

Mayor
Ricky Waring

Council Members:
Bob Jackson
Russ Touchberry
Aaron Brown
Terry Jenkins
Kima Garten-Schmidt
William McIntosh



Town Administrator
Lisa Wallace

Town Clerk
Beth Messervy

Town Attorney
G.W. Parker

TOWN of SUMMERVILLE

COUNCIL MEETING MINUTES

June 9, 2022

ATTENDANCE

Present: Mayor Ricky Waring, Councilmembers Kima Garten-Schmidt, Bob Jackson (attended and voted via Zoom), Aaron Brown, Russ Touchberry, Bill McIntosh, and Terry Jenkins. Also in attendance were Town Administrator Lisa Wallace, Town Attorney GW Parker, and Town Clerk Beth Messervy. A quorum was met. Public and press were duly notified. The meeting took place in Council Chambers at 200 South Main Street and was livestreamed from the Town's website.

CALL TO ORDER

Mayor Waring called the meeting to order at 6:00pm on Thursday, June 9, 2022. Councilman Russ Touchberry gave the invocation, followed by the Pledge of Allegiance.

PROCLAMATION & RESOLUTION PRESENTATIONS

Mayor Ricky Waring presented a resolution to Assistant Town Administrator Madelyn Robinson upon her retirement from the Town of Summerville in July. He also presented a resolution to Chris McRae, Parks and Recreation Department employee, for his bravery in saving the life of an elderly woman in a burning home.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETINGS

Mr. Jenkins made a motion, seconded by Ms. Garten-Schmidt, to approve the combined minutes of the Town Council Meeting– May 12, 2022; the Special Council Meeting – May 23, 2022; the Special Council Meeting – May 26, 2022; and the Standing Committee Meetings– June 6, 2022. The motion carried unanimously.

PUBLIC HEARING – Proposed operating budget for fiscal year beginning July 1, 2022 and ending June 30, 2023

Mayor Waring opened the public hearing. Rhonda Moore, Finance Director, explained the budget presented with an increase in millage as Mr. Jenkins amended the budget ordinance at the May 12, 2022 Council meeting.

Peter Gorman stated that this is the biggest millage increase since Berlin G. Myers was Mayor. Mr. Gorman expressed his concerns that the millage increase was a surprise since it was not mentioned in the Budget Retreat meetings; that Mt. Pleasant raised impact fees, have lower millage, and have a balanced budget; that the Administration Department has grown a lot over the past few years; that the 23 million surplus of 2017 was spent down to a minimum; that Summerville has one of the highest millage rates; and that it is not right to ask citizens to pay more taxes during a time of inflation, higher gas prices, higher property valuations, and a DD2 millage increase for higher teacher pay.

Linda Whetsell stated that the Town needs to stop giving State ATAX money to organizations; that the Town needs to cut spending; that the Town should not spend money on pickleball lighting and Parks & Rec vehicles; and that the Town spends too much on gas money.

CJ Westfall stated that inflation is the result of reckless spending in Washington; that this is the worst possible time to ask for a tax increase; that Brandon King said that Town has a spending problem when he ran for Mayor in 2019; and he asked Council to table the budget reading.

Alisa King stated that she works a second job and had to skip work to attend the Council meeting; she expressed her concern that the proposed tax increase would run her out of her house; she stated that she can barely afford the gas to drive to Mt. Pleasant for her job; and she stated that a tax increase isn't a sense of community.

Diane Frankenberger stated that the citizens need perspective on how much the tax increase actually is (\$39 a year extra for every \$100,000 in property valuation); she also stated that she is in favor of the increase because the taxes the citizens get a lot of services for the taxes that they pay.

Alfreda Sotomeyer stated that she cannot afford the tax rate now. She stated that people will lose their homes and land because of the tax increase; she stated that she cannot buy land because of the taxes now; she stated that the Town should use men to clean ditches and not machines that cost money; and she stated that she has to go to food banks to make up for the high prices at the grocery store.

Tracy Hirsch stated that she is against the millage increase because it will hurt the citizens; she stated that it costs her a lot of gas money to drive downtown Charleston for work; she stated that the Town is wasting man power and gas money; she stated that she is concerned about growth; and she stated that the Town is allowing too much residential development.

Councilman McIntosh asked Ms. Moore to explain the budget process to the citizens for their information. Ms. Moore did so. Mr. McIntosh expressed his concern with the millage increase throwing the budget off of balance.

There being no further comments from the public, the Mayor closed the public hearing.

PUBLIC COMMENT – JUNE 9 2022 AGENDA ITEMS

Mayor Waring opened the floor for public comments for items on the June 9, 2022 agenda. There being no one signed up, Mayor Waring closed public comment.

PENDING BILLS AND RESOLUTIONS

Mr. Jenkins made a motion, seconded by Mr. Touchberry, to give second and final reading of an ordinance to adopt an operating budget for the Town of Summerville, SC for the fiscal period beginning July 1, 2022 and ending June 30, 2023. Mr. McIntosh made a motion, seconded by Mr. Brown, to amend the budget to roll back the millage to 59.5 mills which would balance the budget. Ms. Garten-Schmidt stated that while she did vote for the budget with the millage increase at first reading, she cannot vote for the budget with the increase at second reading because it is the wrong time to increase taxes. Mayor Waring stated that the Town does not raise taxes each year; he stated that there are only 30 citizens in attendance in a Town of over 50,000; he stated that the Council is trying to do the right thing; he stated that the Town still has to provide services to its citizens, which costs money; he stated that he does not want to raise taxes, but that another option has not been presented yet. Mr. McIntosh stated that he has been providing the numbers to Council to review the increased spending of the Town over the last few years; he stated that the Town has a spending problem; he stated that the staff presented a balance budget and that there was no mention of a tax increase at the Budget Retreat meetings; and that the Town is bringing in 1/3 more revenues that it did 7 years ago. Mr. Jenkins stated that while he doesn't want to do so, increasing the millage is the solution to the deficit at this time; he stated that the real budget shortfall is \$5.8 million if it is included that there is no capital spending in the budget this year; he also stated that if there were cuts to personnel, it would have to be across the board and not just in one department, also adding that public safety would have to be cut, which would decrease vital services to the citizens; he also stated that the Town should look at the budget in 6 months to make any necessary adjustments. Mr. Touchberry stated that he appreciated the citizens for speaking; he stated that the Town needs to look at the budget in terms of where the Town needs to be 25 years from now; he stated that he wants to take care of the Town's business efficiently and effectively; he stated that there is no plan for asset management; he stated that the Town needs to take the steps now to plan and prioritize for the future. Mr. Jackson stated that when Mayor Johnson was in office, he decided to "eat down" capital funds so that the Town didn't have to raise taxes; he stated that the only tax increase he voted for was back in 2015, because there had not been a tax increase in so long prior to that; he stated that the Council has let the Town fall in the name of not wanting to spend on priority projects; and he stated that the Town is using ARP funds to fill the gap. The vote on Mr. McIntosh's motion to amend to roll back the millage failed 3-4, with Mr. Brown, Mr. McIntosh, and Ms. Garten-Schmidt voting in favor. Mr. McIntosh made a motion, seconded by Ms. Garten-Schmidt, to postpone second reading of the budget until Council could have a special called meeting after the results of the 2021 audit were received and presented. Mr. McIntosh stated that two people responsible for the 2021 budget and audit were no longer employed with the Town. Mr. McIntosh instructed staff for no new spending until the special called Council meeting could take place. Mr. McIntosh's motion to postpone second reading failed with Mr. Brown, Mr. McIntosh, and Ms. Garten-Schmidt voting in favor. Mr. Jenkins made a motion, seconded by Mr. Touchberry, to amend the original motion to give second and final reading to the budget as voted on by first reading (66 mills), to reduce the amount of ARP funds originally used to balance the budget to an amount that would balance the budget with the 66 mills. Mr. Jenkins's motion to amend passed 4-3, with Mr. McIntosh, Mr. Brown, and Ms. Garten-Schmidt voting in opposition. The original motion as amended passed 4-3, with Mr. McIntosh, Mr. Brown, and Ms. Garten-Schmidt in opposition.

Mr. Jackson made a motion, seconded by Ms. Garten-Schmidt, to give second and final reading of an ordinance to amend and renumber Town Ordinance Chapter 24 – Streets, Sidewalks, and other Public Places, Article II – Picketing, Demonstrations, and Parades, Division I Sections 24-41, 24-42, 24-43, renumbering 24-44 to 24-45, adding new section 24-44, renumbering 24-4 to 24-48, adding new 24-45, adding new 24-46, adding new 24-47. Division II by renaming Division II, and amending sections 24-71, 24-72, 24-73, 24-74, 24-76, 24-77. Some discussion followed. Mr. Touchberry made a motion, seconded by Mr. Jackson, to amend the original motion to include a “use of public facilities” section along with the appropriate renumbering. Some discussion followed. The motion to amend carried 6-1, with Mr. Brown voting in opposition. The original motion as amended carried 6-1, with Mr. Brown voting in opposition.

Mr. Jackson made a motion, seconded by Mr. Jenkins, to give second and final reading to an ordinance to authorize the Mayor or Town Administrator to execute an economic development incentive agreement for Project Wood in the Town of Summerville. The motion carried unanimously.

Mr. Jenkins made a motion, seconded by Mr. Brown, to give second and final reading to an ordinance to authorize the Mayor or Town Administrator to execute a quit-claim deed to North Maple MBM, LLC for the property described in the ordinance. The motion carried unanimously.

Mr. McIntosh made a motion, seconded by Mr. Brown, to give second and final reading to an ordinance to dissolve the Summerville Redevelopment Corporation. Some discussion followed. The motion carried unanimously.

INTRODUCTION OF BILLS AND RESOLUTIONS

Mr. Brown made a motion, seconded by Mr. Jenkins, to give first reading of an ordinance to rezone TMS#s 136-12-04-106, 911 D Central Avenue, owned by Gary A. Charpia; and 136-12-04-108, 911 B & C Central Avenue, owned by Leonard A. & Sylvia L. Holmes; two parcels totaling approximately 0.936 acres, from GR-5, General Residential (5 units/acre), to N-B, Neighborhood Business. (Council District 1). The motion carried unanimously.

Mr. Jenkins made a motion, seconded by Ms. Garten-Schmidt, to give first reading to an ordinance to amend the Summerville Unified Development Ordinance, Chapter 3, Section 3.3, Table of Permitted Uses, and Section 3.4.3, Lodging. The motion carried unanimously.

Mr. Jenkins made a motion, seconded by Ms. Garten-Schmidt, to give first reading to an ordinance to amend the Summerville Unified Development Ordinance, Chapter 3, Section 3.5.2, Uses Customarily Accessory to Residential Dwellings. The motion carried unanimously.

Mr. McIntosh made a motion, seconded by Mr. Jenkins, to give first reading to an ordinance to sell real property of the Town of Summerville, SC known as 118 West Richardson Avenue, Summerville, SC 29483. The motion carried unanimously.

Mr. McIntosh made a motion, seconded by Ms. Garten-Schmidt, to give first reading to an ordinance to amend Chapter 22 - Water Management, Flood Damage Prevention, and Stormwater Management, Section 22-124 - Stormwater control, Item (f) - Minimum runoff control requirements, Subsection (2)(d). The motion carried unanimously.

Mr. McIntosh made a motion, seconded by Ms. Garten-Schmidt, to pass a resolution regarding Town expenditures at the Municipal Association of South Carolina Annual Meeting. Mr. McIntosh stated that the MASC meeting is in Charleston this year, and that the Town should not spend money on food and lodging for Council and staff since it is so close to home. Some discussion followed. The resolution failed 3-4, with Mr. McIntosh, Ms. Garten-Schmidt, and Mr. Touchberry voting in favor.

MISCELLANEOUS

Mr. Jackson made a motion, seconded by Mr. Brown, to approve all of the State Accommodations Tax Advisory Committee's recommendations for 2022 funding to organizations, with the exception of funding for the Flowertown Players. Some discussion followed. The motion carried unanimously. Mr. Jenkins made a motion, seconded by Mr. Touchberry, to approve the State ATAX Advisory Committee's recommendations for 2022 funding to the Flowertown Players. The motion carried 6-0, with Mr. McIntosh recusing himself since he is on the board of the organization.

Ms. Garten-Schmidt made a motion, seconded by Mr. Jenkins, to approve the renewal of a two year contract with Yellowstone for the maintenance of the I-26 Exit 199 Interchange. The motion carried unanimously.

PUBLIC COMMENTS (open)

Mayor Ricky Waring opened the floor for public comments for any topic.

Cheryl Mendosa thanked Councilman Terry Jenkins for his public service. She stated that Petland on Bacons Bridge Road should have their business license revoked due to bad business practices and cruelty to animals.

Linda Whetsell stated that the Summerville Police Department did a good job patrolling her home while she was supposed to be gone, but that the dispatch never let the officers know that she called to tell them that she was not going out of Town. She also commended the Stormwater team for cleaning her ditches, but that they are now grown back again. She stated that someone needs to do their job on Parkwood and Shepard to get the trucks out of that intersection and that there are too many boats in that area. She stated that the flooding is bad at her house on Atlantic Street.

EXECUTIVE SESSION:

Mr. Jenkins made a motion, seconded by Ms. Garten-Schmidt, to enter into Executive Session to discuss a personnel matter related to a vacant seat on the Board of Architectural Review. The motion carried, and Council entered into Executive Session at 8:35pm.

Council reconvened at 8:45pm. Town Attorney GW Parker stated that Council met in Executive Session to discuss a personnel matter related to a vacant seat on the BAR and that no action was taken in Executive Session.

OTHER BUSINESS:

Mr. Jenkins made a motion, seconded by Ms. Garten-Schmidt, to appoint Jane Knight to the Board of Architectural Review to fill the unexpired term of Jeff Bowers (real estate requirement). The motion carried unanimously.

ADJOURN:

Mr. Jenkins made a motion, seconded by Mr. Brown, to adjourn. The motion carried unanimously, and the meeting adjourned at 8:46pm.

Respectfully Submitted,



Beth Messervy, Town Clerk

APPROVED:



Ricky Waring, Mayor