

**MINUTES
WESTMINSTER CITY COUNCIL
Regular Scheduled Meeting
Tuesday, September 12, 2023**

The City Council of the City of Westminster met in a regular scheduled meeting on Tuesday, September 12, 2023, at 6:00 pm at the Westminster Fire Department with Mayor Brian Ramey presiding. Those in attendance were:

Brian Ramey
Jimmy Powell

Dale Glymph
Adam Dunn

Daby Snipes

Ruth May

City Administrator, Kevin Bronson
Assistant to the City Administrator, Reagan Osbon
City Clerk, Rebecca Overton
Police Chief, Matt Patterson
Fire Chief, Michael Smith
Utility Director, Kevin Harbin
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.

Special Recognitions

Mayor Ramey read a Resolution honoring the late Allie “A.T.” Caywood for a lifetime of dedicated service and community involvement. Mrs. Judy Caywood was present to receive the recognition.

Mayor Ramey read a Proclamation celebrating a century of wisdom and dedication of Ms. Bessie Mae Matheson who turned 105 on September 4, 2023. Mrs. Matheson’s son

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was present and read some comments of appreciation she had sent since she could not be in attendance.

Mayor Ramey read a Proclamation declaring September 12, 2023, as Westminster Dixie Majors Allstar Day in honor of the South Carolina State Champion Westminster Allstars. Players and Coaches were present to be recognized and were congratulated with a huge round of applause from members of Council and the audience.

Public Comments

David Cooper stated to Council that he felt like any resident who contacted Council Members or Employees, should get a response in a timely manner. He added that he was pleased with responses he had received from Mayor Ramey, Chief Patterson, Bob Jones, Kevin Bronson, and some city employees. He also expressed concerns about the four way stop sign near Walhalla Street, speeding drivers in that area, and suggested a need for speed bumps and questioned the status of a Neighborhood Watch Program. Mrs. Snipes added that she had mentioned this to Mr. Cooper but told him that the city was not currently involved with this. Mayor Ramey requested an increase in patrols in the neighborhood of Walhalla Street.

Brandy Monds of Upstate SC Get Snacked informed Council that the Free Santa Workshop has been moved to McLadke Orchard in Seneca.

Comments from the Mayor and Council

Mrs. Snipes congratulated the Apple Festival Committee for a very successful Festival and thanked all of the volunteers and City Staff for the hard work put into the Festival. Mr. Glymph thanked the volunteers responsible for the Tuesday morning Prayer Devotionals. Mayor Ramey thanked City Staff for their work during the Apple Festival and commended them for a job well done.

Routine Business

1. Approval of the August 8, 2023, Regular City Council Meeting Minutes

Upon a motion by Mr. Dunn and seconded by Ms. May, the motion to ***approve the August 8, 2023, Regular Meeting Minutes*** passed unanimously.

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

2. Comments from the Utility Director

- a. Mr. Harbin informed Council that there were no problems or issues from the recent Apple Festival.
- b. Mr. Harbin informed Council that USDA Capital Water Project was moving along near Dawn Drive and Greenfield Road for water pressure issues. The next area will be Dixon Road.
- c. Mr. Harbin informed Council that a recent vehicle accident on Highway 24 resulted in a broke pole but there were few outages and extra crews were called in to help rebuild a new pole and transfer service.

3. Comments from City Administrator

- a. Mr. Bronson informed Council that an error had been made in the initial conversations of the Riley Street property zoning issue. He added that staff had calculated how many lots could be subdivided base on R-25 zoning and that the calculations should have been based on R-15 zoning. Mr. Bronson added that this means that the Riley Street property does not need to be rezoned for the purposes of the Hope ComeUnity project.
- b. Mr. Bronson informed Council that staff had recently had some issues with utilities and leases on Commercial buildings and that a Commercial Inspection Form had been drafted and placed into policy to correct these issues.
- c. Mr. Bronson informed Council that the Anderson Park Project did not receive any bids, possibly because the bid specifications were too vague. He added that staff had acquired services from Studio Main to design the Park with construction documents for the price of \$4,000.00, and then rebid the project.
- d. Mr. Bronson informed Council that RIA Grant has been submitted to the Fall funding cycle. He added that this project would be for the construction of a 120,000-gallon ground surface water tank and related appurtenances on Unity Church Road to help with more efficient water pressure in that area. Mr. Bronson added that this project was taken out of the original capital water project due to increase in total cost, but that Mr. Rosier feels it is a priority.
- e. Mr. Bronson informed Council that the Special Events Committee would be meeting on August 16 at 2:00 to discuss upcoming events and ideas.

Old Business

1. Consideration of Second Reading of Ordinance # 09-12-2023-01; An Ordinance to Rezone a Certain Parcel in the City of Westminster from R-25 (One-Family Residential) to MFR (Multi-Family Residential).

Mr. Bronson reminded Council that the Westminster Planning Commission met on Monday, July 17, 2023, to consider Zoning Amendment Application 2023-001 by Jonathan Terry for 104 Highlands Ave from R-25 to MFR. Mr. Bronson added that the applicant presented site plans to the commission and stated that he planned to develop duplexes and small, high density single-family units on the 11.5 Acre property.

Mr. Bronson added that the Commission asked questions about greenspace, density of units, and continuity of adjacent properties. Applicant said that he intended to incorporate greenspace into the final design plan, likely around the currently abandoned home on the property at the end of Dickson Street.

Mr. Bronson informed Council that the Commission recommended approval of the Application, by a vote of 5-0 (unanimous).

Mr. Terry was present at the meeting and assured Council that it will be quite some time before the project is built out and he would like to build some small 1000-1200 square foot homes.

Upon a motion by Mr. Dunn and seconded by Ms. May, the motion to ***approve Second Reading of Ordinance #2023-09-12-01; Rezone a Certain Parcel in the City of Westminster from R-25 (One-Family Residential) to MFR (Multi-Family Residential)*** passed unanimously.

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

2. Consideration of First Reading of Ordinance No. 09-12-2023-02; An Ordinance to Rezone a Certain Parcel in the City of Westminster from R-15 (One-Family Residential) to MFR (Multi-Family Residential).

Mr. Bronson reminded Council that the Westminster Planning Commission met on Monday, July 17, 2023, to consider Zoning Amendment Application 2023-002 by the City of Westminster for 115 Riley Ave from R-15 to MFR. He added that the City, applicant, and owner, has agreed to convey the property to Westminster

Hope ComeUnity, a local nonprofit group, contingent upon rezoning to MFR. Westminster Hope ComeUnity seeks to use the vacant lot, formerly the City Recycling Center, to build three small single-family homes for individuals and families who are without a home for several months while they prepare for and find a permanent residence.

Mr. Bronson informed Council that the Commission did not recommend approval of the application to council, and members cited concerns about location (proximity of a vulnerable population to the HUD supported housing) and ability of the organization to properly manage the project (citing inexperience, not intention as a basis). Mr. Bronson added that the Commission vote was 2-2 (1 abstention).

Upon a motion by Mr. Dunn and seconded by Ms. May, the motion to *approve Second Reading of Ordinance No. 09-12-2023-02; An Ordinance to Rezone a Certain Parcel in the City of Westminster from R-15 (One-Family Residential) to MFR (Multi-Family Residential)* failed.

Member	Motion	Vote
Ramey		No
Glymph		No
Powell		No
Reese		Absent
May	Second	No
Dunn	Motion	No
Snipes		No

3. Consideration of Second Reading of Ordinance # 09-12-2023-03; Authorizing an Equipment Lease Purchase Agreement in the Amount of not Exceeding \$535,000 Between the City of Westminster, South Carolina, And First Citizens Bank & Trust Company, to Defray the Cost of Acquiring Certain Equipment; and Other Matters Relating Thereto.

Mr. Bronson reminded Council that the FY2023-2024 Annual Budget includes the equipment listed below to be purchased using lease-purchase financing. He added that First Citizens Bank offers a competitive lease-purchase financing product that meets the requirements of South Carolina law for municipal financing.

Equipment Estimated Cost

Two (2) Police Vehicles \$ 90,000

One (1) Public Works Vehicle	\$ 44,045
One (1) Water Pickup	\$ 46,000
One (1) Sewer Tractor	\$ 55,000
One (1) Leaf Truck	\$277,000
TOTAL ESTIMATED COST	\$512,045

Mr. Bronson added that the not-to-exceed lease-purchase financing was approved by City Council on first reading on August 8, 2023, which was valued at \$540,000 includes closing costs. **Since the date of first reading of the ordinance the not-to-exceed amount has been amended to \$535,000.** The interest rate is fixed and is bank-qualified at 4.48% for 5 years. There are no fees for pre-payment.

Upon a motion by Mrs. Snipes and seconded by Mr. Glymph, the motion to *approve Second Reading of Ordinance # 09-12-2023-03; Authorizing an Equipment Lease Purchase Agreement in the Amount of not Exceeding \$540,000 Between the City Of Westminster, South Carolina, And First Citizens Bank & Trust Company, to Defray the Cost of Acquiring Certain Equipment; and Other Matters Relating Thereto* passed unanimously.

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

4. Consideration of Second Reading of Ordinance #09-12-2023-04; An Ordinance to Establish a Registration for Vacant and Abandoned Buildings, to Amend the City's Code of Ordinances in Connection Therewith, and Other Matters Related Thereto

Mr. Bronson reminded Council that vacant properties have a greater potential than occupied properties to cause significant and costly problems for the City. He added that these properties often require greater levels of service from law enforcement, codes enforcement, and other City services and, thereby create a financial burden for the City and detract from the quality of life of the surrounding neighborhoods and the City as a whole. Mr. Bronson also stressed to Council that vacant properties have a greater likelihood of becoming unsightly, structurally unsound, and otherwise dangerous.

Mr. Bronson informed Council that the mechanism for addressing these types of properties is a registry system that compels property owners to register their properties with the City and includes a fee schedule.

Upon a motion by Mrs. Snipes and seconded by Mr. Powell, the motion to *approve Second Reading of Ordinance #09-12-2023-04; An Ordinance to Establish a Registration for Vacant and Abandoned Buildings, to Amend the City's Code of Ordinances in Connection Therewith, and Other Matters Related Thereto* passed unanimously.

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

New Business

1. Consideration of First Reading of Ordinance #2023-10-10-01; An Ordinance Amending the Business License Ordinance of the City of Westminster to Update the Class Schedule as Required by Act 176 of 2020.

Mr. Bronson informed Council that the South Carolina's Act 176, the Business License Standardization Act, requires every municipality and county government with a business license tax to update its business licensing class schedule every odd-numbered year to go into effect the following year. He added that as such, 2023 is a time to update licensing practices to remain in compliance with the state law. As required by Act 176, the class schedule updates use the latest statistical data on business profitability from the IRS, which then receives approval from the SC Revenue and Fiscal Affairs Office. The City of Westminster must adopt these by **December 31, 2023**, to address those licensing renewals that will take place for the license year running from **May 1, 2024 – April 30, 2025**.

Upon a motion by Mr. Glymph and seconded by Mrs. Snipes, the motion to *approve First Reading of Ordinance #2023-10-10-01; An Ordinance Amending the Business License Ordinance of the City of Westminster to Update the Class Schedule as Required by Act 176 of 2020* passed unanimously.

Member	Motion	Vote
Ramey		Yes
Glymph	Motion	Yes
Powell		Yes

Reese		Absent
May		Yes
Dunn		Yes
Snipes	Second	Yes

2. Consideration of an Intergovernmental Agreement for Fire Protection and Other Emergency Response Services with Oconee County

Mr. Bronson informed Council that the city has an intergovernmental agreement (IGA) with Oconee County to provide fire service protection to the unincorporated areas around the city. He added that the agreement was signed June 20, 2012. Mr. Bronson also added that since that time properties in the unincorporated area have developed increasing the calls for service and new developments are under construction, with even more are planned for the area. With the direction and input from the City Council, the final draft agreement is presented for Council's consideration. It is not substantially different from the existing IGA. The highlights include:

- Five (5) year term with a maximum of two five (5) year extensions
- Either party may terminate with a twelve (12) month notice
- City will respond to actual or suspected emergencies (fire, medical, hazmat, rescue, and related services) as it does in the city limits
- Monthly reporting from City to County
- Annual compensation from County to City is \$550,000 – was previously \$285,000 annually
- Cooperative effort to maintain ISO ratings
- Other legal provisions
- Does not include annual inflation index – hopefully can be included in the future

Upon a motion by Mrs. Snipes and seconded by Mr. Powell, the motion to ***approve an Intergovernmental Agreement for Fire Protection and Other Emergency Response Services with Oconee County*** passed unanimously.

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

3. Consideration of Resolution No. 09-12-2023-01; A Resolution Supporting the Local Match for the CDBG - Community Development Block Grant Program

Mr. Bronson informed Council that the application deadline for the fall round of Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) program managed by the South Carolina Department of Commerce is September 15, 2023. He added that the City's grant application will fund improvements to the downtown streetscape on Retreat Street and on Main Street from Retreat Street to Lucky Street. The improvements will be designed by Seamon Whitside (SW+). The current estimate for the projects is \$1,296,204. The grant request is for CDBG funds to cover \$750,000 with the City providing a match of \$546,204. Grant awards are anticipated to be announced late this calendar year and construction to begin in 2024.

Upon a motion by Ms. May and seconded by Mr. Glymph, the motion to *approve Resolution No. 09-12-2023-01; A Resolution Supporting the Local Match for the CDBG - Community Development Block Grant Program* passed unanimously.

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

4. Consideration Of Resolution No. 09-12-2023-02; A Resolution to Remand the Westminster Zoning Ordinance to The Planning Commission for Review

Mr. Bronson reminded Council that last summer, City Council and the Planning Commission engaged attorney and planning consultant Spencer Wetmore to review and update the Westminster Zoning Ordinance, including joint sessions of the Council and Commission. He added that this resolution would empower the Planning Commission to review and amend the ordinance and recommend action for City Council.

Upon a motion by Mr. Dunn and seconded by Mr. Glymph, the motion to *approve Resolution No. 09-12-2023-02; A Resolution to Remand the Westminster*

Zoning Ordinance to The Planning Commission for Review passed unanimously.

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

5. Consideration of the Westminster Planning Commission Bylaws as approved by the Westminster Planning Commission

Mr. Bronson informed Council that at the August 21, 2023, meeting of the Westminster Planning Commission, the Commission unanimously approved Bylaws for the Commission. He added that these proposed bylaws were adapted from several other jurisdictions across the state and were prepared by consultant Wade Luther and Assistant to the City Administrator Reagan Osbon. Mr. Bronson also added that the City is compelled by state law to have Bylaws for the Planning Commission and they exist primarily to establish procedures for meeting times, conducting business, and application processing.

Upon a motion by Mrs. Snipes and seconded by Ms. May, the motion to *approve the Westminster Planning Commission Bylaws as approved by the Westminster Planning Commission* passed unanimously.

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

6. Special Events Committee Update
(Councilmembers May, Reese, and Snipes are the Council representatives on the Committee.)

Mr. Osbon informed Council that the Special Events Committee met on August 16, 2023, at City Hall and on August 30, 2023, at the Utility Shop. He added that at the August 16 meeting, the committee reviewed dates and times for upcoming events, requested that they review special event applications, directed staff to work with Downtown merchants for Boo on Main, began preliminary discussions around a Juneteenth Celebration, established a process for parade routes and sign-ups, and began a strategy and schedule for Christmas events.

Mr. Osbon also informed Council that the following event schedule was finalized:

- City Staff Decorating: November 20-22, 27-30 (if needed)
- Tree Lighting: Dec. 1 at 7:00pm
- Christmas Parade: Dec. 2 at 11:00am
- Westminster Festival of Trees at the Depot: Dec. 1-2, 8-9, 15-16, 22

Mr. Glymph questioned why the Christmas Parade was changed to a daytime hour on a Saturday with the tree lighting the night before. Mrs. Snipes responded by saying that were safety and traffic concerns and that the committee along with police input felt it better to have it during the daytime. She added that this may also benefit people who may be working on the typical Friday evening time slot and that businesses downtown would be open on Saturday at that time.

Mr. Dunn questioned why the Secret Santa event was moved and Mrs. Snipes responded that the Depot was too small for such an event and last year the crowd it drew was an issue with the small space and restroom facilities were an issue.

Mr. Glymph questioned whether there were any citizens on the Events Committee and added that he was under the impression that Council had voted to keep citizen members involved. Mrs. Snipes responded that she believed Council had left it be just a Council Committee and that once they have all of the planning and scheduling in order, then the Committee would ask for volunteers to assist the Committee. Mr. Glymph insisted on having volunteers involved. After further discussion, Mayor Ramey suggested waiting until after the first of the year to look at changing the Committee since there were several upcoming events. Mayor Ramey also asked Mr. Bronson to confirm what Council had approved for how the Committee should function and then to inform all Council Members of such.

7. Recreation Planning Committee Update
(Mayor Ramey and Councilmember Dunn are the Council representatives on the Committee.)

Mr. Bronson informed Council that the Recreation Planning Committee met on September 6, 2023, at City Hall. He added that the Committee reviewed the

requirement and timelines in the Request for Proposals (RFP) developed to construct Phase I of the Hall Road Recreation Complex.

8. Discussion regarding the special event personnel policy

Mr. Osbon informed Council that the Events Committee voted to recommend to council that the city begin charging for personnel services to support special events. He added that currently, the Police, Fire, and Utility Departments provide personnel free of charge to special events, despite often having to pay overtime rates to employees. Mr. Osbon stated that the Committee had come up with the following rate schedule suggestion:

Police	\$35 per hour per officer
Fire:	\$35 per hour per firefighter
Public Works:	\$30 per hour per employee

After some discussion, Council tabled this topic until January.

9. Discussion regarding Dixon Road Water Lines

Mr. Bronson reminded Council that the USDA-RD project to improve and add new water lines includes adding a water line along Dixon Road. He added that there are currently fourteen houses that are served by City water and that the water meters for all these houses are in one location at the intersection of Jenkins Bridge Road and Dixon Road. Mr. Bronson also added that the houses currently have self-installed water lines through each property to the water meters and that if one-line breaks or has a leak it is nearly impossible to determine which line services which house.

Mr. Bronson further stated to Council that the USDA-RD project will add a water line so each house may be served properly from water meters located in front of each property, it will also improve water pressure and reliability. He added that as the contractor nears completion of the installation of the new water line, all the property owners will need to connect to the new water line through new water meters and that this will need to be a coordinated effort so that all properties are connected at the same time so the new water line may be used, and the old meters removed.

Mr. Bronson informed Council that Staff is suggesting that the City hire one contractor to install the water lines from the houses to the meter. He added that this is the property owner's responsibility; however, given the cost anticipated for this it may cause a hardship or financial burden which could cause the property

owners to delay in making the connection and therefore a contract will be developed to allow the City to pay the plumbing contractor for the installation with the cost recovered through the utility bill of the property owners over 24-36 months. Liability waivers will be required.

Council agreed with this plan.

10. Discussion of an offer to purchase 0.2 acres of City-owned property located at 308 Fire Tower Road by Mahlon Stoltzfus

Mr. Bronson informed Council that on September 5, 2023, he received an offer to purchase the property located at 308 Fire Tower Road for \$3,500. He added that the subject property is adjacent to property owned by Mr. Stoltzfus and that Utilities Director Kevin Harbin has evaluated the site and the tank and reports neither the property nor the tank is used by the City.

Upon a motion by Mr. Ramey and seconded by Mrs. Snipes, the motion to *approve the offer to purchase 0.2 acres of City-owned property located at 308 Fire Tower Road by Mahlon Stoltzfus* passed unanimously.

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

Adjourn

Upon a motion by Mayor Ramey and seconded by Mrs. Snipes, the motion *to adjourn the meeting at 8:16 pm* passed unanimously.

(Minutes submitted by Rebecca Overton)

Mayor Brian Ramey

Date