

**MINUTES
WESTMINSTER CITY COUNCIL
Regular Scheduled Meeting
Tuesday, June 16, 2022**

The City Council of the City of Westminster met in a regular scheduled meeting on Tuesday, June 16, 2022 at 6:00 pm at the Westminster Fire Department with Mayor Brian Ramey presiding. Those in attendance were:

Brian Ramey
Jimmy Powell

Dale Glymph
Yousef Mefleh

Daby Snipes
Adam Dunn

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

Notice of the meeting and the agenda was posted on a window at the Fire Department 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

Mrs. Daby Snipes led the Council in the invocation and the Pledge of Allegiance.

Certification of Quorum

Rebecca Overton certified a quorum.

Public Comments

Mr. Franklin Jones of James Street expressed his concerns over a legal dispute between himself and the City over a utility incident around January 2021. He stated that he felt like his due process rights were being violated and that he his County taxes are incorrect.

Mr. Gary Barnhart of Westminster Highway spoke in objection to the annexation of his property at 704 Westminster Highway. He stated that he had signed the annexation covenant not fully knowing or understanding its meaning and that the City needed to provide clear transparency with the annexation policy.

June 16, 2022

Comments from the Mayor and Council

Mayor Ramey stated that the Simpson Street ballfield work had begun. Mayor Ramey also stated that the OJRSA Budget had passed at the recent OJRSA meeting.

Old Business

1. Discuss Hospitality Tax Grant Requests and Consider Appropriations related thereto to be incorporated into Ordinance 2022-06-14-001

Council members discussed and offered various grant amounts to the different agencies that had made requests.

Mrs. Judy Caywood withdrew her request for funding for the Westminster Senior Outreach.

After much discussion, a motion by Mr. Dunn and seconded by Mrs. Snipes to **increase the original \$40,000 capped budget amount to \$42,500 with the following amounts awarded** passed.

Foothills Heritage Fair	\$2,250
Gateway Arts Center	\$4,000
Apple Festival	\$10,000
Oconee History Museum	\$4,000
Fall/Spring Rodeo	\$2,000
Skyla Strong Barrel Race	\$2,000
Community Tree Center	\$0
Westminster Senior Outreach	\$0
Bigfoot Festival	\$9,000
Main Street Westminster	\$2,250
Westminster Music Centre	\$3,000
Gunderson Outreach	\$4,000

Member	Motion	Vote
Ramey		Yes
Glymph		Recusal
Mefleh		Yes
Powell		No
Reese		Absent
Dunn	Motion	Yes
Snipes	Second	Yes

2. Second Reading of Ordinance 2022-06-14-001 – an Ordinance making appropriations for certain expenses, capital improvements and indebtedness of the City of Westminster, South Carolina for the year beginning July 1, 2022 and ending June 30, 2023

Mr. Bronson informed Council that the budget was balanced and that several capital projects had been moved to the Capital Projects Fund. He informed Council that the budget included 5% increases across the board for electric, sewer and solid waste services and also included a 5% COLA increase to all employees. Mr. Bronson informed Council that employer health insurance premiums were set to increase later on the fiscal year and that had been factored into the budget. He also advised Council that the only amendment to the budget that had been implemented since the last review was the \$15,000 allocation for the Senior Outreach from the Local Development Corporation Fund. Mr. Bronson then suggested to Council that he move \$2,500 from the Public Relations/Promotions line item in order to cover the increase in the HTAX Grant Awards.

Upon a motion by Mr. Glymph and seconded by Mr. Dunn, the motion ***to approve second reading of Ordinance 2022-06-14-01 - an Ordinance making appropriations for certain expenses, capital improvements and indebtedness of the City of Westminster, South Carolina for the year beginning July 1, 2022 and ending June 30, 2023 with an amendment of a \$2,500 increase in HTAX Grant Awards*** passed unanimously.

Member	Motion	Vote
Ramey		Yes
Glymph	Motion	Yes
Mefleh		Yes
Powell		Yes
Reese		Absent
Dunn	Second	Yes
Snipes		Yes

3. Second Reading of Ordinance 2022-06-14-02 – an Ordinance to adopt the Westminster Comprehensive Plan Update to the 2017 Comprehensive Plan – as amended and adopt the Future Land Use Map

Upon a motion by Mr. Dunn and seconded by Mrs. Snipes the motion ***to approve the second Reading of Ordinance 2022-06-14-02 – An Ordinance to adopt the Westminster Comprehensive Plan Update to the 2017 Comprehensive Plan – as amended and adopt the Future Land Use Map*** passed unanimously.

Member	Motion	Vote
Ramey		Yes
Glymph		Yes
Mefleh		Yes

Powell		Yes
Reese		Absent
Dunn	Motion	Yes
Snipes	Second	Yes

4. Second Reading of Ordinance 2022-06-14-07 – an Ordinance annexing property under 100% annexation method and assigning zoning classification; and other matters related thereto. 704 Westminster Hwy., Westminster, SC Map# 235-00-02-079 Land Use Designation of Low Density Residential, zoning designation of R25 (Residential) and Planning Commission Assessment

Mayor Ramey stated that Council had looked at annexation and growth extensively and that annexation was the only way to help grow boundaries and tax revenues. He stressed that the City was not trying to take away any rights from land owners.

Upon a motion by Mr. Powell and seconded by Mrs. Snipes the motion **to approve second reading of Ordinance 2022-06-14-07 – an Ordinance annexing property under 100% annexation method and assigning zoning classification; and other matters related thereto. 704 Westminster Highway, Westminster, SC Map# 235-00-02-079; Land Use Designation of Low Density Residential, zoning designation of R25 (Residential) and Planning Commission Assessment** passed.

5. Discuss Independent Accountant’s Report on Applying Agree-Upon Procedures for the Automated Metering Infrastructure (AMI) revenue and expenses – Discussion item at the request of Council Member Mefleh

Mr. Mefleh stated that the original agreement for the \$7 AMI fee was to drop it down to \$2 after 5 years. He stated that Council had tried to take it off after the five-year mark but decided to leave it on and in place to generate the revenue for police protection and water projects. He stated that he just wanted to see customers get some kind of credit.

Mayor Ramey added that had Council removed the fee, they would have had to raise rates to compensate the revenue difference. Mr. Glymph added that this information was address in the Council minutes dated 5/28/2020 where the discussion to remove the fee was outweighed by the needs for the revenue.

There was no further discussion or action on this item.

New Business

1. First Reading of Ordinance 2022-08-09-01 – an Ordinance of agreement for the transfer of water line by and between Pioneer Water District of Oconee and Anderson Counties and the City of Westminster in the amount of \$71,500.00

Attorney Andrew Holliday informed Council that this agreement would be to sell the water line running 3.7 miles from Virginia Drive to Fire Tower Road. He stated the one time payment of \$71,500.00 was a fair amount.

Upon a motion by Mr. Glymph and seconded by Mr. Mefleh, the motion **to approve the first Reading of Ordinance 2022-08-09-01 – an Ordinance of agreement for the transfer of water line by and between Pioneer Water District of Oconee and Anderson Counties and the City of Westminster in the amount of \$71,500.00** passed unanimously.

Member	Motion	Vote
Ramey		Yes
Glymph	Motion	Yes
Mefleh	Second	Yes
Powell		Yes
Reese		Absent
Dunn		Yes
Snipes		Yes

2. Resolution 2022-06-16-01 – To Adopt a System of Special Event Permitting, Provide for Off-Duty Staffing , and other matters related thereto

Mr. Bronson informed Council that a system of Special Event Permitting would allow the City to charge back to the event the use of fire, police, and public works. He suggested to Council that the charges be at the discretion of Department Heads. Mrs. Snipes agreed that some level of responsibility needs to be placed on the Event rather the City incurring all of the overtime staffing amounts and other charges associated with providing public service during a festival or event. Mayor Ramey asked about setting a rate structure at another meeting to give Council time to think over the Resolution.

Mr. Bronson suggested to Council that if they were not comfortable with passing the Resolution at this time, that they can direct him to look back over the Resolution language and try to find a middle ground. There was no further discussion or action on this item.

3. Resolution 2022-06-16-02 – Of Intent to participate in the South Carolina Municipal Insurance and Risk Financing Fund

Mr. Bronson informed Council that the City’s current policy with the Insurance Reserve Fund does not include cyber security insurance and they do not offer it. He stated the City is already a member of the South Carolina Municipal Insurance Trust Fund, which provides the City with Worker’s Comp insurance. If

the City becomes a member of both policies, then a discount of offered. Mr. Bronson stated that the discount and policy savings is significant and the City would benefit by switching, effective July 1, 2022.

Upon a motion by Mr. Mefleh and seconded by Mrs. Snipes the motion **to approve Resolution 2022-06-16-02 – Of Intent to participate in the South Carolina Municipal Insurance and Risk Financing Fund** passed unanimously.

Member	Motion	Vote
Ramey		Yes
Glymph		Yes
Mefleh	Motion	Yes
Powell		Yes
Reese		Absent
Dunn		Yes
Snipes	Second	Yes

4. Resolution 2022-06-16-03 – To Amend the City of Westminster Commercial Building Improvement Grant Program, Application and Agreement

Mr. Bronson reminded Council that the Local Development Corporation Board reviews commercial building grant applications for grants up to \$5,000.00. He stated that the Board consisted of members Sammy Dickson, Kent Miller, Brian Allen, and Dale Glymph. Mr. Bronson stated the Board had met and reviewed the application and was making the recommended changes for Council approval.

Upon a motion by Mr. Mefleh and seconded by Mr. Dunn the motion **to approve Resolution 2022-06-16-03_– To Amend the City of Westminster Commercial Building Improvement Grant Program, Application and Agreement** passed unanimously.

Member	Motion	Vote
Ramey		Yes
Glymph		Yes
Mefleh	Motion	Yes
Powell		Yes
Reese		Absent
Dunn	Second	Yes
Snipes		Yes

5. Consideration to appoint a committee for the design and construction of Hall Street Park

Mr. Bronson reminded Council that at the May Council Meeting Council accepted the Recreation Planning Committee's conceptual design of Hall Street Park. He stated that is was the desire of Council at that time to create a new committee to take the project into the design and construction phase. Mr. Bronson informed Council that all members of

the Recreation Planning Committee were willing to serve again and be part of the design and construction committee.

Mayor Ramey suggested reappointing the existing Recreation Planning Committee in addition of Council representation and have the Committee report back to Council. Mr. Bronson added that he would be responsible for taking the minutes of the Committee meetings.

Upon a motion by Mrs. Snipes and seconded by Mr. Mefleh, the motion **to reappoint the Recreation Planning Committee with addition of Council Members Brian Ramey and Adam Dunn to form a Design/Construction Committee of Hall Street Park** passed unanimously.

Member	Motion	Vote
Ramey		Yes
Glymph		Yes
Mefleh	Second	Yes
Powell		Yes
Reese		Absent
Dunn		Yes
Snipes	Motion	Yes

6. Police Officer Pay and Staffing

Mr. Bronson reminded Council of the ongoing struggle to maintain Police Officers when the Officer salaries are not competitive with surrounding agencies. He stated that typically Officers leave Westminster for better paying jobs with nearby agencies. Mr. Bronson stated to Council that there are nine positions budgeted for in the FY 2023 budget and seven of those positions are filled. He suggested using the approved FY 2023 budget amount to adjust the pay scale of the seven current officers in order to be more competitive and hopefully retain the current seven officers. He stated this would essentially pay seven officer positions with the funds for nine officer positions. Mr. Bronson stated that the city wide pay band chart had not been updated since 2019 and that after it is updated to reflect recent COLA increases and these adjustments, it would be hopeful to attract certified officers with the new pay bands. He also suggested looking into doing the same thing with the Fire Department staffing. Council was in agreement.

7. Consider cancellation of July 12, 2022 Regular City Council

Mr. Bronson stated to Council that given the summer vacation and conference schedules, the option to cancel the July Council Meeting might be best. He suggested that if needed, a special meeting could be called.

Upon a motion by Mr. Mefleh and seconded by Mr. Powell, the motion **to cancel the July 12, 2022 Regular City Council Meeting** passed unanimously

Member	Motion	Vote
Ramey		Yes
Glymph		Yes
Mefleh	Motion	Yes
Powell	Second	Yes
Reese		Absent
Dunn	Second	Yes
Snipes		Yes

Routine Business

1. Approval of the May 17, 2022 Regular Meeting Minutes

Upon a motion by Mr. Dunn and seconded by Mr. Glymph, the motion to ***approve the May 17, 2022 Regular Meeting Minutes*** passed unanimously.

Member	Motion	Vote
Ramey		Yes
Glymph	Second	Yes
Mefleh		Yes
Powell		Yes
Reese		Absent
Dunn	Motion	Yes
Snipes		Yes

2. Approval of the May 25, 2022 Called Meeting Minutes

Upon a motion by Mr. Glymph and seconded by Mr. Dunn, the motion to ***approve the May 25, 2022 Called Meeting Minutes*** passed unanimously.

Member	Motion	Vote
Ramey		Yes
Glymph	Motion	Yes
Mefleh		Yes
Powell		Yes
Reese		Absent
Dunn	Second	Yes
Snipes		Yes

3. Approval of the June 2, 2022 Council Workshop Minutes

Upon a motion by Mr. Dunn and seconded by Mr. Glymph, the motion to ***approve the June 2, 2022 Council Workshop Minutes*** passed unanimously.

Member	Motion	Vote
Ramey		Yes
Glymph	Second	Yes
Mefleh		Yes
Powell		Yes
Reese		Absent
Dunn	Motion	Yes
Snipes		Yes

4. Approval of the June 8, 2022 Council Workshop Minutes

Upon a motion by Mrs. Snipes and seconded by Mr. Dunn, the motion to **approve the June 8, 2022 Council Workshop Minutes** passed unanimously.

Member	Motion	Vote
Ramey		Yes
Glymph		Yes
Mefleh		Yes
Powell		Yes
Reese		Absent
Dunn	Second	Yes
Snipes	Motion	Yes

5. Comments from the Utility Director

Mr. Baker informed Council that updates at Anderson Park were ongoing. He stated that recently crews had installed a culvert and work would begin soon on the swing set borders. Mr. Baker also stated that work on Circuit 4.12 would be occurring over the weekend. He also informed Council that work on the water pumps and motors was set to begin in July and that the grading at Simpson Street ball fields had begun.

Executive Session

Upon a motion by Mayor Ramey and seconded by Mr. Glymph, the motion to ***enter into executive session for the purpose of a discussion of negotiations incident to proposed contractual arrangements and proposed sale or purchase of property, the receipt of legal advice where the legal advice relates to a pending, threatened, or potential claim or other matters covered by the attorney-client privilege, settlement of legal claims, or the position of the public agency in other adversary situations involving the assertion against the agency of a claim and a discussion of employment, appointment, compensation, promotion, demotion, discipline, or release of an employee, a student, or a person regulated by a public body or the appointment of a person to a public body pursuant to S.C. Code Ann. 34-4-70 (1) and (2) - Oconee Joint Regional Sewer Authority – discuss potential contractual matter(s)***, passed unanimously.

Upon a motion by Mrs. Snipes and seconded by Mr. Glymph the motion to **exit executive session** passed unanimously.

Adjourn

Upon a motion by Mrs. Snipes and seconded by Mr. Glymph, the motion **to adjourn the meeting at 8:45 pm** passed unanimously.

(Minutes submitted by Rebecca Overton)

Mayor Brian Ramey

Date