

Town of Yemassee Town Council Meeting
November 12, 2019
6:30 P.M.

The Town of Yemassee Council held its regularly scheduled Town Council meeting on Tuesday November 12, 2019 at 6:30 at the Municipal Complex, in Yemassee, South Carolina. Present: Mayor Colin Moore, Council Member(s) – Peggy O’Banner, Chuckie Simmons, Alfred Washington & Michelle Hagan. Staff present: Town Clerk Matt Garnes, Administrative Assistant Tiffany Houston & Police Chief Greg Alexander & Captain Joe Loadholt. Media Present: WTOC-TV, WJCL-TV

Swearing in of Re-Elected Council Memebrs: Judge Dore swore in Council Member Washington for his new term. Ms. Joyce Shaw swore in Council Member O’Banner for her next term.

Determination of Quorum:

The entire Council was present. The meeting was opened at 6:32PM. Council Member Simmons gave the Invocation and the Pledge of Allegiance.

Adoption of Agenda:

Mayor Moore corrected the date on the Consent of the Agenda and asked for a motion to approve the agenda with corrections. Council Member O’Banner made the motion, Second by Council Member Hagan. All in favor

Council Member Washington made the motion to approve the minutes of the October 8, 2019 Town Council Meeting. Second by Council Member Hagan. All in favor.

Old Business

Council Member O’Banner made the motion to approve the first reading on Annexation Ordinance 19-15, annexing approximately 1.00 acres of land located at 141 Riley Street. Second by Council Member Washington. All in favor.

New Business

Mayor Moore provided some background regarding the Resolution entitled “A Resolution Encouraging the South Carolina General Assembly to adopt H. 3063, “Hate Crime Bill”. Mayor Moore reported that this bill is currently sitting in the house Judiciary Committee and is gaining widespread support. The bill would formally recognize what constitutes a hate crime and defines penalties for those convicted of a hate crime. Mayor Moore said South Carolina is only one of five states in the country that does not have a formal hate crime law. The other municipalities in Beaufort County have all adopted Resolution in support of it and asked Yemassee to get on board with it. Mayor Moore asked for a motion to adopt the resolution. Council Member O’Banner made the motion. During the

discussion, Council Member Simmons expressed his stance on why he is against the bill. Council Member Simmons believes that there are already published laws on the books, and we have enough laws and should not grant the state more power. He advised the penitentiaries are already overflowed with people and the more time we give out wouldn't help. Council Member Hagan stated that its her belief that if you do the crime, no amount is too high. Council Member Simmons rebuked her claim and posed the question, what does giving someone a life sentence accomplish? Council Member Hagan again stated that if you do the crime, you should do the time. While referring back to the Resolution, Council Member O'Banner said the second clause states South Carolina is only one of five states that does not have any laws on hate crimes and given the history of South Carolina and the pre-existing hate and racism this issue needs to be addressed. Council Member O'Banner advised that this is her small part to be part of the solution she's for it. Council Member Simmons responded that he doesn't think this law would accomplish anything. Council Member Washington stated the law itself nowadays becomes where some get off and some do not, the law in South Carolina needs to be mandated across the board. Mayor Moore commented and reiterated Council Member O'Banner and said that we remain the only municipality in Beaufort County that has not adopted resolution in support of this bill but ultimately it will be up to the Legislature in Columbia to take action on once they have debated the bill and without further discussion asked for a Second. Council Member Hagan made the second.

IN FAVOR: Council Member(s), Hagan, O'Banner, Washington

OPPOSED: Council Member Simmons

RESULT: Resolution adopted 4-1

Department Reports:

Police Department (Chief Alexander)- Chief reported that it has been calm around the Town over the past month. He spoke in support of the hate crime bill and said the South Carolina Police Chiefs Association and our lobbyists will be hard at work lobbying for H. 3063. He added that there is no penalty right now for the crime and stated he appreciated Town Council's support on the bill

Administration (Town Clerk Garnes)- Mr. Garnes presented his report regarding activity on behalf of the Administration Department for the month. Some of the tasks accomplished was preparing the final submittal for the CDBG Grant which would allow the Town to receive money to demolish dilapidated and blighted structures throughout town. Administration worked on coordinating the reception for the Yemassee Mural dedication in downtown Yemassee and expressed his gratitude from the support of the community, other municipalities and leaders from Hampton & Jasper County. Clerk Garnes reported that with regard to SoLoCo they should have something prepared by our next council meeting in terms of a Resolution to authorize funding of a consultant which will be shared by all member municipalities and the County of Beaufort & Jasper.

Public Works-

No Report

Municipal Court-

No Report

Committee Reports:

Train Station Restoration Committee- Council Member O'Banner reported that the committee has met a few times regarding getting work to continue on the finishing touches so we could begin work on the Veterans Park, specifically the Veterans Monument. The monument has been paid for and is just waiting to be erected.

Yemassee Community Improvement Alumni- Mr. Henson came and asked for an update regarding the five concerns they brought to the Town a year ago. With respect to staffing the Fire Department 24/7, Mayor Moore informed a career firefighter is here Monday-Friday 8-5, provided by Hampton County. It would be too expensive if the Town were to absorb the fire district. Mr. Henson reported that Colleton County has a very successful program countywide and has all stations manned. Mr. Henson said that it does not have to be a Town entity, but perhaps work on Hampton County on staffing this building 24/7. Council Member Washington reported that Hampton County is in the process of cross-training EMT's & Paramedics on the fire apparatus, but it will still take some time. The second item was having a member of Town Council attend each Hampton County Council meeting and report back. Mayor Moore advised that we talk to officials from Hampton & Beaufort counties weekly even if someone does not go to Hampton County Council meetings. Mayor Moore stated we went to multiple meetings in Beaufort County last month as well as met with the General Manager of LRWS last week. Council Member Washington advised he will go next year and bring back a report. With respect to the third item regarding enforcement of the nuisance ordinance, Mayor Moore advised the Town had applied for a grant to tear down numerous houses and would hear something soon. The fourth item was regarding the sidewalks and the regular maintenance of them. Mayor Moore asked what the problem was, he thought they were done. Mr. Henson said they look great but wants to know the plan. Mayor Moore said they will be maintained. The fifth item was a request for more police patrols in the residential areas of Yemassee. Mayor Moore had Chief Alexander take this question and in turn advised that the Zone program is widely successful in engaging in the community.

Public Comment:

Tom Risse (27 Poston Dr) – Mr. Risse advised there are still campaign signs up around the Town and they need to be taken down.

Adjournment:

Council Member Hagan made the motion to adjourn. Second by Council Member Simmons. Meeting adjourned at 7:31PM.