



MINUTES  
Council Meeting  
January 18, 2022 - 6:30pm  
South Congaree Town Hall  
119 West Berry Rd.  
West Columbia, SC, 29172

**Members in Attendance: Mayor Cindy Campbell, Mayor Pro-Tem Mechelle Mabry and Council Members Jim Drennan, Brian Jackson and Bobby Porter**

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**The public was duly notified of the date, time, and place of the meeting.**

**I. Call to Order.**

Mayor Campbell called the meeting to order at 6:37 PM.

A quorum was present.

Mayor Campbell led in the Pledge of Allegiance and gave the Invocation.

Mayor Campbell welcomed everyone and especially the Airport High School Varsity Cheerleaders.

**II. Special Presentation**

**Recognition to Airport High School Varsity Cheerleaders**

Mayor Campbell advised that SC Representative R. J. May sends his apologies and regrets that due to his illness he was unable to be present to recognize each Airport High School Varsity cheerleader and coaches for their accomplishment.

Mayor Campbell shared that in the history of cheerleading competitions, AHS has not ever placed in the top three at the State competition level. Mayor Campbell advised that under the direction of Coach Flake, Airport placed 10<sup>th</sup> in 2019, 5<sup>th</sup> in 2020, and third in the State in 2021! The varsity cheerleaders were also recognized for placing first in the Lower State competition. Certificates of recognition from the State of South Carolina were presented to:

Ally Phillips  
Camryn Turner  
Hannah Williams  
Lakayla Twymon-Pelzer  
Kelsie Bryant  
Kendall Singleton  
Nyra Jenkins  
Takiyah Hunter  
Paislee Bryant  
Coach Elizabeth Flake

Ashley Cooner  
Emerson Senterfeit  
Jada Twymon-Pelzer  
Braelyn Burton  
Lainey Merrick  
Madison Peake  
Sara-Katherine Cantrell  
Taryn Gooding  
Sydney Evans  
Coach Jenifer Gooding

Aubrey Waters  
Grace Smith  
Gracie Spires  
Jasmine Booth  
Lexi Bertwell  
Madison Rucker  
Savannah Cassidy  
Tori Powell  
Taylor Gooding

**III. Second Reading Ordinance 21-005  
AN ORDINANCE PROVIDING FOR A LOCAL HOSPITALITY TAX ON THE SALES  
OF PREPARED MEALS AND BEVERAGES IN ESTABLISHMENTS OF THE TOWN  
OF SOUTH CONGAREE.**

Councilman Porter made a motion to pass the ordinance providing for a local hospitality tax of 2% in establishments of the Town of South Congaree, Councilman Jackson seconded.

Councilman Jackson stated that he is not against it but requests that Council map out what the tax is to be used for before it is passed and we stick to what it is for: real projects and real goals. Councilman Drennan stated he would like council to target a project so once we name a project we are good to move on this one. Councilman Jackson stated the first project is the water and sewer and stated he would like that project to be the first in line and once that is completed we can do other things. Councilman Porter added it will be difficult to target a specific project unless you know what revenue you will have to apply to the project. Councilman Porter stated he listened closely to residents and one business owner who spoke. What spoke volumes to him were statements made by Jeff Shacker that his hometown's business trends increased and also that the big issue with citizens is the timing. Councilman Porter added that he didn't know when is the best time would be to make a change, but now would be the time to move in that direction because we are one of a few towns that doesn't have it. Further, as it accrues over time it will give an idea of the revenue received, Council would then focus on the projects, making this a step by step process. Councilman Jackson clarified that he is not saying the water and sewer would be the only project, he just wants Council to map it out into the two or three projects; citizens' wants to know where the money will go. Councilman Drennan added that the water and sewer project is a million dollar project; we should concentrate on a smaller project; then for the next several years funnel the revenue into the water and sewer project so the general population can see there's some benefit to it. Councilman Porter reminded that council discussed delaying the start for 60 days and now we are looking at five months down the road. Councilman Porter stated this is a good direction for South Congaree to go in and we are not using our citizens to fund the projects but bring the community in as a part of the direction of where we are going and the 2% meets those needs. Councilman Jackson asked all of council where is this money going? Councilman Porter stated the revenue will go to the beautification of the Town of South Congaree; we can dissect this as much as possible but at this point there is not a project that we have agreed on as a target right now. Mayor Pro Tem Mabry added she thinks that is what Council needs to do so that we can be a little more specific than just beautification. Councilman Jackson stated that he has a problem with passing it and it not going to a need and going to a want.

Councilman Porter stated that Council has been talking about the hospitality tax for a year and a half now; we have had opportunity for people to join in on the conversation; at the public hearing we had three people speak up and one business owner speak up we can't let that deter us from going in a vision that we want to go in. Mayor Pro Tem Mabry stated that she would like for Council to convey the vision. Mayor Campbell stated that we have no idea what the revenue from the 2% tax would be and we do not have to have a plan in place; the 2% hospitality tax would be a separate budget and not included in our budget that we have for our

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expenses; let's see what monies are being brought in and then we decide and start talking about what can be done with those funds. Mayor Campbell stated that one person cannot decide what to do with that money, but it would be for the betterment of our town; to move our town forward; to be able to prune the crepe myrtle trees that have been neglected for years. Mayor Pro Tem Mabry stated that she heard the Mayor of Town of Springdale say is 'we're using this money to build a center, a rec center or a building' so what is our vision; he said that in the beginning they used the money to upgrade their park and it has been.

Councilman Porter stated that he has asked several Mayors that have the hospitality tax if it had a negative or positive effect on their town and not one they all say it has been a huge improvement not only throughout their finances but in the areas that they can utilize the money. Councilman Drennan asked why can't we put a list of projects together; prioritize them and select one and work toward it and that would be the vision. Mayor Pro Tem Mabry stated that in April there's going to be a whole new council coming on board and as we have seen in the past we need something in writing to let that next council know that this is where we're going; it's like our comprehensive plan; and that this is what we wanted this 2% go to; she agreed, let's put a list of projects together. Councilman Drennan added that in a year and half we haven't done that, so it's time to put the projects out there; prioritize them; and tell the public that's where we're putting their 2% hospitality tax. Councilman Drennan stated that Lexington County is going for a referendum of 1% increase in sales tax; first thing they did was they are going around to all the municipalities asking for their projects; they are going to list the projects and then ask for the increase in sales tax; we should be able to do the same thing; list the projects we are going to be working on and then go after our 2%; it's just the way you do things. Councilman Porter added that you don't spend money you don't have. Councilman Jackson wants to be able to tell people where the money is going. Mayor Campbell stated she understands what is being said but a plan can't be made if there's no idea what revenue will be brought in; everyone has their own thoughts on it, but we do not have any idea what the 2% will mean for our town; it would mean a lot of good for our town in a lot of ways. Mayor Pro Tem Mabry stated that the first thing people ask her is if we are hurting for money; she answers no and they want to know what's it for? Mayor Campbell stated that the crepe myrtle trees on SC-302 need to be pruned and we do not have the money to pay someone to come in and prune those trees; the hospitality tax would pay for that; we have signs that are falling over and missing signs; hospitality tax would pay for that; how do you make a plan before you pass the hospitality tax? Mayor Campbell stated just because we pass the tax doesn't mean we spend it at that moment; let the revenue come in and council discuss and plan then. Councilman Porter stated that before you make an investment you have to know how much money you have to invest; this is not a tax on each individual; a misconception is that everyone is going to have a 2% on everything they buy; we are capturing revenue from people that are passing through South Congaree. Mayor Pro Tem Mabry stated that she thinks we need to have a vision and see it.

Mayor Pro Tem Mabry made a motion to amend the prior motion to table the Ordinance 21-005 until council has a list of projects before the second reading of the Ordinance 21-005, Councilman Drennan seconded.

Councilman Porter stated that Council has been discussing the possibility of a hospitality tax for a year and a half and he wished some of these concerns would have been brought up within that year and a half; we could have been further along in the procedure if that was a sticking point for not only the citizens of South Congaree but also council members. Councilman Drennan stated that he sent everyone an email a month ago listing two of the projects that he would like to do. Councilman Jackson stated that he thinks this is something we can work out within the next 2 or 3 weeks. Councilman Drennan asked to capture projects from all five council members and let's vote on it at the next meeting and then run the second reading of the hospitality tax at the next meeting on the next agenda; certainly we can do that.

Councilman Jackson made a motion to amend the previous motion to table the second reading of Ordinance 21-005 until the February 10, 2022 work session meeting when council will compile a list of projects, Councilman Drennan seconded.

Roll Call Vote-

Councilman Porter – No

Councilman Drennan – Yes

Councilman Jackson – Yes

Mayor Pro Tem Mabry – Yes

Mayor Campbell – No

The motion carried.

Mayor Campbell advised the list of projects will be added to the work session meeting in February.

#### **IV. Reports**

Police Chief Josh Shumpert reported 124 tickets were written during December 2021. He advised the ticket numbers were down because it was the Christmas season and although they were enforcing the law that is why the numbers were down. The Chief advised that 1964 Blue Ridge Terrace continues to be a problem and have made several arrests. He also advised that 590 Main Street fire is being actively investigated for arson. Code enforcement citations continue to be written and a building official is needed to look at some homes and properties for possibly being condemned. The Police Department has a vacant certified officer position that has been posted on the municipal association website. Three of the four new patrol cars are in and waiting on lights and markings for two of the vehicles. There will be a jury trial on January 19, 2022.

Councilman Drennan asked the Chief if we have a problem with folks borrowing mail out of mailboxes. Councilman Drennan had a neighbor whose mail was taken and is this something we need to be aware of? Chief Shumpert advised crime does not stop and does not sleep. There is not an outpouring of mailbox theft but it has happened.

Mayor Pro Tem Mabry asked how do we choose jurors for jury trials. Chief Shumpert stated that there is a program that is used by the state that randomly selects from our jurisdiction.

Town Attorney, John Rakowsky, advised the Clerk of Court sends the request to jurors and the judge determines whether they serve or not.

Councilman Jackson advised Mayor Campbell to be excused from the meeting for personal reasons.

**V. Approval of Minutes**

Councilman Porter made a motion to approve the minutes from November 9, 2021, Councilman Drennan seconded.

Mayor Pro Tem Mabry asked if these are the same minutes that Sharon sent council. Mayor Campbell replied that she had proofed and made some changes and sent out to council. Mayor Pro Tem Mabry asked if there was any changes to the content. Mayor Campbell replied that the content was the same but that she had added first and/or last names and corrected grammatical errors but the content is the same. Mayor Campbell stated that she has been proofing the minutes for the past nine months and not changed any of the contents only correcting grammar.

Council voted unanimously to approve the November 9, 2021, work session minutes.

Councilman Porter made a motion to approve the November 16, 2021, meeting minutes, Mayor Pro Tem Mabry seconded.

Council voted unanimously to approve the November 16, 2021, Regular Council meeting minutes.

Councilman Porter asked for a confirmation that there was a unanimous vote for a hospitality tax as stated in Section V of the November 16, 2021, council meeting meetings. Councilman Drennan and Mayor Campbell confirmed the voting record in the minutes to be correct.

Councilman Drennan made a motion to approve the December 30, 2021, meeting minutes, Mayor Pro Tem Mabry seconded.

Councilman Porter asked about additional meeting minutes for December 2021. Mayor Campbell advised there are two sets of meeting minutes that were not in Council's packet.

Council voted unanimously to approve the December 30, 2021, meeting minutes.

Mayor Pro Tem Mabry asked who would be writing the minutes for the December meeting. Mayor Campbell advised Marsha Harsey will complete the minutes for the December 21<sup>st</sup> meeting and the Mayor will write the minutes from the December 14 work session with Mr. Jeff Shacker, MASC. Mayor Campbell advised the minutes will be completed by the February work session.

VI. Citizens Comments


Public comment was made by H. R. Williams.

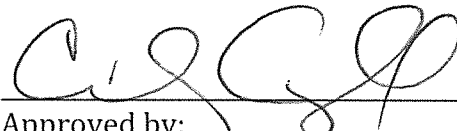
Mayor Campbell thanked the citizens that were present.

Councilman Drennan asked Mr. Williams to send council an email listing what he thinks the hospitality tax should be used for.

VII. Adjournment

Council, on the motion of Mayor Campbell and seconded by Councilman Drennan, voted unanimously to adjourn the meeting at 7:35 p.m.

  
Attested by:

  
Approved by:

Cindy Campbell,  
Mayor

2.15.2022  
Date Approved