TOWN OF HEMINGWAY

MINUTES OF MEETING ON FEBRUARY 14, 2019

HEMINGWAY TOWN HALL AT 6:00 P.M.

**Present:**  George Sutton-Mayor Pro-Tem, Keith Baxley, Jimmy Chinnes, Doug Joy, Charlie Carter, Joseph Lee-Town Administrator, Samantha Lewis-Town Clerk, Chief Bryan Todd, Denise Santoro, Ken Laster-Public Works Director, Gregg Askins, Shamira McCray-Pee Dee Weekly, Dianne Owens-The News, Mike Hanna, Michael Henry, Latoria Lewis, Jeannie Brown-Burroughs, Michanda Williams. ABSENT: Mayor Grady Richardson and John Coker

The News and Florence Morning News were notified by email.

**Council Meeting was called to order at 6:00 p.m.**

**Invocation and Pledge of Allegiance**

**Mayor Pro-Tem Sutton called for an emergency executive session based on information that was just received prior to meeting and it was seconded by Mr. Chinnes and it carried unanimously. Mr. Carter made the motion to amend the agenda to include an executive session and it was seconded by Mr. Baxley and it carried unanimously. SECTION 30-4-70 (a) (1) DISCUSSION OF EMPLOYMENT, APPOINTMENT, COMPENSATION, PROMOTION, DEMOTION, DISCIPLINE, OR RELEASE OF AN EMPLOYEE, A STUDENT, OR A PERSON REGULATED BY A PUBLIC BODY OR THE APPOINTMENT OF A PERSON TO A PUBLIC BODY; HOWEVER, IF AN ADVERSARY HEARING INVOLVING THE EMPLOYEE OR CLIENT IS HELD, THE EMPLOYEE OR CLIENT HAS THE RIGHT TO DEMAND THAT THE HEARING BE CONDUCTED PUBLICLY. NOTHING CONTAINED IN THIS ITEM SHALL PREVENT THE PUBLIC BODY, IN ITS DISCRETION, FROM DELETING THE NAMES OF THE OTHER EMPLOYEES OR CLIENTS WHOSE RECORDS ARE SUBMITTED FOR USE AT THE HEARING. (THE IDENTITY OF THE INDIVIDUAL OR ENTITY BEING DISCUSSED IS NOT REQUIRED TO BE DISCLOSED.)**

**No actions or votes were taken in executive session.**

Mr. Askins, Town Attorney, took the floor to explain the emergency executive session. Mr. Askins stated that council was in receipt of a resignation letter from Councilman Coker effective February 15, 2019. There will be a special election. This election is setup by the Williamsburg County. Mr. Askins informed public that a letter of resignation from Mayor Richardson was just received prior to the meeting effective immediately. This will require a special election also. These two elections will most likely be at the same time. Mr. Sutton will now become the acting Mayor until the special election. He suggested council elect a Mayor Pro-Tem at this point. Mr. Sutton made the motion to elect Mr. Carter as Mayor Pro-Tem and it was seconded was seconded by Mr. Chinnes and it carried unanimously.

**Approval of Minutes:** Mr. Baxley made the motion to accept the minutes as written for January 10, 2019 and January 2, 2019 and it was seconded by Mr. Carter and it carried unanimously.

**Persons Appearing Before Council: Mayor Sutton read the rules for persons appearing before council. Latoria Lewis-Director of Boys & Girls Club** –Ms. Lewis thanked council for the support that the Town gives them. She handed out flyers that gave a quick shot of the past year’s progress. Brianna Williams was selected as Youth of the Year. She is in the top 5 of her class. She is in foster home. She plays basketball, track and volleyball. There is going to be an open house on March 12th from 4-7p.m. She invited council to come and see what they offer to the students. Mrs. Burroughs told council that all students who go to the Boys & Girls Club has an academic increase in their performances. She thanked council.

**Michanda Williams:** Ms. Williams stated she got a water bill that she feels that she shouldn’t have to pay. She lives at 220 Poston Street. She contacted the Town to cut her water off when she got her bill. She got a plumber and found that the leak was not on her property. It was at the store that was adjacent to her property. The water was disconnected and her bill went back down. She feels that she shouldn’t be responsible for this bill. Mr. Laster stated that she purchased the property in November and the previous owners had the water on the adjacent property hooked up through her meter. The water did go through her meter. Mr. Carter asked if she was aware of the other property being hooked up to her meter. She told Mr. Carter no she did not. Mr. Sutton told Ms. Williams that they would get together with Ken and Joe and decide what to do. Mr. Laster stated that the highest adjustment that can be given by the Town is $100 without council’s approval. Ms. Williams’ bill is over $800.00. **Denise Santoro:** Mrs. Santoro displayed a map of all the countries in the world. We need to be getting rid of illiteracy in the world. People are coming from all these countries to our country. She spoke with Tiffany Wright at the county office and she is going to have the book mobile go around to areas. The Boys & Girls Club is not getting all the children. She would like Town to put up slogans or signs about educating yourself. She is trying to get the Methodist churches involved also.

**Construction Update:** Mr. Lee stated that we should be in the new Town Hall around the second week in March. They got the windows in and the concrete poured this week. Next week they are going to start on the sheetrock. If any council would like to see it, stop by. Mr. Joy asked if they are through painting. Mr. Lee stated he didn’t think so. They are suppose to be coming back next week.

**Mike Hanna with Hanna Engineering: Water and Sewer Rate Analysis** Mr. Hanna was asked to do a follow up on the water and sewer rates. On page 2, it explains council’s responsibility for determining the water and sewer rates and if they are fair. These rates should be reviewed on an annual basis. The CPI index is generated by the US Department of Labor that may be used to determine the annual increase. MASC and RIA periodically publish a comparison of the water and sewer rates for municipalities to see where your municipality stands. An increase in 2019 is recommended at 4.19%. The predicted amount for next year will be 12.4%. Totalling 16.59% increase in the next two years. Council may want to consider splitting the increase amount among the two years. The table on page 14 shows in red the increase over the last 15 years for milk, gas, etc. to be 4.11%. Also the water and sewer rates are used for the blue line. An increase of 3.9% is projected for next year. The next 5 pages show where the Town rates are in comparison of other municipalities or utility customers. **Proposal for Stormwater Study:** Hanna Engineering is looking for funding for this project. There are 5 phases to start the scope. The total cost for the fives phases will be around $189,900. Council can decide to do all or each phase along and along. Mr. Carter asked Mr. Hanna if there is any kind of equation for residence to pay for the cost of the study. Mr. Hanna said that City of Florence has a charge. They have a residential and a commercial rate. Commercial rate is more due to the cement and run-off. The bids came in for the new well. They were well over $300,000. He is trying to get RIA and SIRF pooled together to get the ECA well finished. RDA grant will be a wait of 6 months to 1 year. Ken Laster stated that we are under consent order from DHEC for TMH. Mr. Hanna would like permission to go after grants and possibly an emergency EQUATE grant. He was told to continue what he is currently doing. Mayor Sutton thanked Mr. Hanna for his help and for the help of getting grants. Mr. Laster stated that we can’t sit on our hands with the consent order because we will be fined.

**Administrator’s Report: 1)** Mr. Lee asked if any council noticed the new lights in Town. They are a lot brighter. Mr. Baxley stated that he noticed. **2)** QS1 prints our taxes. We have checked with the county on collecting them next year. They can do them for $2.00 a tax notice. We had 771 tax notices last year. This includes property, boats and motors, furniture and fixtures, utilities, etc. This year we are paying around $3.71 per tax notice to prepare and mail. The county’s cost is $2.00 per notice. This will be a savings of over $1300.00. Mr. Lee is asking council to allow him to talk with county about taking over the collection of our taxes. Mr. Carter asked how long will the availability of funds be tied up. Mrs. Lewis stated that at the present time, the county collects our vehicle taxes and we are issued a check once a month along with a bill for the collection. **3)** Mr. Lee stated that there are a few items that we may need to purchase for the new building. He would like permission to use hospitality funds. Mr. Sutton asked what do we need to do to give you permission. Mr. Carter stated that we have already discussed that it is legal to use these funds. Mr. Carter made the motion for the Town Administrator to use whatever funds necessary also includes hospitality funds to pay the bills. It was seconded by Mr. Chinnes and it carried unanimously.

**Old Business:** No old business was discussed.

Council meeting was adjourned at 7:35 p.m.

Sincerely

Samantha Lewis

Town Clerk