

MINUTES

A Public Hearing and Regular Meeting of Walterboro City Council was held at City Hall on Tuesday, January 13, 2015 at 6:15 P.M., with Mayor Bill Young presiding.

PRESENT WERE: Mayor Bill Young, Council Members: Jimmy Syfrett, Paul Siegel, Tom Lohr, Bobby Bonds, James Broderick and Judy Bridge. City Manager Jeff Molinari, City Clerk Betty Hudson and City Attorney George Cone were also present. There were approximately 23 persons present in the audience.

There being a quorum present, Mayor Young called the meeting to order and Council Member Syfrett gave the invocation. Council Member Broderick led the pledge of allegiance to our flag.

PUBLIC INPUT ON AGENDA ITEMS:

There were no public comments or questions on agenda items.

PUBLIC HEARING:

The Mayor then opened a public hearing, duly advertised, to receive public comments and questions on proposed Ordinance # 2014-10, An Ordinance to Change Section 12-9 and Section 12-13 of the Code of Ordinances of the City of Walterboro to Change the Date for Holding Municipal Elections.

Mayor Young then explained that this is an ordinance to move the City elections from May to November. First reading of this ordinance was passed at the last meeting in November. He then asked for comments on this proposed ordinance.

Marsha Johnson, a city resident, supporting the idea of changing the date for the municipal election, said, "well done."

The public hearing was closed and the regular meeting began.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES:

Upon motion of Council Member Bridge, seconded by Council Member Broderick, the Minutes of the November 25, 2014 Regular Meeting and the Minutes of the December 9, 2014 Regular Meeting were approved as submitted. The motion passed with all members voting in favor.

OLD BUSINESS:

1. Ordinance # 2014-10, An Ordinance to Change Section 12-9 and Section 12-13 of the Code of Ordinances of the City of Walterboro to Change the Date for Holding Municipal Elections

A motion was made by Council Member Broderick, seconded by Council Member Syfrett giving Second Reading and Adoption to Ordinance # 2014-10 as submitted. In discussing the motion, Council Member Bonds stated that he would be voting against the motion for the same reasons that he enumerated at the November 25th meeting. He said, I am not comfortable voting myself a six-month extension in office. I think that this is something that ought to be put to a vote of our citizens, as to if and when they want to move the election date.

Council Member Siegel stated that at the first reading of this ordinance, I voted against this ordinance, essentially, for the same reasons that Council Member Bonds

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has objected. However, since that time, I have talked with as many people as I could regarding this proposition and I think that the general consensus is that it would increase turnout and it would be better for the city. And I feel that our election in May really is not a practical time, due to vacations and it's really difficult due to the heat as well, and it is not considered a time of elections generally. I want as many voters as possible to come to the polls, so I have changed my mind, and I am going to vote in favor of this.

Mayor Young then said, there are a number of reasons that I brought this before Council for their consideration. The main reason being the same as what Council Member Siegel has said. About half the time, our City elections follow the day after Memorial Day. From 2001 to 2019, half the time we will have an election the day after Memorial Day, which is a terrible time to have an election. If we have a runoff, then the runoff is in the middle of June, which is even worse. I believe, even though this is a difficult thing for Council to do, none of us want to be interpreted as trying to lengthen our terms, but I think that this benefits the community and it is a change worth making. It also has some other practical benefits for the City. It allows the Council that implements the budget to also prepare their budget. It allows people who are elected in November to go to a retreat soon after they are elected and to set goals and plans for the coming year. There is also a move in the Legislature to go to uniform municipal elections. I have been told that in South Carolina right now, in 50 of the 52 weeks of the year, we have some kind of election in South Carolina. So, there is a move to try to have more uniform elections and to have uniform municipal elections. I think that this is as good of a time as any to go forward with this.

Council Member Bonds then asked the Mayor, in the event that this is approved, when would an individual take office, because as it is now, when we are elected in May, then you don't take office until July 1, which actually as I understand it, is a new calendar year to start fresh with the City. Does this ordinance address when someone is going to take office?

Mayor Young explained that the individual would take office at the first meeting in January. City Manager Molinari answered that under Section 12-13, it says that newly elected officers shall assume office at the first City Council Meeting in January, unless the office is contested.

The motion then passed with a vote of 6/1 with Mayor Young, Council Members Syfrett, Siegel, Lohr, Broderick and Bridge voting in favor and Council Member Bonds voting against the motion for adoption.

NEW BUSINESS:

1. Resolution # 2015-R-01, A Resolution Approving the Municipal State Highway Project Agreement with SCDOT for the Mt. Carmel Intersection Improvement Project at Bells Highway

City Manager Molinari then gave a brief description of this project with the aid of an overhead projection. He told Council that this project has been in the works for sometime. At the beginning of 2011, the City had made an application through the Council of Governments to the State Transportation Improvement Program to improve the intersection of Mt. Carmel Road at Bells Highway and Dorsey Street. As you are aware, this is a very dangerous intersection and the City has secured the funds to do this. Basically, what it will entail will be a realigning of Mt. Carmel Road. So, Mt. Carmel Road and Dorsey Street will be aligned. One of the features that the City added - you will have decorative mast arms at this intersection which will match the installations that you will have throughout the City as part of the Loop Project. In talking with SCDOT, it looks like they will be ready to begin construction on this project

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sometime in the spring. Because the project is within the City limits, SCDOT requires that municipalities pass a resolution to allow them to do the project. Mr. Molinari also explained that the decorative mast arms are very similar to what the City of Charleston has, where there is a decorative base, a fluted pole and fluted arm. The signal head would be affixed to the arm, as well as the luminary on top of the pole. The signal heads will be black to match the mast arm and pole, which will be black as well.

Council Member Broderick pointed out that there are currently no traffic signals at that intersection. So, this will make the intersection safer.

Council Member Bridge then asked the City Manager about the median situation at that intersection. Mr. Molinari responded that when the plans were initially submitted to the City, there were some concerns about a raised median, which initially extended a lot further down Bells Highway. But as you can see, you now have a much smaller area that's a raised median. DOT had gotten some feedback from some business owners along that corridor who were concerned about access being restricted. DOT took that feedback and incorporated it into the design. As a result, you have a much shorter raised median.

Council Member Bridge then asked, what was the length of the median? City Manager Molinari said he could not recall the length.

A motion was made by Council Member Bonds, seconded by Council Member Siegel to approve Resolution # 2015-R-01, approving the project improvement at Mt. Carmel Road, as submitted. The motion passed unanimously.

2. Request to Place Purple Ribbons Downtown April 13, 2015 to May 15, 2015 for Relay for Life 20th Year Celebration Event

A motion was made by Council Member Bridge, seconded by Council Member Broderick, to approve the request by Relay for Life Leader, Marilyn Bazzle, to place purple ribbons downtown from April 13, 2015 to May 15, 2015 for the Relay for Life 20th Year Celebration Event. The motion passed with all members voting in favor.

3. Notice of 2015 City Council Retreat, Location and Time

Next, City Manager Jeff Molinari made the following announcement regarding Council's Annual Retreat:

"Walterboro City Council will conduct its annual 2015 City Council Planning Retreat beginning Friday, January 30, 2015 and running through Saturday, January 31, 2015 to be held at: Palmetto Rural Telephone Cooperative, Inc., 2471 Jefferies Highway, Walterboro, SC. No formal action will be taken on any item at this retreat. Any action items will be brought back to a regular Council meeting for Council's consideration."

A motion was made by Council Member Bonds, seconded by Council Member Siegel to approve the planning retreat date, location and time. The motion passed unanimously.

COMMITTEE REPORTS:

There were no Committee Reports given.

CITY MANAGER'S REPORT:

1. Introduction of Anthony Harrison as New Fire Captain

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Fire Chief Lake along with Anthony Harrison came to the podium. Chief Lake thanked the City Manager and Council for the opportunity to present the next City of Walterboro Fire Captain - Anthony Zack Harrison. Mr. Harrison was born in Colleton County. He has been married to his wife, Saretta for 8 years; has one daughter, Samera and three sons. Harrison's wife, daughter and son, Davon, were present at the meeting. Chief Lake stated that Anthony was hired in September 1990 by Fire Chief Ashton Syfrett. He is a graduate of the South Carolina Fire Academy as an experienced structural firefighter and has acquired multiple additional certifications over the course of his career. This coming September, Zack will have served the City for 25 years. He then introduced new Fire Captain Anthony Zack Harrison.

EXECUTIVE SESSION:

The Mayor then entertained a motion to enter into an Executive Session. Council Member Bonds So Moved and Council Member Broderick seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously. The Mayor announced that the meeting will convene into an Executive Session for:

- 1) Discussion of Proposed Purchase of Property.
- 2) Personnel Matter - Tourism Director Search Update.

The meeting then convened into Executive Session.

At approximately 7:00 p.m., a motion was made by Council Member Bridge to exit Executive Session and return to Open Session. Council Member Broderick seconded the motion. All in favor. None opposed. Motion carried.

The meeting returned to Open Session, and there being no further business to consider, a motion to adjourn the meeting was made by Council Member Broderick, seconded by Council Member Bridge and passed unanimously. The meeting adjourned at 7:02 P.M. Notice of this meeting was distributed to all local media and posted on the City's website and the City Hall bulletin board at least twenty-four hours prior to meeting time.

Respectfully,

Betty J. Hudson
City Clerk

APPROVED: January 27, 2015