TOWN OF HEMINGWAY

MINUTES OF MEETING ON JULY 11, 2019

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

**Present:**  Mayor John Michael Collins, George Sutton-Mayor Pro-Tem, Keith Baxley, Jimmy Chinnes, Solomon Lewis, Bennett Cox, Joseph Lee-Town Administrator, Samantha Lewis-Town Clerk, Chief Bryan Todd, Ken Laster-Public Works Director, Jonathan Laster, Dale Johnson, Veronica Elliott, Officer Michael Mouzon, Greg Glisson, Kendall & Deneise Washington, Robert Bell, Michanda Williams, Shamira McCray-Newspaper, Shamika Gibbs, James Pasley Absent: Charlie Carter

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

**Invocation and Pledge of Allegiance**

**Approval of Minutes:** Mr. Sutton made the motion to accept the minutes as written for June 13, 2019 and it was seconded by Mr. Baxley and it carried unanimously.

**Election of Mayor Pro-Tem:** Mr. Chinnes nominated Mr. Sutton for Mayor Pro-Tem. No other nominations were made. Mr. Baxley made the motion to closed nominations it was seconded by Mr. Chinnes. All were in favor of Mr. Sutton becoming Mayor Pro-Tem and it carried unanimously.

**Persons Appearing Before Council: Dale Johnson-**Mr. Johnson congratulated Mayor Collins on his win. Mr. Johnson stated that he did this fundraiser as a non-profit. He was overwhelmed by what happened and took place. He asked Veronica Elliott to head up the fundraiser. He stated that he was only the cook. He stated that he learned a lot from the mistakes and wants it to continue to be an annual event. He wants it to be the third Friday in February. The committee did a wonderful and the citizens were great. Everything was donated for the fundraiser. No money was spent to purchase supplies, food, etc. Theresa and Veronica did a wonderful job. Veronica stated that all the people that volunteered to help was overwhelming. She is a resident of this town and loves it here. She was willing to support the police and the town. She stated that when Dale came up with this idea, she was skeptical because Johnsonville did such a wonderful job. She stated that she set a mental goal of $5,000. There were big contributors such as Anderson Brothers Bank and Tupperware. She didn’t want to name them because she didn’t want to leave anyone out. She stated that she had business that sells prepared food selling tickets for the fundraiser. It wasn’t as much as outside citizens, but our in-town citizens showed up to support the Police Department. She called the Williamsburg County Sheriff’s office and spoke with the sheriff. He came and showed his support. She stated that she was proud to be part of the fundraiser. She thanked everyone and they presented a check to Mayor Collins and Chief Todd in the amount of $9,000.

**Old Business: 1)** There was no old business discussed.

**James Pasley-Executive Director of Waccamaw Economic Opportunity:** Mr. Pasley was not in attendance but Shamika Gibbs spoke on his behalf. She is the assistant director. She stated that they are going to do a Donnelly redevelopment project. They are going to meet with Donnelly residents and get feed back from the. She would like the Town of Hemingway and Williamsburg County to partner with them to improve that community. \* Mr. Pasley showed up and was allowed to speak to council after the Administrator’s Report.

**Bluegrass Festival:** Mayor Collins stated that the Bluegrass Festival folder was handed over to him at the last meeting. Mayor Richardson was over the prior festivals and he has passed it on. Mayor Collins stated that his heart isn’t into it and he has his own festival that he puts on. He realizes that the cost of the festival is high and not a lot of attendance. Mr. Baxley stated that he doesn’t feel that we need to spend this kind of money for the attendance that this festival receives. He states that it is not feasible. He stated that he is not against a festival, but we are spending taxpayer’s money and don’t think that this is the best thing to do. Mayor Collins stated that he has been coming to the festival for several years and it is slowly growing but the bluegrass music isn’t drawing the crowds. He stated that maybe we need a music festival, fall festival or something else. Mr. Lee stated that he could get 2 to 3 people and see what they come up with. Mr. Baxley stated that he just wants it to be worth the money. Mayor Collins stated that this festival is in October and if we are going to do something, we need to get the ball rolling.

**Timeline for Swearing in Council Members:** Mayor Collins stated that nowhere in the ordinance does it state the timeline for swearing in new council members. There were issues brought up on social media and Samantha needs a timeline. Mr. Lee stated that the results are certified in two days, but the protest and appeal time can take up to 10 days or more. Mr. Lee stated that it should at least be 10 days out from the certification by the County. Mr. Sutton told Mr. Lee to let Mr. Askins (town attorney) research it and see what he comes up with.

**Administrator’s Report: 1)** The tennis courts are getting cracks in them. We are getting bids for the repairs from the company. Mr. Lee feels that we need to take care of these issues because we spent a lot of money in the tennis courts. 2) There are several roofs that need to be replaced on the fields. He is obtaining bids and will present to council before doing anything. 3) We are having issues at one of our pump stations. The generator isn’t working. He asked Mr. Laster to elaborate on this. Mr. Laster stated that the generator is over 30 years old and we crank them every month. Field mice has gotten into the one at Flannigan Pump Station and has messed it up. We are no longer able to get parts for the generator. We are trying to use parts off of another generator, but it still isn’t working. We are down two generators and hurricane season is approaching. We can’t afford to be without one. He stated that we are still trying to see what we can do. To replace the skid one, it will be around $30,000 and the mobile one is double that price. This is a pressing issue. Mr. Baxley asked what is the basics that we need to run. Mr. Laster stated we need two stationary generators. Mr. Lewis stated that if a hurricane comes, the bigger cities get the first of the generators before the small towns. Mr. Baxley stated that he doesn’t like to rent anything. We need to look for grants to help fund this. Mr. Laster stated that it will take 10-12 weeks to have it delivered. Their floor models are available for immediate delivery but cost additional $5000. Mr. Laster stated that we need to have a rental unit until we can get one here to carry us over the hurricane season. Mr. Lee stated that they will get figures together and hand deliver them to council. We can call an emergency meeting to make an educated decision. Mr. Baxley stated that we need to move quickly on this. 4)Water Rates: In 2018 we went up 12% on the water and sewer rates. We got loans from RDA that we must pay back. The water revenue is ok, but the sewer revenue is in the red. We need to purchase these generators, vehicles, etc. to keep the systems running. The chart that was given to council reflects the 8% or the 14% rate increase based on 5,000 gallons. Currently the water rate is $27.80 for in town residents and 8% will be $30.02 and 14% will be $31.69. In February Hanna Engineering presented the rate study with the needs that need to be met. This included water/sewer rate increase. These rates will be across the board for all users. We have a big sewer rehab project that is going to cost $3-5 million. Some of that will be grant but the rest is loan. We have a new well that we are working on getting funding to help with the consent order the TMHs. We have an older system in town, but we must do something to maintain them. Mr. Baxley stated that we didn’t’ raise rates for many years and now we are going to have to play catch up. Our grants depend on our water rates. If we can’t get grants then we can’t keep the systems going. If we keep the rates at the smallest increase, we will have to keep revisiting this. If we do the highest, then the next time we increase it will be at a lower rate. Mr. Lee stated that we will have to have a public hearing and two readings to increase the rates.

\*Mr. Pasley is now present and allowed to speak to council. Mr. Pasley sated that he is the CEO of Williamsburg, Georgetown and Horry County. Mr. Pasley stated that they are going to do a redevelopment project in the Donnelly area. This project will help address some issues to improve health and safety in this area. Older folks have died or moved out and now it is mostly rental property. People don’t take care of rental property. Improving the safety and quality of the area is their focus. This project will last 3-5 years. They need partners to help with letters of support and obtaining funding for grants. He is asking Town of Hemingway to be a partner in the development. He isn’t asking for financial support but to provide assistance. He feels that this project will bring people together. They will have a meeting with residents and see what they feel is the problem and what are the solutions. Mr. Lee asked if when will this begin. Mr. Pasley stated in the fall. They will have a kick-off with a picnic and the partners will be present. Part of this project is to give them the skills to improve themselves. They will have to put in some labor. This is the first project that his agency will take on like this. He asks if the Town will be a partner. Mr. Lee told Mr. Pasley to keep us informed. Mr. Pasley stated that the partner letter hasn’t been drafted yet but will submit it to them for review.

Mr. Baxley made the motion to adjourn the meeting and it was seconded by Mr. Cox and it carried unanimously. Meeting was adjourned at 7:10 p.m.

Sincerely

Samantha Lewis

Town Clerk