnwell homecoming parade will be held October 25<sup>th</sup> with lineup at 3:30 pm and parade at 4:00 pm.
- The application for the RIA Planning Grant has been submitted. There is no required match. .
- The application for the Rural Communities Initiative Grant for up to \$250,000 has been submitted. If awarded a \$100,000 match will come from hospitality tax funds.
- Construction for the SCIIP RIA elevated tank project is scheduled to begin mid-November.
- Camera and smoke testing is ongoing for the SCIIP RIA sewer rehab project.
- The SCIIP wastewater expansion project is finally coming together. The route in the preliminary engineering report that the grant was based on went down Dunbarton Blvd. This was impossible since there was no space to put new utilities without breaking up the pavement and it would require twenty to twenty five easements. We had to relook at the route and the new route will only require six easements. We are working hard to have the project bid in February or March.
- We are working on some other ordinances in addition to those introduced tonight and will present them at the next meeting.
- We are still working on the Special Event policy and application.
- I have been in contact with SCDOT about the process for the wayfinding signage but the storm has delayed our discussions. I am waiting for confirmation from SCDOT for what we can do before going to the sign company for mockups.

### ADJOURN

Councilmember Highsmith made a motion to adjourn. The motion was seconded by Councilmember Dixon and unanimously approved.

Submitted by:

  
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Kim Marie Vargo, Clerk & Treasurer

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