

MINUTES
REGULAR COUNCIL MEETING
February 14, 2022

The February 14, 2022 Regular meeting of the City Council was held at the City of Dillon Wellness Center, 1647 Commerce Drive, Dillon, SC. Notices of this regular meeting of City Council was provided to the media and individuals requesting a copy of the agenda informing them of the date, location, and time of the meeting.

Councilmembers in attendance:

Mayor Pro-Tem Dr. Phil Wallace
Councilmember Timothy Cousar
Councilmember Johnny Eller

Councilmember James David
Councilmember James Washington
Councilmember Douglas Jackson

Janet Paschal, City attorney was in attendance.

- I. **Call to Order** - Mayor Pro Tem Dr. Wallace called the meeting to order at 7:00pm. Everyone recited the Pledge of Allegiance. Benny Genwright gave the invocation.
- II. **Approval of Agenda**
Councilmember Eller made a motion to approve the agenda with an added Executive Session. Councilmember Cousar seconded and the motion passed unanimously.
- III. **Approve minutes of the January 10, 2022 Regular Meeting**
A motion was made by Councilmember David to approve minutes. Councilmember Eller seconded and the motion passed unanimously.
- IV. **Mayor Pro Tem's Report**
Dr Wallace gave an update on the city, he said we are in a really good place. We have \$3.8M of CDBG funding to address some storm drainage issues. They did the study and prioritized what needed to be done first, which is Lucious Road and East Hampton Street. We have the American rescue money \$3.9M we have already distributed \$225,000 for Premium pay for employees. These are things that we need to do. Downtown community development is moving along pretty good we had someone talk about new housing. We aren't talking about 3000SQFT homes but so many of our jobs now are great paying jobs but they take their money and go to Florence, Laurinburg, or down towards the beach because that's where they live. We need to get some houses for people to live in Dillon so they will spend their money here. We are hoping to make renovations on the golf course side. This most recent variant of COVID went through Africa and it looks like we are trialing off of that. This variant is a little milder. Dr. Wallace went on to say the Inland Port will become busier and impact our community. Again, we won't those people to live and spend their money in Dillon. Lastly, he said the father daughter dance is another reason I have a good feeling about covid because there was tremendous participation and it's so good to see. I wish that was a part of our internet footprint instead of the crime.

Heather Richad - Municipal Association of SC – Retiree Benefits

Glen Wagner asked that Heather Ricard from MASC go ahead of him so that she can get back to Columbia. She gave information on Retiree benefits. She provided Council with a presentation and explained how it measured.

City Manager's Report

Glen Wagner began his report saying we are not funding or offering the South Carolina Other Retirement Benefits and Employer Trust (ORBET) at all right now. He said we will have to come up with a policy. We had a similar program several years ago but we ended up repealing in 2000. A percentage was paid on the employee behalf. Heather and Janet met to come up with some numbers but it was very expensive at that time. Glen went on to say that he thinks in the long run it will be a cheaper investment for the city. Right now, there are 7 people not counting police who can retire today with 28 or more years with the City. If you count the police there would be 2 added so that will be 9 people. The health premium is \$900 a month per person. Councilmember Eller asked what does it cost to hire an actuary? Heather said they charge a flat fee, per employee. It will probably be in the \$3-5,000 range. Councilmember David asked if it was a shared cost between employee and employer. Heather responded that it is up to the city. Councilmember Eller said he thinks it's doable and we owe the long-term people that have worked for the city. Glen said he will get with Heather this week and get a resolution to vote on and go from there. Next, Glen talked about the American Rescue Plan. He said he has provided information on what we can do with those funds. The Treasury department has changed rulings on how you can do certain things. Originally you had to fill out a form to come up with a formula and they then gave you categories on what you can use this money for. The Treasury department changed their interim rule to a final rule and we can use a standard allowance of up to \$10m to claim for loss revenue. In our case we can only claim up to \$3.1M. with that being said we are able to do some things that I didn't think we would be able to do. One was we couldn't use this money to match federal grants but now that we can claim loss revenue that goes out of the window. As you see in the summary, I proposed 10 projects and on the second page it gave a cost estimate and a timeline. We have already spent \$230,000 for premium pay we will get \$1.5M in late September and that leaves us a little over \$3M. We have talked about the Farmers Market and our roll off truck. I put in \$150,000 to purchase a used residential garbage truck. The new truck we just purchased, if we have to take it down for preventive maintenance, we have nothing to take its place. Glen went on to talk about developing the 40 acres behind the Wellness Center and installing splash pads. Glen said he and Burt were talking about demolishing buildings and it's about \$3000 per building but if we contract it out it's about \$6,000 per building. We will still charge the property owner this money. The contractor will have to go through DHEC and they can tear down more than one house at a time. Councilmember David asked if someone is not paying taxes, do we have first choice to obtain that property? Glen responded that he spoke with Jamie Estes and they determine what is done with that property. Glen said he told her if it's in the city that we want to have our hands on it first. Stormwater is 100% funding no money out of pocket for the city. The EDA sewer match is \$300,000. Councilmember Eller said there are some immediate needs for the city and can we come back and do a workshop to get some of these things done. Glen responded yes because by the end of April we have to report on how we are spending this money. This money has to be spent no later than 2026. Glen said this is his feedback

and he would like a response from Council and possibly pass something in the March meeting. Next Glen said we talked about removing an island between Family Sports and Kings Pizza but we can't change the traffic lanes. We also talked about taking out the planters on Main Street, and only leaving the ones on the ends. There is a problem with big trucks turning on Main Street off on Hwy 301. Chief Lane said the planter in the center is what causes accidents. Glen asked do you want me to bring something back on the planters. Glen said we will have to get DOT to issue a permit and they will do whatever we would like to do and they will give us guidelines on what we can do. Councilmember Eller asked what do the business owners say. Glen responded that he has only had one business owner to say something about it. Councilmember David said he is more concerned about emergency vehicles. Glen asked again do you want me to bring something back next month to remove the planters out of the middle of each block. Glen continued his report saying Tina has been getting request from groups wanting to use the South Plaza and close the road for parties and class reunions and closing main street. At this time, we have no policy to allow it and no policy not to allow it. The Chief can't sign off on road closures because we don't have a policy for those kinds of things. I can come up with a policy if that is something that you want to do. Railroad avenue is a city street we close it and it's not that big of a deal but when you talk about closing Main Street which is a state highway then it becomes a big deal. If we decide to close these roads for events, what do we have to do to make it happen if we are going to allow this. We need to address traffic control, litter control, number of hours closed, liability insurance of \$1M and who is going to pay for it. We do it once a year but it is a city sponsored event. I think that once we come up to something such as the farmers market area that will open doors to do these things. That's why I'm asking Council do you want me to come up with a policy. Dr. Wallace said we need a policy but I don't think that should include closing Main Street. If we want to develop a policy by the plaza then yes because the Police Department will be right there. Councilmember Douglas said come back with a policy for the plaza but not Main Street. Janet Paschal said they need to make out a proposal. Dr. Wallace said that should include the cost of police getting overtime and a clean-up crew. Councilman Washington said if you did have something there, would they have to get with you or someone with the Chamber of Commerce? Glen said no they would sit down with me and the Police Chief to figure out the number of people so we can determine traffic control. Councilmember Cousar said we don't have numbers on the Friday night events so how can you put a number on that? Glen said he will come back with a policy. Councilmember David said he thinks we are opening a door that doesn't need to be opened.

Finance Report

Finance Director, Janet Bethea gave copies of the Financial Report to the Mayor Pro Tem, City Council, and the City Manager.

Pat Liard – Dillon County Initiative (Farmers Market)

Pat Liard began her report talking about her meeting with Lisa Moody and some members of the Dillon Community Alliance and said she was just here if anyone had any questions. She explained they wanted to have a space for small groups to meet. Dr Wallace said that a 75x110 would probably be too big but if we gutted a building on Main Street, it could be your farmers market and an alley way to the field or whatever we are calling it. Councilmember David asked if it is

possible to put a commercial kitchen there. Pat said someone will have to be there every day to make sure it is within DHEC standards. Councilmember Eller asked what are you asking the city for tonight. Pat said she is just updating but we really need to know if the City is going to let us lease that piece of property. Councilmember Eller asked how much would you need from the city? Pat responded originally, we said \$300,000 to build but since we aren't doing the community room or bathrooms, I'm not sure what we will need. Councilmember Eller asked if you can give us some kind of plan, we might can use the ARP money.

Stephanie Mitchell – Dillon Community Alliance

Stephanie Mitchell began her report saying the financials are currently undergoing through our accountant. She said has supplied a proposal to you all. Glen asked what is your plan if a grant recipient doesn't complete the project. Stephanie replied, the contractor will only get paid for completed work and the business owner will not be able to get any more funds. The business owner wouldn't be paid directly it will go to the contractor. Janet Paschal said if you don't pay the contractor, they can put a lien on the building. Stephanie said we need to meet our business owners where they are some of our business owners don't have the money available and they aren't doing anything right now. According to the laws of the ARP act it can be used as stimulus money. This will be something to stimulate the growth of Main Street. They will have to submit an application and we are looking at a maximum of a \$30,000 grant and the purpose is to get the building ready for a business to move in. Any business owner that has a Code Enforcement issue or owes the city money will not be eligible for this. Dr Wallace said his concern is \$30,000 is a lot of money what if they get this idea and go into business how is that going to work. Stephanie said it's not the business it's the building owner that will be getting the money. Then we work with them to get the building occupied. Dr Wallace said I don't remember a hundred percent grant to do this. I remember we have said shared responsibility and allow the bank to do the vetting. Stephanie said nothing has come to fruition from any other banks. Glen said that Anderson Brothers is interested but we haven't gone any further until we know what kind of money that we are talking about. Stephanie said some banks are only going to be able to do 75% of the appraised value. Councilmember Eller asked do you have 5 business owners right now that are willing to participate in your grants. Stephanie responded yes; we can get that information. The DCA is requesting to make a resolution to vote on the grant at the next meeting. Dr Wallace said we have been burned in the past and we don't want to go through that again. Stephanie said you live and learn. Dr Wallace said he doesn't think it's a good idea to give someone \$30,000 to barely fix the meeting. After a brief heated discussion with Stephanie, Dr. Wallace said we need to talk about this in the committee meeting.

Lisa Moody – Downtown Coordinator

Lisa Moody began her report saying she has given Glen different types of options on 100% grants. She said she has given Glen the incentives on what we can do with businesses. The packet is from the City of Florence, Darlington, and Dayton. She said she took ideas from everywhere. Lisa went on to say she will go through things with the committee. Next, she said she is going through the Retail Recruitment Training Program. This program covers retail development, shopping and an increased demand for residential development. Lisa went on to say now that we have a Starbucks hopefully Chick Fa La or Chipotle will follow. She said she will keep filling Council in on how that

goes. Next Lisa said that she came back from Sumter for the Main Street first quarter training. The Downtown is considered the heart of the community. The Downtown should be a selling point for people wanting to move in. The secret to many different Downtowns, is the government tends to be in the real estate building. We need distilleries, coffee shops, and candle shops. Slowly but surely real estate is where the government needs to be. Dr Wallace said he wouldn't be opposed to buying buildings and fixing it and letting it be a model to sell it. We are really not interested in having real estate but maybe that's what we ought to do with this money by redoing buildings and getting downtown just the way we want it. Lisa went on to say we have a new business, Hall of Queens Hair Salon, they have had their ribbon cutting. We are doing Coffee and talk from 7:30am-9am and have coffee and donuts, sometimes we get an idea and sometimes they get a donut and leave. We have Chit Chat and Chew are for people that couldn't make it in the mornings and it's catered by Casey David. We will be doing these once a month. I'm looking forward to the City of Dillon Business Expo and the St. Patrick's Day celebration on March 12, their will be food, beer, and dancing. It's from 11am-3pm. Lisa said she's excited about the Pod Cast so instead of walking around it's called Destination Downtown Lowdown we will be doing a lot of talking and I will be the host. We will have one department head, council member, and a representative from DCA for 30 minutes during lunch. Alicia Lewis will be our first one this month. Councilmember Washington asked if they heard anything about CDBG grants? Glen said we will be going through Council of Government to do grants. Councilmember Eller asked Lisa if she has applied for any grants, she said she has applied for one for the police department. The max is \$50,000.

V. Citizen's Report

None

VI. Old Business

None.

VII. New Business

Resolution #01-22 Community Development Block Grant – Flood Mitigation Councilmember Cousar made a motion to pass the Resolution. Councilmember Washington seconded and the motion passed unanimously.

Resolution #02-22 Removal of Island within the 100 block of East Main Street Councilmember Washington made a motion to pass the Resolution. Councilmember. Councilmember Jackson seconded and the motion passed 5-1.

Ordinance #22-01 Amend Title 5 Chapter 1 of the City Code of Ordinance to provide provisions for regulation Vacant Commercial and Industrial Buildings within the City limits of Dillon – 1st Reading After discussion, Councilmember Jackson made a motion to pass the Ordinance. Councilmember Cousar seconded and the motion passed 4-2.

VIII. Councilmember's Reports

Councilmember Eller began his report asking the city attorney Janet Paschal if she will have anything on the dog ordinance next month. She said she can get a copy of it. She said it's going to be very detailed but she can get that to Council before the next meeting to look over it. Next, Councilmember Eller said on the west side of Carolina Avenue, we still don't have lighting it's been over 6 months. Glen said Tina has been working with Mindy at Duke and they have changed so

much we can't really get much done. Councilmember Eller went on to say the Inland Port bought a Logistics Center and it was brought to councils' attention that we wouldn't get any tax money from it. This building changed ownership and sold for \$47M, our ordinance says if we give you utilities, we should get tax money and we didn't get anything. I went to the treasures office and the county got \$10,000 from taxes and the city gets zero. QT's is coming in May they have to pay city and county taxes and per our ordinance we should get tax money. Glen said it has to be annexed in. Councilmember Eller said Harbor freight should be in the city too. He asked Janet Paschal to look into it. Councilmember Eller said we lost business license fees when this building was being built. The next time they build something of this magnitude we should get something. Dr. Wallace said if we take the wrong attitude as a city about development growth that's not a good look.

Councilmember David began his report saying a concerned citizen asked a question about the lines for parking. He said you can't see them anymore and is there a plan to fix that. Glen stated he and Burt looked at that today. Next, Councilmember David said somebody came to him about 5 buildings downtown they wanted to buy because they were in Opportunity Zones but when they are trying to sell it for over 6 or 7 times for the appraised value and that's a problem. Lastly, he said he thinks if you start fining people you are going to make them hostile. You are going to ruffle a lot of feathers with this ordinance.

Councilmember Washington asked about properties that haven't had the lawn cut, can the City cut it and send the bill to the property owners. Glen said \$75 is the minimum there is no maximum.

IX. Executive Session

Councilmember Cousar made a motion to go into Executive Session. Councilmember Washington seconded and the motion passed unanimously. No action was taken in Executive session. Councilmember Cousar made a motion to go back into open session. Councilmember Eller seconded and the motion passed unanimously.

X. Adjourn

With no further business to discuss, Councilmember Cousar made a motion to adjourn. Councilmember Washington seconded and the motion passed 6-0. The meeting adjourned at 9:37pm.

Approved: _____

Dr. Phil Wallace, Mayor Pro-Tem

Date Approved: _____

Attest: _____

Tina Scott, Council Clerk