



MINUTES

Special Called Council Meeting
February 27, 2024, 6:30PM
South Congaree Town Hall
Council Chambers
119 West Berry Rd.
West Columbia, SC, 29172

Members in Attendance: Mayor Cindy Campbell, Mayor Pro-Tem Mechelle Mabry,
Councilmembers: Brian Jackson Kitty Spires (Absent), and Jim Drennan.
Also in Attendance: Municipal Clerk Kerri Charlton, Town Attorney John Rakowsky.

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 **6:30 PM**. A quorum was present. Mayor Campbell led in the Pledge of Allegiance and Invocation. Mayor Campbell read the Freedom of Information Act.

Note from Mayor Campbell:

Tonight's meeting was called by Councilman Drennan, Mayor Pro-Tem Mabry, and Councilman Jackson. This is a special-called meeting and not a work session. Special called meetings are to be held when there is an exigent or urgent matter to be discussed and/or action taken by the council. Per our town ordinance 31.06. matters to be considered by council at a regular meeting shall be placed on a written agenda. The matters on tonight's agenda were not considered by all of the Council and I was advised of this meeting late yesterday afternoon.

II. Town Hall Water and Sewer Issue:

Discussion Points:

In the discussion, the Council reviewed the current status of water and sewer services in the affected building and evaluated the severity of the situation considering the prolonged lack of access to these services. It was noted that there were no RFQs or contractor engagements to address the issue, prompting exploration into the feasibility of connecting the building to City of Cayce water as a permanent solution. Additionally, various options for addressing the septic system issue, including repair or replacement, were discussed. The Council also considered budget allocation and potential funding sources for the necessary repairs or replacements. It was determined that follow-up meetings or updates would be necessary to ensure that the issue was being effectively addressed. These discussion points were addressed with the aim of finding viable solutions for the affected building's water and sewer infrastructure concerns.

III. Comprehensive Plan:

Discussion Points:

Councilman Drennan highlighted the one-week training session with a Columbia attorney, which sparked concerns about the comprehensive plan's significance. Drennan emphasized how crucial the comprehensive plan is as the foundation for ordinances and regulations. This concern was reinforced during a recent County meeting, where it was disclosed that the county had finalized its comprehensive plan. The County's plan suggests that the area could potentially accommodate up to eight residential homes on a one-acre lot, a number Drennan deemed excessive. However, without

corresponding ordinances in place, this allowance remains theoretical. Drennan stressed the need to align ordinances with the comprehensive plan to ensure effective enforcement. Councilman Drennan reiterated the presence of outdated ordinances may not align with the current comprehensive plan, last updated in 1999. He emphasized the necessity of updating the plan to reflect the evolving needs and priorities of the community, with public input being crucial.

IV. SAFEBuilt, LLC- Budget VS. Actuals

Discussion Points:

Councilman Drennan stated, back in December he noticed a sudden increase in the invoice for code enforcement services, which had recently been separated from site building inspections or building officials. This came as a surprise, as Councilman Drennan had checked with SAFEBuilt in Georgetown back in October to confirm if this option was included in their contract, only to find that it wasn't. Despite no formal decision to bring in code enforcement, it seemed to be happening anyway. The original code enforcement person from SAFEBuilt had been replaced by Mr. Thomas, who began issuing invoices for code enforcement services alongside those from the building inspector. Upon reviewing the budget, Councilman Drennan discovered that \$20,000 had been allocated for these services, yet the Town had already spent \$25,000 with five months left in the fiscal year. This raised concerns about potential overspending. According to SAFEBuilt, Mr. Thomas was tasked with inspecting Town buildings and worked closely with Building Official Ward Braswell. Issues were identified in both the Town Hall building and the Courthouse, the latter of which had a cracked wall. To address this situation, they needed to weigh their options, considering either a budget amendment or a decision to continue using external code enforcement services. Councilman Drennan mentioned his belief that there were already six code enforcement officers in the police department and that an additional \$13,000 had been allocated to Sergeant Walker to focus on code enforcement outside of his regular scheduled workdays. Furthermore, Councilman Drennan was surprised to learn of Mr. Thomas's involvement in code enforcement, as he had been under the impression that this responsibility fell under the purview of the police department. As a result, Mr. Thomas was instructed to cease code enforcement duties until he completed his certification process, which he successfully did by January 22, 2024. Given the financial implications, the Mayor suggested deferring any decisions until they had a current profit and loss report. Further discussion, possibly in an executive session, was deemed necessary to fully address the matter. With invoices arriving monthly and consistently surpassing the budget by \$2,000 to \$4,000, careful consideration was required to ensure fiscal responsibility going forward.

V. Sewer System- Design analysis for expansion discussion. (7:07 PM)

Discussion Points:

Mayor Campbell brought up a crucial question: whether representatives from the City of Cayce had been invited to discuss the Sewer Agenda item. Councilman Drennan clarified that they had not received invitations, sparking a conversation about the town's responsibility to take the lead on action. Councilman Drennan then pushed for a set of Professional Engineer (PE) drawings, underlining the necessity of soliciting bids for the project. He proposed assigning Bobby Porter, a member of the Water commission, to oversee the Request for Proposal (RFP) process. Stressing the urgency, Councilman Drennan urged allocating \$40-\$50 thousand dollars for this purpose, citing the indispensable role of PE drawings in facilitating growth and averting potential health hazards fifty years down the line. Mayor Campbell, in response, echoed Councilman Jackson's suggestion from earlier, advocating for a public hearing before committing funds. She voiced concerns about burdening citizens with hefty sewer hook-up costs and recommended initiating dialogue with the City of Cayce,

as they oversee all sewer lines in South Congaree. Proposing to schedule a joint discussion during the March work session, she emphasized the importance of collaboration between the two entities. Additionally, Mayor Campbell instructed the Municipal Clerk to reach out to the City of Cayce to express the town's interest in pursuing sewer development. The conversation also touched upon the necessity of sewer infrastructure along Route 302 to accommodate business growth. However, there was acknowledgment of the potential financial strain on three residents living along Route 302 if mandated to connect to the sewer system.

VI. Administrative Rights: Town Website and Town Facebook (7:16 PM)

Discussion Points:

1. Councilman Drennan initiated the discussion by highlighting his extensive training in municipal finance and budgeting, including courses offered by the Municipal Association. He emphasized the advice from CPA Larry Finley, stressing the importance of having at least two individuals overseeing financial records, particularly regarding administrator password privileges in banking systems. Drennan raised concerns about issues encountered with the town website and Facebook page, specifically regarding the posting of special-called meetings and events.
2. Banking and Administrative Access:
Mayor Campbell clarified that Mayor Pro-Tem Mabry is included in banking transactions, with any two council members eligible to sign. Mayor Pro-Tem Mabry suggested granting administrative rights to the Town Clerk for website and Facebook management. Drennan recommended expanding access to Mayor Pro-Tem and Councilwoman Spires.
3. Posting of Agenda:
Drennan stated the need to post his agenda, although it did not meet the required guidelines or regulations. Town Clerk Charlton explained the procedural requirements for special-called meetings, noting the necessity for approval by a minimum of three council members. Drennan's initial agenda was not approved due to format issues and lack of articulation from other council members. Subsequently, a new agenda was sent, and the meeting was set up.
4. Access to Town Website and Facebook:
Mayor Campbell mentioned the turnover in clerks, with the current clerk lacking Facebook access but having website access. She confirmed that Mayor Pro-Tem Mabry was granted access in 2020 but it was never activated. Challenges were noted in reclaiming administrative rights due to previous indiscriminate access.
5. Town Business on Social Media:
The mayor reiterated the importance of using town platforms solely for official town business and functions, emphasizing the avoidance of personal agendas or posts. Drennan referenced the ten percent rule, suggesting that significant town-related content on personal websites could be considered government sites. Councilman Jackson noted Mrs. Drennan's administrator rights due to her prior role as the Town's events coordinator.
6. Town Attorney Intervention:
Town Attorney John Rakowsky redirected the discussion to the agenda item concerning social media accounts, clarifying that the 10% rule applies only to those in their official capacity posting.

VII. Executive Session Entered at 7:28 PM

S.C. Code 30-4-70 (A) (1) 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. [Personnel: Clerk of Court and Police Department]

- Mayor Campbell made the motion to enter Executive Session at 7:28 PM, Motion seconded by Councilman Drennan, Motion carries by unanimous vote.
- Mayor Campbell made the motion to exit Executive Session at 7:58 PM, and reconvene to public forum, Motion seconded by Councilman Drennan, Motion carries by unanimous vote.
- No Votes were taken during Executive Session.

Councilman Jackson made a motion to use ARPA premium pay in the amount of \$2500.00 for the clerk of court Hailee McGee for working during Covid.

Motion carried at 7:59PM

- Councilman Drennan- Yea
- Councilman Jackson- Yea
- Councilwoman Spires- Absent
- Mayor Pro-Tem Mabry- Yea
- Mayor Campbell- Yea

Councilman Jackson made a motion to give a 5% increase in pay to the Police department effective March 1, 2024. Seconded by Councilman Drennan, Discussion: Mayor Pro-Tem Mabry clarifies that it is the current pay period.

Motion carried at 8:00PM

- Councilman Drennan- Yea
- Councilman Jackson- Yea
- Councilwoman Spires- Absent
- Mayor Pro-Tem Mabry- Yea
- Mayor Campbell- Yea

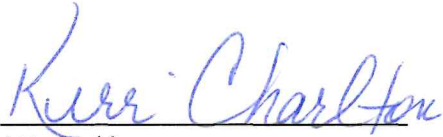
VIII. Citizen Comments:

Jerry Smith addressed the council regarding Code Enforcement, emphasizing the importance of enforcement not only for town ordinances but also under the international code council and being certified IPMC. He advocated for Code Enforcement officers to be certified and capable of addressing violations effectively. Smith agreed with Councilman Drennan's assertion that officers should actively identify violations while on duty. He highlighted his experience as a Code Enforcement officer, where he wrote a minimum of 40 violations per week. Smith stressed the need for Code Enforcement to be a full-time position, separate from the role of a building inspector. He noted the challenges and costs associated with hiring a certified Building Inspector for Code Enforcement purposes, estimating a minimum cost of \$70,000. Regarding the discussion on political posts on personal pages, Smith mentioned that he couldn't find any laws applying to private citizens and expressed agreement that such regulations might apply to official town or council member pages. Smith expressed concerns

about the density of housing, specifically referencing the issue of eight homes per acre, and indicated his intention to seek clarification from Lexington County. He also raised questions about the town's ordinances and the rationale behind investing in sewer infrastructure if Cayce holds the rights. Councilman Drennan responded, noting that while Cayce holds the first right of refusal, the Lexington County Joint Municipal Water and Sewer could potentially assist in addressing the sewer needs of the town. Smith concluded his comments, indicating that he had no further remarks.

IX. Adjournment of Council Meeting:

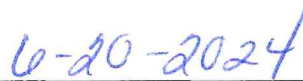
The council, on the motion of Mayor Campbell, seconded by Councilman Drennan, voted to adjourn the meeting at **8:06 PM**. Motion carried with unanimous vote of council.



Attested by:
Kerri Charlton,
Municipal Clerk



Approved by:
Cindy Campbell,
Mayor



Date Approved

For the complete Live Stream Video, Please see the following Facebook Links:

<https://www.facebook.com/TownOfSouthCongaree/videos/362657926634741>

<https://www.facebook.com/TownOfSouthCongaree/videos/625194373149820> PT 2

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

The Town of South Congaree is a handicapped accessible facility.