

**Lamar Town Council Meeting Minutes**  
**September 13, 2021**

The Lamar Town Council Meeting was called to order by Mayor Darnell Byrd-McPherson at 6:17 PM.

Invocation was given by Deacon Tim Dargan.

Mayor McPherson did a visual roll call. Council members in attendance were Mayor McPherson, Councilman Tyler Cook, Councilwoman Angele White-Bradley, Councilwoman Inez B. Lee, and Councilwoman Mary Ann Mack.

Others in attendance were Tim Dargan, Chief Carl Scott, Mike Lloyd, and Elijha Enoch-Smith. Jannie Lathan and Doug Poston participated virtually via zoom.

A motion was made by Councilwoman Lee that the agenda be accepted. Councilwoman Mack seconded the motion. The motion was carried unanimously.

A motion was made by Councilwoman Bradley to accept the minutes from the August 9, 2021, Lamar Town Council Meeting as read. Councilman Cook seconded the motion. The motion was carried unanimously.

Jannie Lathan of Lathan Consulting Corporation reported that she spoke with John Reynolds (Davis & Floyd), and he confirmed that the survey has been completed. He also added that they are in the preliminary design stage of the Zion Pump Station. Ms. Lathan said that Davis and Floyd will provide an update to the Town every two to three weeks.

Doug Poston of Douglas R. Poston, Jr. CPA gave the following financial report:

General Fund:

Receipts - \$134,331.44, Disbursements - \$80,008.72 (Including \$25,133.72 transfer to Utility Fund),  
Increase in cash - \$54,322.72, Ending cash balance - \$124,684.67

Utility Fund:

Receipts - \$54,938.65, Disbursements - \$80,544.99, Decrease in cash -\$25,606.34,  
Ending cash balance - \$82,675.81 (\$14,665.77 available for operations; remainder is grant funds)

Mayor McPherson asked Mr. Poston and Councilwoman Mack to look at delinquent outstanding invoices to see if they can be paid with the ARPA funds. Councilwoman Mack said that the funds must be used for specific purposes and said that the council should be cautious about how much is spent toward water & sewer.

Councilwoman Bradley and Councilman Cook asked Mr. Poston about "Fixed Asset Additions" in the amount of \$20,000. Mr. Poston responded that the check for \$20,000 has been written, but according to Mr. Dargan, the vendor has not provided the Town with all the necessary documents to facilitate the check being released. This check was written from the "restricted for grants" account.

Mayor McPherson discussed the Town of Lamar Fiscal Year 2020 Audit. She has engaged the accounting firm of Hamilton, McKinney, and Moss of Columbia, South Carolina to conduct the audit. Mayor McPherson has

requested that they complete the audit within 60 days and has directed all Town of Lamar staff to provide any documents the auditors request within 48 hours.

Councilwoman Mack asked if the auditors gave a projected starting date and what would be the process for gathering documents. Mayor McPherson replied that once she signs the contract the auditors would start on September 15, 2021. She also said that the auditors would provide a list of the requested documents and the Town's staff must provide those documents as soon as possible. Mayor McPherson expects the 2020 audit to go much smoother than the 2019 audit.

Councilwoman Mack gave an update on the Town of Lamar progress towards becoming compliant with the South Carolina Business License Standardization Act. She pointed out that step one has been completed (the Town has until January 2022 to complete all require steps), which was notifying the business owners of the new business license year. The Town of Lamar business license year currently runs from September 1 of the current year – August 31 of the following year. The new business license for the entire state of South Carolina will run from May 1 of the current year (beginning in 2022) – April 31 of the following year.

Councilwoman Mack said that the business license for businesses in Lamar for 2021-2022 would run from September 1, 2021 – April 31, 2022, and that the amount of the license would be prorated. Mr. Dargan interjected that although the business license year would be reduced, the amount of the business license would remain the same. He pointed out that the business license fee is determined by the gross revenue of a business from the previous year.

Mayor McPherson wants the Town to meet with or contact all business owners in Lamar to explain how the new Business License Law works. She wants to see how the Town can help the businesses and how the businesses can help the Town. Councilwoman Mack reiterated that this change is not an option, but a law.

Councilwoman Mack read the American Rescue Plan Act Resolution. Councilwoman Bradley made a motion to adopt the resolution. Councilman Cook seconded the motion. The motion was carried unanimously.

The Public Works Report was given by Mike Lloyd. Mr. Lloyd reported that there was a 51.77 % water loss for the month of August; this was in large part due to two separate water leaks on Pearl Street near the old Spaulding Elementary School. He also pointed out that the SCADA unit that controls the Grooms Center water tank was giving faulty readings which made the valve remain open longer than it should have been resulting in getting additional water from Darlington County Water and Sewer Authority. Joe Butler of Butler Electric was notified today about the SCADA unit.

Mr. Lloyd said that he has been analyzing the cost for parts for a water and sewer tap; he believes that the Town is losing money on these projects and should increase the charge to at least \$700. He also recommended that the Town charge a service charge for installing water and sewer taps. He will discuss this later with Mr. Dargan.

Mr. Lloyd said that there should be a sewer cleanout installed at the road going back into the Town's sewer line. There should also be a mandate that the citizens put a sewer cleanout at their residence so that they can route the sewer back to the street. He suggested that in the past, the citizens had to contact a plumber to check their sewer before the Town would go out to that resident...he thinks that the Town should reinstate that practice. Mayor McPherson asked Mr. Lloyd to submit a written report.

Councilwoman Bradley asked Mr. Lloyd who does the repair work when there is a leak in town. Mr. Lloyd replied that Micheal McDonald and the public works staff handle most of the repairs during working hours; but if there is an issue that they cannot fix, or if it's after hours, the Town contacts Kirk Rouse. Councilwoman Bradley suggests that it may be more cost-effective to locate an alternative plumber if a leak goes unrepaired for a significant length of time. Mr. Lloyd replied that part of the problem was due to shortage of supplies from the local vendors, and the ongoing problem of the Town's backhoe malfunctioning.

Mr. Dargan pointed out that when there are multiple leaks, the Town attempts to fix them as they come up, but for safety reason and financial reasons, the most serious leaks must be repaired as soon as possible.

Mr. Lloyd said that when DCWSA has a break in Lamar, it costs the town to replenish the water tanks. Mr. Dargan is going to address this issue with Frank Hough (DCWSA).

Mayor McPherson says that she wants a paper trail to document reports of leaks, repair of leaks, and delays in repairing leak. This documentation would benefit the Town when it applies for financial assistance.

Chief Carl Scott gave an update on behalf of the Police Department. Chief Scott commended Citizens of Lamar for being vigilant and contacting the Police Department when there is suspicious activity in the neighborhood; he cited an example and asked the citizens to continue to send information and evidence o possible criminal activity. Chief Scott said that the Terrence Carraway 5K Run was very successful and asked everyone to pray for the families of fallen officers. He also said that the Lamar Neighborhood Watch meeting presented information on the "Open Carry Law".

Mayor McPherson asked Chief Scott about the search for another officer as well as the state of the officer who is on leave.

Councilwoman Lee read a statement and made a motion that the Lamar Town Council submit a written communication to the Darlington County Council stating that the Town of Lamar would resume code enforcement in the Town of Lamar. Councilwoman Cook seconded the motion. The motion carried unanimously.

Mr. Dargan gave all council members a copy of a propose "Grease Ordinance" by way of information.

Mayor McPherson gave an update on covid-19 and the precautions that we all should continue to take. She recommended that all Town Staff consider getting vaccinated if they have not done so already.

Mr. Dargan gave an update on past and future events: He thanked and congratulated the organizers of the Health and Wellness event and Michelle Lloyd in winning Teacher of the Year for Darlington County. Mr. Dargan also discussed the upcoming Harvest Hope food giveaway sponsored by Bethany Baptist Church, Brandon Pinkard's school supply giveaway, and the upcoming elections for the Town of Lamar.

Councilwoman Bradley made a motion that the Lamar Town Council meeting be adjourned. Councilwoman Lee seconded the motion. The motion carried unanimously. Mayor McPherson adjourned the council meeting at 7:32 pm.

Timothy L. Dargan, Administrative Manager