

# VARNVILLE TOWN COUNCIL MEETING

August 13, 2012 @ 7:00 PM

(I)

## **Call to Order**

Officials present were Mayor Nathaniel “Nat” A. Shaffer, Mayor Pro-Tem Lloyd “Tootie” Griffith, Jr., Councilmen Ralph Smith, Henry Tuten, H. Alexander Campbell, Adam Major, and Ronald Williams, Police Chief Tyrone Smith, Fire Chief Dobie Hiers, Town Attorney, Kevin Brown, and Secretary to the Mayor and Council, Amy Roberts. Absent was Public Works Director, Robert “Bobby” Edwards.

Among the general population in attendance were Brenda Willis, Martha Bazzle, James Holman, and Eugene Jenkins.

The meeting was called to order by Mayor Shaffer. The invocation was given by Mayor Pro-Tem Griffith and the Pledge of Allegiance followed. Amy Roberts gave the FOIA Compliance Report stating that the meeting agenda was faxed to all media outlets and posted outside the town hall on August 10, 2012.

Mayor Shaffer presented the minutes from the council meeting held on July 9, 2012. Mayor Pro-Tem Griffith made a motion that the minutes be accepted for approval and Councilman Major seconded the motion. All members were in favor.

(II)

## **Introduction and/or requests of visitors**

Mayor Shaffer acknowledged the general public in attendance and stated that Ronald G. Winn withdrew his application to speak concerning the Labor Day Parade. Mayor Shaffer and the council then allowed James Holman to speak for five minutes regarding the Lowcountry Regional Water System, although he was not on the agenda. Mr. Holman asked multiple questions which the mayor promptly answered. Mr. Holman said although he felt a little more educated on the LRWS, he would like to meet with the mayor and the members of council individually to further discuss the subject.

(III)

## **Financial report**

Mayor Shaffer presented the financial report in the absence of a town clerk. In July 2012, in the General Fund there was an income of \$50,938 and expenditures of \$76,911 with a deficit of \$25,973. The balance in the General Fund is \$194,732. Water Works had an income of \$86,817 and expenditures of \$31,181 with a net increase of \$55,636. The balance of the Water Works account is \$397,812. No deductions were taken from the Water Works account such as garbage, refuse, and solid waste fees, etc. The account balance for the CBDG grant money is \$229,417 and the balance on the Money Market Reserve Fund is \$78,148.

(IV)

**Unfinished Business**

None

(V)

**Reports of Department Heads and Committees**

**Police Department:** Police Chief Tyrone Smith informed the council that the Varnville Police Department has been busy working on multiple burglaries that occurred in July 2012.

**Fire Department:** Fire Chief Dobie Hiers stated the Varnville Fire Department received 33 calls in July 2012, but not all calls were fire related.

**Department of Public Works:** In the absence of Bobby Edwards, Mayor Shaffer read the Public Works report. The report stated that a tree fell on the Town of Varnville sign at the corner of Highway 63 and Brookwood Drive and the sign is being repaired. The Freeman Field has been organized for Little League Football. Public Works employees are trying to catch up on mowing the grass since all of the recent rain. There have been many compliments about the work done at the Blue Star Memorial site.

**Clerk Treasurer's Office:** Nothing to report

**Mayor's Office:** Mayor Shaffer reminded the council of the Municipal Association of South Carolina's Regional Advocacy Meeting in Walterboro on August 30, 2012 at 11:00 AM. He asked all council members who want to attend to report to the Varnville Town Hall by 10:00 AM so that everyone could ride together. The residents of Autumn Estates submitted a street light request at the corner of Spruce Street and Frog Hollow Road. Councilman Tuten made a motion to grant the request and Mayor Pro-Tem Griffith seconded the motion. Mayor Shaffer abstained from voting since he formerly owned the property. All other members were in favor. Mayor Shaffer expressed the need for new furniture and carpet in his office at Varnville Town Hall. The carpet has been in the town hall since the 1970's and is badly worn and stained. The office could also use a filing credenza and more shelving. Mayor Shaffer said that he would gladly buy used furniture from the government surplus store/auction. He requested approximately a \$2,000 allowance for the renovations. Mayor Pro-Tem Griffith made a motion to proceed with the renovations and Councilman Campbell seconded the motion. Mayor Shaffer abstained from voting. All other members of council were in favor. Mayor Shaffer stated that he is currently working on a USDA Rural Development Grant for a new roof and lobby renovations for Varnville Town Hall. The mayor reminded the council of the Chamber of Commerce Business After Hours Meeting on August 16, 2012 at 6:00 PM. State Farm in Hampton will be hosting the meeting with discussion on investigating fraudulent vehicle and homeowner claims. Police Chief Tyrone Smith and Mayor Pro-Tem Griffith will attend. Mayor Shaffer informed the council that the new copier had arrived from Digital Office Equipment. The copier was networked to all

computers in the town hall for no additional charge and has the capability of serving as a fax unit for a one-time upgrade charge of \$519. Councilman Major made a motion to purchase the fax upgrade and Mayor Pro-Tem Griffith seconded the motion. All members were in favor. Mayor Shaffer reported that the Varnville Planning Commission denied Peola Butler's application for a zoning change and/or variance on Live Oak Street in Varnville. Hattie Mae Wiley is the landowner of the property; therefore a zoning change or building permit cannot be issued to Ms. Butler. Also there is a town ordinance that prohibits construction on or near the airport. Town Attorney, Kevin Brown, sent a letter to Ms. Butler's attorney to this effect.

(VI)

### **New Business**

Mayor Shaffer gave the first reading of Ordinance 2012-04 in title only. The ordinance reflected an increase in monthly solid waste fees from 50¢ to \$1.00 and an increase in the monthly garbage base from \$11.50 to \$14.00. Mayor Shaffer stated that there was a \$30,000 shortfall in garbage, refuse, and solid waste in last year's Streets and Sanitation budget. Councilman Tuten made a motion to table the first reading of the ordinance until further discussion and Councilman Campbell seconded the motion. Mayor Shaffer opposed. All other members were in favor.

Mayor Shaffer presented the council with a CDBG loan request of \$50,000 from Mary Bridges Stanley d/b/a Palmetto Wireless, a Verizon dealer. Mrs. Stanley submitted a business plan along with her request. The terms of the loan would be 4% secured money for 120 months with a monthly payment of \$555.42. Mrs. Stanley owns 6 acres of land in Washington which would serve as collateral for the loan. Councilman Tuten made a motion to grant the loan request and Councilman Campbell seconded the motion. All members were in favor.

(VII)

### **Old Business**

None

(VIII)

### **Council members' concerns/comments**

Councilman Smith said he received a call from a Varnville citizen about a parking problem at the Freeman Ball Park. The citizen was worried about the safety of the children in the parking area. Councilman Smith met with Bobby Edwards concerning the issue and signs are being put up to resolve any parking concerns.

Councilman Tuten asked if any progress was being made on enforcing the dilapidated building code in Varnville. Police Chief Tyrone Smith said that he would have Code Enforcement Officer, Michael Smith, write a report about the progress.

Mayor Pro-Tem Griffith stated that he had received three recent calls from citizens about dogs running through yards and barking. He asked that Public Works Director, Bobby Edwards, give a report on how many dogs are trapped each month.

Councilman Campbell said that the Ginn Street Ball Park is in need of some attention. The park is inoperable. The growth needs to be controlled on the fence and the grass need mowing.

Councilman Major had no comments.

Councilman Williams said that he had been in San Diego and is glad to be back in Varnville. He thanked James Holman for his questions about the LRWS and said it was good to hear from concerned citizens. Councilman Williams also thanked Eugene Jenkins for his representation of the Varnville Area Housing Authority.

(IX)

### **Executive Session**

Mayor Shaffer called for a motion to go into Executive Session at 8:13 PM to discuss a contractual matter involving the sale of property, personnel incentives, and a personnel disciplinary matter. Mayor Pro-Tem Griffith made a motion to go into executive session and Councilman Smith seconded the motion. All members were in favor. After approximately an hour of discussion, Mayor Shaffer called for a motion to come out of executive session at 9:20 PM. Councilman Campbell made a motion and Mayor Pro-Tem seconded the motion. All members were in favor. Mayor Shaffer stated that council decided to hold off on the sale of a five acre parcel of land. An employee's request was granted to increase the number of hours worked each week. The disciplinary matter will be handled by the department head of that employee.

(X)

### **Adjournment**

Mayor Shaffer called for a motion to adjourn at 9:22 PM. Mayor Pro-Tem Griffith made a motion and Councilman Campbell seconded the motion. All members were in favor.

Respectfully submitted,

Amy Roberts  
Secretary to Mayor and Council