

MINUTES
WESTMINSTER CITY COUNCIL
Regular Scheduled Meeting
Tuesday, January 9, 2024

The City Council of the City of Westminster met in a regular scheduled meeting on Tuesday, January 9, 2024, at 6:00 pm at the Westminster Fire Department with Mayor Brian Ramey presiding. Those in attendance were:

Brian Ramey
 Jimmy Powell

Audrey Reese
 Adam Dunn

Daby Snipes
 Dale Glymph

Ruth May

City Administrator, Kevin Bronson
 Assistant to the City Administrator, Reagan Osbon
 City Clerk, Rebecca Overton
 Interim Police Chief, Caitlin Pope
 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.

Swearing in of Members

Andrew Holliday swore in recently elected Mayor Brian Ramey, and Council Members Adam Dunn, Audrey Reese, and Daby Snipes.

Call to Order

Mayor Ramey called the meeting to order at 6:05 pm.

Certification of Quorum

Rebecca Overton certified a quorum.

Invocation and Pledge of Allegiance

Mrs. Audrey Reese led the Council in the invocation and the Pledge of Allegiance.

Public Comments

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Mr. David Cooper spoke to Council and stressed his concerns about the overstretched police and fire departments. He suggested to Council to explore the possibility of obtaining a federal grant that would provide additional police officers, adding that nearby Lavonia, Georgis had done this recently. Mr. Cooper added that he would like to see a minimum of 9 full time Officers and a Police Chief making the Department a 10 Officer staff.

Election of Mayor Pro Tempore for 2024

Upon a motion by Mr. Dunn and seconded by Mrs. Reese, the motion to *nominate Mr. Powell as Mayor Pro Tempore for 2024* passed unanimously.

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

Comments from the Mayor and Council

Mrs. Snipes announced that is was National Law Enforcement Appreciation Day and she expressed her gratitude for all Police Officers and their dedication and work.

Mr. Glymph asked about the police vehicles and recent repairs. Chief Pope stated there had been some manufacturing issues with the new Tahoes and both had brakes replaced recently. He also asked about looking into a possible solution to the continuous damage to the marquis sign. Mr. Bronson added that they could discuss this at the upcoming Planning Session Workshop.

Mr. Ramey addressed the concerns that Mr. Cooper had spoke about and added that the biggest challenge for having more Police or Fire Officers is the budget.

Routine Business

1. Approval of the December 12, 2023, Regular City Council Meeting Minutes

Upon a motion by Mrs. Reese and seconded by Mr. Glymph, the motion to *approve the December 12, 2023, minutes as amended*, passed unanimously.

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

2. Comments from the Utility Director

- a. Mr. Harbin informed Council that the USDA project had encountered some delays recently with the rain. He added that the Dixon Road water line was complete with over half of the residents active on the new line.
- b. Mr. Harbin informed Council that there had not been any electrical or other incidents with the recent heavy rains.

3. Comments from City Administrator

- a. Mr. Bronson informed Council that the tabled Ordinance concerning the appointment of Police Chief and City Clerk would be on the February agenda.
- b. Mr. Bronson informed Council that the FY 2023 Audit would be on ready for presentation at the February meeting.
- c. Mr. Bronson reminded Council that the Planning and Priority Workshops were recently cancelled and offered new dates for rescheduling those workshops. All Council Members were in favor of having those on January 23rd and 24th. Mr. Bronson added that the January 24th workshop would be facilitated by Chip Bentley of the Appalachian Council of Governments.

Old Business

None

New Business

1. Consideration of Ordinance No. 01-09-2024-01; An Ordinance to Amend Title VII, Chapter 70, of The Code of Ordinances for the City of Westminster

Mr. Bronson informed Council that the proposed change to Title VII Chapter 70 of the Code of Ordinances would provide additional tools for Westminster Police Officers when individuals are actively not complying with lawful requests or orders from officers. He added that this ordinance would make it unlawful to not comply with these orders, creating an additional charge that the Police Department may levy in such event. Mr. Bronson stated that the effects would be

like that of Resisting Arrest but would enable officers to write a ticket for the incident to be handled in City Court, not General Session or other higher courts. He also added that neighboring cities such as Walhalla and Seneca have versions of this ordinance of their own. This would result in:

- (i) Allow police officers to ticket offenders without a warrant under City Code,
- (ii) Offenders potentially avoiding an arrest record, and
- (iii) Fines paid to remain in City Court, not the higher courts.

Upon a motion by Mrs. Reese and seconded by Mrs. Snipes, the motion to ***approve first reading of Ordinance No. 01-09-2024-01; An Ordinance to Amend Title VII, Chapter 70, of The Code of Ordinances for the City of Westminster,*** passed unanimously.

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

2. Consideration of City Council Meeting Schedule

The 2024 City Council Meeting Schedule is recommended as follows:

January 9, 2024	6:00 PM
February 13, 2024	6:00 PM
March 19, 2024	6:00 PM
April 9, 2024	6:00 PM
May 14, 2024	6:00 PM
June 11, 2024	6:00 PM
July 9, 2024	6:00 PM
August 13, 2024	6:00 PM
September 10, 2024	6:00 PM
October 8, 2024	6:00 PM
November 12, 2024	6:00 PM
December 10, 2024	6:00 PM

Upon a motion by Mr. Glymph and seconded by Mrs. Snipes, the motion to ***approve the City Council Meeting Schedule*** passed unanimously.

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

3. Consideration of FY2025 Annual Budget Calendar

January 9, 2024	City Council Priority Setting Workshop No. 1	1:00-5:00PM
January 9, 2024	City Council Meeting Council consideration of proposed FY2025 Budget Calendar	6:00 PM
January 9, 2024	City Council Priority Setting Workshop No 2	9:00-1:00PM
January 24, 2024	Budget kick-off meeting with senior staff	
February 13, 2024	Budget Workshop Expenditure Review Part 1- Utility Fund Electric Water (includes Water Plant) Sewer	4:00 PM
	City Council Meeting	6:00 PM
February 14, 2024	Departmental budget requests due to CA	
March 4, 2024	Department Directors meet with CA	
March 5, 2024	Department Directors meet with CA	
March 19, 2024	Budget Workshop Expenditure Review Part 2 General Fund Solid Waste Fund Youth Recreation Fund Hospitality and Accommodations Tax Fund	4:00 PM
	City Council Meeting	6:00 PM
April 9, 2024	Budget Workshop Revenue Review Utility Funds General Fund Solid Waste Fund Youth Recreation Fund Capital Projects Fund Hospitality and Accommodations Tax Fund	4:00 PM
	City Council Meeting	6:00 PM
April 30, 2024	City Council 2022 Budget Workshop Bringing it all together, all funds, revenue and expenditures - balanced. Reflects preferences and follows priorities of Council. Council directs modifications, adjustments.	4:00 PM
May 14, 2024	Public Hearing and 1st Reading	6:00 PM
June 11, 2024	2nd Reading and Adoption	6:00 PM

Upon a motion by Mrs. Reese and seconded by Mr. Glymph, the motion to *approve the FY2025 Annual Budget Calendar* passed unanimously.

Member	Motion	Vote
Ramey		Yes
Glymph	Second	Yes
Powell		Yes
Reese	Motion	Yes

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May		Yes
Dunn		Yes
Snipes		Yes

4. Consideration of Resolution No. 01-09-2024-01; A Resolution Pledging to Practice and Promote Civility in The City of Westminster

Mr. Bronson informed Council that the Municipal Association of South Carolina’s Civility Initiative calls upon cities and towns across the state to commit to civil and constructive discourse in everyday interactions with the public, elected officials, and staff. He added that as destructive as incivility can be in everyday life, it is particularly harmful in a city council meeting, or in municipal offices. Approval of this resolution will reaffirm the City and City Council’s commitment to civility in 2024.

Upon a motion by Mrs. Reese and seconded by Mrs. Snipes the motion to ***approve Resolution No. 01-09-2024-01; A Resolution Pledging to Practice and Promote Civility in The City of Westminster*** passed unanimously.

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

5. Consideration Of Resolution No. 01-09-2024-02; A Resolution Committing the City of Westminster to Provide A Local Match for The Appalachian Regional Commission (ARC) Funds Managed by The South Carolina Department of Commerce Grants Administration

Mr. Bronson informed Council that staff is in the process of applying to the Appalachian Regional Commission (ARC) for grant funding to improve portions of the downtown streetscape along Main Street in between Retreat Street and Lucky Street, along Grey Street including the railroad underpass and surrounding areas. He added that the application for the grant requires the city to commit to provide a local cash match of \$298,332.00, which equals the 50-percent local match required to support the application for a \$596,663.00 Appalachian Regional Commission Grant.

Upon a motion by Mr. Dunn and seconded by Mrs. Snipes, the motion to ***approve Resolution No. 01-09-2024-02; A Resolution Committing the City of Westminster to Provide a Local Match for The Appalachian Regional Commission (ARC) Funds Managed by The South Carolina Department of Commerce Grants Administration*** passed unanimously.

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

Executive Session

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

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

Adjourn

Upon a motion by Mrs. Reese and seconded by Mr. Dunn, the motion ***to adjourn the meeting at 7:05 pm*** passed unanimously.

(Minutes submitted by Rebecca Overton)

Mayor Brian Ramey

Date