

Lamar Town Council Meeting Minutes January 8, 2024

Mayor James Howell called The Lamar Town Council Meeting to order at 6:16 PM.

Deacon Tim Dargan gave the invocation.

Mayor Howell took roll call of all council members present: Mayor Howell, Councilwoman Bradley, Councilman Cook, Councilwoman Mary Ann Mack, and Councilwoman Inez B. Lee.

Others in attendance: Tim Dargan, Chief Carl Scott, and Chip Kempson. Doug Poston and Karl McColleston appeared via Zoom.

Councilwoman Mack made a motion to accept the agenda for the January 8, 2024, Lamar Town Council Meeting. Councilwoman Bradley seconded the motion. The motion carried unanimously.

Councilwoman Bradley made a motion to accept the minutes from the December 11, 2023, Lamar Town Council Meeting, and the December 18, 2024 Lamar Town Council Meeting. Mr. Dargan interjected that the minutes from the December 18th meeting were not available. Councilwoman Bradley then made a motion to accept the minutes from the December 11, 2024, Lamar Town Council Meeting. Councilman Cook and Councilwoman Lee seconded the motion. The motion carried unanimously.

Lamar Citizen, Chip Kempson, spoke to council about a dog attack that killed his cat on January 3, 2024; the incident was captured on video. Mr. Kempson said that Chief Scott and the Darlington County Animal Control are helping, but he would like the mayor, council, and administration to be more concerned and active about the stray dog's situation. He mentioned that comments such as, "If people will stop feeding stray cats" – doesn't help the situation.

Councilwoman Mack asked if the animal shelter was taking animals again. Chief Scott said they were.

Doug Poston of Douglas R. Poston, Jr. CPA gave the financial Report:

General Fund (December 2023): Receipts - \$31,416.94, Disbursements - \$39,940.57, Decrease in cash - \$8,523.63, Ending cash balance - \$463,100.77 (\$228,093.47 of these funds are from the American Rescue Funds).

Utility Fund (December 2023): Receipts - \$44,977.75, Disbursements - \$51,380.72, Decrease in cash -\$6,402.97, Ending cash balance - \$81,927.98 (\$24,792.78 available for operations; \$57,135.20 for restricted grant funds).

Councilwoman Mack asked why the Utility Fund balance decreased. Mr. Poston remarked that the balance fluctuates from month to month, but the account is in good shape.

Mr. Poston gave the "Budget to Actual" Report for each department. Councilman Cook asked if the report was for the fiscal year. Mr. Poston stated that it was for 6 months.

Lindsay Privette from the Pee Council of Government (COG) submitted the SCIIP Grant Report:

Activities completed:

- December 11, 2023: Teresa Jacobs, PDRCOG Grants Specialist, began direct solicitation of construction firms for the project as per SC RIA SCIIP requirements.
- December 22, 2023: Quarterly Progress report 2 was submitted to SC RIA and the Town of Lamar.
- January 3, 2024: A Bid Opening Reminder and Request for No Bid Forms email was sent to the 17 firms that have requested bid documents ahead of the upcoming bid opening.

Upcoming activities:

- Bid Opening will be held at Lamar Town Hall at 2:00 pm on January 9, 2023
- Following the Bid Opening, PCRCOG Staff will prepare and submit the construction contract for review and approval. The review period is estimated to be 30 days,

Councilwoman Bradley made a motion to receive Ms. Privette's report as information. Councilman Cook seconded the motion. The motion carried unanimously.

Councilwoman Bradley gave the Codes and Business Report. Councilwoman Bradley asked Karl McColleston of Gov.Possible (who appeared before council at the October Lamar Town Council Meeting) to appear via zoom to further explain how the Town would benefit from using the services of his company. In addition to providing a business license portal, the Town would also be integrated into the State's business license portal. The data would be saved in the system for processing future business licenses as well as sending out annual renewal letters. The Town would also be given a credit card reader to process credit card payments. The setup fee for the service is \$1,200 and the annual fee amount is \$1,200. Councilman Cook made a motion for the Town to proceed with a making a contract with Gov.Possible. Councilwoman Bradley seconded the motion. The motion carried unanimously.

Councilwoman Lee gave the Beautification Commission Report. Councilwoman Lee said that she didn't have a report to give; however, the commission is scheduled to meet on January 12th.

Councilwoman Lee gave the Water & Sewer Report. She stated that the SCADA unit on the water tanks were showing low water levels on the tanks on December 30 – 31 2023, but the level started rising on January 1, 2024. Mayor Howell said the low reading levels were due to a leak in the county that was found and repaired. Councilwoman Lee also gave the Water Loss Report. The Town was billed \$13,125.75 from DCWSA. Gallons Purchased: 4,066,370 Gallons Billed: 2,567,815 Gallons Water Loss: 1,498,555

Councilwoman Mack gave the Streets and Sanitation Report. Councilwoman Mack did not have a report, but she reminded the citizens of Lamar to report streetlights outages to Duke Energy.

Councilman Cook gave the Lamar Police Department Report:

- The South Carolina Department of Commerce Grant will be submitted at the end of January 2024.
- Officer Lindsay Lorenzo will be graduated from the SC Criminal Justice Academy on December 22, 2023. She is now a certified officer.
- The First Responders Parade was held on December 21, 2023.
- Animal Control has resumed setting animal traps.
- Contact Animal Control for stray animals (843-398-4011).
- Read Ordinance 3.211 Dogs Running at Large Prohibited.
- Encourage residents to call the Anonymous Tip Line at 843-326-1449 (non-emergency calls). Residents with helpful information can also call Chief Scott directly. For emergencies call 911.

Councilman Cook read a Martin Luther King Day Proclamation for the Town of Lamar. Councilwoman Bradley made a motion to adopt the proclamation. Councilwoman Lee seconded the motion. The motion carried unanimously.

Mr. Dargan gave an update on the upcoming MLK Day March & Celebration, and the Bid Opening Event for the Railroad Lift Station. Councilwoman Mack also pleaded with citizens to take precaution for the severe weather storm that has been predicted for tomorrow (January 9th). Councilwoman Mack also spoke about the Egg Scramble Jamboree schedule for the first week in April. This year marks the 40th Anniversary of the festival.

Mayor Howell announced that American Luxury Coach purchased the Craig's Industries building and warehouse Mid-November 2023. He said that the company plans to hire approximately 70 employees. It will be approximately 6-8 months before they are ready to open.

Councilwoman Mack asked what typed of business it will be. Mayor Howell responded that the company will oven bake, powder coat, and refurbish parts.

Councilwoman Bradley commented that the business and the local schools should partner together to train job applicants. Councilman Cook said that it's a win-win for everyone.

Councilwoman Lee asked why the council was not notified earlier. She said that they should have known as soon as the mayor found out. She asked if someone spoke to the citizens that live in that area. Mayor Howell said that the owner asked him not to say anything. The owner is supposed to appear at the next council meeting.

Councilman Cook made a motion to adjourn the Lamar Town Council Meeting. Councilwoman Mack seconded the motion. The motion carried unanimously.

Mayor Howell adjourned the meeting at 7:04 pm

Respectfully Submitted,

Timothy L. Dargan, Town Administrator