MINUTES
WESTMINSTER CITY COUNCIL
Regular Scheduled Meeting
Tuesday, March 16, 2021

The City Council of the City of Westminster met in a regular scheduled meeting at the Westminster Fire Department on Tuesday, March 16, 2021 at 6:00 pm with Mayor Brian Ramey presiding. Those in attendance were:

Brian Ramey	Reid Adams	Rusty Cater
Danny Duncan	Yousef Mefleh	Brad Chastain
Jimmy Powell		

Interim City Administrator, Kevin Bronson
Rebecca Overton
Utility Director, Leigh Baker
City Attorney, Andrew Holliday
PMPA Director, Andy Butcher
Members of the public and press

Notice of the meeting and the agenda was posted on 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. Cater led the Council in the invocation and pledge.

Certification of Quorum

The City Clerk certified a quorum.

Public Comments

1. Suzette Snedigar spoke about the need for more gym space for volleyball.
2. Woody Sanders asked why two Councilmembers who stated that they would resign last fall are still sitting at the Council table.

Presentation

Mr. Andy Butcher, the new Director of Piedmont Municipal Power Agency (PMPA) introduced himself to Council. Mr. Butcher also shared with Council his three principles and goals going forward. Questions concerning the lawsuit and Westminster need for relief in the rates the City currently pays were addressed. Mayor Ramey stated that with Mr. Butcher's leadership, he felt that the lawsuit among other member City's will be resolved.

Old Business

1. Second Reading of an Ordinance to Execute a Real Property Lease Agreement to the Westminster Senior Outreach; Pool Building (Oconee TMPS 530-16-13-014)

   Upon a motion by Mr. Duncan and seconded by Mr. Adams, the motion ***to approve the second reading or Ordinance 2021-03-16-01*** passed unanimously.

Member	Motion	Vote
Ramey		Yes
Cater		Yes
Adams	Second	Yes
Chastain		Yes
Duncan	Motion	Yes
Mefleh		Yes
Powell		Yes

2. Second Reading of an Ordinance to Rezone Tax Map #530-06-05-009, 106 Simpson Street from R-25 to R-15

   Upon a motion by Mr. Duncan and seconded by Mr. Chastain, the motion ***to approve the second reading of Ordinance 2021-03-16-02*** passed unanimously with Mayor Ramey recusing himself.

Member	Motion	Vote
Ramey		Recused
Cater		Yes
Adams		Yes
Chastain	Second	Yes
Duncan	Motion	Yes
Mefleh		Yes
Powell		Yes

3. Consider Award of Contract to Swing of Things for Construction of Retreat Street Park Cover

   Upon a motion by Mr. Adams and seconded by Mr. Chastain, the motion ***to approve $27,350 to Swing-O-Things Inc. for the construction of the stage at Retreat Street Park*** passed unanimously.

Member	Motion	Vote
Ramey		Yes
Cater		Yes
Adams	Motion	Yes
Chastain	Second	Yes
Duncan		Yes
Mefleh		Yes
Powell		Yes

New Business

1. Proclamation Recognizing April as National Donate Life Month

   Upon a motion by Mr. Adams and seconded by Mr. Duncan, the motion ***to proclaim the month of April as Donate Life Month*** passed unanimously.

Member	Motion	Vote
Ramey		Yes
Cater		Yes
Adams	Motion	Yes
Chastain		Yes
Duncan	Second	Yes
Mefleh		Yes
Powell		Yes

2. First Reading of an Ordinance to Rezone a Certain Parcel in the City of Westminster From R-25 to R-15 (Tax Map #530-21-05-006, 106 Simpson Street)

   Upon a motion by Mr. Adams and seconded by Mr. Duncan, the motion ***to approve the recommendation from the Westminster Planning Commission to rezone tax map #530-06-05-001, 106 Simpson Street from R-25 to R-15*** passed unanimously with Mayor Ramey recusing himself.

Member	Motion	Vote
Ramey		Recused
Cater		Yes
Adams	Motion	Yes
Chastain		Yes
Duncan	Second	Yes
Mefleh		Yes
Powell		Yes

3. First Reading of an Ordinance to Rezone a Certain Parcel in the City of Westminster from GR to R-15 (Tax Map #530-21-05-006, 112 West Oak Hwy)

   Upon a motion by Mr. Adams and seconded by Mr. Cater, the motion ***to approve the recommendation from the Westminster Planning Commission to rezone 112 West Oak Highway, tax map #530-21-05-006 from GR to R15*** passed unanimously.

Member	Motion	Vote
Ramey		Yes
Cater	Second	Yes
Adams	Motion	Yes
Chastain		Yes
Duncan		Yes
Mefleh		Yes
Powell		Yes

4. Consider Awarding the Bid for Sewer System Manhole Survey and Inspection

   Upon a motion by Mr. Adams and seconded by Mr. Duncan, the motion ***to approve the award of bid to Tugaloo Pipeline, Inc. for $82,280 for Sewer System Manhole Assessment*** passed unanimously.

Member	Motion	Vote
Ramey		Yes
Cater		Yes
Adams	Motion	Yes
Chastain		Yes
Duncan	Second	Yes
Mefleh		Yes
Powell		Yes

5. Consider Bids for Variable Frequency Drives (VFD's)

   Upon a motion by Mr. Adams and seconded by Mr. Chastain, the motion ***to award the bid for the VFD project to Amtech Drives of Atlanta, GA for $145,212.03*** passed unanimously.

Member	Motion	Vote
Ramey		Yes
Cater		Yes
Adams	Motion	Yes
Chastain	Second	Yes
Duncan		Yes
Mefleh		Yes
Powell		Yes

6. Consider Quote for Old Practice Field Improvements

   Upon a motion by Mr. Adams and seconded by Mr. Mefleh, the motion ***to approve $5,594.51 to Jenkins Family Lawn Care Services for improvements at the Old Practice Fields*** passed unanimously.

Member	Motion	Vote
Ramey		Yes
Cater		Yes
Adams	Motion	Yes
Chastain		Yes
Duncan		Yes
Mefleh	Second	Yes
Powell		Yes

7. Discussion of OJRSA Rate Change Proposals

   Mr. Bronson informed Council of the need to raise rates at Oconee Joint Regional Sewer Authority. The City of Seneca has stated that they would like the increase in increments over a three year period, raising the rate 1/3 each year. However, Mr. Bronson stated that doing the increase over a three year period does not generate enough revenue to support the expenses needed to operate the plant. He is recommending that the full increase be proposed. Westminster residence would see an increase of approximately 9.8% on their sewer rate.

   Also, Mr. Bronson stated that many improvements are needed at the plant and some are due to a DHEC consent order. Mr. Bronson informed Council that if the Sewer Board decided to seek a bond in order to pay for the repairs and upgrades, all three City Councils would need to approve. Mr. Adams asked about the refund the City's received last year and why was that given back if repairs and upgrades were needed at the plant. Mayor Ramey stated that previous administration at OJRSA did not inform the board of the need. Now that a new director has been hired he has been sharing with them all the needed repairs the sewer plant needs.

   The Council indicated that they would support the issuance of a bond if needed for the repairs at the plant.

8. Resolution in Support of Oconee County Constructing a Magistrate's Office in Westminster

   Upon a motion by Mr. Adams and seconded by Mr. Duncan, the motion ***to approve the resolution in support for the construction of the Oconee County Magistrate Offices at 1606 East Main Street*** passed unanimously.

Member	Motion	Vote
Ramey		Yes
Cater		Yes
Adams	Motion	Yes
Chastain		Yes
Duncan	Second	Yes
Mefleh		Yes
Powell		Yes

Mr. Adams stated that, if there were no objections, he would like Mr. Bronson to write a letter of support to the County Council and would like Mr. Duncan to read it at the next County Council meeting.

9. Resolution to Appoint an Alternate Board Member to Piedmont Municipal Power Agency (PMPA)

   Upon a motion by Mr. Adams and seconded by Mr. Chastain, the motion ***to appoint Danny Duncan as the Alternate Director on the PMPA Board*** passed with a 4 to 3 vote with Mayor Ramey, Mr. Powell and Mr. Mefleh voting no.

Member	Motion	Vote
Ramey		No
Cater		Yes
Adams	Motion	Yes
Chastain	Second	Yes
Duncan		Yes
Mefleh		No
Powell		No

Routine Business

1. Approval of the January 26, 2021 Priority Setting Workshop minutes, the February 16, 2021 Budget Workshop minutes, and the February 16, 2021 regular meeting minutes

   Mayor Ramey asked that an amendment to the February 16, 2021 regular meeting minutes be made on item 15 to add the wording, “Submit a proposal to Council for approval”.

   Upon a motion by Mayor Ramey and seconded by Mr. Adams, the motion ***to approve the January 26, 2021 Priority Setting Workshop minutes, the February 16, 2021 Budget Workshop minutes, and the February 16, 2021 regular meeting minutes as amended*** passed unanimously.

Member	Motion	Vote
Ramey	Motion	Yes
Cater		Yes
Adams	Second	Yes
Chastain		Yes
Duncan		Yes
Mefleh		Yes
Powell		Yes

2. Comments from the Utility Director

   Mr. Baker updated Council on the projects going on in town;

   a. The Sanitary Survey will begin this month and will be a two day event.
   b. Application for a CDBG grant is proceeding, the full application is due by April 15.
   c. Water taps are being installed and valves are being turned on a regular basis to stay compliant with DHEC regulations. Also, staff will be relocating a water line in the intersection of A and B Streets. While installing the new sewer line for the Beacon Hill project, the contractor hit a water line in the intersection.
   d. Staff is currently gathering a list of repairs that qualify for a CFund grant. This will be a large scale request for paving and sidewalk repairs and any other qualifying projects that they can add.
   e. The generator grant request has passed the first phase of approval. If final approval is given, then there will be generators at the Hwy 76 pump station, City Hall, Police Department and the Shop.

3. Comments from the City Administrator
   a. Mr. Bronson stated that he will have engineers coming to town to evaluate three properties, the old Chevrolet building, Beacon Mill property and the old College Street school building. This evaluation will help determine if the City can obtain grant monies that would abate the property that can then be sold and developed. The City would not own the property but would work with the property owners to obtain the grant. There are more opportunities for Cities to obtain these types of grants then a developer.

4. Comments from Mayor and Council
   a. There were no comments from the Mayor or Council

(Mr. Powell left prior to Executive Session)

Executive Session

Upon a motion by Mayor Ramey and seconded by Mr. Duncan, the motion ***to enter into an executive session for the purpose of section 30-4-70 (a) (1) a discussion of employment, appointment, compensation, promotion, demotion, discipline, or release of an employee, a student, or a person regulated by a public body. (1) City Administrator Employment Contract*** passed unanimously.

Upon a motion by Mr. Cater and seconded by Mayor Ramey, the motion ***to exit executive session and re-enter regular session*** passed unanimously.

Upon a motion by Mr. Adams and seconded by Mr. Duncan, the motion ***to enter into a contract with Kevin Bronson as the City Administrator upon his approval of the contract changes*** passed unanimously.

Adjourn

Upon a motion by Mayor Ramey and seconded by Mr. Cater, the motion ***to adjourn the meeting at 9:00pm*** passed unanimously.

(Minutes prepared by Jennifer Adams)

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Mayor Brian Ramey Date