

Council Meeting Minutes
For
October 2, 2006
Branchville Town Hall
7:00 P.M.

PRESENT

Mayor Tim Cooner
Councilman Glenn Miller
Councilman Charles Dukes
Councilwoman Amy Bryant
Councilwoman Georgianna Harmon
Councilman Chris Ott

OTHERS PRESENT

Rhonda Thompson Town Clerk

GUESTS

Beatrice Miller	Carolyn Campbell	Bill Silverthorne	Betty Skolasky
Debra Perugini	Al Hammond	Charles Bamberg	Luther Folk
Donald Valentine	Bessie Hardwick	Raymond Hardwick	Josephine Priester
Virginia Peele	Margaret G. Frazee	Leland B. Frazee	Sammie Ruple
Luvenia Williams	John Goodwin	Jackie Etheridge	

Mayor Cooner asked that all stand for the Pledge of Allegiance followed by a moment of silence for our invocation.

Mayor Cooner welcomed all guests to the meeting and stated we have a full house and that is very good to see.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

Mayor Pro tem Charles Dukes made a motion to approve the minutes of September 11th Town council meeting with a second from Councilman Glenn Miller. Motion carried.

PUBLIC COMMENTS – AGENDA ITEMS/NON AGENDA ITEMS

Mayor Cooner asked for public comments on items of agenda.

-Ms. Virginia Peele as humbly as possible am asking for the Town's and council's permission to open a Bible Book Store and when you involve God she thinks nothing but good can come into play.

-Ms. Margaret G. Frazee then spoke on questions of 911 and how long it took them to respond to her call on August 20th. Then she shared how amazed she was at Rail Rode Daze to see so many people around Branch Junction with Branchville EMS on their shirts and at the Ambulance in the parade. Branchville is beautiful with the flowers and the water has been improved. Ms. Frazee stated no one has died from the lack of water or flowers but could from the lack of response of local EMS.

Moved on to public comments of other matters.

-Ms. Beatrice Miller then shared with us about the National Kidney Walk the first one in SC, on October 26 at the Edisto Gardens, in Orangeburg and asked permission to leave pamphlet in the Town Hall for people to sign up for the walk or donations.

Councilwoman Harmon said she had spoken with someone who said there are five dialysis centers within a 35 mile radius and they were not opening any more. Then Ms. Miller state that there are plans of opening one more.

-Chief Barbara Walters said she was here on request of Sheriff Williams because they had received a piece of information that the Sheriffs office was not properly working drugs in the area, and she wanted to assure the Town that the sheriff's office were doing the best they can to assist the Town in combating the war on drugs. Narcotics people have been trying to get informants and without informants you get nowhere. Chief Walter then stated that there where rumors and she doesn't believe in rumors that they couldn't lock up the drug dealers because they were related to Sheriff Williams. I can assure you he will put you in jail no matter whether you are kin to him or not. Chief Walters went further to say they were an assisting agency and were here to assist us in any way possible.

-Charlie Byrd spoke and said he was the assistant coach for the Branchville High School basketball team and they went around to the old elementary school gym and the locks have been changed again and Mayor Cooner said he would make sure we got some keys for the team to use. Councilman Miller said that the locks were changed but not to keep the basketball team from using the gym, obviously they had not been given the new key to the current locks. Councilman Miller then asked if Mr. Smith would be responsible for the last person leaving and making sure the fans were turned off, because we have reports of the fans running continuously over the weekends back in the summer and our concern is the high electricity bills the Town has had to pay.

APPROVAL OF FINANCIAL REPORT

Mayor Cooner asked pleasure of approving the financial report and Councilman Glenn Miller said approved as released and Councilwoman Amy Bryant seconded. Motion carried.

Committee and Staff Reports

Police Department

-Mayor Cooner stated that everything seems to be running along pretty smooth. Mayor Cooner said he could not think of anything stolen in the last few weeks so everything is good. Councilman Miller said glad to see notice of Leash Law on the Town Sign. He said after the last council meeting there was an incident about some dogs and started to be a serious problem and Councilman Miller appreciated Mayor Cooner and Doc's assistance. Councilman Miller stated if you see a dog in the street to call it in. Councilman Miller then stated this was our Town and no one needed to be afraid to walk down the streets of the Town.

Public Works -The public works department is doing a good job and did a wonderful job after cleaning up during and after Rail Rode Daze. Mayor Cooner said the men had worked all day long on a 2 inch line that was abandoned ran into some problems and hopefully will be finished tomorrow.

Mayors Report

-The Mayor everything was running smoothly and received a letter from Orangeburg County Sheriff's office today stating they had 33 officers present at the Rail Rode Daze Festival and congratulations to the Town for putting on an excellent community event. Mayor Cooner said only eight people were arrested and had a show of as many people as usual and the festival was a success.

Beautification Committee

-Mr. Bill Silverthorne said the beautification committee was involved in the projects across from Skeeter's as well as across from the Baptist church. Mr. Silverthorne said the committee has done a lot this year but he does not believe they have done enough. He commented on the video store that has been an eye sore and complimented the Mayor for having something done with that. Councilwoman Harmon asked what the next step on the video store would be and Mr. Silverthorne said that he believed nothing because the roof was falling in. Mr. Sammie Ruple said he saw in the minutes about the sidewalk by Clyde McAlhany's house and he said before he retired from SCDOT they tried to repair the sidewalk the lady who owned the house that burned down was the hold up because she did not want to cut down the tree which roots were causing the sidewalk problem. Mayor Cooner commended Mr. Silverthorne and the Beautification Committee for all of the work they did in Town for the Rail Rode Daze clean up. Mayor Cooner went on to discuss the asbestos clean up at the school. The Town has one bid for \$14,000 and another from Safety Kleen out of Columbia for approximately \$20,880. Senator Matthews has presented \$31,000. Currently we have two quotes totaling \$43,000, which is a total of \$14,000 for clean up and \$29,000 for demolition of the building. The hold up now is getting the asbestos out. Mayor Cooner said the Town will get some more bids on this project. The house on the corner of Fairey and Edwards has been an eye sore for many years, we started campaign six months ago and now they are in the process of bringing the house up to code. We have one individual that does not want to comply with our guidelines about the cleanliness of the yards in our Town. This gentleman has hired an attorney and Mayor Cooner said it just takes time to put this kind of ordinance into effect with the \$200.00 per day fines. Mayor Cooner attended the Orangeburg County Council meeting and Orangeburg County trying to pass ordinance about property maintenance and if the people don't respond the county will.

OLD BUSINESS

Mayor Cooner has nothing to report at this time.

NEW BUSINESS

Mayor Cooner asked the pleasure of the Council on the second reading of the water rate increase. Councilman Glenn Miller motioned and Chris Ott seconded. Motion carried. Mayor Pro Tem Charles Dukes said before starting on Capital Projects lets make everyone happy and talk about the Christmas Parade. Councilwoman Amy Bryant and Councilwoman Georgianna Harmon will chair the Christmas Parade. Mayor Cooner stated to get a calendar and select a good date for the parade. Mayor Cooner said a couple weeks ago he came into town and saw more people up there at the intersection of Highway #210 and Highway #21 that he had seen in Branchville for a number of years and Mayor Pro Tem Charles Dukes said that was the 6 to 8 year old jamboree. It was said approximately 450 people were there. Mayor Cooner commended the people involved in these events and that work with the youth of our town. Mayor Cooner asked about a Christmas party and if Councilman Miller and Councilman Ott would cook this year, and it was decided to wait a little longer to finalize the details

PROGRESS ON CAPITAL PROJECTS

Mayor Cooner commented the Town should be aware that the highway department moved out of Branchville, and he was waiting to see what would happen to that property. That would be a good location, and when the Bowman highway department shut down, Bowman got the building. The Mayor then said that if we inherited the property we could develop it into something good. Councilman Miller made the motion to write the appropriate letters regarding Branchville securing Highway Department property and Councilwoman Amy Bryant seconded. One Councilman Chris Ott Abstained from voting. Motion carried. Councilman Miller voiced concerns that he would prefer no parks or picnic areas.

ITEMS OF INFORMATION

-Mayor Cooner said he would like to attend the SC Rural Water Association Conference that will be held in November. Mayor Cooner asked council to approve 3 slots for council members to attend the SC Rural Water Association. Councilwoman Georgianna Harmon motioned, Mayor Pro Tem Charles Dukes seconded, motion carried and Councilman Chris Ott abstained from voting.

-Mayor Cooner called Washington and invited Congressman Jim Clyburn to attend Rail Rode Daze Festival. Congressman Clyburn attended and him and the Mayor visited while they walked and talked he asked what project was giving the Town the most grief and Mayor Cooner stated the Freight Depot, so Congressman Clyburn will try and get the Town assistance on the extra \$400,000 needed.

-Mayor Cooner also requested to spend Thanksgiving in Washington – which is the place you get your name on the list for additional fund monies to be awarded.

Mayor Cooner asked Council if there was anything else and if now need to adjourn for executive session to discuss a personnel matter and contractual matter. Mayor Pro Tem moved and Councilman Miller seconded. Motion carried.

Meeting Adjourned.

Respectfully Submitted,

Rhonda Thompson

Rhonda Thompson
Town Clerk