

Town of Yemassee Council Meeting
Tuesday, September 8, 2015
6:30 p.m.

Present: Mayor Cook, Council members O'Banner, Anderson, Jinks and Moore were present.

Invocation: Given by Rev. Witter

Pledge of Allegiance to the Flag:

Determination of Quorum: All of Town Council Members were present.

Determination of Notification of Press: The Press and Radio Station were notified.

Public Comments: Trena Sanders talked about a previous complaint that she filed against the Police Dept. She said that she did not get the information concerning the policies and procedures of the Town of Yemassee that she asked for in a timely manner. Councilman Moore asked Sanders when she put the request in for the first time. Sanders said she faxed her request on June 11, 2015. Councilman Anderson requested a list of the information that Sanders is requesting so that he can look at it. Councilman Moore asked that Ms. Sanders get her complaint together and he will meet her somewhere to get it. Sanders asked for a time frame that the information will be given to her. Mayor Cook said that once the list from her is given to council they will get back with her within fifteen days with what she needs.

A citizen asked how to go about getting ordinances regarding fire arms being discharged within the city limits and parking for semi-trucks and tractors trailer trucks on city streets. Councilman Moore said that guns being fired within the town limits are prohibited. Councilman Moore said that an ordinance is already in place and can be strictly enforced through the Police department.

Yisrael said that he is still cleaning off the lot at Salkehatchie Rd and Railroad Avenue to start his Flea Market business no later than October 1, 2015. Councilman Jinks told Yisrael that he has to contact the Emergency Management Office to get an address for the lots. Yisrael also said that the Police removed his goods and wants to know how he can get them returned. Councilman Jinks said that there is an ordinance to keep the area clean. Mayor Cook said that the Police enforce our ordinance laws and if they see a violation in effect they take care of it. Mayor Cook also told Yisrael that Council supports what the officers are doing.

Ms. Youmans said that a pack of dogs are killing animals in the neighborhood. Mayor Cook said to find out who the owner of the dogs are. Mayor said that they will do all they can to take care of the problem.

Nigel Alexander said that the Council should come together and not be divided. He mentioned that he lives here because he loves Yemassee. He also mentioned that his dad told him that there are three sides to every story, one person's story, the other person's story and the truth. Mr. Alexander said that he told Kiel Brown if he needed some help that he would be available for the next two weeks.

Jimmy Glass wanted to know what is going on with the water department. He said that his bill is going up every month. Council member Jinks mentioned that Council member Peggy O'Banner was just appointed and would need some time to decipher what is going on.

Douglas Mickens said that there was a stolen car found behind his church. He asked if there was another way to contact the Police Department besides calling 911. Council member J.J. Jinks mentioned that 911 is the key because it keeps records. Anderson mentioned that calls from cell phones may be hard to track because of them having numbers from different counties.

Chris Brown had a problem with council member Dan Anderson helping with Point South's festival and not helping with the Yemassee Shrimp festival. Anderson stated that he was asked to help with the Point South festival, but was not asked to help with the Shrimp festival. Council member Dan Anderson stated that Rogers asked him to help with the Basketball Tournament.

Building Department: Was not present

Fire Department: Chief Paul Holmes reports that there were ten assists through EMS, Three house fires, two brush fires, four fire alarms, seven wrecks, assisted Jasper County once, two Helicopter landings, and cancelled on three calls.

Police Department: Chief Greg Alexander reports that they had two criminal domestic violence, three alarms answered, five vehicle accidents, a rape case that is still being investigated, and four DUIs. Chief Greg Alexander mentioned that the Police Department has openings for Reserve officers for the school zone.

Public Works: Was not present

Council Member Peggy O'Banner states that under the FOIA she requested several sets of records concerning an employee at the May 5, 2015 council meeting. She states that the records included cell phone, banking, payroll, time sheets, etc. To date she has not received a response.

In the July 14, 2015 meeting she requested for property to be annexed into town limits of Yemassee. To date she has not had a response.

OAN:

Council Member Peggy O'Banner states that they were elected to be leaders for Yemassee. She states that there is something to be said when a body of elected officials is unable to work as a

team. She states that the entire group must meet to make decisions, develop a certain degree of communal trust and do the job they were elected to do for the citizens.

The trust will never develop when leaders are hypocritical in claiming they are unified and even praying for unity, but work toward a different goal.

The uncalled for actions and blatant disrespect that has reared its ugly head on several occasions on the part of this mayor leaves us even more divided.

Mayor Cook is a source of division and controversy for the Town of Yemassee. His most recent actions since this election season opened have widened the division among some Council members and the Mayor.

We have endured Mayor Cook's using the rostrum as his personal Bully Pit and Constant Source of confusion. Walking out of that July 14 meeting and not returning to perform his sworn duties is dereliction of those duties. He accepts pay for the duties so I simply ask that he act as a workman who is worthy of his hire and do the job of Mayor. It is as if we are simply treading water trying to stay afloat while Mayor Cook pulls us into the undertow. This MESS must end.

Mayor Cook keeps jumping from topic to topic and we never seem to get anything done. I personally believe this to be on purpose so that we look as if we are not doing our part as a council.

I have been available over these last few months to answer questions, give input, advice and feedback. My phone is always on day and night for all elected, town employees such as Ms. Loretta and citizens. Over these many years that I have served on council I have never had to deal with so many day to day issues and questions. I am here after hours and on the weekend. While I work a full time job I know what is now required since we changed the form of government. I am up to the task of leadership.

I challenge you to all pull your weight.

These are my personal thoughts as a citizen and First Black duly elected female Councilmember in Yemassee!!

Peggy Bing-O'Banner

Mayor told Council member Peggy O'Banner that she has been at the Town Hall a few evenings lately since the government changed. He said that the whole time that he's been here prior to that, she never came in the Town Hall except for the Town Council meeting. He said that he took an oath to do what he has to do while he's here and he will do that. Mayor said that he respects Council member O'Banner's opinion.

Council member Colin Moore stated that he is at the Town Hall almost every day and things have improved more than he thought it could have in such a short time. Strictly by the work being done correctly, because the people that were in the Town Hall before now did not do it correctly and sometimes did not do it at all. Mayor Cook said that he agrees with Moore one hundred percent.

Council member J.J. Jinks asked Mayor Cook if he was aware that several months ago the insurance on patrol vehicles were not paid and Chief Alexander had to be sent to Columbia in his own personal car. Mayor said that he knew it and that Amber said that she paid the insurance on line. Jinks asked Mayor who hired Amber and Mayor said that he hired her as an Interim Clerk. Mayor said that he made a mistake. Jinks asked if he knew that there was no job application for Amber. Council member Dan Anderson stated that he has been with the Town for two years and asked what they have done. Council member Colin Moore stated that things have improved greatly. Anderson said that until they agree to disagree and stop taking things so personally they will not get anywhere. Jinks said that whatever he needed to do to carry Yemassee forward he is willing to do and that it will be done the right way.

Council member Moore stated that all they needed to do as far as annexation is pass an ordinance on it saying that, that person and that land and annexation is all we need to do at this time. Mayor Cook stated that the lawyer has to see it. Moore stated that the lawyer just looks at what council approved. Moore made a motion that they accept the first parcel of land beside the bread factory belonging to Mrs. Peggy O'Banner. The motion was seconded by Council member J.J. Jinks. Council member Peggy O'Banner abstained. Motion passed.

Council member J.J. Jinks made a motion that they accept Mrs. Sandra Cook's request to annex the lot beside Gloria Brown on Bing Street. Motion was seconded by Council member Dan Anderson. Council member Peggy O'Banner abstained from vote. Motion passed.

Council member Jinks motioned to table the minutes from the last meeting until October. Motion was seconded by Council member Moore. Motion passed.

Mrs. Kakela Robinson asked what the charge should be for the Community center. Council member Jinks said that he has some volunteers to upgrade the Community center, then change the rental fee from \$85.00 plus \$50.00 deposit to \$125.00 for rental fee plus \$50.00 deposit. Council member Anderson motioned to appoint Jinks to get repairs done. Motion was seconded by Council member Peggy O'Banner. Motion passed.

Mrs. Kakela Robinson mentioned the formal application from the Magistrate's office concerning Railroad Avenue. She said that she needs permission to complete and file it. Council member Jinks made a motion to give Mrs. Robinson authority to use \$40.00 for forms needed to evict the tenants. Motion was seconded by Council member Dan Anderson. Motion passed.

Council member Colin Moore mentioned following up on the dog problem. Council member Jinks mentioned trying a trap. The work order was written by Council member Peggy O'Banner.

Council member J. J. Jinks asked the public if they would be offended if the Department reports were eliminated from the council meeting to shorten the time of the council meetings. He mentioned that the reports could be readily available to walk in and receive. One citizen said let the reports be heard. Another citizen said he doesn't see where it accomplishes anything. Council member Dan Anderson mentioned that he spoke to the Regional Leader for the Boy Scouts and said that Yemassee does not have a sponsor for the Boy Scouts. Anderson asked if the Town of Yemassee could sponsor them. Council member Anderson said that he will bring more information on it.

Council member Dan Anderson tabled the Resolution to Establish Economic Development until the October council meeting.

Council member J. J. Jinks asked for a donation from the Town of Yemassee for the Yemassee Shrimp festival. Council member Peggy O'Banner made a motion to make a \$100.00 donation. The motion was seconded by Council member Colin Moore. Motion passed.

Council member J. J. Jinks mentioned that the Hampton County Fire Department was trying to create a contract to take over Yemassee Fire Department. Mayor Jerry Cook mentioned getting back with the Town Lawyer on that.

Council member Colin Moore asked if they could have something put together and work off of it until they get the audit for 2015 done. Colin stated that Maia said that she hasn't worked for the Town of Yemassee for a year. Jinks asked if we could get Beard to get the audit done. Mayor Cook said that he will talk to Maia.

Council member Dan Anderson mentioned that the Beaufort County Auditor is asking about millage and needed some papers signed.

Mrs. Kakela Robinson mentioned that the QS1 system has been purchased, training is needed, the Time and Date Stamp came in, and the Public Works department received a pressure washer and drill set. Robinson also mentioned that the amount of money being spent on the tractor needs to be looked into.

Council member Dan Anderson mentioned that Lester has been being bitten by bees a lot and won't go to the hospital because he doesn't know if the Town will pay for it.

The question was asked about how often Triangle is delivering ice to the ice cooler. Mrs. Robinson mentioned purchasing an ice machine. Mayor Cook said that the cost for maintenance is higher for an ice machine. Council member Moore suggested moving the ice cooler that we have. Jinks suggested putting the ice cooler in front of the fire truck beside the water spigot.

Mrs. Robinson mentioned that garbage rates went up for commercial dumpsters. She also mentioned that there is an administrative cost for hours spent calling the citizens. Council member Colin Moore mentioned that Lowcountry Regional Water dropped the ball on their collecting. Mayor Cook said that Lowcountry should be held accountable. Council member J.J. Jinks asked Mrs. Robinson to find a policy that will fit Yemassee that can be adopted. Council member Peggy O'Banner suggested that we call Regional once a month to see who has not paid. Jinks said that if we get to the point of taking the trash cans, we need to remember to turn it off at Republic Services as well. Jinks mentioned that the policy should read that after two months we will ask Keil to remove the receptacle and notify Lowcountry and Republic that they are removed. Robinson said that we have lost money with garbage collection. Jinks said that we should go up 10% on all commercial containers from 2 yds up to 8 yds, which is the max and if any larger, an increase will be applied to them as well.

Hampton County's outstanding fees for Detention center inmates are \$4000.00. Judge Smith will check on the bills. It was mentioned that a fee is not charged until an inmate is held over twenty four hours.

Mrs. Robinson mentioned the animal shelter rate increases. Mayor Cook said that he is at fault with that. Robinson asked if they want the bill to be paid. Council member Jinks suggested paying \$500.00 dollars every two months.

Mrs. Robinson mentioned that there is a question about ownership of the EMS building. She said that according to the county, they own the building and they are responsible for all of the bills. It was mentioned that we (Yemassee) are paying the light bill and county said that they are paying the cable bill. Council members Anderson and Jinks said that we should not be paying it. Council member Colin Moore said that we need to look at the agreement.

Mrs. Robinson mentioned that some employees are not a member of PEBA. She contacted PEBA membership and the power point was forwarded to her. Robinson mentioned that if a person makes over \$9000.00 and/or is full time he or she has to be enrolled in PEBA. She mentioned that elected officials have to be enrolled as well. Mrs. O'Banner made a motion to enroll all eligible employees. Council member J. J. Jinks seconded the motion. Motion passed.

Mrs. Robinson asked what the policy is for holiday pay and how employees accrue leave. Chief Alexander asked for the holiday pay that he did not receive last year. Jinks made a motion to pay any employee who is still employed. Jinks also mentioned that if one employee is paid, all should be paid. Council member Colin Moore said that the policies will need to be rewritten. Mrs. Kakela Robinson asked if the employees will be paid for Labor Day. She suggested that the employees get paid for Labor Day while the policy is being written. Council member Moore made a motion to pay everyone for Labor Day. Council member J. J. Jinks seconded the motion. Mayor Cook opposed it. Motion passed.

Mrs. Robinson states that members of council have not voted in the past couple of months. She said that according to State Ethics Commission any time you recuse yourself from a vote a Recusal Statement from SC Ethics Commission has to be placed in the minutes. A motion was made by Council member Dan Anderson to adopt the Recusal Statement. The motion was seconded by Council member J. J. Jinks. Motion passed.

Mrs. Robinson mentioned that the Town of Yemassee does not have set fees for reimbursement. Mayor Cook asked why it has been that way all these years. Judge Smith asked what Mayor Cook's reimbursement is for. Mayor Cook said that it was for traveling expenses. Council member J. J. Jinks asked Mayor Cook if he is saying that he would be entitled to reimbursement every month without an expense ledger. Council members J. J. Jinks and Colin Moore said that a decision needed to be made to let Mrs. Robinson know what to do. Council member Dan Anderson said that since Mayor Cook was expecting the \$200.00 reimbursement this time that it should be given to him. Then council will decide from that point on what they will do. Council member Colin Moore made a motion to table the Reimbursement Policy until the next council meeting. Motion was seconded by Council member Peggy O'Banner. Motion passed.

Executive Session: Council went into executive session.

Adjourn: Motion made to adjourn meeting by Moore. Motion seconded by Jinks. Motion passed.