

**City of Pickens Council Committee of the Whole
January 23, 2023
6:00 P.M.**

The Mayor and City Council met for the Council Committee of the Whole in the Council Chambers at City Hall 219 Pendleton Street, Pickens S.C. Agendas were posted and sent to media on January 19, 2023.

Council Members in attendance:

Mayor Fletcher Perry

Council Member Jimmy Davis

Council Member Patrick Lark

Council Member Lois Porter

Council Member Isaiah Scipio

Council Members Absent: Council Member Robert Nealy

Staff:

Administrator, Charlene Carter

Police Chief, Randal Beach

Fire Chief, Chris Elrod

(The minutes are a synopsis of the meeting, and a full viewing and recording of the meeting is available on the City of Pickens Webpage and Facebook. Also, the full agenda packet with all departmental reports are available).

WELCOME AND CALL TO ORDER:

Mayor Perry called the meeting to order and welcomed those in attendance. Mayor Perry further noted the absence of Council Member Robert Nealy. Council Member Patrick Lark gave the Invocation and followed with the Pledge of Allegiance.

COMMENTS FROM CITIZENS:

Mayor Perry opened the floor for citizens with business/comments.

1. Caroline Rogers – Ms. Rogers thanked Council for the job they do and recognized that Council makes complex decisions. Ms. Rogers spoke as it relates to item number 5 (a) regarding the ordinance changes that govern the rules for the Pickens City Council. Ms. Rogers stated she has concerns about changing City Ordinances when it conflicts with the S.C. Code of Laws. Ms. Rogers asked to be on record as stating she did not think the word “Mayor” should be omitted from the Ordinance. Ms. Rogers stated these changes should not be made from emotion and has effects that carry into future mayors and council members.
2. Geneva Robinson- Ms. Robinson came before Council with a concern that she had a water leak that she did not know about, and she had recently had it repaired. Ms. Robinson stated she usually has a bill of \$86.00 however, due to the leak her bill was over \$600.00. Ms. Robinson stated she would think the protocol for a massive leak would be to inform the homeowner. Also, she questioned the policy that will not allow an adjustment back to the normal rate. Ms. Robinson stated she is still responsible for \$300.00. Ms. Robinson requested Council to look at changing this policy.

>>During Council discussion the policy was discussed regarding there being (2) adjustments per year. Administrator Carter stated there have been discussions about better ways to flag meters and place tags on the front door of a homeowner that has obvious problems. It was discussed

that many meters are failing and there are several water breaks. Mayor and Council asked Ms. Carter to look at the issue when a water bill is consistent, how to better serve the customer when there has been a repaired leak.

DEPARTMENTAL REPORTS COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE

Full Reports are online. City of Pickens Website and Facebook Page

- a. **POLICE DEPARTMENT** – Chief Beach had a full report that was distributed in the agenda packet. Chief Beach praised several departmental functions such as the social media and volunteerism. Chief beach informed Council the Police Department recently held their own Academy which resulted into (6) new reserve officers. Chief Beach stated these reserve officers have worked diligently to pass all the required test and they will have a positive impact on the community. Chief Beach stated cost for the department continues to be offset by Officer Griffin doing an excellent job with getting unused inventory to Gov.deals.

- b. **FIRE DEPARTMENT** – Chief Elrod had a full report that was distributed in the agenda packet. Chief Elrod highlighted some departmental items such as the Duke Energy grant for light-towers, these will be in soon. Also, he will be applying for FEMA funds for (3) cardiac monitors. Chief Elrod updated Council regarding the cost increases in turnout gear. The department is also going to a demonstration regarding emergency management software that will communicate with all departments during events.
Fire department ladder truck – Chief Elrod updated Council as it relates to the prior authorization to purchase a used ladder truck from the City of Clemson. Unfortunately, Clemson’s procurement policy provides for equipment to go to public auction and cannot be purchased outright. Chief Elrod gave Council some options regarding other used ladder trucks in the event the City is uneventful during the auction process. During Council discussion Council Member Patrick Lark asked about the best way to navigate authorization when the truck came to auction. Chief Elrod recommended discretion, and for Council to trust staff in this process. It is imperative to obtain a used fire truck due to the fact a new truck would take approximately (3) years to build and would be approximately \$1.3 million. Staff will keep Council updated.

- c. **ADMINISTRATION** – Administrator Carter distributed to Council a full report on the following departments. Ms. Carter noted a few items.
Planning -things are moving forward with Starbucks, Waffle House, and several apartments.
Court – the new court room is doing well at the public works facility, and no problems to report.
Finance – still in deep revue of the financials. Ms. Carter did call attention to the fact she has requested an itemized invoice from CWS for budget purposes. Most departments continue to be over regarding overtime pay. This is a result of events that take much more personnel.
Public Works – Roll Carts are ordered and should be in mid-March. The CWS reports are in the packet and things seem to be doing well. Ms. Carter praised the crews who continue to work with water/sewer issues and especially for the month of December with the extreme cold temperatures. Ms. Carter also thanked Bryan Owen for assisting

at night and on week-ends to communicate via social media as it relates to water/sewer issues. Ms. Carter stated Street/Sanitation divisions are limited with staff at the current time. This makes it difficult for picking up trash, leaves, and brush as these require a CDL personnel.

During Council discussion, Mayor Perry requested Ms. Carter to investigate the recycling issue. If in fact, there is no recycling in the County, this time could be better utilized.

Recreation – Positions at recreation and several other positions are posted.

1. Discuss the following:

- a. Proposed ordinance changes (Rules of Council) – Ms. Carter stated this was an Ordinance that was tabled in December. Ms. Carter stated she was contacted by some of Council to update the Ordinance as it relates to how the Council will move forward doing business as an elected body. Ms. Carter stated most of the rules are simply updating outdated items such as time, committees, and the schedule.

Ms. Carter took the changes as follows:

Sec. 2-33: Committees – *as Council no longer has separate committees, she would advise changing the rule so that Council will meet as committee of the whole once a month or as agreed upon by the majority of Council.*

Sec. 2-56: Date and time of regular meetings – *Change the time to 6:00 P.M. and add that any changes to scheduled council meetings may be made by the majority of Council and add the City Clerk or Administrator will contact council members to communicate a request for a meeting change and request abilities to attend for quorum purposes.*

Sec. 2-57: Special Meetings- *Remove the “on the call of the mayor” change to on the majority of City Council.*

>>During discussion, Ms. Carter stated she is recommending the change to better reflect a Council/Administrator form of government and helps the elected body be collective in their decisions. Council Member Isaiah Scipio stated he did not believe the mayor should be removed from being able to call a special meeting. He debated that the mayor holds a physical office in City Hall and he should be able to call a special meeting. Council Member Patrick Lark stated if there is not a quorum of council regardless if it is a regular meeting or a special called meeting, the business of the city cannot take place. Mr. Scipio stated he thought it was irresponsible to not allow the mayor to request a special meeting. He also stated it was time for the council to start pulling together and do the work they were elected to do. Council Member Patrick Lark stated he did not see the language as negative, he said he believes it's more understandable because no one should be able to call a meeting without a quorum. Council Member Isaiah Scipio stated the council still needs one individual to be able to call a meeting and he believes at this point the mayor is elected by the people to function in that capacity. Mr. Scipio reiterated the need to work together and to stop the division. In addition, Mr. Scipio stated he thought some council members were having meetings that he had no knowledge about. Council Member Jimmy Davis stated he has never attended a meeting that was not published. Mr. Davis further stated he did not appreciate being accused of secretive meetings, and he is able to disagree with issues but still do his job as an elected officials. Mayor Perry stated the ordinance changes as it relates to removing the mayor from certain powers is not right, and all the mayors that have been

before him have had that privilege. Mayor Perry requested Ms. Carter to consult with the attorney regarding Sec. 2.57.

Sec. 2.59: Appointment of special committees. Ms. Carter stated this section pertains to removing "appointed" by the mayor and change to as agreed upon by the whole Council.
>>Council concurred appointed committees should come from mayor and council.

Sec. 2.63: Order of Proceedings – Ms. Carter stated some council members ask about the time for citizens to speak, and most municipalities and counties use the time of (3) minutes for each citizen to speak.

>>During Council discussion it was the consensus to leave the speaking time at (5) minutes and to obtain a clock.

Ms. Carter went through the remainder of the order of proceedings with no comments from Council.

In conclusion, Ms. Carter called attention to the fact that normally the City of Pickens works as a body of (7) members and now it will be working as a body of (6). Therefore, in the event of a tie vote, the motion will fail.


Council determined they would like to change the ordinance to reflect moving the City Council meetings from the 1st and 3rd Monday evening to the 2nd and 4th Monday evenings. (this will provide for an ordinance change and will take effect upon 2nd reading)

- b. Handbook grievance changes – Ms. Carter stated the handbook is due for a (5) year update. Ms. Carter stated the grievance policy is a matter of concern. Mayor Perry stated he did not think the Mayor should be the hearing officer and further stated he thought the policy was unclear. Council Member Lois Porter stated former administrators would set the grievance committee. Ms. Carter stated the committee is supposed to be a committee of peers.
 - Chief Elrod stated to Council that he was tasked with working on this handbook some years ago, and the attorney at the Municipal Association had concern with the members of council being the grievance committee. Ms. Carter stated she will have something back to Council in the Feb. meeting.
- c. City commitments and community events – Ms. Carter went over positive results from last year's events at the Doodle Market and Amphitheater. Council was informed of thoughts and events as the City goes into 2023.
- d. Stormwater Secona and Allgood Roads – Ms. Carter stated that she had been in discussions regarding the storm water issues within this area. Ms. Carter gave Council a description of the problems that are causing much hardship on property owners.

ADJOURN:

Hearing no further discussion, Mayor Perry called for the motion to adjourn. Motion was made by Council Member Isaiah Scipio, seconded by Council Member Patrick Lark, and unanimously passed. Pickens City Council stood adjourned at 8:15 p.m.

Respectfully Submitted:



Donna F. Owen, City Clerk

Approved:



Mayor Fletcher Perry