

CITY OF BARNWELL, SOUTH CAROLINA

**MINUTES of the MEETING of BARNWELL CITY COUNCIL
January 6, 2025 – 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, Deputy Fire Chief Scotty Hankins, and Public Works Director Philip Stanley

The press was notified but none were present.

CALL TO ORDER

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

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE & CIVILITY PLEDGE

Council led the pledge of allegiance and the civility pledge.

PUBLIC COMMENTS

Ms. Phyllis Rhodie said there is still a litter problem in the Pine St and Calhoun area and wanted to know what else could be done. Administrator McEwen said the City has bags, gloves, and pickup sticks available if Ms. Rhodie can get some volunteers together to help pick up trash. The City will pick up the trash bags. Ms. Rhodie asked for Church St to be placed on the list for

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the next City wide trash pickup. She also wanted to know how to get Pine St paved. Administrator McEwen said the City did not own any roads. This request would have to go to the County or SCDOT.

Mr. Willie Walker said he was representing some citizens who had several issues. The first was abandoned houses and overgrown lots. Mayor Stil said the City is in the process of cleaning up areas. The second was eighteen wheelers being parked in residential areas. Administrator McEwen said zoning and safety issues would have to be looked at. The last issue was the City drug problem. Elderly people do not want to say anything because they are worried about retribution. Police Chief Michael Butts said anyone can call him and it would be kept confidential.

INTRODUCTION TO WELVISTA-WANDA DICKS

Ms. Wanda Dicks is the Community Outreach Coordinator for Welvista. Welvista is a nonprofit mail order pharmacy in Columbia that helps provide free prescription medicines to qualified uninsured South Carolina residents. She explained the basics of the program. She is trying to raise awareness of the program in Barnwell County. She does work with The Well in Barnwell.

APPROVAL OF THE MINUTES OF THE DECEMBER 2, 2024, REGULAR SCHEDULED CITY COUNCIL MEETING

Councilmember Dixon made a motion to approve the minutes of the December 2, 2024, regular scheduled City Council meeting. The motion was seconded by Councilmember Myers and unanimously approved.

FINANCE SALARY COMMITTEE APPOINTMENT CHANGE

Mayor Still said City Code Section 2-55 Council Committees states that membership on the salary committee shall change annually. This has not been done recently. Since Councilmember Davis has been on this committee the longest, she will come off and go on the W&S committee. Councilmember Claytor will come off the W&S committee and go on the salary committee.

COMMITTEE/DEPARTMENT REPORTS

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

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Sanitation and Streets (Councilmembers Davis & Myers) – Our new refuse collection contractor Good Ole Boys has been doing an excellent job. Complaints are down from the previous contractor.

Parks, Recreation and Tourism (Councilmembers Dixon & Highsmith) – Basketball registration has closed. Participants will be notified about teams. The Daddy/Daughter Dance is being planned.

Police (Mayor Pro Tem Kinlaw & Councilmember Dixon) – Police Chief Butts gave a report on monthly activities. The department has lost two officers. He has rehired one certified officer and hired a new uncertified officer.

Fire (Mayor Pro Tem Kinlaw and Councilmember Claytor) – Council was given a written report on monthly activity. EMT calls account for 56% of all calls. Deputy Fire Chief Scotty Hankins said one of the fire trucks is in the shop due to getting gas that had water in it. Councilmember Dixon commended the department and everyone involved who helped with the fundraiser for Billy Gainey, a former City employee.

Finance and Salary (Mayor Pro Tem Kinlaw & Councilmember Davis) – No Report

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

Downtown Revitalization (Councilmembers Dixon & Myers) – No Report

ADMINISTRATOR'S REPORT

-Safebuilt Code Enforcement Officer Joshua Thomas has been working on several high profile issues. He has sent out citations and is waiting for responses before working on the legal process.

-Footings and foundation for the SCIIP RIA elevated tank project are complete. Tank construction will begin this month.

-Our engineers have received the report from the camera and smoke testing for the SCIIP RIA sewer rehab project. They are asking for clarification on some issues before preparing the bid documentation.

-Received the Encroachment License from Carolina Gas Pipeline for the SCIIP wastewater expansion project. Plans are complete and some minor final revisions are being made to the specifications. The Construction Permit Application package will be submitted to SCDES this week.

-We have been awarded the RIA Planning Grant to use cameras and smoke testing for fissures in the old downtown section of Barnwell. The \$242,000 grant does not require any matching funds.

-SCDOT requires a break away post for the wayfinding signs. The company we were working with could not meet SCDOT requirements. I am working with a sign company from Augusta. SCA understands the issue and will still help with the payment of the signs.

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EXECUTIVE SESSION

Councilmember Highsmith made a motion to enter into executive session for discussion of the employment of an employee in administration. The motion was seconded by Councilmember Dixon and unanimously approved.

Mayor Still declared the Council was out of executive session.

ADJOURN

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

Submitted by:



Kim Marie Vargo, Clerk & Treasurer