



**REGULAR CITY COUNCIL MEETING  
Wednesday, January 29, 2025; 6:30 P.M.  
Bennettville Public Safety Complex**

**Minutes**

1. CALL TO ORDER Mayor Tyron Abraham
2. INVOCATION AND PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE Gregory Scott, Sr.
3. ROLL CALL  
District 1-Wanda Weaver  
District 2-Tyrone Davis  
District 3-Allen Taylor  
District 4-William Jennings, Jr.  
Mayor Tyron Abraham  
District 5-Vacant  
District 6- Gregory Scott, Sr.
4. APPROVAL/CORRECTION OF MINUTES
  - A. **Regular Council Meeting; Tuesday, November 19, 2024**-Mayor Abraham stated that they would hold off on approving the minutes for Regular Council Meeting Minutes; Tuesday, November 19, 2024, due to a missing sheet. Members of Council voted unanimously.
5. PUBLIC REQUESTS/ PRESENTATION OF PETITIONS
  - A. **Employees Anniversaries**-Mrs. Angela Ward, Asst. City Administrator expressed appreciation to all December and January Employees Anniversaries. She thanked all employees for their dedication and hard work for The City of Bennettville. Mrs. Ward ended by saying The City of Bennettville has started a new Customer Service Initiative. We are enhancing our Customer Service with the logo, The three P's: Polite, Professionalism and Patient.  
**December Anniversaries:** QuShika S. Lucas (Administration) 12 years; Fredericka Miller (Public Works) 13 years; Angela Sellers (Water Treatment) 4 years; Thomas Cato (Fire) 3 years; Walter Jackson (Utility Building) 1 year; Brittany Jones (Business Development) 1 year and John Smith (Utility Building) 1 year

**January Anniversaries:** Tasha Townsend (Finance) 23 years; Kim Peterson (Police) 8 years/return to work retiree; William Griggs (Fire) 8years; Larue Fine (Public Works) 3 years and Evan Graham (Water/Sewer) 2 years

**Retired in December**

Shawn Lucas – Lieutenant Investigations (Police)

John Crowley – Manger Utility Billing (Utility Billing)

B. **New Hires & Promotions**

**December New Hires**

Garrett Sweatt – Firefighter (Fire)

Dustin Sheppard – Firefighter (Fire)

Jonathan Beggs – Sergeant (Police)

Whitney English – Police Records Clerk (Police)

**December Promotions**

Sheikela Brown – Police Secretary/ Record Clerk (Police)

Evan Graham – Distribution/Collection Worker B

- C. **PDRTA (Don Strickland)-** Gave an update on their transportation services within Marlboro County: Bennettsville Express, McColl-Clio Bennettsville, demand Response and Bennettsville-Cheraw.. A newsletter was distributed to all council members at the beginning of the meeting showing percentages of annual passenger ridership & survey data, current funding, etc. PDRTA’s total service area is over 3,500 square miles, making it the largest RTA in South Carolina and the third largest in the nation.

- D. **Pee Dee Coalition (Wendy Woods)-** Shared the continued mission of the agency. The goal is to reduce family violence and child abuse.

6. PUBLIC COMMENTS (Agenda Items Only)  
None

7. SECOND READING AND PASSAGE IN FULL OF ORDINANCES  
No Business

8. FIRST READING AND ADVERTISEMENT OF ORDINANCES  
No Business

9. PASSAGE OF RESOLUTIONS

- A. Intergovernmental Agreement – Marlboro County magistrate serving as City of Bennettsville Municipal Judge (McQueen)

**Recommending Action:** A motion to approve the intergovernmental agreement for the Marlboro County magistrate serving as a City of Bennettsville Municipal Judge. Moved by Mr. Davis. Seconded by Mr. Scott. Motion passed unanimously.

10. GENERAL BUSINESS DISPENSED BY MOTION

- A. Dam Repair Professional Services (Davis & Floyd) Contract

**Recommending Action:** A motion to approve the Administrator to enter into the attached agreement with Davis & Floyd for professional engineering services. Moved by Mr. Jennings. Seconded by Ms. Weaver. Motion passed unanimously.

B. ARPA Expenditures (current budget year)

**Recommending Action:** A motion to approve the Administration to move forward with the agreed upon expenditures from ARPA allocations in the current budget year by moving money from the general fund into accounts to support the discussed projects. Moved by Mr. Davis. Seconded by Mr. Jennings. Motion passed unanimously.

C. Adoption of 2024-2025 Budget Calendar

**Recommending Action:** A motion to approve the 2024-2025 Budget Calendar as presented with the understanding that it could be modified by council at any time. Moved by Ms. Weaver. Seconded by Mr. Taylor. Motion passed unanimously.

D. Employee Pay Increase Plan (current budget year)

The City of Bennettsville commissioned a salary survey study in 2023 in efforts to pay all employees a competitive wage. The study was completed in 2024, and the city is taking steps to increase pay rates based on the study. The attached plan is phase one of the implementation of the study.

**Recommending Action:** A motion to approve the employee pay increase plan A presented. Increase the pay from the salary survey to bring people up to the minimum of \$15/hour.

The City of Bennettsville seeks to pay all employees a livable wage. This plan will increase the pay rate of all employees making less than \$15/hour to \$15/hour. Moved by Mr. Taylor. Seconded by Mr. Scott. Motion passed unanimously.

**Recommending Action:** A motion to approve the employee pay increase plan B presented. Moved by Ms. Weaver. Seconded by Mr. Davis. Motion passed unanimously.

E. SC Appropriations (Crooked Creek)

**Recommending Action:** A motion to approve the Administrator to pursue funding from the State to conduct maintenance on Crooked Creek. Moved by Ms. Weaver. Seconded by Mr. Taylor. Motion passed unanimously.

F. Santee Cooper Transmission Permission

**Recommending Action:** A motion to approve the Administrator to execute a permission agreement with Santee Cooper for the purpose of allowing city property to be surveyed for the construction of a transmission line. Moved by Mr. Taylor. Seconded by Mr. Davis. Motion passed unanimously.

11. PUBLIC COMMENTS (Non-Agenda Items Only)

Ms. Virginia Bostic-Asked why did the fee for a gas tap go from \$200 to \$1200.00? When it has always been \$200.00, and citizens weren't notified. A pamphlet should have been placed inside of the light bills so that citizens would have known.

Dr. Rippin McLeod- Thanked the City of Bennettsville for cutting the price on the gas back to a reasonable fee. Thanked the Police Department and Fire Department for serving the community. Lastly, he asked council to look at considering the policy on the utility needs for citizens. Requesting services that you don't need but is at the resident.

12. BOARDS AND COMMISSIONS

- A. Planning Commission (No Cases)
- B. Board of Architectural Review/Tree Committee (No Cases)
- C. Board of Zoning Appeals
  - Case #: Tiny Home

13. COUNCIL COMMITTEES

- A. Finance Committee (Chairman Jennings)-Gave an update on the two meetings that were held. He stated the city is doing well and it is coming back. The budget is great. The departments are staying on budget.
- B. Public Services Committee (Mayor Abraham)- Primary objective is working on ordinances and getting them up to date.
- C. Public Safety Committee (Chairman Taylor)-Gave an update on the meeting that was held on Tuesday, January 28<sup>th</sup>.
- D. Lake Authority -(No Update)

14. REPORTS AND INFORMATION PRESENTATION

- A. 2024 SCMIRF Annual Review – Increase in Premiums (Update)- Mr. Simon discussed how insurance premiums increased due to multiple accidents in city vehicles. The City Administration is taking steps to reduce accidents with training, Geotracking software, an improved city-wide vehicle policy, and more departmental oversight.
- B. Bennettsville Lofts - Ownership Change (Update)-The Bennettsville Downtown Lofts wish to change ownership. The project has two mortgages with the city and must get permission from the city to make the transaction. The Administration will forward this agreement to the city attorney for review and to confirm any modifications to the agreement requested by the city.
- C. Marlboro Pee Dee Rate Structure Change-Mr. Simon read a letter that was sent from Marlboro Pee Dee (MPD) regarding the rate structure related to on-peak energy hours. The purpose of this change is to flatten your annual power bill to remove the spikes you mostly see during the summer months.
- D. Request for Proposal – Affordable Housing Development (Update)-In 2023, the city voted to earmark the property for the development of affordable housing. The site, located on Cheraw Street, is an ideal location for housing development and an important opportunity in Bennettsville. Located near a school and around other residential areas, the development opportunity will deliver affordable housing solutions for the citizens of Bennettsville.
- E. Finance Report- Mr. Sam Sparkman (CFO) gave an update on revenues and

- expenditures.
- F. Grants Report- Rachel Williams gave an update on grants/projects and their timelines.
15. COMMUNICATION BETWEEN CITY COUNCIL AND CITY ADMINISTRATOR
- A. Marlboro County Board of Voter Reg. & Elections (November Election Dates)
- B. Marlboro County/City of Bennettsville Elections Agreement (Update)
16. NON-AGENDA ITEMS FROM COUNCIL
- Ms. Weaver-Thanked Angela Ward, Asst. Administrator for sending weekly emails. She also mentioned using the Community Center as a warming center was a great idea, however, in the future we should think about using the old Fire Station building for a permanent shelter for the Winter and Summer since it is in a central location.
- Mr. Davis- Thanked all departments, employees, citizens and Administrator for all they do.
- Mr. Taylor-Congratulated our new Mayor Tyron Abraham.
- Mr. Jennings- Encouraged citizens to participate in all meetings and to keep moving forward.
- Mr. Scott-Thanked all employees for doing their jobs and department head for their monthly reports. Next, he recognized retirees Shawn Lucas (Police) and John Crowley (Utility Manager). Lastly, he received many calls about water issues and the citizens weren't notified.
- Mayor Abraham-Thanked Council for a good meeting. He stated he appreciates all employees and without them nothing can get done. Next, he thanked Officer Thompkins for setting up a simulator. Lastly, he read a letter to council, citizens, leaders and employees. He thanked everyone who volunteered and donated to the warming shelter.
17. ADJOURN
- Meeting adjourn at 9:02pm.

**Public Comment Policy:**

Citizens desiring to speak at any regular meeting must provide a written request to notify the City Clerk prior to the agenda deadline. Citizens interested in commenting at a regular meeting shall sign in to speak and limit comments to no more than 3 minutes.

**Mission Statement:** To utilize all available resources for the development of plans, programs, and projects to improve services to the citizens of Bennettsville and establish and maintain an active role in economic and community development.