

CITY OF BARNWELL, SOUTH CAROLINA

**MINUTES of the MEETING of BARNWELL CITY COUNCIL
February 3, 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, and Jana Myers

Councilmembers Absent: Councilmember Highsmith

Others Present: City Administrator Lynn McEwen, City Attorney Thomas Boulware, Clerk & Treasurer Kim Marie Vargo, Police Captain James Thorpe, Fire Chief Phillip Delk, PRT Director Tommy Elkins, and Public Works Director Philip Stanley

Jonathon Vickery and Stephanie Shavers with the People Sentinel were present.

CALL TO ORDER

Mayor Still called the meeting to order. Mayor Pro Tem Kinlaw led in prayer.

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE & CIVILITY PLEDGE

Council led the pledge of allegiance and the civility pledge.

PUBLIC COMMENTS

None

SWEARING IN POLICE OFFICERS

Attorney Thomas Boulware administered the oath of office to police officers Ernest Lewis, James Sapp, and Britt Stokes Jr.

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APPROVAL OF THE MINUTES OF THE JANUARY 6, 2025, REGULAR SCHEDULED CITY COUNCIL MEETING

Councilmember Dixon made a motion to approve the minutes of January 6, 2025, regular scheduled City Council meeting. The motion was seconded by Mayor Pro Tem Kinlaw and unanimously approved.

APPROVAL OF THE MINUTES OF THE JANUARY 13, 2025, SPECIAL CALLED CITY COUNCIL MEETING

Mayor Pro Tem Kinlaw made a motion to approve the minutes of January 13, 2025, special called City Council meeting. The motion was seconded by Councilmember Dixon and unanimously approved.

APPROVAL OF THE MINUTES OF THE JANUARY 14, 2025, FINANCE & SALARY COMMITTEE MEETING

Councilmember Claytor made a motion to approve the minutes of the January 14, 2025, finance & salary committee meeting. The motion was seconded by Councilmember Davis and unanimously approved.

APPROVAL OF THE CONTINUATION OF PLANNING COMMISSION MEMBERS SHELBY WILLIAMS-BROOMFIELD AND BENNIE WIGGINS JR FOR ANOTHER TWO YEAR TERM

Councilmember Claytor made a motion to approve the appointments. The motion was seconded by Councilmember Dixon and unanimously approved.

APPROVAL OF AN MOU BETWEEN THE CITY AND COUNTY FOR THE KAYAK PROGRAM

The kayaks will be located in Kilkenny Park. The County is working on a structure to house the kayaks. Mayor Pro Tem Kinlaw made a motion to approve the Memorandum of Understanding. The motion was seconded by Councilmember Myers and unanimously approved.

FIRST READING OF ORDINANCE 2025-1 “AN ORDINANCE TO REPEAL AND REPLACE IN ITS ENTIRETY, CHAPTER 5 ARTICLE VIII SOLAR USE, OF THE CITY OF BARNWELL ZONING ORDINANCE

Councilmember Dixon made a motion to read the ordinance by title only. The motion was seconded by Mayor Pro Tem Kinlaw and unanimously approved. Administrator McEwen read the ordinance by title only. Councilmember Davis made a motion to approve the first reading of Ordinance 2025-1. The motion was seconded by Councilmember Claytor and unanimously approved.

COMMITTEE/DEPARTMENT REPORTS

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

Sanitation and Streets (Councilmembers Davis & Myers) – Public Works Director Philip Stanley gave a report of trash and furniture picked up in January for the Palmetto Pride Litter Crew Grant. Councilmembers Jana Myers and Alicia Davis have been working on making a more walkable City by connecting downtown to other areas of the City. They are looking into intersection upgrades, Community Investment Program, possible ramp over Dunbarton from Fuller Park to the lake, and repaving Circle.

Parks, Recreation and Tourism (Councilmembers Dixon & Highsmith) – PRT Director Tommy Elkins said basketball will continue into March. Plans for the Daddy/Daughter Dance are being revisited since other entities have similar dances. Received County approval to extend the area for placing flags during holidays from the circle up Pechman St.

Police (Mayor Pro Tem Kinlaw & Councilmember Dixon) – Captain James Thorpe gave a report on monthly activity. One certified and two uncertified officers have been hired. Citizens have been contacting the department about drug activity since they know they can do so anonymously. These areas have been under surveillance.

Fire (Mayor Pro Tem Kinlaw and Councilmember Claytor) – Fire Chief Phillip Delk gave a report on monthly calls. The cost to repair the fire truck for damage due to water in the gasoline was over \$18,000. This bill will be sent to the vendors insurance company for payment. They will be going to look at a possible replacement ladder truck on February 13th.

Finance and Salary (Mayor Pro Tem Kinlaw & Councilmember Davis) – Mayor Pro Tem Kinlaw said the finance and salary committee recommends that the City accept the resignation of City Administrator Lynn McEwen. They also recommend John Zawacki, Tony Dicks, Meridith Wright, and Pickens Williams Jr. be part of a search committee for her replacement. The search committee along with Mayor Still, Mayor Pro Tem Kinlaw, and Councilmembers Claytor and Davis will make recommendations to the full Council of applicants after an initial review of applications and initial interviews. Councilmember Claytor made a motion to accept the finance

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and salary committee's recommendations. The motion was seconded by Mayor Pro Tem Kinlaw and unanimously approved. Clerk & Treasurer Kim Vargo reminded Council to file their Statement of Economic Interest by March 30th. Field work for the yearly audit has been finished. The audit cannot be completed until information from the state retirement system is received. The state usually sends this information out in late February.

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

Downtown Revitalization (Councilmembers Dixon & Myers) – Councilmember Myers said the committee has been working on finding funding for more murals and building relationships with businesses to gain knowledge of their needs to help them prosper. Councilmember Davis asked Administrator McEwen if Councilmember Myers could help out with updating the City's Facebook page since she had an IT background. Administrator McEwen said this would be taken into consideration.

ADMINISTRATOR'S REPORT

- The newspaper article on condemnation of buildings has prompted the owner of one of these buildings on Marlboro Ave to talk to the City about plans.
- Concrete footings/foundations for the SCIIP RIA elevated tank project are complete, Final concrete cylinder tests will be performed February 10th.
- All field work for the SCIIP RIA sewer rehab project is complete. The bid documents are being prepared for submission to RIA. The project should go to construction in April or May.
- We have received notice to proceed with smoke testing of the sewers in the older section of downtown Barnwell for the RIA planning grant.
- We are working on getting signed easements for the SCIIP wastewater expansion project. Bamberg should have the first reading of the ordinance for the property transfer this month. We still expect to have all in place for a March bid deadline.
- I am getting a final mockup from St. Clair Signs of Greenville, SC for the wayfinding signs. This will be sent to SCDOT for a right of way permit. It will be a little over \$9,000 for four signs.
- Gave an update on the blight elimination program with Southeastern Housing.
- We will be submitting an application to MASC awards for the fire station.
- We will not apply for the \$100,000 State Trails grant as originally anticipated. There is too much going on right now. The application has already been started, so someone can pick it up if the City wants to apply in the next year or two. The State said not applying this year will not hurt the City.

EXECUTIVE SESSION

Councilmember Claytor made a motion to enter into executive session for discussion on contractual negotiation for an industrial prospect and contractual negotiation on Interim Administrator. The motion was seconded by Councilmember Davis and unanimously approved.

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Mayor Still declared the Council was out of executive session.


Councilmember Myers made a motion to accept the City Administrator's recommendation to move forward with the industrial prospect. The motion was seconded by Councilmember Davis and unanimously approved.

Mayor Pro Tem Kinlaw made a motion to offer the position of Interim Administrator to Thomas Dicks with the terms recommended by the finance committee. The motion was seconded by Councilmember Claytor and unanimously approved.

ADJOURN

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

Submitted by:



Kim Marie Vargo, Clerk & Treasurer