

Council Meeting Minutes
For
January 8, 2007
Branchville Town Hall
7:00 P.M.

PRESENT

Mayor Tim Cooner
Councilman Glenn Miller
Councilwoman Amy Bryant
Mayor Pro Tem Charles Dukes
Councilwoman Benita Gibbs
Councilman Chris Ott
Councilwoman Georgianna Harmon

OTHERS PRESENT

Rhonda Thompson Town Clerk

GUESTS

Beverly Berry	Charlie S. Byrd	Carolyn Campbell	Bessie Hardwick
Betty Skolasky	Debbie Perugini	Luther Folk	Beatrice Miller
Luvenia Williams	Chrystal Gibbs		

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

Mayor Cooner welcomed everyone out and mentioned it was a nice crowd.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

Mayor Cooner asked the pleasure of Council on the approval of minutes Mayor Pro Tem Dukes motioned and Councilman Ott seconded.

PUBLIC COMMENTS – AGENDA ITEMS/NON AGENDA ITEMS

Mayor Cooner asked for public comments on items of agenda, hearing none.

PUBLIC COMMENTS OF OTHER MATTERS

Mr. Charlie Byrd said he was here on behalf of the Branchville High School and the Red Cross was sponsoring a blood drive at the School on February 1st from 1:30 – 7:30 and would like all persons that could to give.

Ms. Luvenia Williams said we were having a good turnout at the Community Center with the Senior Program and she invited everyone to come and visit to see how the seniors were enjoying themselves. Ms. Williams also thanked Amy Bryant for the contribution Ott's Country Store gave to the Senior Program. Mayor Cooner stated that we opened the Center on January 2nd for the Grand Re-Opening we had guests attend from the Lieutenant Governors office, Representative Gilda Cobb-Hunter and Orangeburg County Council Chair Harry Wimberly. Mayor Cooner then said we have fed an average of 41

meals per day for the past five days. That type of number is proof that there is a need for this type program in the Town of Branchville. Mayor Cooner verified with Ms. Williams that we have 65 on the roster and 17 on a waiting list. Mayor Cooner then advised the Council they could eat there any time but the call Ms. Williams and give her a heads up so she could plan for the extra meals. Mayor Cooner said that this is a wonderful thing and but we needed to continue to do fun activities to keep the interest. Ms. Williams is working on a few field trips to get the seniors out and about. Mayor Cooner said that his dream would one day be once the Town Hall is renovated to make a Senior Center upstairs and have different rooms for designated for the various hobbies or games and a separate dining room for the meals. Mayor Cooner said that the Town of Branchville was posted on the Lieutenant Governors web site.

Mayor Cooner then proposed a list of Council Meeting dates prepared by the Town Clerk.

Garden
Mayor Cooner stated that some time ago he brought before Council the idea of closing the Town Hall on Wednesday afternoons at 1:00 p.m. Councilman Miller said that he had a question if anyone knew why that ever was started, and stated that in 1942 it was for the Victory Guard, and Councilman Miller said that was so behind the times. Councilwoman Harmon said it seems as if all the towns do that. Councilman Miller said it was time to move on now. Councilwoman Harmon said she thought it was a cute concept.

Mayor Cooner said we received \$450,000 grant through the Governor's office for Streetscape, and we received letter back in November saying the Town had received the Grant. Mayor Cooner said he has the official letter that needs signing. Mayor Cooner said he wanted Mayor Pro Tem Dukes to sign and one other Councilperson. Mayor Cooner said he seemed to have a problem getting Streetscape off and going and the problem seemed to be permitting by DOT, and our engineer and DOT have not been able to agree on the pipe size for the project that was submitted some time ago in the past. Mayor Cooner said these permits were holding up the \$450,000. Mayor Cooner discussed the plans he had anticipated for Highway 78 East from the intersection to the Villa, with curb and gutter on the side of the street. Mayor Cooner said Highway 78 West would qualify quicker for Streetscape. Mayor Cooner said between Highway 21 and Ott Street on the first block we could fix it up with some Carriage Lights and some nice trees. Mayor Cooner said Palm trees would be the way to go and Mayor Pro Tem Dukes said Palm trees did not do anything for him. Councilwoman Bryant mentioned the possibility of Crepe Myrtles. Mayor Cooner said he would want to change the style of Carriage lights that we currently display to a different style because you can push the one we have now over. Councilwoman Gibbs asked about streetscape being a trail walk, where there would be enough room for two people meet each other and every so often put in benches and trashcans. Mayor Cooner said he would hate for someone to get mugged or raped in that area. Councilman Miller said you can't live all your life in a shell, being scared. Then there was a discussion amongst the Council about having the railroad track cleaned up and who was going to clean it up. Councilman Miller said he thought that would be a good idea for the trail walk. Mayor Cooner said some wanted to build a lodge with a nature trail for companies to come and visit from N.Y. and such. Mayor Cooner

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said that he thought about something like a track to be built between the tracks. Councilwoman Harmon said the money had been approved for something else to be done. Mayor Cooner said a track would be something for future money. Mrs. Berry asked the status of the platform, Mayor Cooner said waiting on the contract from the railroad. Mr. Folk said to get some of the Council to ride over to Springfield and see the walking area they have.

Mayor Cooner asked if any of the Council brought names of Architects. Mayor Cooner said that we would take pictures of woodwork at the Freight Depot. Mayor Cooner said Congressman Clyburn said the \$400,000 was coming so ADA requirements would have to be met. Mayor Cooner said his recommendations to the Council would be to get an Architect to draw up the plans, the Town to buy the materials and hire a company to do the construction. Mayor Cooner said the wanted the construction to be exactly like it was in the past, but in that case the doors and windows would be so out of proportion.

Councilman Miller stated that we needed to know what we are planning to do with the Depot just as much as restoring it. Mayor Cooner said his opinion would be for the Town to keep the front and the back could be used for office space for companies such as Finance Company, Lawyer Office or Insurance Company. Councilman Miller said the reason he wanted to know was because the Town had made one mistake and did not need to make another. The Town needs to spend a lot of money in 2007 said Mayor Cooner.

Councilwoman Bryant said maybe we could utilize some of the money allocated to decorate the Town prettier at Christmas. Mayor Cooner said if you go somewhere and see something you like to let him know. Councilwoman Bryant said that you can't see the arrow painted in the turn lane anymore and she said someone almost hit her on the way to the bank the other day. Councilwoman Bryant said maybe we could put up a sign "turn only lane with an arrow".

APPROVAL OF FINANCIAL REPORT

Mayor Cooner asked pleasure of approving the financial report and Councilman Miller motioned and Councilwoman Bryant seconded.

COMMITTEE AND STAFF REPORTS

Police Department

-Mayor Cooner stated that the Police Department was doing a great job and mentioned to the Council that the Town went an entire year without a major incident. Mayor Cooner said that Luvenia has Crime Watch people coming to talk at the Community Center with the seniors.

Administrative Office

-Councilman Miller stated nothing at this time.

Public Works

Mayor Cooner stated sewer pump at the pond that is broke and probably would cost in excess of \$6,000.00. Mayor Cooner said he met with DHEC and went and looked at the CBP site and determined it might be a candidate for a pretreatment site. Mayor Cooner said their attorney finally realized that it was a conflict of interest for him to represent

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CBP because McNair law firm at times handles issues for the Town. Mayor Cooner said that it does not seem we can come to a compromise.

Mayors Report

Mayor Cooner said I guess y'all have seen the Old School is gone and approximately \$50,000.00 was spent on that clean up. Mayor Cooner said that we are the SCRWA 2006 System of the Year. The SCRWA is having a Decision Making Summit and we need to be there. Mayor Cooner said he will send our water to the Great American Water Taste Test for the state and the winner will go to a national level in Washington.

Beautification Committee

Mayor Cooner said that Mr. Bill Silverthorne was not present and his wife had been under the weather and he was probably home with her. Mayor Cooner asked if anyone had anything on the Beautification Committee.

OLD BUSINESS

Mayor Cooner asked if we had any Old Business, Councilman Miller said he was addressed about the water across from Zion Church. Mayor Cooner said we would not serve that area on the water project now. Councilman Miller said how much would it cost, Mayor Cooner said \$50,000.00 - \$75,000.00, you would have to have engineering agreement, DHEC permit, permit for highway right of way, inspections and so on.

NEW BUSINESS

Mayor Cooner asked if the Council had any new business to discuss. Councilman Ott said there are two trees at the American Legion Hut pushing up the cement and making the wall of the building to crack. Councilman Ott said he had gotten a price from Myers at \$400.00/per tree. There was some discussion regarding the coolers at the old elementary school. Mayor Cooner said we need to do better than what we are doing and we don't have a bunch of money to work with, but we get hung up on small issues. Mayor Cooner said once he became Mayor he thought he had the authority to make any decision on \$5,000.00 or less. Anything more than that he would have to bring it before Council. Mayor Cooner said the Old Fire Station needs to be fixed, Mayor Pro Tem Dukes said fix or tear down. Mayor Cooner said fix it. It only needs a new door and a new roof. Mayor Cooner said was is the ruling on how much he can spend without Council approval. Mayor Pro Tem Dukes said that should be at the discretion of the Mayor. Mayor Cooner then said, at the Freight Depot, the truss and cap to meet the code should be around \$15,000, and the Mayor has no idea what to guess on the price of the metal because it has gone up so much. The Mayor then said he could probably find someone locally to do the work for approximately 15,000 and the Town would still be under \$100,000 spent and would already have the roof on. Councilwoman Harmon asked if we always bid on issues, and Councilman Miller said that is the way to stay out of trouble. Mayor Cooner said him and Council had a work session back in October and he was ready to move forward on the Freight Depot. Mayor Cooner said that he wanted someone with nice camera to go and take good pictures of what is there now and so we can duplicate. Councilwoman Bryant offered to take the pictures. Mayor Cooner asked

pleasure of Council of building without architect and get local people to build
Councilwoman Harmon motioned and Councilwoman Bryant seconded.

PROGRESS ON CAPITAL PROJECTS

Mayor Cooner stated we are trying to finalize everything on the Regional Water Project.

ITEMS OF INFORMATION

Mayor Cooner mentioned once more that he would like to attend the SCRWA Decision Maker's Summit and anyone else that wanted to attend to let him know. Councilwoman Gibbs said she wanted to attend. Mayor Cooner asked if anything else to discuss and there was discussion amongst the Council about the Council meeting date in December and they agreed to change it to Tuesday December 4, 2007.

Mayor Cooner said if no further business could he have a motion to adjourn. Mayor Pro Tem Dukes motioned and Councilman Miller seconded.

Meeting Adjourned.

Respectfully Submitted,

Rhonda Thompson
Town Clerk