

Minutes
Town of Yemassee Town Council
September 12, 2023, Regular Town Council Meeting 6:30PM
101 Town Cir, Yemassee, SC 29945-3363

Attendance:

Present: Mayor Colin Moore, Mayor Pro-Tem Peggy Bing-O'Banner, Council Member David Paul Murray, Council Member Washington, Human Resources Specialist Caroline Koger, Public Works Director Lonnie Green, Town Administrator Matthew Garnes and Police Chief Gregory Alexander

Absent: Council Member Stacy Pinckney

Media Present: Lowcountry Inside Track, Ltd.

Call to Order:

Mayor Moore called the September 12, 2023, Regular Town Council Meeting to order at 6:30PM.

Determination of Quorum:

Council Member Pinckney was absent. The remainder of Council was present.

Mayor Moore asked for a motion to approve the agenda as presented for September 12, 2023, Regular Town Council Meeting as presented. Mayor Pro-Tem O'Banner made the motion to adopt. Second by Council Member Washington. **All in favor, Motion Passed.**

Mayor Moore asked for a motion to approve the minutes of the August 29, 2023, Special Town Council Meeting. Council Member Washington made the motion to approve. Second by Council Member Murray. **All in favor, Motion Passed.**

Public Comment:

Marie Rivers (250 Bing St) – Ms. Rivers commented on the need for sewer services to come down Bing St. Currently, it ends near Drayton Rd and on the southern side near Riley Street and didn't know why there was the gap between both ends of Bing St. She stated her septic tank is failing and it will cost roughly \$10,000.00 to replace it. She asked that the Town apply for a grant or otherwise find funding to extend sewer service to that portion of Bing St.

Darrell A. Russell (2 Pine St) – Mr. Russell played the digitally recorded version of his new song, titled "Yemassee". It is available for purchase on the Apple iTunes store and

other digital music platforms. Mr. Russell thanked the Council for their time and will be performing at the Shrimp Festival this weekend.

Old Business:

Ordinance 23-27: Consideration of an Ordinance Amending the Business License Ordinance of the Town of Yemassee, to Update the Class Schedule as Required by Act 176 of 2020: Mayor Moore asked Mr. Garnes to provide background information. Mr. Garnes said this is a required update per Act 176 and this will only affect a few rate classes that are not frequently used here. If the Council were not to adopt the update as required by law, it would negate the towns' ability to impose, assess, and collect a business license tax. Mayor Pro-Tem O'Banner made the motion to approve second and final reading. Second by Council Member Murray. **All in favor, Motion Passed.**

New Business:

River Rd Sewer Extension & Upgrade Public Project Application: Mayor Moore advised that this was a request for consideration by the Town of Yemassee, on behalf of the Lowcountry Regional Water System (LRWS), for approval of a Public Project Application. The applicant is seeking to install an alternative sewer system including individual grinder pumps and a common force main to serve six (6) homes on River Road and one (1) industrial customer on River Rd in Beaufort County, the abandonment of existing septic tanks and the installation of two Remote Terminal Units (RTU's) including radio equipment to allow the two (2) existing pump stations on Guess Drive to be monitored as part of the LRWS existing SCADA system. Mr. Garnes introduced Ms. Kari Foy, Engineer for LRWS. Mr. Garnes advised that as set forth in Chapter 6, Section 6-29 within the Code of Ordinances of the Town of Yemassee, South Carolina, the applicants are submitting a Public Project Application for an expansion or modification of utility infrastructure. The Ordinance sets a goal of ensuring that the proposed project is consistent with the spirit and intent of the Town while ensuring the Town Council, residents, and business owners have ample opportunity for feedback on the proposed project any that any questions regarding the project are answered.

Mr. Garnes provided some background on the existing utility infrastructure. The water and wastewater infrastructure within the Town of Yemassee is owned and operated by the Lowcountry Regional Water System (LRWS). LRWS inherited the infrastructure from the Town of Yemassee Water Department in 2013 when the utility consortium formed. LRWS is the franchised water and wastewater provider in the Town of Yemassee and has been since its inception. The infrastructure that was in place was installed over the course of almost four decades and was not uniform and much of the original infrastructure was in place. Over time, through both municipal grants and LRWS funded projects, the system has seen significant upgrades. Town Staff routinely communicate with management of the Lowcountry Regional Water System and discuss areas of

concern as well as review potential grant opportunities to improve the infrastructure and resiliency of the network as well as improve the quality of life for residents and business owners.

An opportunity identified was identified this Spring by Town Staff to potentially fund a project within Beaufort County that would address several critical issues while minimizing the potential for groundwater contamination after a failing septic tank or old sewer lines. The Beaufort County Council created a “Good Neighbor Fund” project which was to be funded off American Rescue Plan (ARP) funding that the County government received. The formula determined earmarked the Town of Yemassee approximately \$500,000.00 for ARP qualified projects such as infrastructure with the requirement being the projects must benefit and be within Beaufort County.

The County required each municipality in the County (Hilton Head Island, Bluffton, Hardeeville, Beaufort, Port Royal & Yemassee) to submit a formal request for funding for review at the Committee level at the County first, followed by County Council. The Town of Yemassee requested and subsequently received two tranches of funding through this program including this sewer extension and the Castle Hall Sidewalk Project. The project has no local match required from the municipality and the primary requirements are that the project be completed by the date dictated by the Federal Government ARP program and that the project will be subject to periodic grant monitoring by Beaufort County, as each municipality is a subrecipient of grant funds.

LRWS currently has limited water and wastewater infrastructure within Beaufort County and is limited to the infrastructure that was inherited from the Town when its water department was transferred. Water and wastewater serve both the Beaufort Housing Authority (Yemassee Heights) development and Alpha Genesis on Castle Hall Rd. On Guess Drive, the former industrial park properties are served by both water and sewer and host the only two lift stations owned by LRWS in Beaufort County. Finally, water and sewer service serve the Vetrostone plant at 108 River Road and water serves some residential areas on River Road from the county line to Guess Drive.

As the Town of Yemassee is the subrecipient of the funds, the Town will issue RFP’s / Solicitations and receive invoices and pay out invoices due. Technical review will be completed jointly with LRWS Engineering and Management staff. The Town has issued an RFP for Engineering Services for the project with sealed bids due by September 21, 2023. Ms. Foy then spoke on some of the technical aspects of the project. Council Member Murray made the motion to approve the Public Project Application as presented. Second by Mayor Pro-Tem O’Banner. **All in favor, Motion Passed.**

Adjournment:

Mayor Moore asked for motion to adjourn. Council Member Murray made the motion to adjourn. Second by Mayor Pro-Tem O’Banner. All in favor, **Meeting Adjourned at 6:57 PM.**