

Regular Town Council Meeting

December 12, 2023

I. Call to Order

Mayor Sulka called the meeting to order at 5:00 PM.

PRESENT

Mayor Lisa Sulka

Mayor Pro-Tem Larry Toomer

Councilmember Fred Hamilton

Councilmember Bridgette Frazier

Councilmember Dan Wood

II. Pledge of Allegiance

The Pledge of Allegiance was given by Mayor Lisa Sulka. Invocation by Councilmember Fred Hamilton.

III. Adoption of the Agenda

Motion made by Mayor Pro-Tem Toomer, Seconded by Councilmember Hamilton to adopt the agenda as presented.

Voting Yea: Mayor Sulka, Mayor Pro-Tem Toomer, Councilmember Hamilton, Councilmember Frazier, Councilmember Wood

IV. Adoption of the Minutes

1. Regular Meeting Minutes of 11/14/2023

Motion made by Councilmember Wood, Seconded by Councilmember Hamilton to approve the Regular Meeting Minutes of 11/14/23 as presented.

Voting Yea: Mayor Sulka, Mayor Pro-Tem Toomer, Councilmember Hamilton, Councilmember Frazier, Councilmember Wood

V. Presentations, Celebrations and Recognitions

1. Recognition of Beaufort County School District Superintendent Frank Rodriguez - Mayor Lisa Sulka

Mayor Lisa Sulka, on behalf of the Town Council, recognized Dr. Frank Rodriguez for educating the community about the importance of the school bond referendum. This referendum, which recently passed in November, will provide future assets for the school district and essential for providing for an expanding student population.

2. Beaufort County School District Character Student of the Month - Macie Cole from H. E. McCracken Middle School- Mayor Lisa Sulka

Mayor Lisa Sulka, on behalf of Town Council, honored Macie Alexis Cole, a 7th grader at H.E. McCracken Middle School, for her character traits of courage and tolerance.

3. Proclamation in Support of National Impaired Driving Prevention Month - Mayor Lisa Sulka

Mayor Lisa Sulka, on behalf of Town Council, presented this proclamation to Bluffton Police Chief Joe Babkiewicz.

4. Presentation of Awards for Christmas Parade Winners - Mayor Lisa Sulka

Mayor Lisa Sulka, on behalf of Town Council presented a trophy to the following 2023 Christmas Parade winners:

- Best Float: May River High School Animal Welfare Club/Palmetto Animal League
- Best Performance: Horan Brothers Band
- "State of Mind" Award: "Dancing through the Bluff," a group of friends and neighbors from the Woodbridge neighborhood.

5. Annual Update from Bluffton Police Department's Mental Health Advocate – Hannah Anderson and Victims Advocate - Kate Cooler

Hannah Anderson, BPD's community mental health advocate, and Kate Cooler, BPD's victims advocate, gave an update of BPD's community outreach programs.

VI. Public Comment

Mike Raymond – 5827 Ginko Lane, Bluffton – Mr. Raymond spoke regarding the annexation statement in the Town of Bluffton brochure, advising of correction.

Heather Harkins – 58 Fording Court, Bluffton – Ms. Harkins spoke of her concerns for the annexation of the parcel located at 35 Fording Ct, Bluffton, and the construction of the proposed apartment complex.

Skip Hoagland - 61 Sparwheel Lane, Hilton Head Island - Mr. Hoagland addressed Mayor Sulka regarding funding of the HHI Bluffton Chamber and election results.

VII. Communications from Mayor and Council

Mayor and Councilmembers wish the community a Merry Christmas and Happy New Year.

Councilmember Frazier expressed her gratitude to the Town of Bluffton Staff for the annual Christmas parade.

VIII. Formal Agenda Items

1. Approval to Authorize a Construction Contract with Beaufort Construction of SC, LLC for the Event Area Site Development at Oyster Factory Park (Fiscal Impact: \$1,016,818.50) – Pat Rooney, Manager of Capital Improvements Program

Town Council, with the exception of Councilmember Toomer who recused himself, approved this contract. Voting Yea: Mayor Sulka, Councilmember Hamilton, Councilmember Frazier, Councilmember Wood

2. Approval to Authorize a Master Services Agreement with JK Tiller Associates, Inc., Witmer Jones Keefer, Ltd., and Wood + Partners for As Needed Planning and Design Consulting

Services (Fiscal Impact: Not to Exceed Individual Project Budget Amounts) – Pat Rooney, Manager of Capital Improvements Program

Town Council unanimously approved this authorization. Voting Yea: Mayor Sulka, Mayor Pro-Tem Toomer, Councilmember Hamilton, Councilmember Frazier, Councilmember Wood

3. Consideration of Ordinance Amending Chapter 6 – Businesses and Business Regulations, Appendix A – Business Licenses Rate Schedule and Appendix B – Business License Class Schedule by NAICS Code of the Town Code as Required by Act 176 of 2020. - Second & Final Reading - Natalie Majorkiewicz, Director of Finance

Town Council unanimously approved the second and final reading of this ordinance. Voting Yea: Mayor Sulka, Mayor Pro-Tem Toomer, Councilmember Hamilton, Councilmember Frazier, Councilmember Wood

4. Consideration of Accommodations Tax Advisory Committee Funding Recommendations for Quarter Ending September 30, 2023 - Natalie Majorkiewicz, Director of Finance

Town Council approved the following ATAX funds:

- The New Bluffton Worship: Christmas Eve Under the Stars: \$15,280
- Gullah Travelling Theater, Inc.: Gullah Kinfolk Come to Bluffton: No funds awarded; will resubmit application with more information.
- May River Theatre, Inc.: Advertising & Royalty Funding for 2024 Season: \$39,801
- Farmers Market of Bluffton: 2024 Expenses: \$55,300
- Hilton Head Island – Bluffton Chamber of Commerce: 2024 Official Bluffton Vacation Planner 45,000 Deferred to Next Quarter Total for the Quarter: No funds awarded; will resubmit application with more information.

Voting Yea: Mayor Sulka, Mayor Pro-Tem Toomer, Councilmember Hamilton, Councilmember Frazier, Councilmember Wood

5. Consideration of a Resolution Encouraging Governor Henry McMaster to Declare an Economic Disaster Due to the Dumping of Imported Shrimp in the United States Market – Heather Colin, Assistant Town Manager

Town Council, with the exception of Councilmember Toomer who recused himself, approved this resolution. Voting Yea: Mayor Sulka, Councilmember Hamilton, Councilmember Frazier, Councilmember Wood

6. Consideration of the Acceptance of University Investments, LLC's One Hundred Percent (100%) Annexation Petition to Annex Certain Real Property Contiguous to the Town of Bluffton's Corporate Boundaries Consisting of a Total of 65.592 Acres, More or Less, Located at Southwest Corner of the Buckwalter Parkway and Lake Point Drive Intersection and to the West of the Retreat at Grande Oaks, and Bearing Beaufort County Tax Map Nos. R600-029-000-0014-0000 (Portion) and R600-029-000-2410-0000. - Kevin Icard, Director of Growth Management

Town Council unanimously accepted this annexation petition; the Town's Planning Commission will be the next step for this application. Voting Yea: Mayor Sulka, Mayor Pro-Tem Toomer, Councilmember Hamilton, Councilmember Frazier, Councilmember Wood

XIV. Consent Agenda Items

1. Monthly Department Reports: Police, Finance and Administration, Human Resources, Municipal Court, Projects and Watershed Resilience, Public Services, Don Ryan Center for Innovation, and Growth Management
2. Town Manager Monthly Report
3. Presentation of the Hilton Head Island Bluffton Chamber of Commerce FY24 Quarterly Report - Ariana Pernice, Hilton Head Island Bluffton Chamber of Commerce
4. Consideration of Adoption of the 2024 Town Council Meeting Schedule and 2024 Quarterly Workshop Meeting Schedule - Marcia Hunter, Town Clerk
5. Lowcountry Area Transportation Study (LATS) Local Match Request - Stephen Steese, Town Manager
6. Consideration of a Resolution to Adopt the Town of Bluffton Strategic Plan for Fiscal Years 2025-2026 – Heather Colin, Assistant Town Manager
7. A Resolution Authorizing an Amendment to the Current Redevelopment Plan for the Town's Tax Increment Financing District - Chris Forster, Assistant Town Manager

Town Council unanimously accepted the Consent Agenda as presented. Voting Yea: Mayor Sulka, Mayor Pro-Tem Toomer, Councilmember Hamilton, Councilmember Frazier, Councilmember Wood

10. Executive Session

No Executive Session Items

12. Adjournment

Motion made by Councilmember Hamilton, Seconded by Mayor Pro-Tem Toomer to adjournment at 6:19 pm.

The motion carried unanimously.