

Lamar Town Council Meeting Minutes
January 11, 2021

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

Invocation was given by Deacon Tim Dargan.

Roll call was taken by Mayor McPherson. Mayor McPherson was the lone Council Member in attendance. Councilwoman Angele White-Bradley and Councilwoman Inez B. Lee participated remotely via Zoom call. Councilwoman Mary Ann Mack was not in attendance.

Others in attendance were Tim Dargan and Chief Carl Scott. Jannie Lathan, Doug Poston, and William Hancock participated remotely via Zoom.

Mayor McPherson added Public Works update by Councilwoman Bradley. A motion was made by Councilwoman Bradley that the agenda be accepted. Councilwoman Lee seconded the motion. The motion was carried unanimously.

A motion was made by Councilwoman Bradley to accept the minutes from the December 14, 2020 Lamar Town Council Meeting, Councilwoman Lee seconded the motion. The motion was carried unanimously.

Jannie Lathan of Lathan Consulting gave an update on the Zion Pump Station Project and the close out on the wastewater treatment plant requirements:

- The Zion Pump Station Project design is 100 % complete and on schedule to be put up for bid near the end of next month (February) or early March.
- The closeout work on the wastewater treatment plant upgrades is essentially done, but the Town is waiting on engineering firm Davis & Brown to provide necessary closeout requirements.

Councilwoman Bradley asked if the Town is facing penalties from DHEC due to the delayed closeout documents. Ms. Lathan commented that DHEC has fined the Town because of the delays.

Mayor McPherson remarked that we should forward the documents requirements to the Town's attorney (Gene Warr). Ms. Lathan replied that Mr. Warr has been copied on the correspondences relating to these closeout requirements.

Councilwoman Bradley gave an update from the Public Works Department:

- The wastewater plant manager, Don Johnson, reported that there has been an overflow of the sewer pond and that it has been overflowing for about 5 days. Mr. Johnson is going to fill out the necessary paperwork and contact DHEC about the situation prior the DHEC site visit this week. The plan is to get a truck to pump the pond and dispose in a nearby river.
- The excessive rain has caused an overload on the pumps at the station.

Mayor McPherson mentioned that the Town is in negotiation with Mike Lloyd to come aboard in a management capacity for the water and sewer division of Public Works. Mr. Lloyd brings a wealth of knowledge and experience in this area and would be a great asset to the Town.

Mayor McPherson asked that we all pray for Michael McDonald, Public Works Manager, as he continues to recover from his recent illness.

Mayor McPherson informed the citizens of Lamar that the water bills went out late for the month of January, therefore all customers would be granted a one-week extension (January 18) to pay their water bills without incurring a penalty.

Chief Carl Scott gave the Police Department Report:

- The Lamar Police Department is currently accepting applicants for an open position in the department. Interested parties can fill out an application online or they can drop the application off at the Police Department.
- Lamar Municipal Court will be closed until April 19 due to an order from the Supreme Court.
- The Lamar Neighborhood Watch will have their next meeting on February 4, 2021.

Mayor McPherson asked Chief Scott to explain the procedure for those who had court dates or those wanted to pay their fines.

Chief Scott responded that the individuals could pay their fines online or bring a money order to the Police Department. He also stated the judge will suspend all court case pending for the months of January, February, and March until the April 19, 2021.

Town of Lamar Financial Report - Doug Poston of Douglas R Poston Jr. CPA:

- The General Fund had a decrease in cash of \$3800.
- The Utility Fund had a decrease of in cash of \$8800.
Mr. Poston pointed out that the decrease in the utility fund was due to some very large water bills incurred by the Town. The Town made a \$20, 000 water payment, but it did not include all that was owed.
- The expenditures from July 2020 to the current date budget to actual for each department:
Administrative - \$103,000, Police Department - \$80,000, and Water & Sewer - \$205,000

Mayor McPherson stated that there appears to be a lot of water that is being charged to the Town that the Town is not able to recoup. She theorized that there must be an issue with the calculations, the readings, leaks, or some other issue. Mike Lloyd informed Mr. Dargan that the Town was losing approximately 34 % in revenue due to water loss monthly.

Mayor McPherson suggested that the Town of Lamar budget be amended to capture categories that funds were not allocated for. She said that there would be a work session before the next Lamar Town Council Meeting to address this issue.

Mayor McPherson stated that the Town of Lamar's 2019 audit fell through the cracks and that the 2020 audit is now due. As a result, the Town has been looking to secure an audit firm that handles municipal audits. The Mayor spoke to the City Manager (Howard Garland) of the City of Darlington and he highly

recommended that the Town of Lamar use the audit firm that they are currently using (The Brittingham Group, LLP)

William Hancock gave the following report:

- Mr. Hancock spoke to Howard Garland (City of Darlington Manager) on last week who informed him that the Town of Lamar was looking for an audit firm to get the Town's audit reporting current.
- Mr. Hancock reached out to the SC State Treasurer's office to see if the state was holding any of the Town's fund; as of last Friday, they were holding \$62,000. According to state law, the state must start holding funds after the 13th month after the fiscal year ends.
- Mr. Hancock spoke to the State Treasurer personally to see if some of the Town's funds can be released prior to the 2019 audit being completed; the treasurer will check and get back with him later.
- If the Town of Lamar retains the services of Mr. Hancock's firm (The Brittingham Group), he will go to the State Treasurer on behalf of the Town to secure the release of the withheld funds. He will also get the 2019 audit complete as soon as possible, schedule the 2020 audit, and then schedule the 2021 audit so we can become and remain good municipal citizens of the state.

Mayor McPherson took full responsibility for the 2019 audit not being conducted in time. She said that the audit was not on a working calendar and that she was recently informed that the individual that handled Lamar's audits no longer works at the firm that conducts Town's audit.

Mayor McPherson relayed that Mr. Hancock said that even though it is tax season, their firm can begin working with the Town immediately. She recommended that the Town Council moved forward with hiring Mr. Hancock's firm. Mayor McPherson stated that the Town will have to sign an engagement letter for the 2019 audit and would like to sign the engagement letter for the 2020 audit as well. Mr. Hancock suggested that the best practice would be to sign one engagement letter at a time. Mayor McPherson asked Mr. Hancock to contact Mr. Poston as soon as possible.

Mr. Hancock asked, "Is Lamar a Town or City"? Councilwoman Bradley remarked that the charter states that Lamar is a Town. Mr. Poston added that he has seen the Town of Lamar and the City of Lamar on different correspondence; however, the bank statements list Town of Lamar. Town of Lamar will be the name of record.

Mayor McPherson reminded the Citizens of Lamar about Mask Ordinance that went into effect on January 4, 2021 and said that more information about the ordinance can be found on the Town's Facebook page and website. She also cited data that she received from CareSouth that stated 17% of Lamar's population has tested positive for covid-19. Mayor McPherson implored all citizens to wear masks, practice social distancing, and sanitize (wash hands).

Mayor McPherson stated that the Town is trying to align with state regulation as far as business license applications are concerned; In the meantime, interested parties can access and pay for their business licenses online. She mentioned that tickets and bills can be paid online as well.

Councilwoman Bradley wanted to discuss reaching a conclusion to the conversations that the council has been having concerning Town Hall being opened more than two days a week.

She that she understood that the women in the Town Hall Office did not want to work extended hours and days because they were fearful of being alone in the building; however, she has been contacted multiple times by citizens and have had discussions with staff members about the need to have Town Hall open at least 4 days a week. Councilwoman said that we should find ways to make the workers feel safer and perhaps split their days to cover the 4-day work week.

Mayor McPherson responded that it is pretty much settled that there will be a 4-day work week. She also said that the office is not closed because the workers are fearful of being alone, but it is closed due to the coronavirus pandemic. Mayor McPherson wanted to know what the pressing business transactions are that would necessitate citizens needing to enter the actual building. She cited examples of public buildings that are open but are not allowing the public to enter the building.

Mayor McPherson said that someone will be hired to make sure that the office is “manned” on the 4 days that Town Hall is opened. She suggested that one of the biggest concerns from the citizens is there being someone to answer the telephone, check messages, and return telephone calls. Speaking of the telephone, Mayor McPherson said that the phone system the Town currently has is old and antiquated; upgrading the telephone system will be the next project.

Mayor McPherson discussed bringing on a retiree who has banking experience who may be able to help process water bills. The mayor asked the water clerk to compose a detail list of duties and responsibilities so that the Town can determine what roles someone else would have to play in terms of making sure that we are operating efficiently. Mayor McPherson said the Council was still waiting on Tim Dargan to decide if was going to work for the Town full time and was hopeful that he would. She pointed out that Mr. Dargan was already sharing some of the roles of the Town Clerk and other duties.

Councilwoman Bradley suggested that answering the phone is one thing, being knowledgeable enough to provide a helpful answer is another. She gave several examples that would require someone with knowledge of and access to certain information to be available.

Mayor McPherson responded that Town Council is already working on this and that it is the goal of the council to have something in place by the beginning of February. She asked that anyone interested in working for the Town part-time should fill out an online application.

Tim Dargan gave an overview of recent events (Harvest Hope Mobile Food Pantry and First Responders Christmas Parade) and upcoming events (CareSouth Mobile Schedule, Memorial for deceased Lamar citizens, and Lamar Town Council Special Election).

Mayor McPherson spoke about the upcoming election. She stated that the election was advertised in the News and Press, the Town’s newsletter, the Town’s website, and the Town’s Facebook page. She mentioned that we must all work together for the good of the Town and that volunteers are very viable to that success. Mayor McPherson listed some of the achievements that have occurred under this administration including the website, Facebook page, direct deposits, etc.

A motion was made by Councilwoman Bradley to adjourn the Lamar Town Council Meeting. The motion was seconded by Councilwoman Lee. Mayor McPherson adjourned the meeting at 7:07 pm.

Timothy L. Dargan, Administrative Support

Lamar Town Council Meeting Minutes
February 8, 2021

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 introduced and welcomed Tyler Cook as a new member of the Lamar Town Council. Tim Dargan introduced former Councilman Mike Lloyd, Paul Corker, and Davey Wadlington as members of the Public Works Department. Chief Scott introduced Officer Daniel Barnett as a part time member of the Lamar Police Department.

Roll call was taken by Mayor McPherson. Council Members in attendance were Mayor McPherson, Councilwoman Inez B. Lee, and Councilman Tyler Cook. Councilwoman Angele White-Bradley and participated remotely via Zoom call. Councilwoman Mary Ann Mack was not in attendance.

Others in attendance were Tim Dargan, Chief Carl Scott, and Mike Lloyd. Jannie Lathan and Doug Poston participated remotely via Zoom.

A motion was made by Councilwoman Bradley that the agenda be accepted. Councilman Cook seconded the motion. The motion was carried unanimously.

A motion was made by Councilwoman Bradley to accept the minutes from the January 11, 2021, Lamar Town Council Meeting as read. Councilman Cook seconded the motion. The motion was carried unanimously.

Report from Jannie Lathan of Lathan Consulting Corporation:

- Received notification today that SERCAP is about 90 % complete with the GIS mapping for the Town's sanitary sewer system.
- Still waiting on Davis & Brown to submit the final request for payment so that the Town can make the payment to RWF Construction.
- Glenn Kirven sent an email stating that Davis & Brown are getting ready to install the floor meter (Zion pump station). Hopefully, the flow meter will be installed, and the Town can close out the related contract.
- Working with SERCAP to put in the grant application for the State Revolving Fund to secure funding to replace the Railroad pump station.
- Received bid to perform repair work at the Railroad pump station; bid came in as a lump sum, the Town is requesting a more detailed cost estimate before moving forward.

Mayor McPherson asked Ms. Lathan the following questions:

What does the acronym SERCAP stand for? Ms. Lathan stated that the acronym stood for Southeast Rural Community Assistant Project.

Did RWF submit the repair estimate? Ms. Lathan replied that Evans Paving submitted the estimate.

Has the flow meter been installed? Ms. Lathan suggested that someone from town should verify whether the meter has been installed.

Public Works Department Report:

Councilwoman Lee stated that the February water bills were being mail out late due to several ill staff members; because of this, the due date for paying the water bill will be extended from the 10th to the 20th. She also said that that due date will be to the 20th going forward.

Mike Lloyd Water Report:

January 2021 - Daily water purchased 145, 887 gallons [Monthly water purchased 4,522,497 gallons]

2020 Year in Review:

Gallons of water Purchased.....37,601,220. (39,090,090)

Gallons of Water Sold.....26,061,629. (26,061,629)

Gallons used During Hydrant Flushing.....238,660. (238,660)

Unaccounted for Gallons.....11,300,931. (12,789,801)

Average Percentage Loss.....35 to 40% (35 to 42%)

Average Daily Loss (Gallons).....30 to 40,000 (30 to 40,000)

What the numbers would have been if there had been no problems with the 3” water meter and no major water loss during the months of January – May 2020 and the month of August 2020.

Mayor McPherson asked Mr. Lloyd what some of the reasons for the water and/or revenue loss were and what were his recommendations for addressing them. She wanted to know what he would do first.

Mr. Lloyd replied that his first action would be to look at the Water Department billing register for customers and compare the previous reading with the current reading. If both readings are the same, it would probably indicate that the water meter has stopped. In cases such as this, the Town would charge the customer a minimum bill. At some point, the Town should physically check the location that show the same reading and (1) change the faulty water meters, and (2) see if someone is residing in that location.

Mr. Lloyd said that he has discovered service line leaks in various locations in the Town; when he locates them, he contacts someone (Kirk Rouse) to repair the line and stop the leak. He thinks that all old water meters should be replaced. The new meters will raise the cost to the customers.

Mayor McPherson said that she would like to see written operating procedures so that when new staff members come in, they will have some guidelines to follow and there should be meetings with current staff and new employees to bring them up to speed on the process.

The mayor asked if there were any new meters in stock. Mr. Lloyd said that he was sure there were a few, but Councilwoman Lee would have more information. He also talked about updating the current water meter system to a system that could read the meters from 50 – 75 feet away, be download into a porting system at Town Hall within several hours; This would save manpower hours and resources by freeing up the person reading the water meters and the water clerk.

The mayor remarked that we should look at cross training when it comes to reading the water meters and that we should get an estimate on the new system.

Councilman Cook asked if the water meters that are in stock are already equipped with the read system technology. Mr. Lloyd said that they are not.

Councilwoman Bradley commented that there was an effort several years ago to investigate the cost and feasibility of purchasing the read water meters and that Ms. Jannie Lathan was going to try to get a grant to secure them. Mr. Lloyd replied that he recalled those efforts and think that the cost was around \$150 per/meter at the time.

Chief Carl Scott Police Department Report:

- Will receive safety equipment that was donated from the National Sherriff's Association.
- Received two cars that were donated from the Town of Bethune. (Thanks to Chief Ward, Mayor, and Town Council)
- Received the Palmetto Pride Trash Grant (Thanks to Ms. Jannie Lathan and Councilwoman Inez Lee)
- Asking for more volunteers for the Neighborhood Watch Program

Doug Poston – Financial Report

Mr. Poston was unable to participate due to the low volume on his device. Mayor McPherson read the reports in his absence.

- Mayor McPherson noted that there were several late outstanding invoices that need to be addressed.
- Mayor McPherson wants Mr. Poston to match the actual invoices with actual payments.
- The Grant funds listed on the bank balances are not operating money, they are for specific water projects. The mayor wants these items separated going forward.
- The mayor noted that funds had to be transferred from the Administrative Account to the Utility Account.
- The budgeted amount are not actual dollars; they are projected. They Mayor wants the Town to go back and look at hard dollars to make a true budget.
- Loss revenue with Mozingo Liquors closing and the Public Schools being closed for a time. Need to come up with other sources of revenue (Bike Shop, Pet Grooming Service, etc.)
- List all business on the Town's website and check to see if business license fees are current.
- Mayor McPherson spoke about the new restaurant "Little Taste of Cajun".

Mayor Darnell Byrd McPherson – Signatory for Bank Accounts

- The former Mayor Pro Tem, Lang Howell, was the secondary signature on the Town of Lamar Bank Accounts.
- Councilwoman Lee made a motion that current Mayor Pro Tem, Councilwoman Angele Bradley, be the secondary signature on the Town of Lamar bank accounts. Councilman Cook Seconded the motion. Motion passed unanimously.

Carolina Bank Account Numbers:

Town of Lamar Administrative Account – 0103000153
Town of Lamar Water Account - 0103000161
Town of Lamar Withholding Account - 0100144467

Name of new signer: Angele White Bradley

Remaining signer: Darnell Byrd McPherson

Name of signer to remove: C. Lang Howell

Endorse checks and orders for the payment or otherwise withdrawal or transfer funds on deposit with the Financial Institution.

Name of Control Person: Timothy L. Dargan, Administrative Manager

- Jannie Lathan Pointed out that the RIA Grant Account needs two primary signatures. Councilman Cook volunteered to be the second signatory.

Deacon Dargan gave an update on the Town's partnership with Save the Children and Lee County First Step Food Giveaway Program and commented on the positive feedback the Town received from the citizens concerning the 2020 Memorial for deceased members from the Town of Lamar. He also spoke about the upcoming Covid-19 testing and vaccination schedules.

Mayor McPherson reminded everyone that the Town has loss several community members to coronavirus and that the Town is praying for their loved ones.

Councilwoman Lee made a motion that the Lamar Town Council Meeting be adjourned. Councilman Cook Seconded the motion. Mayor McPherson adjourned the meeting at 7:09 pm.

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Invocation was given by Deacon Tim Dargan.

Mayor McPherson thanked Tim Dargan for accepting his new role as Administrative Manager for the Town of Lamar.

Roll call was taken by Mayor McPherson. Council members in attendance were Mayor McPherson, Councilman Tyler Cook, and Councilwoman Inez B. Lee. Councilwoman Angele White-Bradley and Councilwoman Mary Ann Mack participated remotely via zoom.

Others in attendance were Tim Dargan, Chief Carl Scott, and Mike Lloyd. Jannie Lathan, Doug Poston, William Hancock, Kelvin Durant, Dr. Scott Allen, Victoria Coleman, and Kristine Neal participated remotely via zoom.

A motion was made by Councilwoman Bradley to accept the agenda. Councilman Cook seconded the motion. The motion was carried unanimously.

A motion was made by Councilwoman Mack to accept the minutes from the February 8 Lamar Town Council Meeting. Councilwoman Bradley seconded the motion. The motion carried was carried unanimously.

Report from Jannie Lathan of Lathan Consulting:

- 1) Ms. Lathan and Tim Dargan continue to work with David White of SERCAP to pull together the grant application for upgrading the Railroad pump station. The application is due a week from today (March 15).
- 2) Ms. Lathan is still waiting on David & Brown to submit the final request for payment so that the Town may be able to make the final payment to RWF Construction and close out the work that RWF has completed for improvement with the wastewater treatment plant.
- 3) Ms. Lathan receive several RFPs from the engineering firm that is working on improvement on Zion Road. She will be forwarding the RFPs to Mayor McPherson for final review and approval on tomorrow.

Mayor McPherson voiced her concern about the outstanding invoice for Davis & Brown. She said that she would place a call with Davis & Brown on tomorrow to see what she can find out.

Mayor McPherson said that she was excited about the work that Mr. White and SERCAP has been doing for the Town at Railroad, including the visit by several members of the SERCAP Team on last week.

Report from the Department of Public Works:

Councilwoman Inez B. Lee thanked all the agencies that are helping the Town of Lamar address it issues; she deferred to Mike Lloyd and Chief Carl Scott for the discussion about water loss and the Department of Transportation.

Mike Lloyd

- The January water loss is still over one third percent or 37.353 percent gallon a day. The Town was losing an average of 36,865 gallons average per day. The next goal is to compute the dollar amount for the percentage of water loss by next Town Council Meeting.
- The numbers were very high from the February purchase of water from Darlington County Water and Sewer Authority. Mr. Lloyd discovered that one of the two elevated tanks had risen above the normal level of 22 -23

feet; both tanks should be at the same level. He turned the valve off several times a day so that should help the level return to normal in within the next three or four days.

- Mr. Lloyd pinpointed a few more water leaks that will also help with the water loss.

Councilman Cook asked about the faulty water meters and if they had been replaced.

- Mr. Lloyd replied that they have not been replaced to his knowledge. The billing register copy was not clear enough to read the information that was needed, but he has identified 35 – 50 meters that are questionable. Once we get a list compiled, we will check and verify whether the meters have stopped. Mr. Lloyd told Mayor McPherson that there are approximately 20 - 25 water meters in stock inventory.

Chief Carl Scott

- Department of Transportation came to Lamar on February 25 and 26 to clean out some of the storm drains with a rented vacuum truck. DOT located a broken pipe on Pearl Street for which they place a work order to return and fix the pipe later.
- DOT Representative Justin Jackson emailed paperwork to Chief Scott to forward to Councilwoman Lee that will give DOT easement to clean out ditches that have been prone to flooding. The citizens must sign these documents and return them to DOT prior to the ditches being cleaned.

Mayor McPherson stated that the ditches in the problem areas have been a real sore spot and that there have been a lot of complaints about that issue. She is very grateful to DOT for helping the Town.

Report from Chief Carl Scott of the Lamar Police Department:

- The Neighborhood Watch membership has grown and continue to grow every meeting. The Last meeting focused on being prepared and leaning on your neighbor. Chief Scott pointed out that this is a Neighborhood Watch Program and not a Crime Watch Program.
- Jerry Shull presented the signs for the Neighborhood Watch Program; the signs have already sold out. More signs will be ordered and can be purchased for \$20 each; please see Jerry Shull or Kelly to place an order. Chief Scott is meeting with DOT at 11:30 am tomorrow to discuss the criteria for proper placement of the signs.
- The Lamar Police Department has an opening for two fulltime Police Officers. Chief Scott encouraged the citizens to help find officers to help keep our town safe. He stated that Lamar is a nice, quiet town with a lot of history; we need people who care about our town to help keep it safe.

Councilman Cook asked when the next Neighborhood Watch Meeting will be held. He added that he attended the last meeting, and that the information was useful for everyone. He encouraged his fellow council members to attend some of the future meetings. Chief Scott answered that the next meeting would be held on the first Thursday in April (8th).

- Chief Scott said that the Police Department is grateful to have received the Palmetto Pride Grant and have begun looking at the equipment that was outlined in the grant such as digital cameras and crime scene equipment. He wants to stay within the guidelines of the grant.
- Trash Clean Up Day for the Town will be March 27 but will run through April 2. Chief Scott is asking all resident that live in town to clean from their front door to the streets. He is asking all other volunteers to meet at Town Hall at 9:00 am on Saturday, March 27 to receive supplies and instructions for which street they will be assigned to clean. They will be drinks and lunch provided at the end of the clean-up.
- Amnesty Week will be from March 15 through March 19. This is a time when you can contact the SCDMV to see if you are eligible to have your license reinstated. More information is available on the Town's website.

- On March 31, The Darlington County Sherriff Department will be giving hams to Senior Citizens aged 60 and above. You can pick up the ham from the Sherriff Department between the hours of 11:00 am – 1:00 pm, and 4:00 pm – 6:00 pm; they will also be delivering hams to seniors who do not come by the Sherriff's Department.

Mayor McPherson reiterated that citizens visit the Town's website for information about the Town's events. She thinks that the Amnesty Program is good for the citizens.

Financial Report from Doug Poston of Douglas R. Poston Jr. CPA:

- General Fund Cash Receipts (\$10,707.65) – Expenditures ((\$41,934.79) - Decrease in Cash (\$31, 227.14) [Transferred \$9,514.83 to the Utility Fund]
- Utility Fund Cash Receipts (\$34,719.29) – Expenditures (\$48,120.28) – Decrease in Cash (\$13, 400.99) [Received a Transfer of \$9,514.83 from the General Fund]
- Vast majority of the balance in the Utility Fund is allocated to designated funds and grants.
- Mr. Poston told Mayor McPherson that apart from a few items, he has uploaded all the information that he could to Mr. Hancock (The Brittingham Group, LLP) for the 2018-2019 Audit.

Audit Report from William Hancock of The Brittingham Group, LLP:

- Gave a list of some of the documents that the Town will have to provide for Fiscal Year 2018-2019 (including Police tickets, water & sewer customers, retirement quarterly report, state fees and fines, debt and lease agreements, minutes of meetings, etc.).
- Previous auditor needs to submit several more documents.
- Will begin pulling documents the end of March- early April, should have a report ready by the end of April 2021.
- Will begin working on the audit for Fiscal Year 2019-2020 in June 2021.
- Will begin working on the audit for Fiscal Year 2020-2021 between July through the end of 2021. Should be ready by Christmas of 2021. Going forward the Town of Lamar will be on the fall calendar with the Brittingham Group and the audits will be delivered by Christmas of every year.

Standard Business License – Councilwoman Angele White-Bradley

Councilwoman Bradley listed the seven steps for Business License Standardization. Must be complete by January 2022:

1. Be sure your license year runs from May 1 to April 30.
2. Review your business license data for accuracy.
3. Rebalance and adjust rates to prevent a windfall or loss.
4. Adopt the standardized class schedule provided by the Association.
5. Repeal your business license ordinance and replace it with the Association's model ordinance.
6. Set up an online portal account to accept business license payments.
7. Notify stakeholders about the changes.

Mayor McPherson asked if the portal would be handled by the state and if the amount of the license was listed.

Councilwoman Bradley stated that the State will receive the payment and notify the Town that someone wants to start a business. The amount of the license has not been listed.is not listed.

Egg Scramble Jamboree – Councilwoman Angele White-Bradley:

- The Egg Scramble Jamboree Committee has decided to postpone the 2021 Egg Scramble Jamboree until the fall: possibly the month of September.
- A link for the Egg Scramble Jamboree will be added to the Town’s website.

A New You Counseling Center – Kelvin Durant, LPC, LAC, NCC

- Kelvin Durant plans to open another branch of “A New You Counseling Center” in Lamar, SC in June 2021; he currently has an office located in Florence, SC.
- Mr. Durant has been counseling for over 10 years and has been operating his own practice for over two years.

Opening of Town Hall for Public Meeting – Councilman Tyler Cook

Councilman Tyler Cook broached the subject of re-opening Town Hall for citizens to attend in-person Town Council Meetings. He stated that he has been approached by several citizens who have concerns about accessing Town Council Meetings; either they do not use Facebook, or they do not have internet access. Councilman Cook said that some citizens just prefer to attend the meetings in person and that as a Republic, we [Town] should give the citizens access that is most convenient to them. He referenced the technical glitches that occurred in these meeting and previous meetings.

Councilman Cook mentioned that in addition to following safety protocols; the vaccine rollout and the decline of new cases in our area should be considered in deciding if we should open the council meeting to the public. He then made a motion to re-open the Town Council Meetings to the public beginning with the April meeting. Councilman Cook asked council what they thought about this proposal.

Mayor McPherson asked Mr. Dargan if he had information on any nearby municipalities that were opening their council meeting to the public. Mr. Dargan replied that of the municipalities he checked with all of them were still having virtual Town Council Meetings. He also said that the safety of our citizens should be of paramount concern.

Councilwoman Mack agreed that the Town should do all it can to keep the citizens informed and encourage their participation; however, on a personal note she has been stricken by covid and think that we should ere on the side of caution. She interjected that local citizens have lost their lives to the covid-19 virus.

Mayor McPherson spoke on the seriousness of the covid-19 virus and mentioned several staff members who contacted the virus and are still suffering the side effects. She stated that although there have been improvements in Town Hall operations, there are things that must be improved upon including the telephone system. Mayor McPherson said that we should move towards opening Town Hall as soon as possible and that the Town is taking every step to be totally transparent. No formal vote was taken by the council on opening Town Hall.

Rescinding the Mask Ordinance – Councilman Tyler Cook

Councilman Tyler Cook revisited the Town of Lamar’s Mask Ordinance. He relayed that several citizens have questioned the need to have a formal mask ordinance considering that most establishments have their own regulations regarding mask wearing; his opinion is that the ordinance should, “Go sweetly into the night”. Councilman Cook thinks that the Lamar Police Department is doing a commendable job enforcing the ordinance without being too forceful. Most citizens have been conditioned and will wear masks regardless of the ordinance; he feels that as adults, citizens are responsible enough to decide about their own health. Councilman Cook offered, “Government that governs best, governs least”.

Councilwoman Mary Ann Mack said that her opinion is that as responsible members of the community, we should follow the recommendation of health officials like the CDC and DHEC instead of layman. The mask ordinance should remain in place.

Councilwoman Angele White- Bradley feels like we are on the upside of covid, but we have not made it to the top of the mountain yet. She said that more than anything, the town should show a concerted effort for the safety of our constituents. We should continue the mask ordinance until the CDC, or another Government body of science says otherwise.

Councilwoman Inez Lee stated that the mask ordinance is not just for us, but it is to protect others as well.

Councilman Cook added that if the ordinance remained in place, he would hope that the fine for not wearing a mask would be eliminated.

Councilwoman Mack responded by saying that the fines would serve as an incentive to encourage citizens to continue to wear masks.

Councilwoman Mack made a motion that the Town of Lamar Mask ordinance be extended for 60 days and kept in its current form. Councilwoman Bradley seconded the motion. The motion carried by a vote of 4 to 1.

Upcoming Events - Tim Dargan

Mr. Dargan gave an update on the following: Covid-19 testing and Vaccinations, Harvest Hope Food Pantry, Honor for Nobel Peace Prize Winner David Beasley, Text My Gov, and Zoom.

Mayor McPherson stated that the Town will encourage citizens to apply for assistance with the Darlington County Community Action Agency to help pay their delinquent water bills. She said that the Town will start pulling the water meters of citizens who are not paying their delinquent water bills.

Donate Life Proclamation – Mayor McPherson & Kristine Neal (Sharing Hope SC)

Kristine Neal, Director of communication for Sharing Hope SC, spoke about her organization and their role in organ and tissue donations from organ donors. She shared that April is “Donate Life” month and that they were honored that Lamar proclaimed April as Donate Life month in the Town of Lamar.

Mayor McPherson officially signed the “Donate Life” Proclamation.

Councilwoman Mack made a motion that the Lamar Town Council Meeting be adjourned. Councilwoman Bradley seconded the motion. Mayor McPherson adjourned the meeting at 7:57 pm.

Executive Session.

Timothy L Dargan, Administrative Manager

Lamar Town Council Meeting Minutes
April 12, 2021

Lamar Town Council Meeting was called to order by Mayor Darnell Byrd-McPherson at 6:21 PM.

Invocation was given by Deacon Tim Dargan.

Roll call was taken by Mayor McPherson. Council Members in attendance were Mayor McPherson, Councilwoman Inez B. Lee, and Councilman Tyler Cook. Councilwoman Angele White-Bradley and Councilwoman Mary Ann Mack participated remotely via Zoom call.

Others in attendance were Tim Dargan, Chief Carl Scott, and Mike Lloyd. Pamela Prince participated remotely via Zoom.

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

A motion was made by Councilwoman Mack to accept the minutes from the March 8, 2021 Lamar Town Council Meeting as read. Councilwoman Bradley seconded the motion. The motion was carried unanimously.

Jannie Lathan of Lathan Consulting Corporation was not present. Ms. Lathan's report was omitted.

Doug Poston of Doug R. Poston, Jr. CPA was not present. Mr. Poston provided the financial records as information.

Tim Dargan gave an update on the status of the Town of Lamar 2018-2019 financial audit being conducted by the Brittingham Group. Mr. Dargan said that the auditors were "turning over every stone" and he praised how meticulous, professional, and patient they have been. The auditors have gathered a lot of information thus far, but they are still going through the collection process. Mr. Dargan said the task has been tedious, but the Town will be the better for it at the conclusion of the audit.

Chief Carl Scott added that he spoke to the auditors about the implementation of E-Tickets. More information concerning E-Tickets will be forthcoming.

Pamela Prince of the Pee Dee Coalition joined the meeting via zoom to discuss April being Child Abuse and Sexual Assault Awareness Month. She said that the coalition has two virtual Clergy Roundtable events planned for the month and expressed that they need the church' help and guidance in dealing with sexual assault issues:

Tuesday, April 13th @ 1:00 pm hosted by Chesterfield and Darlington Counties

Thursday, April 15th @1:00 pm hosted by Dillion and Marlboro Counties

Ms. Prince also spoke about recognizing National Denim Day on the 28th of April; Darlington County will also observe Denim Day on the 16th of April. Ms. Prince said that Denim Day was created from a sexual assault case that occurred in 1992 where the assailant blamed the assault on the victim because she was wearing tight jeans.

Mike Lloyd reported that the Town of Lamar is still experiencing a significant water loss. He thinks that having the water tanks calibrated will help, along with finding and exchanging faulty water meters.

Mr. Lloyd stated that 114 out of 490 accounts have used less than 1000 gallons of water; he is researching these customers to see why the usage rate is so low.

Councilwoman Inez Lee gave a report on the "Great American Clean Up". She said that 51 volunteers donated over 6 hours for the event; 15 volunteers lived outside of the city limit. 76 bags of trash were picked up on that Saturday and 36 bags were picked up afterwards.

Councilwoman Lee thanked Darlington County Council for the truck that they donated to the Town of Lamar. She spoke about the increase in delinquent water bills and non-payment of water bills; actions will be taken by council and the Public Works Department to address this issue. Councilwoman Lee thanked the Public Works Department for going over and beyond the call of duty in recent weeks.

A Citizen of Lamar, Edith Josey, submitted the following question to Town Council, "If a customer's water bill increases because of a water leak, would the sewer bill increase by the same amount"?

Mayor McPherson and the Town Council replied that a customer sewer bill should not increase due to a water leak. Under normal circumstances, the sewer bill mirrors the water bill, but this should not apply with a water leak.

Another citizen submitted the following question to Council, "If a citizen in Lamar's city limit purchases water from the Town, is it mandatory for them to also pay for sanitation services"? Mayor and Council stated that customers who purchase water must also pay for sanitation service. Mike Lloyd mentioned that the one exception would be a merchant who has a commercial dumpster.

Mayor McPherson pleaded with citizens to submit their questions and concerns to Town Council members and Town hall staff members. She added that we work for the Citizens of Lamar. She also said that the Town would send out letters or contact water customers who are severely delinquent with their water bills so that they can contact the Darlington County Community Action Agency.

Councilwoman Mack made a motion that the citizens only be billed for the actual water loss and not for sewer in the event of a water leak. Councilwoman Bradley seconded the motion. The motion was carried unanimously.

Chief Carl Scott gave an update on the Neighborhood Watch Program. He thanked the Darlington County Sherriff Office and Investigator Deandre Richardson for presenting two presentations, "Real Guns that Look Like Toys" and "Real Drugs that Look Like Candy". He also thanked the Sherriff Department for spearheading the Hams for Seniors event.

Chief Scott said that the interview process for additional officers is ongoing.

Tim Dargan gave an update on covid-19 testing and vaccinations, Harvest Hope Food Giveaway partnership with local churches, event to honor David Beasley, and Text My Gov.

Councilwoman Mack made a motion that the Lamar Town Council Meeting be adjourned. Councilman Bradley Seconded the motion. Mayor McPherson adjourned the meeting at 7:09 pm.

Council went into Executive Session.

Timothy L. Dargan, Administrative Manager

Lamar Town Council Meeting Minutes
April 12, 2021

Lamar Town Council Meeting was called to order by Mayor Darnell Byrd-McPherson at 6:21 PM.

Invocation was given by Deacon Tim Dargan.

Roll call was taken by Mayor McPherson. Council Members in attendance were Mayor McPherson, Councilwoman Inez B. Lee, and Councilman Tyler Cook. Councilwoman Angele White-Bradley and Councilwoman Mary Ann Mack participated remotely via Zoom call.

Others in attendance were Tim Dargan, Chief Carl Scott, and Mike Lloyd. Pamela Prince participated remotely via Zoom.

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

A motion was made by Councilwoman Mack to accept the minutes from the March 8, 2021 Lamar Town Council Meeting as read. Councilwoman Bradley seconded the motion. The motion was carried unanimously.

Jannie Lathan of Lathan Consulting Corporation was not present. Ms. Lathan's report was omitted.

Doug Poston of Doug R. Poston, Jr. CPA was not present. Mr. Poston provided the financial records as information.

Tim Dargan gave an update on the status of the Town of Lamar 2018-2019 financial audit being conducted by the Brittingham Group. Mr. Dargan said that the auditors were "turning over every stone" and he praised how meticulous, professional, and patient they have been. The auditors have gathered a lot of information thus far, but they are still going through the collection process. Mr. Dargan said the task has been tedious, but the Town will be the better for it at the conclusion of the audit.

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Tuesday, April 13th @ 1:00 pm hosted by Chesterfield and Darlington Counties

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Ms. Prince also spoke about recognizing National Denim Day on the 28th of April; Darlington County will also observe Denim Day on the 16th of April. Ms. Prince said that Denim Day was created from a sexual assault case that occurred in 1992 where the assailant blamed the assault on the victim because she was wearing tight jeans.

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Mayor McPherson and the Town Council replied that a customer sewer bill should not increase due to a water leak. Under normal circumstances, the sewer bill mirrors the water bill, but this should not apply with a water leak.

Another citizen submitted the following question to Council, "If a citizen in Lamar's city limit purchases water from the Town, is it mandatory for them to also pay for sanitation services"? Mayor and Council stated that customers who purchase water must also pay for sanitation service. Mike Lloyd mentioned that the one exception would be a merchant who has a commercial dumpster.

Mayor McPherson pleaded with citizens to submit their questions and concerns to Town Council members and Town hall staff members. She added that we work for the Citizens of Lamar. She also said that the Town would send out letters or contact water customers who are severely delinquent with their water bills so that they can contact the Darlington County Community Action Agency.

Councilwoman Mack made a motion that the citizens only be billed for the actual water loss and not for sewer in the event of a water leak. Councilwoman Bradley seconded the motion. The motion was carried unanimously.

Chief Carl Scott gave an update on the Neighborhood Watch Program. He thanked the Darlington County Sherriff Office and Investigator Deandre Richardson for presenting two presentations, "Real Guns that Look Like Toys" and "Real Drugs that Look Like Candy". He also thanked the Sherriff Department for spearheading the Hams for Seniors event.

Chief Scott said that the interview process for additional officers is ongoing.

Tim Dargan gave an update on covid-19 testing and vaccinations, Harvest Hope Food Giveaway partnership with local churches, event to honor David Beasley, and Text My Gov.

Councilwoman Mack made a motion that the Lamar Town Council Meeting be adjourned. Councilman Bradley Seconded the motion. Mayor McPherson adjourned the meeting at 7:09 pm.

Council went into Executive Session.

Timothy L. Dargan, Administrative Manager

Lamar Town Council Meeting Minutes
May 10, 2021

Lamar Town Council Meeting was called to order by Mayor Pro-Tem, Councilwoman Angele Bradley-White, at 6:15 PM.

Invocation was given by Deacon Tim Dargan.

Roll call was taken by Councilwoman Bradley. Council Members in attendance were Councilwoman Bradley, Councilwoman Inez B. Lee, and Councilman Tyler Cook. Councilwoman Mary Ann Mack participated remotely via Zoom call.

Others in attendance were Tim Dargan, Chief Carl Scott, Mike Lloyd, and Doug Poston.

A motion was made by Councilman Cook 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 April 12, 2021, Lamar Town Council Meeting as read. Councilman Cook seconded the motion. The motion was carried unanimously.

Jannie Lathan of Lathan Consulting Corporation was not present. Ms. Lathan's report was omitted.

Doug Poston of Doug R. Poston, Jr. CPA was not present. Mr. Poston provided the financial records as information. He reported the following:

- General Fund Cash Receipts and Disbursements for the Month of March (2021)
\$10, 517 Collected - \$49,000 Spent = Decrease of cash on hand of \$38,000
- Utility Fund Cash Receipts and Disbursements for the Month of March (2021)
\$34,000 Collected - \$30,00 Spent = Increase of cash on hand of \$3,500

Councilwoman Bradley asked if Darlington County Water and Sewer Authority should be paid from the Utility Fund and if a payment was made in March. Mr. Poston replied that DCWSA should be paid from the Utility Fund and that there was no payment made in March, but one was made subsequent (later) to March.

Mr. Dargan asked Mr. Poston to clarify how much of the balance on hand for the Utility Fund was designated for grant purposes. Mr. Poston responded that \$85,000 of the \$105,000 was designated grant funding.

Mike Lloyd discussed the following:

- Thanked Willie Morgan of SERCAP for providing the 2020 water audit for the Town of Lamar.
- Compiled a 4-year comparison (2018-2021) for water purchased and sold from January -April of each year. The amount purchased and sold in 2021 was significantly larger than in previous years.
- Had an unusual number of water breaks and water loss in the first quarter of 2021; some of the breaks and water loss were caused by other agencies. The Town had to replenish the water in the water tank to make up for the loss which resulted in additional purchase of water. The Grooms water tank also had to be recalibrated to reflect accurate readings and control the water level in the tanks; this also resulted in water loss.
- 1.5 million gallons of water has been purchased for the month of May and today is only the 10th.
- The billing registry is starting to show signs of improvement. The amount of water purchased, and the amount billed are trending in the right direction.

- Have replaced 12 of the 30 water meters identified as too low usage or no usage.
- Told Councilwoman Bradley that the water meter readings are being verified and that this sometimes require multiple readings.
- Answered Councilwoman Bradley and Councilwoman Mack question concerning previous years where it appeared that more water was billed than sold. He said that it was an error in previous years, but now the opposite is true and that the true billing is catching up with the Town.

Chief Carl Scott discussed the following:

- Chief Scott met with Justin Jackson of DOT to discuss the Lamar Neighborhood Watch signs and the repair/ clearing of potholes, manholes, storm drains, ditches, and sidewalks. [Councilwoman Mack gave additional information concerning one of the ditches].
 - Discussed talking with DOT about a proposed new tractor trailer route (to avoid Boykin Avenue).
 - DOT will try to alert the Town in advance when work is going to be done.
- Lamar Neighborhood Watch:
 - 1) Thanked Sherriff James Hudson, Molly Odom, and Captain Ricky Flowers for their presentation on May 6 Neighborhood Watch Meeting.
 - 2) See Chief Scott, Captain Jerry Shull, or Captain Cynthia Lighty for purchase of neighborhood watch sign (\$20) or Traffic vest (\$22)

Councilwoman Bradley gave the first reading for an amendment to increase the fine amount from \$200 to \$500 for Town Ordinances 1.207 ((General Penalty. Continuing Violations) and 7.301 (Penalties). The first reading passed unanimously.

Councilwoman Bradley and Mr. Dargan discussed the re-opening of Town Hall in the Mayor's McPherson absence.

All four council members discussed the pros and cons of extending or repealing the Town's current mask ordinance. They discussed the vaccination rate as well as the revised numbers given by DHEC on the decline of the covid-19 virus; Councilman Cook pointed out the CDC numbers that stated the numbers have gone down dramatically. Councilwoman made a motion that the current ordinance remain in effect until the next council meeting and that mask continued to be required in Town Hall.

Tim Dargan gave an update on several items, they included: covid-19 testing and vaccinations, Day of Prayer Proclamation, Text My Gov, Harvest Hope food giveaway partnership with local churches, and Men Health Month (June).

Reading of Men Health Month Proclamation by Councilwoman Bradley.

Councilwoman Mack announced that the Methodist Women will be having a giveaway at John Wesley.

Councilman Cook gave an overview of David Beasley's visit to Wesley Chapel.

Councilman Cook made a motion that the Lamar Town Council Meeting be adjourned. Councilman Lee Seconded the motion. Councilwoman Bradley adjourned the meeting at 7:38 pm.

Timothy L. Dargan, Administrative Manager

Lamar Town Council Meeting Minutes
June 14, 2021

Lamar Town Council Meeting was called to order by Mayor Darnell Byrd-McPherson at 6:50 PM.

Mayor McPherson opened the meeting by acknowledging and thanking Dr. Kristi Austin, Principal of Lamar-Spaulding Elementary School, for allowing the school to host the Lamar Town Council Meeting for the month of June. This is the first council meeting opened to the public since the onset of the coronavirus pandemic.

Invocation was given by Minister Angela Kirkland Jacobs.

Roll call was taken by Mayor McPherson. Council Members in attendance were Mayor McPherson, Councilwoman Angele White-Bradley, and Councilman Tyler Cook. Councilwoman Inez Lee and Councilwoman Mary Ann Mack participated remotely via Zoom call.

Others in attendance were Dr. Marlon Thomas, Kristi Austin, Tim Dargan, Chief Carl Scott, Mike Lloyd, and Elijah Enoch-Smith. Jannie Lathan, Joe Bittle, Marek Calhoun, and Rosa McLeod participated remotely via Zoom.

A motion was made by Councilman Cook that the agenda be accepted. Councilwoman Bradley seconded the motion. The motion was carried unanimously.

A motion was made by Councilwoman Bradley to accept the minutes from the May 10, 2021, Lamar Town Council Meeting as read. Councilman Cook seconded the motion. The motion was carried unanimously.

The following written reports were received as information by Mayor McPherson:

- 1) RIA Grant Report submitted by Jannie Lathan of Lathan Consulting Corporation.
- 2) Financial Reports submitted by Doug Poston of Douglas R. Poston, Jr. CPA.
- 3) Public Works Report submitted by Mike Lloyd.
- 4) Police Department Report submitted by Chief Carl Scott of the Lamar Police Department.

Mike Lloyd gave an update on his written report. He commented that Joe Butler of Butler Electric has completed the installation of the alarms and lights at the Cambridge and Ballpark lift stations; Mr. Butler hopes to install the alarms and lights at the Zion pump station this week.

Councilman Cook expounded on two of the Lamar Neighborhood programs for kids - the garden club and the racing league. Jerry Shull added that there is no age limit for the racing league, but they will monitor this going forward.

Tim Dargan gave an update on the re-opening of Town Hall. Town Hall will be open to the public every Monday and Tuesday from 9:00 am – 12:00 pm, and from 1:00 pm to 3:00 pm; additional days may be added as needed. Tim Dargan, Chief Carl Scott, and Elijah Enoch-Smith are at Town Hall Monday – Friday every week.

Mr. Dargan also spoke about the upgrade and availability of the telephone system, Text My Gov, Zoom, the Town of Lamar's monthly newspaper, website, and Facebook page.

Mayor McPherson commented on the importance of open and effective communication.

Councilwoman Bradley conducted the second reading for an amendment to Lamar Town Ordinance 1.207 (General Penalty. Continuing Violations) and Lamar Town Ordinance 7.301 (Penalties). The amendment would increase the fine amount from \$200 to \$500. The increase will make the fine amount more in line with other municipalities as well as assist with e-ticketing.

The second reading was passed unanimously by Town Council.

The second portion of the council meeting was conducted in a Town Hall format which allowed various agencies and official to make presentations and receive questions from the audience.

Joe Bittle and Marek Calhoun of CareSouth Carolinas gave an overview of their organization efforts to combat the coronavirus epidemic. They also spoke about the covid-19 vaccinations, Moby-1 unit, sleeves up program, flu shots, and the need to remain vigilant and cautious.

Rosa McLeod of Darlington County Community Action Agency said that funds are currently available for home cooling assistance. Limited funds available for water, rent, and mortgage (only one month for house payment). She listed the requirement for obtaining assistance. DCCAA will hold a public election on June 26 to fill 4 seats on its Board of Commission.

Dr. Marlon Thomas, Principal of Lamar High School, gave a virtual presentation and an oral overview about the first magnet school program at Lamar High School. He also spoke about his excitement of being the new principal for the school.

Kristi Austin, Principal of Lamar-Spaulling Elementary, spoke about the new school and the challenge that staff and students faced this past school year due to covid-19 restrictions. She looks forward to a more normal setting and working with the community this upcoming school year.

Danielle Wilkes, Chairman Christmas Committee, said that the committee will have 16 new receptacles installed on light poles on Main Street so that they can utilize all the snowflakes during the holiday season. All poles must have streetlights to get receptacles, only 12 currently have lights; therefore, they must purchase 4 four streetlights to use all 16 receptacles. The Christmas Committee will pay a one-time payment of \$2,255.40 to purchase the receptacles. The committee will also pay \$37.52 for the streetlights from November-January every year, the Town will pay the \$37.52 for the remaining nine months.

Ms. Wilkes said that the Town of Lamar Christmas Festival will be the 1st Saturday in December.

Mayor McPherson would like for all business in Town with awnings that are not new, to clean them up or replace them. She also thinks that the businesses need to create an association so that they can work together to create revenue and spruce up the town.

Lamar Citizen, Jerry Shull, enquired about the dilapidated buildings on main Street. Chief Scott replied that once the owner is located and notified, they will have 60 days to come up with a plan of action.

Councilwoman Bradley made a motion that the Lamar Town Council Meeting be adjourned. Councilman Cook seconded the motion. Mayor McPherson adjourned the meeting at 7:57 pm.

Timothy L. Dargan, Administrative Manager

Lamar Town Council Meeting Minutes
July 12, 2021

The Lamar Town Council Meeting was called to order by Mayor Darnell Byrd-McPherson at 6:20 PM.

Invocation was given by Angela Kirkland Jacobs.

Roll call was taken by Mayor McPherson. Council Members in attendance were Mayor McPherson, Councilman Tyler Cook, Councilwoman Angele White-Bradley, Councilwoman Mary Ann Mack, and Councilwoman Inez Lee.

Others in attendance were Tim Dargan, Chief Carl Scott, Mike Lloyd, Elijha Enoch-Smith, and Patrice Lloyd. Doug Poston originally participated via zoom, but later attended the meeting in person.

A motion was made by Councilman Cook that the agenda be accepted. Councilwoman Bradley seconded the motion with the noted changes (Tim Dargan speaking on the upcoming events). The motion was carried unanimously.

A motion was made by Councilwoman Mack to accept the minutes from the June 14, 2021, Lamar Town Council Meeting as read. Councilwoman Bradley seconded the motion. The motion was carried unanimously.

Patrice Lloyd from the South Carolina Department of Mental Health gave a presentation on mental health awareness. She received and answered several questions from audience members.

The Financial Report was given by Doug Poston of Douglas R. Poston, Jr. CPA.:

General Fund > Beginning Balance-\$50,316.46, Ending Balance-\$64,309.24 = Increase of \$13,992.78
Utility Fund > Beginning Balance-\$99,325.91, Ending Balance-\$87,943.62 = Decrease of \$11,382.29

The Public Works Report was given by Mike Lloyd:

- Mr. Lloyd reported that the previous month water loss was the lowest that it has been in recent month.
- Several citizens cut their water back on after the Public Works Department disconnected service for delinquent or non-payment.
- Introduced a memo that will be placed at citizens residence to notify them of intent to remove water meter until satisfactory arrangements have been made to bring the account current. (Council adopted the memo; however, Councilwoman Mack suggest that the “number of days” be removed from the memo language.
- Working on ways to enforce delinquent payments in a timely manner.

The Lamar Police Department Report was given by Chief Carl Scott:

Chief Scott gave an update on the issue concerning dilapidated buildings in the Town of Lamar. Chief Scott also spoke about the upcoming Lamar Neighborhood Watch Kids Racing League and the Lamar Fun Day Event.

Councilman Tyler Cook had a concern about litter in the town limits of Lamar. Councilwoman Inez Lee stated that the Town didn't have a litter problem and she also pointed out that the Town employees could not go on private citizens property to pick up litter. The public works employees will pick up litter as they come across it.

The Lamar Town Council held a very healthy and lengthy discussion on the first reading of the proposed budget for Fiscal Year End 2022:

- Councilman Cook had concerns/questions about several miscellaneous items, funds spent at several local businesses, the need to seek cost-saving opportunities as much as possible, and the method at which the projected numbers were arrived.
- Mayor McPherson emphasized that some services and supplies are necessary to efficiently operate in the current climate. She also elaborated on the positive improvements that have taken place.
- Councilwoman Bradley revealed that this was the most detailed budget report that she has seen since she has been on council.
- Councilwoman Mack stated that the budget is a living document.

Councilwoman Mack made a motion that the first reading of the Fiscal Year 2022 Budget be accepted. Councilwoman Bradley seconded the motion. There were 4 “Yea” votes and 1 “Nay” vote; therefore, the first reading of the budget passed. The second budget reading will be held at a special Town Council Meeting on July 29 at 6:30 pm at Town Hall.

The Lamar Town Council held the first reading of the proposed water and sewer rate increase:

- Councilman Cook said that the Town is currently too dependent upon Darlington County Water & Sewer Authority and that the Town should explore getting its own drinking water system. He also mentioned that the Town should try not to burden the citizens financially.
- Tim Dargan said that research is being done to see if it is financially feasible for the Town to have its own water well.
- Councilwoman Bradley and Councilwoman Mack stated that due to DCWSA increasing their water & sewer rates, the Town of Lamar has no choice but to do the same. DCWSA has an increase of 3% that goes into effect on August 1, 2021; Councilwoman Mack suggested that the Town increase their rate to 4% effective August 1, 2021.
- Mike Lloyd pointed out that although the water & sewer rates for the Town of Lamar correspond, typically, the sewer rates are more in most municipalities.
- Several citizens asked questions and/or made comments about the Town obtaining its own water system (will this be pursued), Davis & Brown (is the Town still working with them), and rate increase (could there be a larger increase this time so that there will not have to be a rate increase every year).
- Jeronell Bradley, who publicly acknowledged that she was a DCWSA Board Member, made several observations including: (1) Lamar has the lowest water & sewer rates, which may explain the deficiency in funds, (2) is the Town charging other entities that use the waste water treatment pond to discharge their waste, (3) DCWSA wants to partner with the Town of Lamar, but there are costs associated with their assistance, (4) does the Town plan to seek its own water treatment facility, and (5) DCWSA is not trying to take over the Town of Lamar water & sewer systems.
- Mayor McPherson stated that the council should reach out to DCWSA County for further guidance and assistance. She appreciates the patience shown by DCWSA and their willingness to work with the Town of Lamar in bring arrears payment current. Mayor McPherson mentioned the upcoming meeting with DHEC, as well as the problem associated with the Railroad Avenue lift station.

Councilwoman Bradley made a motion to increase the water & sewer rate to 4%. Councilwoman Mack seconded the motion. There were 4 “Yea” votes and 1 “Abstain”; therefore, the 1st reading of the water & sewer rate passed.

Tim Dargan spoke about the following upcoming events:

- Lamar 's 150 Year Celebration (Sesquicentennial)
- Diane Hicks Day (Health Awareness)
- Youth Virtual Revival / Community In-Person Summer Revival
- Lamar Music Festival (Gospel/Jazz/Easy Listening)
- Text My Gov

Mayor McPherson stated that the Town will have a work calendar that will include a schedule for audits, budgets, annual fees, etc. She also suggested that the Council reach out to The Darlington County Council (Bobby Hudson and Charles Stewart) for assistance and guidance. Finally, Mayor McPherson noted that the council is being as transparent as possible and that they are sharing information with the citizens.

A citizen asked about the cleaning or replacing of the awnings on the businesses on Main Street. The mayor said that some additional awnings have been pressured washed since the last Town Council Meeting and that The others are a work in progress.

Council Cook stated that his intent in asking questions is not to be disruptive or negative, but to enlighten the citizens. He acknowledged that he gains valuable insight himself at these meetings and think that the sharing of knowledge would alleviate some of the concerns of the citizens.

Closing prayer given by Deacon Tim Dargan.

Councilwoman Bradley made a motion that the Lamar Town Council Meeting be adjourned. Councilman Cook seconded the motion. Mayor McPherson adjourned the meeting at 8:50 pm.

Timothy L. Dargan, Administrative Manager

Lamar Town Council Meeting Minutes
August 9, 2021

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

Invocation was given by Councilwoman Inez B. Lee.

Mayor McPherson led everyone in reciting the Pledge of Allegiance.

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

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

The Public Works Report was given by Mike Lloyd:

- Mr. Lloyd reported that there was over a 40 % water loss for the month of July.

The Financial Report was given by Doug Poston of Douglas R. Poston, Jr. CPA.:

General Fund:

Receipts - \$81,971.77, Disbursements - \$75, 919.06 (Including \$41,596.38 transfer to Utility Fund), Increase in cash - \$6,052.71, Ending cash balance - \$70,361.95

Utility Fund:

Receipts - \$73,653.50, Disbursements - \$53,314.97, Increase in cash -\$20,338.53, Ending cash balance - \$108,282.15 (\$20, 727.11 available for operations; remainder is grant funds)

The Lamar Police Department Report was given by Chief Carl Scott:

Fun Day:

- Estimated that 125 back packs were given out to children and youth
- Fun Day tee shirts will soon be available for purchase.
- Special thanks to Representative Robert Williams, Darlington County Sherriff Department, and Darlington County Fire Department.
- Special thanks to merchants, vendors, and individuals for their donations.

Chief Scott said that he appreciates the anonymous tips that the Lamar Police Department has been receiving and he encourages the public to continue calling in tips.

Councilman Tyler Cook talked about the Lamar Neighborhood Watch sponsored kid's Racing League.

Councilwoman Bradley and Mayor McPherson discussed the upcoming Lamar Health and Wellness Day Event.

Mayor McPherson thanked the Lamar Neighborhood Watch for all of their activities, The Lamar UMC for hosting a well-received Community Vacation Bible School, Ladies Divine (Shakeita Price) for hosting a successful school supplies giveaway.

Mayor McPherson read an announcement from Chris Weaver of the Lamar Recreation Department. Anyone interested in attending the football or cheerleading camp should meet at the practice field from Monday through Thursday. The cost for flag football is \$40, the cost for cheering is \$35. Flag baseball and softball sign up is from the 16th of August through the 1st of September; the cost is \$35. Please contact Chris Weaver for more information.

Councilwoman Mack spoke about the council planning a short work session. One of the things that needs to be discussed is the receiving and use of the American Rescue Funds (ARF); she listed some of the things that the funds could be used for and could not be used for.

Mayor McPherson said that she would get Mr. Dargan to schedule the work sessions upon his return.

Councilwoman Bradley made a motion that the Lamar Town Council Meeting be adjourned. Councilwoman Mack seconded the motion. Mayor McPherson adjourned the meeting at approximately 6:48 pm

Footnote: Council Members in attendance were Mayor McPherson, Councilman Tyler Cook, Councilwoman Angele White-Bradley, Councilwoman Mary Ann Mack, and Councilwoman Inez Lee.

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

Timothy L. Dargan, Administrative Manager

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 required 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

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