

Lamar Town Council Meeting Minutes
October 11, 2021

The Lamar Town Council Meeting was called to order by Mayor Darnell Byrd-McPherson at 6:15 PM.

Invocation was given by Deacon Tim Dargan.

Mayor McPherson declared all council members present. 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 were not in attendance.

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 Mack to accept the minutes from the September 13, 2021, Lamar Town Council Meeting as read. Councilwoman Bradley seconded the motion. The motion was carried unanimously.

Doug Poston of Douglas R. Poston, Jr. CPA submitted a financial report in his absence:

General Fund:

Receipts - \$27,959.27, Disbursements - \$57,995.50, Decrease in cash - \$30,036.23, Ending cash balance - \$109,234.97

Utility Fund:

Receipts - \$40,410.11, Disbursements - \$50,270.13, Decrease in cash -\$9,860.62
Ending cash balance - \$72,709.98 (\$4,691.56 available for operations; remainder is grant funds)

Councilwoman Mack commented that the actual budget to date was very close percentagewise to the budgeted amount for each department for the 1st quarter. Councilman Cook pointed out that the numbers given on the report were for two months not three, therefore the council will have to access where the budget stands. Mayor McPherson reminded the council about the budget workshop and said that they should schedule a meeting to examine the 1st quarter.

Mayor McPherson stated that the Town of Lamar has enlisted the services of Hamilton, McKinney, and Moss of Columbia, South Carolina to conduct the Town's audit for fiscal year 2020. Mr. Foster McKinney has met with several members of staff (October 5, 2021) to lay out a "game plan" for the addressing the audit and he will be sending send a list of items that he will need to complete the audit.

Mr. Dargan gave an update on the Business License Standardization Law. He stated that the Town has complete the first step of notifying merchants about the new law and the new business license date. He has uncovered several issues that have prevented the Town from completing the second step which is the rebalancing process. He is working with Charlie Barrineau of MASC and others to find a remedy for this situation.

Councilwoman Mack commented that the Town has not properly administered the business license over the last several years because it relied on merchant's statements instead of verifying their revenue. She added that local merchants have not been paying the correct amount and that there may have to be adjustments made to compensate for the shortage.

Mr. Dargan stated that the Town bears some of the responsibility by not having procedures and protocols in place to consistently process the business licenses. This will be handled properly going forward.

Mayor McPherson said that the addition of a Town Administrator and having written procedures will help to ensure that there is accountability and protocols going forward. She said that this will also help during the times of transition in the future.

Mr. Dargan gave an update on code enforcements. He stated that the Town of Lamar has resume code enforcement for the Town of Lamar. He reiterated that there must be an increase in cost for permits and related items to offset the cost of paying a code enforcer for the Town. Mr. Dargan stated that he and Councilwoman Lee met with Charles Stewart (County Administrator) and Terri Cribb (Development Service Supervisor) to get a list of active and/or pending permits from Lamar citizens.

Mr. Dargan told council that he was informed that there appears to be ordinances that were updated but were not properly updated in the Code of Ordinance book or filed by the Town Clerk. This situation will be followed up and addressed accordingly.

Mayor McPherson stated that those were some of the reasons that the Town gave code enforcements to the County. She said that Chief Scott didn't have the time or qualifications to conduct code enforcements. The Town would have to contract with an outside source.

Councilwoman asked if the ordinances would have to be updated or would they be enforced as they are currently written. Mr. Dargan said that they would have to be reviewed and some of them would probably have to be updated. He also reminded council that a planning commission and a board of zoning appeal must be in place. Councilwoman Bradley asked if these boards were already in place. Mayor McPherson said that they were not but would have to be put in place soon. Councilwoman Lee said that each member of the board can only serve for a certain number of years.

Mike Lloyd gave a report for the Public Works Department:

- 1) September water loss was 28.8 % or 1.3 million gallons of water; however, it's the lowest water loss percentage since April (6 months)
- 2) There are three residential service lines leak that the Public Works Department on tomorrow (Tuesday, October 12, 2021)
- 3) There will be a DHEC water inspection on Tuesday, October 19, 2021. All records have been updated and the team is ready for the inspection.
- 4) There must be an increase in cost to make water and sewer tap. At current cost, the Town is losing money.
- 5) Mr. Lloyd is working on a master part list for frequently used parts. Will get with Tim Dargan and forward the list to council for approval.
- 6) The Town has been purchasing less water from Darlington County Water & Sewer Authority.

Chief Carl Scott gave a report for the Lamar Police Department:

- 1) Thanked Darlington County Chairman Bobby Hudson, Darlington County Administrator Charles Stewart, Darlington County Council, and the Darlington County Sheriff's Department for their Donation of a 2017 Ford Explorer to the Lamar Police Department.
- 2) Advised Lamar citizens to contact Animal Control when they witness stray animals in or around town. He reminded dog owners to have collars, tags, and leash on their dogs when they are in town.
- 3) The Town of Lamar observed Treat or Treat on October 30th from 4:00 pm – 7:00 pm. Trunk or Treat will be observed on Railroad Avenue during these same hours. No costume masks will be allowed in businesses – only covid-19 masks.
- 4) National Night Out was observed on the first Tuesday of the month (October 5).

Mayor McPherson said that all upcoming events should be placed on the Town's community calendar so that the citizen can prepare for the events in advance.

Mr. Dargan gave an update on past and future events:

He thanked Bethany Baptist Church, Harvest Hope, the Town of Lamar, and all the volunteers to participated in the September 24 food giveaway.

Mr. Dargan highlighted all the Trick or Treat activities planned for the month of October, Christmas on main, and the upcoming local elections. He also mentioned two new facilities - Erwin's Auto and Towing and Lamar's Adult Education.

Council went into Executive Session to discuss personnel matters [Section 30-1-70(A) (1)].

At the conclusion of Executive Session, Councilwoman Bradley made a motion that the Lamar Town Council meeting be adjourned. Councilwoman Mack seconded the motion. The motion carried unanimously. Mayor McPherson adjourned the council meeting at 7:41 pm.

Timothy L. Dargan, Administrative Manager