TOWN OF HEMINGWAY

MINUTES OF MEETING ON JANUARY 9, 2019

 110 SOUTH MAIN STREET AT 6:00 P.M.

**Present:** Mayor John Michael Collins, George Sutton-Mayor Pro-Tem, Keith Baxley, Charlie Carter, Jimmy Chinnes, Solomon Lewis, Bennett Cox, Joseph Lee-Town Administrator, Samantha Lewis-Town Clerk, Gregg Askins, Denise Santoro, Edith Redden, Tammy Wilkes,

Sha'Teira Fulton, Robert Bell and Greg Glisson

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

**Invocation and Pledge of Allegiance**

**Approval of Minutes of Meeting:** Approval of minutes of meetings for December 12, 2019 was motioned by Mr. Sutton and it was seconded by Mr. Carter and it carried unanimously.

**Persons Appearing Before Council:** Mayor Collins read the procedures for addressing council.

A) Ms. Santoro asked Mr. Lee if he had read the information that she left last month. Mr. Lee stated that he has not read the material. Mr. Lee stated that she lives in the county and she needs to go to them. Ms. Santoro stated that she is going to the county and also Johnsonville. Ms. Santoro stated that everyone should be educated on how a courtroom is ran. It’s their right. She stated that she is very disappointed. She stated that we have a lot of illiteracy in our community. She asked about if we are prepared for a threat about war. Do we have any pamphlets on how to keep our community safe? We need to have a plan in place if something were to happen. Mr. Lee stated that he will meet with her during the day on Friday or Monday.

**Old Business:** A) Mr. Sutton stated that it is National Police Appreciation Day. He would like to thank Chief Todd and all his staff for the hard work that they do to keep our community safe.

**Edith Redden-Voter’s Registration:** Ms. Redden is asking council to change the election date for council members to odd years. Right now, the Town of Hemingway is on an even year election. This year our election falls on the same year as the presidential election. When you have several elections that are greater than the Town’s it doesn’t get the turn out that it should. She would like for all the towns and cities of Williamsburg County to be on the same date. The Town of Kingstree and the Town of Stuckey is has changed to odd years. The Town of Lanes is in the process of changing to the same date. This will be cost efficient for Hemingway. Some of the cost will be divided among the Towns. This will help them give all the attention that the election will need to Hemingway in a timely manner. This would also increase the voter turnout for this election. Mr. Carter stated that since our election is set for July this year, will we extend the terms to next year which is an odd year. Ms. Redden stated that it would have to be figured out with your lawyer. Mr. Askins then spoke and said that he feels that extending the years will be illegal and he would have to look into it. He is thinking that they would have to shorten the next two terms to get it on the correct cycle. The Town would have to amend their ordinance. When the council is going to change the ordinance, they need to decide on the swearing in time of them to take office. Mr. Chinnes stated that it makes good sense to do it. Mr. Baxley made the motion to change the voting from even to odd year and it was seconded by Mr. Lewis and it carried unanimously.

**Shag Festival Hospitality Request:** Mayor Collins stated that the Shag Festival will be the last weekend in March. Mr. Carter asked why they changed the date. Mayor Collins stated they are going to try to keep it on the last weekend of March due to each year they had to change the date in April due to Easter and the rain that is in April. The ride company is tired of bogging down and cost to get pulled out. The electrical cords get wet and they fear someone getting hurt. The vendors also complain of the weather and muddy area to get in and out of the one gate. They are asking $13,000 this year from the Town. They asked for $10,000 last year but the county is not going to be able to donate their $3,000 they usually give. Mr. Carter asked if drainage and removal of the fences will help with the festival. Mayor Collins stated that the committee would like to meet with council concerning the removal of the back two fences of the ballfields. Mr. Lee stated that the only regulated field is the middle field. Mr. Carter asked when was the last time that a tame has been played on those fields. Mr. Lee stated that he just wanted council to be aware of it. Mayor Collins stated that removing the two fences for the back two fields would make it a better fair ground area. The ditches need to be cleaned out to help with the drainage. Mr. Carter stated that he has friends from Georgetown and areas coming in for the festival and can’t even walk around for the mud. Mr. Lee stated that is why we are applying for a grant, but we must do a study before. Hanna Engineering is working on the study at this time. Mr. Carter stated that this needs to be done. Mr. Sutton stated that we need to get the ditches cleaned out because his air conditioner is in water when it rains a lot. Mr. Lewis stated that beavers may be the problem. You have to kill the beavers, or they will keep building the dams. Mr. Lee told Mayor Collins that the Shag Festival still owes the town money and Mayor Collins said we will get it. Mr. Carter stated that the festival has been around for 32 years and it is a light on Hemingway. We need to make it the best we can. Attorney Askins said that a hydrologist needs to be hired for this and they are extremely expensive. They will also help you write a grant. Mayor Collins stated that he spoke with Senator Sabb and he stated that there is $157 million for six counties in grants. Mr. Lee stated that we are looking at that also. Mr. Carter made the motion to give the Shag Committee the $13,000 and it was seconded by Mr. Cox. Mr. Baxley stated that he opposed the action. Mr. Baxley asked why we have to make up the $3,000 that the county can’t do. Mr. Lewis stated that Hemingway would pay $10,000 but the county can’t pay. Mr. Chinnes stated that we went up to $10,000 last year from $8,000. Mr. Sutton stated that he just doesn’t know if we can do that much. Mr. Baxley stated that he wants a complete financial statement. He asks this every year and still hasn’t received it. Mayor Collins stated that he gave council receipts for the $10,000 that was spent. Mayor Collins stated that they have nothing to hide. Mr. Baxley stated that he didn’t want receipts for the $10,000, he wants a complete financial statement with details. Mr. Baxley stated that he would abstain from the vote. Mr. Baxley said we need to know exactly what is spent. Mayor Collins stated that they didn’t ask the Boys and Girls Club for a financial statement when they gave them money. Attorney Askins stated that an ordinance was passed on the hospitality tax and they need to revisit the ordinance to see what the procedure is. Mayor Collins stated that they can bring it back up at the next meeting. Mr. Carter withdrew his motion and Mr. Cox withdrew his second.

**Administrator’s Report:** a) Mr. Lee stated that the trash company is asking all residents and business to place their trash cans a certain way to have. b) Open house for the new Town Hall is going to be January 29th from 5:00-7:00 p.m. We will have food and drinks. Mr. Chinnes stated that he feels that all council members should attend.

**Executive Session: 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.**

Mr. Sutton made the motion to go into executive session and it was seconded by Mr. Carter and it carried unanimously.

No actions or votes were taken in executive session.

Mr. Baxley made the motion to pay the Public Works Director for vacation days that wasn’t used. This is a one-time deal. It was seconded by Mr. Chinnes. Mr. Carter stated that the Town was at fault for not having a certified person to check the wells. The Town will have a backup in place as soon as possible. It carried unanimously.

Meeting was adjourned at 7:45 p.m.

Sincerely

Samantha Lewis

Town Clerk