

MINUTES
REGULAR COUNCIL MEETING
March 14, 2022

The March 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. Dr. Wallace also gave the invocation.
- II. **Approval of Agenda**
Councilmember Eller made a motion to approve the agenda but adding Planters under New Business and add an Executive Session. Councilmember Cousar seconded and the motion passed unanimously.
- III. **Approve minutes of the February 14, 2022 Regular Meeting and February 21, 2022 Workshop Minutes**
A motion was made by Councilmember Eller to approve minutes for both meetings. Councilmember Cousar seconded and the motion passed unanimously.
- IV. **Mayor Pro Tem's Report**
Dr. Wallace began his report saying let's try to keep our comments short and to the point. We can do this in an hour or an hour and 15 minutes. He went on to say the COVID numbers look really good. He said he thinks the omicron variant has given us herd immunity. Hopefully we're on the tail end of COVID. He said he hasn't heard about any new variants coming. Next, Dr. Wallace said we need to keep Ukraine in our prayers. Dr. Wallace asked how often do we back up computers? He asked if we are covered if we have a cyber-attack. Glen responded, we read all of time about ransoms but he didn't know how safe we are. Dr Wallace asked Glen to check and see if we are safely doing this. Janet Bethea said we have something like iron mountain and if something happens, we can come be back up within the next day. Dr. Wallace said the Downtown committee met last week and we are going to present a few things tonight to see what council wants to do. All we are doing is presenting alternatives to council. He said he got a letter from Kent Williams that there is more money. Glen said it's more American Rescue Plan money. They will make this money available through certain grants such as stormwater, broadband, or water and sewer. They will give money to certain offices for the state to disburse as grants. Dr. Wallace wants to start building a treatment plant on the other side of I95. The proposed amount

to do this was \$50-80M and that's to take the water to Pee Dee River once it's cleaned. Lastly, Dr. Wallace said he is working on a state of Dillon article for the paper and after he finishes, he will let Glen look it over to be sure it's correct.

City Manager's Report

Glen began his report saying that last month the Municipal Association of South Carolina (MASC) was here to discuss the Retiree Health Insurance. Janet Bethea and I talked to the actuary within the next couple of days they are taking our data and looking at employees that meet all the requirements. The retirement requirements are 28 years of service and 25 years if you are on the police side and 30 years for the ones that have been hired after July 2013. Twenty-seven years if you are a police officer and at the age of 55. Dr Wallace asked if that would be uninterrupted service. Glen responded yes. Under the state guidelines they can break it up as long as they stay within the system and not draw any money out. Glen said he reached out to Smith Brooks the auditor and asked if we didn't fund it but offered it anyway how does that hurt the city financially? Smith Brooks replied it's just going to be a liability on your books if you don't fund it. The biggest key is whatever direction that we go I need to know from council what that policy is going to be. Dr Wallace said he needs to know what the cost is going to be. Glen said it depends on how much of it the city wants to pay. Once we get more information back from the actuary they will come and discuss this with council as well, then we can go from there. Glen went on to talk about redistricting. This is nothing that we have even gone through, we are supposed to do it every 10 years. We haven't done it since the early 80s. I have given you each a print out that came from the SC Fiscal Affairs office that shows what the district looks like today. This is based on information that Tina Scott has provided them. Do you want the Office of Fiscal Affairs to come in April to do a workshop because it could be time consuming? Councilmember Eller made a motion to see if we can do it on Monday April 18 at 7pm. The motion passed. Glen asked Council to send him an email or text of what you would like to see in the budget. He said he knows that Councilmember Cousar mentioned about including bonus and longevity pay. Dr. Wallace said the only problem with that is we base that off of good years. Glen said he would like to have Council input now so we can start working on the budget. Lastly, the Statement of Economic Interest reports are due March 30.

Finance Report

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

Don Strickland – Pee Dee Regional Transportation Authority

Don Strickland began his report saying he wanted to come to Council and give an update and I know we are entering budget season. This has been a success story. We have had 13000 trips in the City of Dillon for folks going to spend money or make money. We are entering into or second year. The Dillon connect is Latta, Hamer, and Little Rock. We have done 2050 trips and that is people coming into Dillon we have done 1000 command pick-ups and that is where we pick up people from their homes to get them to their doctor appointments. Harbor Freight started out slow but now we are at 1300 trips taking folks to and from work 60% has been within the last three months. There is a real big plea to connect Florence to Dillon there will be federal funds to provide those services. Marion will be our next big connect. A lot of new employees are trying to get to work and these entities are looking outside of Dillon to fill vacancies. With this expansion

we talked about connecting Marlboro. Councilmember Eller asked how long would it take to get the signs done? Mr. Strickland responded about 8 weeks.

V. Citizen's Report

None

VI. Old Business

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 – 2nd

Reading- After discussion, Councilmember Eller made a motion to table the Ordinance and meet with the building owners to explain the Ordinance. Councilmember Jackson seconded and the motion failed 3-3. Councilmember David made a motion to amend the Ordinance and only focus on the Historical District. Councilmember Jackson seconded and the motion passed 4-2.

VII. New Business

Resolution #03-22 A Resolution electing the standard allowance for lost revenues under the American Rescue Plan Councilmember David made a motion to pass the Resolution. The motion passed unanimously.

Resolution #04-22 A Resolution authorizing the issuance of Special Event permits on the South Plaza After discussion, Councilmember Jackson made a motion to pass the Resolution. Councilmember Washington seconded and the motion passed 6-0.

Appoint Ben Hayes to the Board of Architectural Review to fulfill the General Contractor Vacancy After discussion, Councilmember David made a motion to appoint Ben Hayes. Councilmember Eller seconded and the motion passed 6-0.

Removal of Planters on Main Street

Dr. Wallace began this discussion saying it was his understanding that we were moving the planters in the middle of the block. Glen said the first thing is to look at is the possibility of Main Street being resurfaced in 2023. If we are going to move the planters, we need to do it now because we would hate to tear up new asphalt. We discussed leaving planters on the corners of the blocks. The committee made the recommendation to expand the sidewalks and they don't like the trees blocking the business signs. That was the biggest issue. Dr. Wallace said his concern is we forgot what it looks like to have cement everywhere and nothing soft. Maybe we should look at shrubbery. We wanted to bring up making main street a 4 lane or maybe a 3-lane option. This would possibly restrict traffic flow. I would like to see downtown being an event that you would like to go to and not just drive through. I would like to see a lane on each side and then a middle turning lane. Glen said you will add some space by taking out the planters in the center of the block. Councilmember Jackson asked if we had a photo of what it looked like before the planters. Burt said it cost us about \$5000 to take the planters out and put asphalt there. I'm not opposed to taking the trees out I just think we should take it out but make it green said Dr. Wallace. Burt said just take the trees out first. Cousar said take the trees out and see what it will look like first. Councilmember David said it hasn't been maintained and he was thinking take all of the centers out. Councilmember David made a motion to take out all planters in the center Councilmember Eller seconded. The motion failed 4-2. Dr. Wallace asked do we want a 4-lane street or a 3-lane street downtown at the approval of DOT. Councilmember Eller asked if we can table this until we can get a visual of what we want to do? Councilmember David made a motion to keep it 4 lanes. Councilmember Eller seconded the motion failed 3-3. Glen said he will get with the state and bring something back next month.

VIII. Councilmember's Reports

Councilmember Eller asked can we consider fixing the Fire Department. He asked Glen has he looked at their issues? Glen stated yes. The bay said hasn't been worked on in a long time and 2-3 years ago we put a roof on the living side. Next, Councilmember Eller asked how is the gas affecting the city. Glen said two weeks ago we purchased gas at \$3.20 per gallon and we will probably order again in the next three weeks. If it's \$4 at the pump we will probably pay \$3.75 per gallon. Councilmember Eller asked is the plaza going to open back up? Can we reach out to them to find out their plan? Lastly, Councilmember Eller asked can we get trash cans for Harman Park. Glen responded; we don't have any.

Councilmember David said the Storm Water research book was a good read. He went on to say the chapter that caught his eye was about the watersheds it stated their research shows that and significant storm in Dillon will cause flooding. We're already leaning into a budget area and I think that we should look at storm water like we look at sewer water. He said you don't let sewer water stay in the street but our storm water does. When the river gets high, we can't push water in the river. Same with storm water if it gets to a certain height, we can't get it to the river. If we pump the water out how often will we have to do that. Glen said he has no idea what that cost would be. Councilmember David said if we can move it and keep storm water from standing in the streets it will benefit the town. Glen said we added storm water fee to hire two people and do storm water research. Councilmember David said he will be in favor of pushing the storm water fee higher. Councilmember Eller said citizens are hollering now about the \$4 fee. Glen said we did a study and got almost \$4m in grants so that's the bang for the buck.

Councilmember Cousar asked Burt Rogers how is it looking with your new truck? Burt said he found one but not sure when we can get it. Glen said we found one for \$120,000 and we will come back next month with information. Next, Councilmember Cousar thanked Chief Lane for doing good job on that murder. Your investigator came over and talked to the kids and asking if they knew anything. I think the investigators should go out and meet and talk with these kids.

Councilmember Eller asked if Janet Paschal had anything on the dog ordinance? Janet responded yes, she has looked over the file and has talked with Glen and suggested some revisions on that code. She went on to say Council should consider requesting for hearing for that incident that took place in August 2021. Janet said she will have something on the next meeting. Councilmember Eller asked about the transfer of the logistics building at Harbor Freight. Janet said she doesn't have a good report on that building. Glen said that building has been sold again and I think there is a possibility of an annexation.

IX. Executive Session


Councilmember Jackson made a motion to go into Executive Session. Councilmember Eller 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 8:50pm.

Approved: 
Dr. Phil Wallace, Mayor Pro-Tem

Date Approved: April 11, 2022

Attest: 
Tina Scott, Council Clerk