

**MINUTES
WESTMINSTER CITY COUNCIL
Called Meeting
Wednesday, January 19, 2022**

The City Council of the City of Westminster met in a called meeting on Wednesday, January 19, 2022 at 6:00 pm at the Westminster Depot with Mayor Brian Ramey presiding. Those in attendance were:

Brian Ramey
Jimmy Powell

Dale Glymph
Yousef Mefleh

City Administrator, Kevin Bronson
Rebecca Overton
Utility Director, Leigh Baker
Police Chief, Matt Patterson
City Attorney, Andrew Holliday
Members of the public and press

Notice of the meeting and the agenda was posted on a window at the Depot and at westminstersc.org twenty-four hours prior to the meeting and all persons, organizations and local media requesting notification and the agenda were notified by email.

Call to Order

Mayor Ramey called the meeting to order at 6:00 pm.

Invocation and Pledge of Allegiance

Mr. Dale Glymph led the Council in the invocation and pledge.

Certification of Quorum

Rebecca Overton certified a quorum.

Public Comments

1. Audrey Reese thanked Leigh Baker, Kevin Bronson, and all of the Utility Staff for their recent work during the snow and ice storm. She stated that outages were expected but that their response time and dedication to the jobs seemed to be very effective with the amount of time that customers were out of service. She also expressed gratitude to the Police Department for the videos of the roads so the public would be aware of the dangerous conditions. Mr. Bronson added that the utility crews worked almost 24 nonstop hours and he too was very grateful for their dedication.

January 19, 2022

Comments from the Mayor and Council

Mayor Ramey reaffirmed the gratitude that Ms. Reese had extended and expressed that he too was thankful for the employees going beyond their normal duties during the storm.

New Business

1. Accept resignations of Danny Duncan, Brad Chastain, and Rusty Cater; declare three City Council seats vacant and open for the unfulfilled terms; and other matters related thereto

Mr. Holliday informed Council that the resignation of Mr. Duncan and Mr. Chastain could be accepted but the resignation from Mr. Cater would need to be held and accepted at the February Council meeting since it was not effective until January 31. He also informed Council that the three seats could be held in one election and would need to be thirteen Tuesdays from January 31st. This would mean a special election would be on Tuesday, April 26, 2022.

Upon a motion by Mr. Powell and seconded by Mr. Glymph, the motion **to accept the resignations of Mr. Duncan and Mr. Chastain** passed unanimously.

Member	Motion	Vote
Ramey		Yes
Cater		Absent
Glymph	Second	Yes
Mefleh		Yes
Powell	Motion	Yes

2. Appointment of a Mayor Pro Tempore for 2022

Upon a motion by Mr. Glymph and seconded by Mr. Mefleh, the motion **to nominate Jimmy Powell as Mayor Pro-Temp for 2022** passed unanimously.

Member	Motion	Vote
Ramey		Yes
Cater		Absent
Glymph	Motion	Yes
Mefleh	Second	Yes
Powell		Yes

3. Appointment of a City Clerk and Treasurer

Upon a motion by Mr. Glymph and seconded by Mr. Powell, the motion **to appoint Rebecca Overton as City Clerk and Treasurer** passed unanimously.

Member	Motion	Vote
Ramey		Yes
Cater		Absent
Glymph	Motion	Yes
Mefleh		Yes
Powell	Second	Yes

4. Appointment of a new Board Member for the Fire Department 1% Local Board of Trustees

Upon a motion by Mr. Glymph and seconded by Mr. Ramey, the motion **to nominate Mr. Mefleh as the new Board Member for the Fire Department 1 % Local Board of Trustees** passed unanimously.

Member	Motion	Vote
Ramey	Second	Yes
Cater		Absent
Glymph	Motion	Yes
Mefleh		Yes
Powell		Yes

5. Appointment to the Sewer Board

Mr. Bronson informed Council that he was contacted by Attorney Larry Brandt who told him that he was not qualified to serve on the Sewer Board due to his residency being outside of Oconee County. Mr. Bronson stated his apologies to Council for the misunderstanding about his residency and stated that he had previously discussed that with the Board and the Council and did not realize it would be an issue. He suggested Council defer any action on appointing another member just yet until staff can Council can research any ramifications of whether or not a Council Member can serve on the Board or if they need to seek another individual. Mr. Bronson reminded Council that Westminster is currently represented by Mr. Leigh Baker on the Sewer Board and that he would remain in that seat. No action was taken at this time.

6. Appointment to the Local Development Board

Upon a motion by Mr. Ramey and seconded by Mr. Powell, the motion to **appoint Mr. Glymph to the Local Development Board** passed unanimously.

Member	Motion	Vote
Ramey	Motion	Yes
Cater		Absent
Glymph		Yes
Mefleh		Yes
Powell	Second	Yes

7. First Reading of Ordinance #2022-01-19-01; Budget Amendment #4 to amend the FY2021/2022 Annual Budget to include a 20% sewer rate increase in the per one thousand gallon fee for all rate codes

Mr. Bronson informed Council that the OJRSA Board had recently passed a 20% increase that the City would soon be seeing on the monthly billing from them. He stated that the sewer department is on track with revenues and expenditures. He also stated that in order to stay on track Council would need to pass on the increase. Mr. Bronson mentioned that if Council chooses not to pass the increase, there was a line item in the budget for new sewer flow meters that could possibly be postponed or purchased from ARP Funds. He also reminded Council that the rate increase was only to the per gallon fee and not the base fee and that would take effect with the March 2022 billing.

Current Rate Schedule:

Description	Current Monthly Fee Per 1,000 GAL
SW Non-Res 3" WM	\$6.35
SW Inside Residential	\$6.92
SW Outside Residential	\$7.32
SW Non-Res 6" WM	\$6.35
SW Non-Res 4" WM	\$6.35
SW Non-Res 2" WM	\$6.35
TN SW Non-Res 4: WM Main	\$3.99
County Sewer Only	\$5.05

Proposed Rate Schedule:

Description	Proposed Monthly Fee Per 1,000 GAL
SW Non-Res 3" WM	\$7.62
SW Inside Residential	\$8.30
SW Outside Residential	\$8.78
SW Non-Res 6" WM	\$7.62
SW Non-Res 4" WM	\$7.62
SW Non-Res 2" WM	\$7.62
TN SW Non-Res 4: WM Main	\$4.79
County Sewer Only	\$6.06

Upon a motion by Mr. Powell and seconded by Mr. Glymph, the motion to **approve the First Reading of Ordinance #2022-01-19-01; Budget Amendment #4 to amend the FY2021/2022 Annual Budget to include a 20% sewer rate increase in the per one thousand gallon fee for all rate codes** passed unanimously.

Member	Motion	Vote
Ramey		Yes
Cater		Absent
Glymph	Second	Yes
Mefleh		Yes
Powell	Motion	Yes

8. First Reading of Ordinance #2022-01-19-02 to sell or otherwise convey City Property (Tax Map #530-16-13-014) approximately 0.77 acres located on Lucky Street and commonly referred to as the Pool Building to Westminster Senior Outreach

Mr. Holliday informed Council that he had drafted a contract of sale and purchase as well as title/deed to real estate for City Council to execute with the Senior Outreach Group. He stated to Council that the contract does have an easement clause to preserve access to ball fields and use by City crews as needed. He also stated that there is a clause in the contract stating that if the Senior Outreach Program ever no longer needed or wanted the property that it would revert back to the City and not be offered as a purchase by an outside party.

Upon a motion by Mr. Mefleh and seconded by Mr. Glymph the motion **to approve the First Reading of Ordinance #2022-01-19-02 to sell or otherwise convey City Property (Tax Map #530-16-13-014) approximately 0.77 acres**

located on Lucky Street and commonly referred to as the Pool Building to Westminster Senior Outreach passed unanimously.

Member	Motion	Vote
Ramey		Yes
Cater		Absent
Glymph	Second	Yes
Mefleh	Motion	Yes
Powell		Yes

9. First Reading of Ordinance #2022-01-19-03 to authorize a Lease Agreement with Oconee Cultivation Project for 20 West Abbey Street (SC Tax Map #530-12-01-023)

Mr. Bronson informed Council that the Oconee Cultivation Project currently uses this property but is in need of a Lease with the City for the property so that they can obtain state grants. Mr. Holliday stated that the Lease Agreement would be for 5 years with a \$5.00 annual payment and the option to renew.

Upon a motion by Mr. Glymph and seconded by Mr. Mefleh the motion to **approve the First Reading of Ordinance #2022-01-19-03 to authorize a Lease Agreement with Oconee Cultivation Project for 20 West Abbey Street (SC Tax Map #530-12-01-023)** passed unanimously.

Member	Motion	Vote
Ramey		Yes
Cater		Absent
Glymph	Motion	Yes
Mefleh	Second	Yes
Powell		Yes

Routine Business

1. Approval of the January 11, 2022 Regular Meeting Minutes

Upon a motion by Mr. Mefleh and seconded by Mr. Glymph the motion to **approve the January 11, 2022 Regular Meeting Minutes** passed unanimously.

Member	Motion	Vote
Ramey		Yes
Cater		Absent
Glymph	Second	Yes
Mefleh	Motion	Yes
Powell		Yes

2. Comments from the Utility Director

Mr. Baker informed Council that crews worked diligently during the recent snow and ice storm to restore services. He stated that the area of Pumphouse Road was out for longer than he would have liked but that there was several safety concerns in that area with falling trees and that sometimes safety issues can delay progress. He thanked everyone for their support and work. He also stated that all issues were from big trees or poles and that the recent tree trimming projects had definitely helped minimize issues. Mr. Ramey thanked Mr. Baker and his crews for the positive attitudes and work dedication they had shown recently.

3. Comments from City Administrator

Mr. Bronson informed Council that the executive session listed on the agenda was not needed and instead shared that he had received a letter from Attorneys Willoughby & Hoefer which was in response to the City of Seneca's intent to sue the City of Westminster, the City of Walhalla, and the OJRSA. He informed Council that the last paragraph of the letter stated in sum that the assertions made by the City of Seneca are not founded in fact and do not establish any arguable breach by the Cities or the OJRSA. He informed Council that is the opinion of this law firm that the City of Seneca has no substantial justification for proceeding with a lawsuit.

Mr. Ramey asked Mr. Bronson to keep a running total of the costs of this lawsuit and asked Mr. Baker to ask the OJRSA and the City of Walhalla to do the same.

Adjourn

Upon a motion by Mr. Ramey and seconded by Mr. Mefleh, the motion ***to adjourn the meeting at 7:03 pm*** passed unanimously.

(Minutes submitted by Rebecca Overton)

Mayor Brian Ramey

Date