

Lamar Town Council Meeting Minutes May 13, 2024

Mayor James Howell called the Lamar Town Council Meeting to order at 6:17 PM.

Councilwoman Inez B. Lee gave the invocation.

Mayor Howell took roll call: Mayor Howell, Councilwoman Angele White- Bradley, Councilman Tyler Cook, Councilwoman Mary Ann Mack, and Councilwoman Inez B. Lee were all present.

Others in attendance: Tim Dargan, Carl Scott, Lindsay Privette, Preston Watson, Brent Bullard, and Danielle Wikes.

Councilwoman Bradley made a motion to accept the agenda for the May 13, 2024, Lamar Town Council Meeting. Councilman Cook seconded the motion. The motion carried unanimously.

Councilwoman Bradley made a motion to accept the minutes from the April 8, 2024, Lamar Town Council Meeting and May 2, 2024, Lamar Town Council Called Meeting with adjustment to the report giving by Councilwoman Lee in the April 8, 2024, Lamar Town Council Meeting. Councilman Cook seconded the motion. The motion carried unanimously.

Danielle Wilkes, who signed up to speak in advance, asked members of the Egg Scramble Jamboree Committee what their plans were for the banners and poles mounted throughout town. She said that she would get with Councilwoman Mack to discuss the matter later. Ms. Wilkes mentioned that the Town Hall Christmas Tree needs to be upgraded. She and William Spring will give the Town a quote for a wire-framed tree. In closing, Ms. Wilkes said that there will be a "Christmas in July" raffle held in the month of July. A drawing will be held every day of the month.

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

General Fund (March 2024): Receipts - \$10,733.15, Disbursements - \$36,104.41, Decrease in cash - \$25,371.26, Ending cash balance - \$487,727.54 (\$209,653.43 of these funds are from the American Rescue Funds).

Utility Fund (March 2024): Receipts - \$39,892.94, Disbursements - \$44,649.53, Decrease in cash -\$4,756.59, Ending cash balance - \$88,198.67 (\$31,039.12 available for operations; \$57,159.55 for restricted grant funds).

Mr. Dargan gave an update on the Town of Lamar FYE 2023 Audit and the budget schedule for the FYE 2025. The audit is underway, and documents are being pulled and processed. The budget schedule is as follows:

Budget Workshop – Monday, May 20th at 6:00 pm

First Reading of Budget Ordinance – Tuesday, May 28th at 6:00 pm

Second Reading of Budget Ordinance – Monday, June 10th at 6:15 pm

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

Activities Currently On-Going/Completed:

- April 26, 2024, Town of Lamar met with Davis & Floyd to discuss the plans for rescoping and rebidding of project.

Upcoming Activities:

- Rebid in May 2024
- Bid opening June 2024

Lindsay Privette of the Pee Dee Regional Council of Government, and Preston Watson of Davis & Floyd appeared before the council to give an update on the Railroad Avenue Lift Station Project

Lindsay Privette said that the Bid Opening for the Railroad Avenue Lift Station construction was held on January 9, 2024. The bids that came in were much higher than the funds that are available for this project. She spoke to Abby Linden at the Rural Infrastructure Authority (RIA) about obtaining additional funds, but unfortunately there are no additional SCIP or RIA funds available. Ms. Privette also said that the Lamar was further along in their project than most other municipalities.

Preston Watson gave more details on the financial restraints involving this project. He said the Town needs an additional \$400,00 to move forward. Mr. Watson also said that Davis & Floyd has incurred additional expenses and that the contract must be modified. More funding must be obtained as soon as possible. The deadline to advertise is in June or July 2024.

Members of council asked how the situation got so dire without being forewarned. Mr. Watson said that the original contract was completed in 2021, the cost of supplies and the demands of the market have driven up the cost. The council also questioned how the project was ready for bid for quite some time but was just opened for bidding this year.

Mayor Howell spoke about the deteriorating condition of the manhole on Railroad Avenue. He asked Mr. Watson to physically look at the manhole and advise on what to do. Mr. Dargan pointed out that the Town is spending \$4000 per/month on the sewer bypass pump at that location.

Councilwoman Bradley gave the Codes and Business Report. As of May 13, 2024:

- 121 business license renewal letters were mailed out.
- 48 business licenses were renewed.
- 27 new business licenses were issued.
- 73 business Licenses are pending renewal (8 have been received and need additional information).

Councilman Cook discussed a proposed Chicken Amendment to the Town of Lamar Ordinances.

Councilman Cook read a proposed amendment using a model of the City of Columbia's animal code. Councilman Cook suggested a few changes to better suit the Town of Lamar. This proposal includes the number of chickens allowed, proper enclosures for the chickens, elimination of some of the zoning requirements, and clearer language in the Town of Lamar current ordinance (3.108).

Councilwoman Lee asked which part of Columbia was the ordinance in effect for. She was concerned about the chickens getting out of their enclosure and about the odor the chickens would bring. Councilwoman Lee suggested that the council do more research and discuss this further at a future council meeting

Brent Bullard was formally introduced as the Code Enforcement Officer for the Town of Lamar. He is the owner of RCI of South Carolina and has entered into a contract to serve the Town of Lamar. Mr. Bullard asked council to adopt the following codes and to note that they will be automatically updated at the time of State adoption from this point forward:

- 2021 International Building Code (with South Carolina Modifications)
- 2021 International Mechanical Code (with South Carolina Modifications)
- 2021 International Fuel Gas Code (With South Carolina Modifications)
- 2021 International Plumbing Code (With South Carolina Modifications)
- 2021 International Residential Code (With South Carolina Modifications)
- 2029 International Energy Code
- Chapter 1 of the International Building and Residential Code as it is written.

Councilman Cook made a motion to adopt the stated codes and Chapter 1, Councilwoman Bradley seconded the motion. Mayor Howell, Councilman Cook, Councilwoman Bradley, and Councilwoman Mack voted "Yay". Councilwoman Lee voted "Nay". The motion was carried by a vote of 4-1.

Mr. Bullard was asked about chicken ordinances in surrounding local towns. He said that he would check around and get back in touch with the council.

Councilwoman Lee Beautification Commission Report:

- Committee continues to work on giving a different look to the trash cans. Work is ongoing.
- In addition to the "Great American Clean-up Project", the committee is looking to work with the Lamar area schools to create a "Day of Caring".

Councilwoman Lee gave the Water & Sewer Report:

- West Jackson water line repair.
- Issues on Boykin Street have been resolved.
- Reynolds Street issues from the "business" has been resolved.
- Other streets and water leakage are being assessed as needed.
- The Helen Lane Project is ongoing.

Water Loss Report for the Month of April 2024:

Gallons Purchased: 3,931,710 Gallons Billed: 1,633,042 Gallons Loss: 2,298,668 (Paid to DCWSA -\$12,1694.83)

Councilwoman Mack gave the Streets and Sanitation Report:

Councilwoman Mack said that the shoulders of some streets need to be cut, sprayed, or trimmed with a weed-eater. The grass is destroying the pavement in some of these areas. She will compile a list of the most serious ones.

Councilwoman Mack recommended that the town gets more garbage carts. She researched several companies and presented her findings to the council. After a brief discussion, Councilwoman Bradley made a motion to purchase 50 garbage carts from Toter's Municipal and Government Division at a total cost of \$3,065.56 (shipping charges included). Councilwoman Mack seconded the motion. The motion carried unanimously.

Councilman Cook gave the Lamar Police Department Report:

- The Concealed Weapons Permit Class was held on April 27, 2024. SLED will start offering a free concealed weapons class in the future.
- A community forum on the "Open Weapon Carry Law" was held on May 9, 2024.
- Lamar Fun Day will be back this summer. Contact Chief Scott if you would like to participate.
- The quarterly report for the SC Department of Commerce Grant for the Lamar Police Department was submitted on April 26th. The funds for the quarter were spent on salaries and radio repairs.
- The COPS Hiring Grant has opened for FY2024. The Lamar Police Department is working to apply for funds and will give an update at the June 10th Lamar Town Council Meeting.
- Reminded citizens to watch their speed when driving around town.
- Please contact the Animal Shelter if you need a trap in your area.
- Encourage residents to call the Anonymous Tip Line at 843-326-1449 (non-emergency calls).

Mayor Howell announced that a pediatrician office will open in the Town of Lamar in August 2024. They are looking to hire nurses from the Lamar area.

Tim Dargan stated that the Town of Lamar will be featured in the May 15, 2024, Edition of the News & Press.

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

Mayor Howell adjourned the meeting at 7:42 pm.

Respectfully Submitted,

Timothy L. Dargan