

Lamar Town Council Meeting Minutes  
February 12, 2024

Mayor James Howell called The Lamar Town Council Meeting to order at 6:20 PM.

Rev. Adrian Allen of Lamar Baptist Church gave the invocation.

There was a moment of silence in memory of Edward "Ed" Johnson.

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 (Town Administrator), Carl Scott (Chief of Police), Joe Jebaily, and Tadi Ajan.

Councilwoman Lee made a motion to accept the agenda for the February 12, 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 18, 2023, Called Lamar Town Council Meeting, and the January 8, 2024, Lamar Town Council Meeting. Lamar Town Council Meeting. Councilwoman Lee seconded the motion. The motion carried unanimously.

Joe Jebaily, Owner of American Luxury Coach, spoke to council about his new business venture. He was joined by employee Tadi Ajan. Some of their topics of discussions included:

- Purchased the Craig Manufacturing and Outlet building. Currently remodeling the building.
- Black Horse International is a worldwide company in based in America and Mexico. The plan is to make Lamar the headquarters for the operation.
- Refurbish parts.
- Manufacturing and powder coating will increase after the sale of the North Carolina business.
- Need gas line installed.

Councilwoman Mack asked about environmental impact to the rural community. Mr. Jebaily said the powder coat would be recaptured and not get into the air.

Mayor Howell and Councilwoman Lee asked about the numbers of employees and training opportunities. Councilwoman Lee also asked about hours of operations. Mr. Jebaily said they planned to hire up to 70 employees. He stated that potential employees could get training in Florence; their aim is to help the community. He said that the plant would be open from 7:30 am – 8:00 pm, eventually getting to 5:30 – 6:00 pm. Mr. Ajan added that they would gradually hire up to 70 employees but could potentially hire more. He said that there would be one shift but could eventually have two shifts.

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

General Fund (January 2024): Receipts - \$13,707.09, Disbursements - \$62,110.11, Decrease in cash - \$48,403.02, Ending cash balance - \$414,697.75 (\$228,093.47 of these funds are from the American Rescue Funds).

Utility Fund (January 2024): Receipts - \$38,289.46, Disbursements - \$32,602.24, Increase in cash -\$5,687.22, Ending cash balance - \$87,615.20 (\$30,471.71 available for operations; \$57,143.49 for restricted grant funds).

Councilwoman Bradley made a motion to accept the financial report as information. Councilman Cook seconded the motion. The motion carried unanimously.

Teresa Jacobs from the Pee Council of Government (COG) submitted the SCIIP Grant Report:

Activities completed:

- January 9, 2024: Bid opening was held at the Lamar Town Hall at 2:00 pm.
- January 24, 2024: Post-bid (virtual meeting) with Abby Linden, SC RIA Grants Program Manager at 3:00 pm to discuss the scope of the project, the bid opening, and next steps.

Upcoming Activities:

Project will be re-bid in February.

QPR3 to be completed and submitted by March 29, 2024

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

Councilwoman Bradley gave the Codes and Business Report:

Business owners can renew their business license via (1) The State Business License Portal (MASC), Gov. Possible, or by contacting Lamar Town Hall.

New business owners must contact the Town Hall directly.

Business Renewal letters will be mailed out beginning the week of February 19, 2024.

The contract between the Town and Gov. Possible has been signed.

The violation sent by the Town's Code Enforcement Officer needs more clarification for the property owners.

Councilwoman Lee gave the Beautification Commission Report.

The Beautification Commission is working on giving the trash cans on Main Street a new look.

The Great American Clean-Up...March 21-23, 2024

Councilwoman Lee gave the Water & Sewer Report:

- The Grooms and Pearl Street Water Tanks have been fluctuating recently, but they are being monitored.
- Water line repairs at Spaulding Elementary School (Pear Street), Duke Street, and East Jackson Street.

Water Loss Report for the Month of January 2024:

Gallons Purchased: 4,803,670, Gallons Billed: 2,156,306, Gallons Loss: 2,647,364 (Paid to DCWSA -\$15,485.11)

Water leaks have contributed significantly to the water loss.

Mayor Howell Addresses the Delinquent Water Bills:

- Customers with a delinquent water bill will have their water disconnected immediately (starting on February 13<sup>th</sup>)
- They must pay the entire delinquent balance and a \$50 reconnection fee before water service is restored.
- If a customer tampers with the water meter, they will be charged a \$200 tampering fee.
- The Town and other agencies have tried to work with customers, but the Town has no choice but to collect the money that is due.
- Customers are not charged for water leaks. They are only charged for water that goes through their water meter.

Councilwoman Mack gave the Streets and Sanitation Report:

- Reminded citizens to report street light outages to Duke Energy.
- Alerted citizens to driving hazards being caused by road work and by manholes being uncovered.
- Local businesses could possibly be violating a code by draining a cooler in the street.
- Shared map of the state-maintained streets within the city limits of Lamar with council and citizens.
- Looking at street signs that may need replacing.
- Spoke to Rep. Robert Williams and will speak to Senator Malloy about securing funds for a community building.
- Looking into SCPR Grants. The grant requires an 80-20 match.
- Discuss possibility of selling trees on property at South Davis Street (Hwy 401).
- Citizens are concerned about blocked access to homes and possible access for town property.

Councilman Cook gave the Lamar Police Department Report:

- The South Carolina Department of Commerce Grant Quarterly Report was submitted for Quarter 4 of 2023. With the acceptance of this report, the remaining \$75,000 of the \$150,000 allocated in the grant will be released to the Town.
- Grant Expenditures for the Quarter 4 of 2023 included the following:  
(1) Quarterly bonus pay to officers, (2) uniforms, (3) transmission work on both police cruisers, (4) Offsetting salaries for Chief Scott and Officer Lorenzo.
- 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.

Chief Scott is checking into other items that may be covered under the grant.

Councilwoman Mack thanked Chief Scott for being the Town's connection to DOT.

Mr. Dargan gave a report on upcoming events. He discussed the events for the Egg Scramble Jamboree and the fundraiser for Christmas on Main.

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

Mayor Howell adjourned the meeting at 7:24 pm

Respectfully Submitted,

Timothy L. Dargan, Town Administrator