

Council Meeting Minutes
For
January 7, 2008
Branchville Town Hall
7:00 P.M.

PRESENT

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

OTHERS PRESENT

Rhonda Thompson Town Clerk

GUESTS

Phyllis Overstreet	Beverly Berry	Dan Campbell
Debra Perugini	Carolyn Campbell	Betty Blaylock
Betty Skolasky	Gidget Vickers	John Goodwin

Mayor Cooner called the meeting to order and asked that all stand for the Pledge of Allegiance followed by a moment of silence.

Mayor Cooner said we have a heavy agenda tonight and the first thing that needs to be done is have the Honorable Judge Richard Murray to swear in all the Councilpersons from the last election as well as the Mayor.

The Honorable Judge Richard Murray did swear in Councilmen Ott, Miller and Dukes and after those three did swear in Mayor Cooner.

Mayor Cooner said he wanted to move around on the agenda and the Town's Engineer was present and he wanted to move him into the agenda at this time. Mr. Kirk Nivens presented a letter to the Mayor and Council regarding the Regional Water Project. Mr. Nivens read the bid winners and said the totals were less than budget for the project. Mr. Nivens recommended that Council award these contracts and also to pass a resolution authorizing the Mayor to sign all documents as Rural Development approves them. Mr. Nivens then asked approval of Council for the Mayor to execute a Notice of Intent to Award. Mayor Cooner asked for Councils approval to make a resolution for the Mayor and Clerk would be able to sign all documents pertaining to the Regional Water Project. Councilman Dukes motioned and Councilman Miller seconded.

Mr. Nivens brought forth to Council that the Town was having difficulty with sewage system back-ups. Mr. Nivens recommended to Council that the Town consider purchasing a Sewage system-cleaning machine. This machine would cost approximately \$40,000.00. Mayor Cooner said that several years ago the Town acquired this money through the "Second Penny".

Mayor Cooner then read the bond Ordinance for the Regional Water Project by name only that was prepared by McNair Law firm and it was motioned by Councilman Dukes and seconded by Councilman Ott. Mayor Cooner then said there would be a special called meeting next week for the second reading of the Ordinance.

Mayor Cooner said as the law states after the election, during the first called meeting of the New Year, a Mayor Pro Tem would be elected. Mayor Cooner passed out small pieces of paper and the votes read as follows Councilman Miller with six votes and Councilman Dukes with one vote. The new Mayor Pro Tem will be Councilman Miller.

Mayor Cooner said that he needed to add to the agenda the quote from McGregor and Company.

Mayor Cooner stated that Council needs to approve the dates scheduled for our next twelve Council meetings. Council agreed to change the meeting for December 2008 to a Tuesday so people would be able to attend the "Tour of Homes". Mayor Cooner asked the pleasure of Council on the Council meeting dates, Councilman Dukes motioned and Councilwoman Bryant seconded.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

Mayor Cooner asked the pleasure of Council on the approval of minutes Councilman Ott motioned and Councilwoman Gibbs seconded.

PUBLIC COMMENTS – AGENDA ITEMS/NON AGENDA ITEMS

Mayor Cooner asked for public comments, hearing none.

PUBLIC COMMENTS OF OTHER MATTERS

Mayor Cooner asked for public comments Mr. Daniel Campbell brought a picture of the welcome sign that is out on Highway 78 East and said there was black paint on the sign and it had been like that since he knew Branchville existed. Mayor Cooner said we would call Sign a Rama and have it fixed. Mrs. Carol Copes spoke to say that the residents of Brian's Residential Care walk in the street and someone is going to get hurt and Councilman Dukes said we need to see about a sidewalk on that street. Mrs. Beverly Berry mentioned that the street she lives on seems like a racetrack here lately. Mayor Cooner addressed the Clerk and said to call the Orangeburg County Administrator and find out who the C-Fund chairman is and contact them regarding the sidewalk. Mayor Cooner said we would handle the sign on Highway 78 East and pass along the speed complaint on Fairey and Bridge Streets to the Chief of Police.

APPROVAL OF FINANCIAL REPORT

Mayor Cooner asked the pleasure of Council for approving the financial report, after several questions from Councilwoman Harmon. Councilman Dukes motioned to approve and Councilman Ott seconded.

COMMITTEE AND STAFF REPORTS

Police Department –

-Mayor Cooner said the Police Department is doing a good job and Linda Luck graduates from the Police Academy on January 11th.

Administrative Office

-Mayor Cooner asked Councilman Miller if he had anything. Mayor Pro Tem Miller thanked the Clerk for putting the phone number for Orangeburg County dispatch on the water bills.

Public Works

-Mayor Cooner said everything is running good.

Mayors Report

-Mayor Cooner said this should be a good time to discuss the approval of C.C. McGregor to continue doing our audits for the Town. Mayor Cooner said they have been doing them for the past seven or eight years. Mayor Cooner read to Council the anticipated costs of having C. C. McGregor continue to do the Town's audit for the next three years. Mayor Cooner recommends that C.C. McGregor continue to do the audit and Councilman Dukes motioned and Mayor Pro Tem Miller seconded.

Mayor Cooner said the Town received a letter from an Attorney and that issue would need to be discussed in executive session.

OLD BUSINESS

Mayor Cooner said he had no old business to discuss tonight. Councilwoman Harmon asked about the roof on the Town Hall. Mayor Cooner responded by saying we have stopped proceeding on the Town Hall until better planning can be done. Mayor Cooner said that Mr. Nivens and himself might take a trip to Washington in the next few weeks and they would pay for it out of their pockets. Councilwoman Harmon then asked about the siren for the pole and Mayor Cooner responded to that question by saying that it is still being looked at and will have to be moved. Councilwoman Bryant said the Freight Depot looks Great. Councilwoman Harmon asked about the employee loans and Mayor Cooner said they have been stopped, until Council can come up with some type of policy for employee loans. Councilwoman Harmon then had several questions regarding the employee handbook and had it been updated. Mayor Cooner replied no it has not been updated, and the Town uses it as an outline. Councilwoman Harmon then asked the Clerk if she had completed the list of Ordinances for her and the Clerk replied no. There was some discussion at this time regarding updating the Town's Ordinance books and the cost of that project would be approximately \$5,000 to \$6,000.

NEW BUSINESS

Mayor Cooner said the Council needs to pass the Grievance Procedures and Reasonable Accommodation ADA/Section 504 and the Town Clerk in the past has always become the compliance manager for the Section 504. Mayor Cooner asked the pleasure of Council and Councilman Dukes motioned and Councilwoman Bryant seconded.

PROGRESS ON CAPITAL PROJECTS

Mayor Cooner said this item has already been covered tonight.

Mayor Cooner said there has been some discussion regarding our Business License Ordinance. Mayor Cooner said he has done a lot of homework researching different Town's Ordinances and reviewing a new one for our Town. Mayor Cooner then discussed in great detail the new Ordinance that our Town is considering adopting. Mayor Cooner compared license amounts from the current Ordinance to the one we are considering adopting. Mayor Cooner said that we can't continue to keep on doing what we have been doing as far as our Business Licenses are concerned, something has got to change. Councilman Ott, Councilwoman Bryant and Councilman Dukes, who are Merchants, had concerns regarding casting their votes on this issue. Mayor Cooner came up with a four-year plan to gradually raise the Business License Rates to where they should be in the next four years. The numbers for the tier should be something similar to .12, .13, .14, (.15, .16, or .17).

Mayor Cooner asked the pleasure of Council on having Senn Construction proceed with the Streetscape Project. Councilwoman Bryant motioned and Councilman Dukes seconded.

ITEMS OF INFORMATION

Mayor Cooner said there is going to be a SCRWA Decision Maker's Summit held in February

Mayor Cooner then asked for a motion to go into executive session to discuss a letter from a lawyer and Councilman Dukes motioned and Councilwoman Gibbs seconded.

Mayor Cooner advised Council he has no other business at this time and asked for a motion to adjourn.

Meeting Adjourned.

Respectfully Submitted.

Rhonda Thompson
Town Clerk