

**Regular Town Council Meeting Minutes  
March 15, 2016**

**Location: Chapin Town Hall**

**Attending:** Mayor Skip Wilson; Council Members Mike Clonts, Robbie Frick, Kay Hollis, and Gregg White; staff members Dan Lambert, Karen Owens, Andy Metts, Carl Stevens, Inga Whelchel, and Chief Zeigler.

**Call to Order:** Mayor Wilson called the meeting to order at 6:01 pm, and determined there was a quorum. Mr. Clonts offered the prayer and Pledge of Allegiance. Mayor Wilson noted the new schedule for the Regular Town Council Meetings would be the third Tuesday of each month at 6:00 PM.

**FOIA:** Mayor Wilson acknowledged that the appropriate notifications in compliance with the SC Freedom of Information Act had been met.

**Minutes:** Mayor Wilson stated there was an amendment to the February 16<sup>th</sup> minutes on Page 5 in the middle of paragraph 1 under “New Business”. There was a typing error of “Mr. Clonts White” and stated the correction of striking through “White”. Mayor Wilson asked for approval of the February 16<sup>th</sup> meeting minutes with the correction. Mr. Clonts made a motion to accept the amended minutes; 2<sup>nd</sup> by Mr. Frick. The motion passes by unanimous vote.

**Mayor’ Comments:** Mayor Wilson stated the Town Hall Department Administrators will have a planning session to review ongoing issues and discuss future plans. The Council will have input on the plans, budgeting, etc.

**Reports:** Staff gave general reviews of monthly reports provided in Council packets and answered questions.

- 1. Financial report** –Mr. Stevens presented the monthly financial report for February. He noted that the revenue generated was ahead of schedule, due to collection of large business license fees in February that would normally come in during March. Comparing 2015 to 2016, there is an increase in business license fees of 2.4% this year. The majority of the licenses are still due to come in. There were 50 new business licenses in two months with the average license fee being \$330. The Town has been diligent in collecting these license fees. He also noted the Year-to-Date expenses are \$36,000 over prior year’s budget, due to salaries, benefits, and insurance costs. Otherwise, there are no surprises and everything is on track as scheduled.

**Town Council Comments:** Mr. White asked why line item 6325 was at 106% of the budget. Mr. Stevens stated the expenses were up due to the additional personnel in the Police Department and worker’s compensation increase. Mr. White asked if we are expecting any unusual expenses. Mr. Stevens stated the repair of the Town Hall water damaged concrete pad where the dumpster is located, at an approximate cost of \$25,000. The Insurance Reserve Fund denied our claim, stating the insurance does not cover the parking lot or concrete pad. Mr. White noted the revenue for the Utilities department was \$28,000 above budget. Mr. Metts stated the increase was due to water

and sewer billings with the majority coming from new customers. Also, there was a slight 8% increase in the water rate. Overall expenses were \$9,300 higher due to 100% increase in employees and insurance; however the Town saved \$53,000 in expenses due to the reduction in use of outside contractors for repairs. Mr. White asked if he anticipated any increase or decrease in sewer tap fees. Mr. Metts expected an increase rather than a decrease. Mr. White asked why line item 6383 was at 127% of the budget. Mr. Stevens stated they had under-budgeted, looking at prior years, the increase of five new employees and general liability insurance fees. Mr. White inquired about the credit card fees. Mr. Stevens stated more Utility customers are using credit cards to pay their water and sewer bills. He is working with Susan in Utilities to try and consolidate the banking fees, as well as working with QS1 to update the billing software and reduce fees.

- 2. Police report** – Chief Zeigler noted that during this time of year, phone scammers are increasing and for the residents to be aware of a few current scams. The scammers will identify themselves as being with the IRS or another government agency, as well as SCE&G trying to get the caller to send money. He wanted to reiterate that none of these agencies will solicit money over the phone and for residents to never give out personal information, banking information, or money to these scammers. Most of the scam phone calls show a local or US area code, but the calls are originating from countries overseas who can manipulate the caller ID. Chief Zeigler reported that the Marco Rubio event on East Boundary Street was successful without incident in both safety and traffic control measures. With the unannounced arrival of Governor Nikki Haley to the event, her security detail commended the Chapin Police Department on their flexibility and professionalism to accommodate her last minute arrival. Captain Crump is putting together informational brochures to help citizens who are either victims or know of someone in situations involving domestic violence.

**Town Council Comments:** Mayor Wilson asked if there were many cases of Domestic Violence in Town. Chief Zeigler stated we have a few cases, but that even one case is too many, and that South Carolina has the highest number of domestic violence murders in the country. Mr. White noted the drug violations were up quite a bit from last year and wanted to know if this was a concern. Chief Zeigler stated the Police Department has reached out to another agency regarding this issue, but sees nothing to be concerned about, as the drug violations ebb and flow with the climate in South America. The department is aware and has identified areas to address to help curb future trends.

- 3. Utility report** – Mr. Metts stated they are three items he would like to highlight from his report. First, there was an agreement made in 2012 transferring the water line on Hwy 48 from Chapin to the City of Columbia, but it never received final Council approval, which would be discussed later in the agenda. Second, bids for repair of the damaged parking lot will be due on March 24<sup>th</sup>, and the bids with expenses/costs will be shared with the Council. Third, the Indian Fork subdivision sewer pump station had major pipe failures and the station was brought back up yesterday with the assistance of three outside contractors. Mr. Metts announced that he and Dan Lambert attended the SC

Environmental Conference and during the award ceremony, Chapin Utilities was awarded the highest honor given to a utilities department of “2015 Facility Excellence Award”. This award is given each year by the SC DHEC to a utilities department for going above and beyond.

**Town Council Comments:** Mr. White commended the Utilities department for an great job and for the amazing accomplishments they have done in one year.

4. **Zoning report** – Mr. Clauson was not present for this meeting. Mayor Wilson stated the information was given in the Council packets for their review. Of note, Lexington County Council approved the funding for the sidewalk connection and storm drainage project along Columbia Avenue near the Town Hall. There were no Town Council comments.
5. **Communications & Economic Development report** – Ms. Owens highlighted that there have been new businesses coming to Town, they are working with the S48 project, and the new Town website was launched on February 29<sup>th</sup>. She noted the new website would give citizens the opportunity to create their own login to custom design their notifications for any events, updates, or emergency alerts. Ms. Owens stated the Prayer Breakfast will be on April 15<sup>th</sup> morning with a shredding event later that day at the Town Hall from 2:00 PM – 4:00 PM. The American Legion Post will sponsor a Blood Drive on April 7<sup>th</sup> from noon – 5:00 PM, and also a volunteer hot dog lunch on April 16<sup>th</sup> from noon – 2:00 PM. There were no Town Council comments.

#### **New Business:**

1. **Resolution to support Chapin Arbor Day Committee** – Mrs. Mood has worked hard on the Standing Tall project with planting sequoia trees in Chapin, and our Town Hall receiving three of those plantings. The Mayor asked Council to endorse and support this committee. Mrs. Hollis made a motion to adopt this Resolution; 2<sup>nd</sup> by Mr. White. The motion passes by unanimous vote.
2. **Request to refinance the General Obligation Bond** – The Town has made their fifth of 10 payments with the principal balance of \$431,000 that was borrowed to fund the construction of the Town Hall. The rates have dropped to 1.97%, and the current rate we are paying is 3.49%. To refinance the balance at 1.49%, the costs associated with the refinancing would outweigh the savings. Instead, Pope and Flynn has asked BB&T (current bond holder) if they would adjust their rates on the current bond, which they were agreeable to drop the rate to 1.97%. This would mean an \$18,000 savings in interest. Also, there would be a \$5,000 cap on the legal fees to process this rate reduction. Mr. Stevens was asking for Council’s approval and also we only have 45 days to preserve this rate, so we would need to have a first reading of the ordinance, 2<sup>nd</sup> reading, and final vote within that time frame with a special called meeting would need to be done quickly.

**Town Council Comments:** Mr. White stated it would be a good idea to do this now. Mr. Clonts asked that a motion be made to proceed with the refinancing request. The Motion was made by Mr. White; 2<sup>nd</sup> by Mr. Frick. The motion passes by unanimous vote.

3. **Request to pursue Hazard Mitigation Grant Funding** – Mr. Metts attended a Hazardous Mitigation Grant Workshop and stated there are grants available to fund Utilities projects to mitigate the impact of future disasters. He submitted a list of 17 items on the Capital Improvement Plan that could benefit from these grant funds. Grant requests are limited to \$400,000 per request and the expected match from the Town is 25%. The submissions are due by April 5<sup>th</sup> and the Utilities Department plans to submit three requests considered are:
  - a. 18” Force Main Sewer Interceptor from Old Lexington Hwy to WWTP for a total cost of \$850,000.
  - b. Installing bypass pumps at PS #42, #32, #10, #T6, and #T5 at \$395,000 total Town obligation for the pumps.
  - c. Install alternate power supplies at PS #T7, #P3, #26, #18, and #T18 at \$75,000 Town obligation for each power supply.

Mr. Metts asked the Council for approval before proceeding with the Grant submissions.

**Town Council Comments:** Mr. Clonts asked for the total amount needed. Mr. Metts stated the town would have to come up with 25% of any grant money awarded. Mr. White asked if these projects were expenses that were already planned over the next five years, which was confirmed by Mr. Metts. Mr. Clonts asked if the grant funds were given, would we have to wait to proceed over the 5-year schedule. Mr. Metts stated if we were awarded the grant money, we would not have to wait and could do up to five projects now. Mayor Wilson stated that these projects would be null and void if the grants were not awarded. Mr. White asked the likelihood these grants would be awarded. Mr. Metts stated that approval would be very good for some of the projects. Mr. White made a motion to pursue the grants and Capital Improvement Plan as presented; 2<sup>nd</sup> by Mr. Clonts. The motion passes by unanimous vote.

4. **Request to seek Council’s final approval to complete the transfer of the existing water line along Hwy 48 to the City of Columbia** – Mr. Metts presented the Council tentatively approved the transfer in 2012, but final approval was never done.

**Town Council Comments:** Mr. White stated that the City of Columbia would install an elevated water tank, but it is not mentioned in the followup letter. Mr. Metts stated the elevated water tank would be constructed after all water lines were installed. Mr. Clonts made a motion to approve the transfer; 2<sup>nd</sup> by Mrs. Hollis. The motion passes by unanimous vote.

5. **Request to review Wastewater Treatment Plant Preliminary Engineering Report Vendor Selection** – Mr. Metts stated there were 13 submissions. All thirteen proposals were evaluated and the top three of those were given an interview. He asked the Council go into Executive Session to discuss the three selected submissions. Mr. White made a motion to go into Executive Session; 2<sup>nd</sup> by Mayor Wilson. They went into Executive Session at 7:06 PM after Mayor Wilson, Mr. Clonts, and Mr. White voted in favor. Ms. Hollis and Mr. Frick voted against the measure. The Town Council and the Mayor Wilson went into private chambers to discuss the Preliminary Engineering Report Vendor selection.

**Executive Session – After the Executive Session, the meeting was reconvened at 8:10 PM.**

**Public Comments:** Leiesha Huffstetler asked for the Council to consider re-doing or expanding the current plant as opposed to building a whole new facility with a capacity of 2.4 million gallons. She stated we use .8 million gallons per day and asked why should we go to a bigger facility when we are not at capacity. Mr. Metts explained that in September of 2014 we exceeded the 1.2 million gallon capacity of the facility with 1.4 million gallons. The average daily flow can exceed the capacity with high to medium rainfall. Also, our technology at the existing facility is antiquated. Mrs. Huffstetler asked if the engineering report researched expanding the existing plant and would suggest it would be better to expand than to build a new plant. Mr. Metts stated that the report would look at expansion and building and determine the best route for moving forward.

Kim Murphy stated she was concerned with building a new facility, as well. She wanted to know if the engineers looked at alternatives and look at using existing components such as the lagoon component. Mayor Wilson stated we have not gotten into that detail at this point. It is a 3-step process: Step 1 – Getting Preliminary Engineering Reports to look at options. Step 2 – Designing of the Wastewater Treatment Plant. Step 3 – Assessing the cost. He stated that we have not committed to anything at this point. Mrs. Murphy found a document showing a plan of 5 million gallons per day, which concerned her to see. Mayor Wilson assured her that he had not seen that document and they would not be discussing any issues regarding 5 million gallons. He reiterated the focus tonight would be the Preliminary Engineering Reports. Mrs. Murphy complimented our new website, but she could not find a link for what is included in the Council packets. Mayor Wilson stated he would make a note and address this issue. Mrs. Murphy congratulated the Utilities Department on their award and thanked them for their hard work. Mrs. Murphy stated she had a concern that the number of items put in front of the Council on the agenda that are seen for the first time and action is taken that same meeting. She recommended the items be placed on the agenda the first time for discussion and then a second time to take action at a following Council meeting. Mayor Wilson thanked both women for their comments.

**Executive Session Action Items:** The Mayor made a motion to accept the Preliminary Engineering Report proposal from Hussey/Gay/Bell Engineering Firm; 2<sup>nd</sup> by Mr. White. The motion passes by unanimous vote.

A motion to adjourn the meeting was made by Mr. White; 2<sup>nd</sup> by Mr. Frick. The motion passes by unanimous vote. The meeting was adjourned at 8:23 PM.