

MINUTES
WESTMINSTER CITY COUNCIL
Regular Scheduled Meeting
Tuesday, November 12, 2024

The City Council of the City of Westminster met in a regularly scheduled meeting on Tuesday, November 12, 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
 Dale Glymph

Daby Snipes
 Adam Dunn

Ruth May

City Administrator, Kevin Bronson
 Assistant to the City Administrator, Reagan Osbon
 Budget & Management Analyst, Kiley Carter
 Police Chief, Fred Miller
 Fire Chief, Michael Smith
 Utility Director, Scott Parris
 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.

Certification of Quorum

Kiley Carter certified a quorum.

Invocation and Pledge of Allegiance

Mrs. Audrey Reese honored Rebecca Overton's husband with a moment of silence and then led the Council in the invocation and the Pledge of Allegiance.

Special Recognitions

Mrs. Snipes presented Judy Caywood and Contractor Keevan Moore with a proclamation representing the Westminster Senior Center/A.T Caywood Senior Outreach.

Mr. Ramey presented the Foothills Christian School Lady Flame varsity volleyball team with a proclamation for their volleyball state championship.

November 12, 2024

Mr. Ramey also presented a proclamation recognizing the Daughters of the American Revolution Literacy Month.

Public Comments

There were no public comments.

Comments from the Mayor and Council

Mrs. Snipes commented on the success of Boo on Main this year and thanked everyone who participated/organized this event.

Mr. Ramey commented on having a verbal contractor for the Hwy 76 bridge. This process has been expedited due to the need for it. He spoke about how this bridge being out has affected Westminster businesses due to the detours needing to be taken.

Routine Business

1. Comments from Utility Director

- a. Mr. Parris informed Council that there is a design/construction team for the Hwy 76 bridge along with surveyors. The city is trying to stay a few steps ahead of everyone since we do have a bypass water line on this bridge. The new bridge will be wider and longer. There is a call on November 14, 2024, to get more details. As for now, the plan is to take out the old and the current bridge. The new bridge will be open by June 2025.
- b. Mr. Parris informed Council that Heirloom farms is about 70% complete. There have been some minor snags with the contractors that the City has worked through and moved right along.
- c. Mr. Parris informed Council that the SCIIP project is seeing progress slowly because the old pipe has to be removed to install the new pipe.
- d. Mr. Parris informed Council of the mandatory lead and copper inventory from EPA. This is physical verification of the type of service water lines in the ground. He stated that Chris Todd has done endless research and was able to eliminate some potential service lines due to the water installation dates. No letters need to be sent out for lead services in our system.

2. Comments from the City Administrator

- a. Kevin Bronson asked Police Chief Miller to introduce two of his newest officers, Trevor Osterbrink and David Harrison. Mr. Osterbrink will be able to start the academy soon. He credited Mr. Harrison for doing such a great job of cleaning up the evidence room. Police Chief Miller will have a new hire start as of December 2, 2024. This will leave one spot available. Chief Miller hopes to be fully staffed by January 1, 2025.
- b. Mr. Bronson and Mr. Osbon commented on the Special Events coming up. Mr. Bronson reminded the council of Arbor Day on December 6, 2024, with a small celebration to plant some trees back after those that were lost after Hurricane Helene. He informed the council that the city will be using money received from PMPA to purchase the trees to plant.
- c. Mr. Osbon commented on Christmas in the City of Westminster. Christmas decorations are scheduled to go up before Thanksgiving this year. The Christmas parade will be December 6, 2024 at 6 pm. The sign-ups are now open for this, which is new, but we are working with everyone who would like to participate. The city will also be doing a window decorating contest with judges and more details to come. Mr. Glymph asked Mr. Osbon if the city is taking volunteers for these Christmas events since it is such an undertaking. Mr. Osbon said that the city will if they need to. Volunteers would just need to reach out to the city and details will be provided on how they can help.
- d. Mr. Osbon commented on the City's 150th birthday in March 2025. More details are to come closer to the event date.
- e. Mr. Osbon commented on the future of the Planning Commission. Truman Holbrooks has served on this commission for awhile and does not plan to serve any longer once his term is up in December. The city recommends that council keep this in mind as a replacement will be needed to begin serving in January. Mrs. Reese made a point to everyone on council to be sure that whoever is nominated knows the commitment of this commission. Mr. Osbon stated that anyone interested with questions can be directed to him.
- f. Mr. Bronson talked about how Mammoth has began mobilizing their equipment on Hall Road today.
- g. Mr. Bronson spoke about how the city is still searching for an attorney. This job has been posted to the MASC website, the city website, and the SC Bar website. The postings were open ended, and Council could have potential attorneys to consider at the December meeting.

3. Approval of the October 8, 2024, Regular Meeting Minutes

Upon a motion by Mrs. Reese and seconded by Mr. Glymph, the motion to *approve the October 8, 2024, regular meeting minutes* passed unanimously.

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

Old Business

1. Consideration of Second Reading of the SIXTH SUPPLEMENTAL ORDINANCE NO. 2024-11-12-01 AUTHORIZING AND PROVIDING FOR THE ISSUANCE OF A COMBINED UTILITY SYSTEM REVENUE BOND, SERIES 2024A (OR YEAR IN WHICH ISSUED) OF THE CITY OF WESTMINSTER, SOUTH CAROLINA, IN THE PRINCIPAL AMOUNT OF NOT EXCEEDING \$8,705,000 TO BE PURCHASED BY THE 1 UNITED STATES OF AMERICA, ACTING THROUGH THE UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE, RURAL DEVELOPMENT; PROVIDING FOR THE PAYMENT OF THE PRINCIPAL OF AND INTEREST ON THE BOND FROM THE NET REVENUES DERIVED FROM THE OPERATION OF THE CITY'S COMBINED UTILITY SYSTEM; AND OTHER MATTERS RELATING THERETO.

Mr. Bronson explained that this ordinance allows the city to use the USDA funds to pay to install waterlines that we have now completed. Very little of the language changed, 2024A reference is now just 2024 and some USDA language was cleaned up as consent on their end. This pleases the bond counsel. Staff recommends approval.

Upon a motion by Mrs. Reese and seconded by Mr. Dunn, the motion to *APPROVE SECOND READING OF THE SIXTH SUPPLEMENTAL ORDINANCE NO. 2024-11-12-01 AUTHORIZING AND PROVIDING FOR THE ISSUANCE OF A COMBINED UTILITY SYSTEM REVENUE BOND, SERIES 2024A (OR YEAR IN WHICH ISSUED) OF THE CITY OF WESTMINSTER, SOUTH CAROLINA, IN THE PRINCIPAL AMOUNT OF NOT EXCEEDING \$8,705,000 TO BE PURCHASED BY THE 1 UNITED STATES OF AMERICA, ACTING THROUGH THE UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE, RURAL DEVELOPMENT; PROVIDING FOR THE PAYMENT OF THE PRINCIPAL OF AND INTEREST ON THE BOND FROM THE NET REVENUES DERIVED FROM THE OPERATION OF THE CITY'S COMBINED UTILITY SYSTEM; AND OTHER MATTERS RELATING THERETO* passed unanimously.

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

New Business

1. Consideration of First Reading of Ordinance 2024-12-10-01: AN ORDINANCE AMENDING SECTION 151.018 OF THE CITY OF WESTMINSTER ZONING ORDINANCE REGARDING THE PROCEDURES FOR ZONING PROPERTY THAT IS ANNEXED INTO THE CITY

Mr. Osbon explained that the city has realized with the current annexations that we could streamline this process by having two readings instead of four on any annexations. This would make the process quicker for anyone waiting for this. Staff recommends approval.

Upon a motion by Mr. Dunn and seconded by Mrs. Reese, the motion *to approve First Reading of Ordinance 2024-12-10-01: AN ORDINANCE AMENDING SECTION 151.018 OF THE CITY OF WESTMINSTER ZONING ORDINANCE REGARDING THE PROCEDURES FOR ZONING PROPERTY THAT IS ANNEXED INTO THE CITY* passed unanimously.

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

2. Consideration of First Reading of Ordinance 2024-12-10-02: AN ORDINANCE TO REZONE A CERTAIN PARCEL IN THE CITY OF WESTMINSTER FROM R-15 (ONE-FAMILY RESIDENTIAL) TO R-6 (ONE-FAMILY RESIDENTIAL). The City recently sold property located at 115 Riley Street (TMS# 530-21-06-015).

Mr. Osbon explained that the city did sell 115 Riley Street to Josh Thomas. Mr. Thomas would like to build 4 homes and would like for this to be rehomed to R-6 which is consistent with the multi-family residential zoning across the street. Staff recommends approval. This is on the agenda in November for the planning commission meeting for the second reading to be brought back to the council. Mrs. Reese confirmed the difference between R-6 and R-15 with Mr. Osbon. Mr. Ramey asked how many other R-6 zonings were in the area. Mr. Osbon said that it was a new zoning designation and only one other has been approved.

Upon a motion by Mrs. Snipes and seconded by Ms. May, the motion *to approve First Reading of Ordinance 2024-12-10-02: AN ORDINANCE TO REZONE A CERTAIN PARCEL IN THE CITY OF WESTMINSTER FROM R-15 (ONE-FAMILY RESIDENTIAL) TO R-6 (ONE-FAMILY RESIDENTIAL). The City recently sold property located at 115 Riley Street (TMS# 530-21-06-015) passed.*

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

3. Consideration of Legal Services Agreement with Burr Foreman for legal services relating the million USDA Loan

Mr. Bronson explained to Council that they approved a schedule of expenditures for the loan. At the time there was a city attorney (Andrew Holliday) and a bond counsel reviewing it. We still need to have the review done by an attorney and Mr. Bronson explained the terms with Burr & Forman to review this on the city's behalf. Mr. Ramey asked when payment started. Mr. Bronson explained that it would be 60-90 days after closing and stated that the city would be within budget with these payments.

Upon a motion by Mr. Dunn and seconded by Mrs. Reese, the motion to ***approve Consideration of Legal Services Agreement with Burr Foreman for legal services relating the million USDA Loan passed unanimously.***

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

4. Consideration of updated City of Westminster Water Policies

Mr. Osbon explained that Chris Todd had reviewed and made recommendations to update the city's water policies. Mr. Osbon explained what these changes were and recommended that council approves.

Upon a motion by Mrs. Reese and seconded by Mr. Glymph, the motion to ***approve Consideration of updated City of Westminster Water Policies passed unanimously.***

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

5. Discussion regarding the OJRSA rate study

Mr. Bronson explained this was just a discussion to give staff guidance, no vote was needed. OJRSA is expecting each city to do a rate study on what it costs each city to provide sewer collection services. We are expected to have ours completed after OJRSA has theirs completed. We must wait on OJRSA to complete their rate study before we can complete our rate study. Mr. Bronson explained that we are different from the OJRSA because we have other collection services besides sewer in a combined utility fund. He explained that the city could conduct a rate analysis just on sewer or we could conduct a rate analysis on water, sewer, and electric. Mr. Bronson explained that this would be about \$7,500 to \$40,000 to conduct this rate analysis, and we would need to have this in our current budget to keep up with the pace of OJRSA and their expectations of us. Kevin expects that this expense will be after the first of the year. Mr. Bronson suggests that we go ahead and do a rate analysis for all collection services in the combined utility fund unless the cost is more affordable by just doing sewer. Mrs. Reese asked if the results would be skewed if we did all three services together instead of just sewer. Mr. Bronson explained with just sewer that the OJRSA would get exactly what they want, but then we would be undermining our understanding since all three services are combined in their own fund. Mr. Dunn asked if we could do a rate analysis for all three services and then break them down separately. Mr. Bronson explained that his concern is that we do not have the money in the budget for this, but it must be done. Mr. Dunn suggested that we get a quote on this rate analysis before making a final decision. Mrs. Reese agreed. Mr. Bronson also explained that we already undercharge for sewer collection and that it still does not pay for itself. Mr. Ramey explained that each time rates are discussed, the council typically tries to keep the rates at what customers can afford to pay, not how much the city needs to charge. Mr. Bronson explained that the city would prepare a solicitation to include all 3 services with an option to just do sewer and see what quotes the city gets back.

6. Discussion regarding the painting of a logo on the Westminster Water Highway 11 Tank

Mr. Bronson explained that this has been discussed before but because of the price that no action was taken. There is no vote needed, just discussion. Mr. Bronson explained that the total cost for this would be \$15,300 with the option of paying for this over three years (quarterly payments of \$1,275). Mrs. Reese discussed how she is helping at the West-Oak High School Band again and that this has always come up. She feels that if we have the opportunity, to just go ahead and do it. Mrs. Snipes agreed since they are already up there to have them go ahead and do it. Mr. Ramey said that this has never been brought up as a payment option, always just a lumpsum. The consensus was to go ahead and paint the West Oak athletic logo on the Highway 11 water tank.

7. Discussion regarding the Recreation Center Construction Contract and the hiring of a third-party project inspector

Mr. Bronson explained that at the last Recreation Planning Committee meeting that this issue came up. Two council members are on the Recreation Planning Committee and Mr. Bronson is asking for directions from the entire council. Mr. Dunn does not believe that we need a third-party inspector and Mr. Ramey agreed. The council agreed that since Scott Parris is involved that no third-party inspector is needed for this.

8. Council called for a recess at 7:14 pm with Mrs. Reese making a motion and Mrs. Snipes giving the second.
9. The council reconvened at 7:17 pm
10. Discussion and presentation of anticipated FEMA Reimbursement requests

Mr. Osbon explained the costs associated with damage from Hurricane Helene and gave the council an idea of what the city will be requesting back from FEMA. He explained that some of these requests may be denied. He also explained that these costs may continue to increase. Mr. Osbon credited Mr. Michael Smith with his help on this since he went through it in 2017. Mr. Ramey asked Mr. Parris about the cost to replace the city's waterline over the Hwy 76 bridge. Mr. Parris then explained.

11. Presentation regarding the Vacant Building Registry by Assistant City Administrator Reagan Osbon

Mr. Osbon presented the council with a PowerPoint presentation of the current status on the city's vacant building registry.

12. Discussion regarding contractual matters related to Piedmont Municipal Power Agency (PMPA)

Mr. Bronson presented the council with a PowerPoint presentation related to PMPA.

13. Council called for a recess at 8:02 pm with Mrs. Reese making a motion and Mr. Glymph giving the second.
14. The council reconvened at 8:08 pm with Mr. Ramey making a motion and Mr. Glymph making a second to go into executive session.

Adjourn

Upon a motion by Mr. Ramey and seconded by Mrs. Reese, the motion *to adjourn the meeting at 9:45 pm* passed unanimously.

(Minutes submitted by Kiley Carter)

Mayor Brian Ramey

Date