

Regular Town Council Meeting Minutes

February 13, 2024

- I. This meeting can be viewed live on [BCTV](#), on Hargray Channel 9 and 113 or on Spectrum Channel 1304.

II. CALL TO ORDER

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

PRESENT

Mayor Larry Toomer
Mayor Pro-Tempore Dan Wood
Councilmember Fred Hamilton
Councilmember Bridgette Frazier

III. PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE AND INVOCATION

The Pledge of Allegiance and Invocation were presented by Mayor Pro-Tempore Dan Wood.

IV. ADOPTION OF THE AGENDA

Motion made by Councilmember Frazier to amend the agenda to reflect item- IX. Public Hearing be delayed until 6:00PM or later to satisfy regulations for the public hearing, Seconded by Mayor Pro-Tempore Wood.

V. ADOPTION OF THE MINUTES

Regular Meeting Minutes of January 16, 2024

Motion made by Councilmember Frazier, Seconded by Councilmember Hamilton to approve the Regular Meeting Minutes of January 16, 2024, as presented.

VI. PRESENTATIONS, CELEBRATIONS, AND RECOGNITIONS

1. Introduction of New Employees and Recognition of Promotions - Anni Evans, Director of Human Resources

Town department directors introduced new and newly promoted employees to Town Council.

2. Beaufort County School District Character Student of the Month - Mayor Larry Toomer

The Beaufort County School District Student of the Month for November and December are:

November - Monica Tagle Bautista, a 3rd grader from Bluffton Elementary.

Mayor Larry Toomer, on behalf of Town Council, honored Monica Tagle Bautista for the character traits of respect and gratitude.

December - Claudia Minshew, a 6th grader at Bluffton Middle School.

Mayor Larry Toomer, on behalf of Town Council, honored Claudia Minshew for the character trait of compassion.

3. Second Helpings Commendation - Mayor Larry Toomer

Mayor Larry Toomer, on behalf of Town Council, read a commendation to the non-profit, Second Helpings, to help residents who are food insecure. Several representatives of the organization attended Town Council meeting to accept the commendation.

4. Annual Palmetto Bluff Development Agreement Update - Will Howard, Vice President of Development

Will Howard, vice president of development, presented an update to Town Council regarding the Palmetto Bluffton Development Agreement. The highlights include total home sales for (2023): \$300 million. Palmetto Bluff has rights for 4,000 units and currently is about halfway to build-out. Future plans include offering a more diverse product line and predict about 250 home closings for 2024. Howard estimates the average resale price for Palmetto Bluff homes is probably between \$2.5 - \$3 million.

VII. PUBLIC COMMENT

Michael Johannes – 18 Clayton Ct, Bluffton – Mr. Johannes approached the dais to discuss Family Promise – The Promise House. Family Promise is the only shelter model for homeless children and their families in Beaufort and Jasper counties. He is requesting the assistance of Town Council to assist in locating and purchasing property to build the Promise House to move forward to fulfill the vision the “Every Child Will Have a Home”.

Skip Hoagland – 61 Sparwheel Lane, Hilton Head – Mr. Hoagland discussed his views on corruption of local government. Upon completing the three minutes allocated for him to address the Council, he proceeded to speak on behalf of Lynn Greeley, who was not present. Mr. Hoagland was advised he was out of order resulting in him being escorted out of the meeting by Bluffton Police Department.

VIII. COMMUNICATIONS FROM MAYOR AND COUNCIL

Mayor Pro-Tempore Wood congratulated Natalie Majorkiewicz, Director of Finance, and the entire accounting team for their outstanding work regarding results of the presentation of the FY2023 Audit. Mayor Toomer, Councilmembers Frazier and Hamilton also acknowledged and praised the department for their outstanding success of the highest level of opinion.

Councilmember Frazier praised the Bluffton Bobcats Girls and Boys varsity basketball teams and wished both teams the best wishes for the games scheduled this evening.

Mayor Toomer advised the Town of Bluffton Special Election was occurring with the polls closing at 7:00PM. He encouraged the public to exercise their right to vote.

IX. PUBLIC HEARING & FINAL READING

1. Consideration of Town of Bluffton Needs Assessment for Housing, Public Facilities, and Economic Development – Michelle Knight, Community and Economic Development Director, Lowcountry Council of Governments

Michelle Knight, a representative of the Lowcountry Council of Government, presented a public hearing regarding Bluffton Needs Assessment for Housing, Public Facilities and Economic Development for possible projects which would be aligned with the SC Community

Development Block Grants. South Carolina is expected to receive \$20 million grant funds this year. The bulk of funds, \$17 million, is reserved for Community Development Programs.

Councilmember Frazier, Seconded by Councilmember Hamilton to prioritize and approved the priorities for prospective projects to apply for these grants as follows:

- 1 - Affordable Housing
- 2 - Housing Assistance Program "safe & dry" repairs
- 3 - Infrastructure improvement including sewer, water, and drainage
- 4 - Transportation & pedestrian safety
- 5 - Restoration of properties or facilities of special value to the community

X. FORMAL AGENDA ITEMS

1. Acceptance of the Presentation of the Town of Bluffton FY 2023 Audit by Mauldin and Jenkins, LLC - Natalie Majorkiewicz, Director of Finance

Trey Scott, a representative of Mauldin & Jenkins presented the result of the Town of Bluffton FY2023 Audit. The audit opinion was "clean," which is the highest level of opinion.

Motion made by Mayor Pro-Tempore Wood to accept the audit presentation of the Town of Bluffton FY 2023, Seconded by Councilmember Frazier.

Town Council unanimously accepted the audit presentation.

2. Consideration of an Ordinance Authorizing an Economic Development Incentive Agreement between the Town of Bluffton and Solomon Property Holdings, LLC in support of the development of 15,000 square feet of a Health & Wellness Facility - Second & Final Reading - Chris Forster, Assistant Town Manager

Motion made by Mayor Pro-Tempore Wood to approve the Ordinance Authorizing an Economic Development Incentive Agreement between the Town of Bluffton and Solomon Property Holdings, LLC in support of the development of 15,000 square feet of a Health & Wellness Facility, Seconded by Councilmember Frazier.

Town Council unanimously approved the second and final reading of this ordinance.

XI. CONSENT AGENDA ITEMS

1. Monthly Department Reports: Police, Finance and Administration, Human Resources, Municipal Court, Projects & Watershed Resilience, Public Services, Don Ryan Center for Innovation, and Growth Management
2. Town Manager Monthly Report

Motion made by Councilmember Hamilton to accept the Consent Agenda items as presented, Seconded by Councilmember Frazier

Town Council unanimously approved the Consent Agenda as presented.

XII. EXECUTIVE SESSION

1. Personnel Matters Regarding Town Council Appointments of Boards, Committees, and Commissions (Pursuant to Freedom of Information Act 30-4-70 [a][1])

Motion made by Councilmember Hamilton to enter Executive Session, Seconded by Mayor Pro-Tempore Wood.

XIII. ACTION FROM EXECUTIVE SESSION

Motion made by Councilmember Hamilton, Seconded by Councilmember Frazier to approve the following appointments:

- Chris Kehrer - May River Watershed Action Plan Advisor Committee (WAPAC) No Term Expiration Length
- Melissa Perri – Municipal Election Committee (MEC) Term Expires in 2026

Town Council unanimously approved the appointments.

XVI. ADJOURNMENT

Motion made by Mayor Pro-Tempore Wood, Seconded by Councilmember Frazier to adjourn at 6:39PM.

NEXT MEETING DATE: TUESDAY, MARCH 12, 2024