

**BARNWELL COUNTY COUNCIL**  
**October 13, 2015**  
**Council Meeting Minutes**

Pursuant to the Freedom of Information Act, the news media was notified & notice was posted 24 hours prior to the meeting.

Barnwell County Council met on October 13, 2015 at 6 pm. Attending were Chairman David Kenner, Vice Chairman Keith Sloan, Councilman Harold Buckmon, Councilman Jerry Creech, Councilman Freddie Houston Sr., Councilman Lowell Jowers Sr., Councilman Joe Smith, Administrator Pickens Williams Jr., County Attorney JD Mosteller, and Clerk to Council Kim Futrell. Also in attendance were Stuart MacVean, Dr. Bill Nolnar, Kirk Broom, Michael Patterson, Jim Gambrell and Laura McKenzie with the People Sentinel.

**Call to Order, Invocation, Declaration of a Quorum, Approval of Agenda & Minutes, Welcome & Public Comments**  
The meeting was called to order, the invocation given and a quorum declared. A motion was made to approve the agenda. The motion was seconded and it passed. A motion was made to approve the minutes for the September 8<sup>th</sup> and September 15<sup>th</sup> Council meetings. The motion was seconded and it passed. Chairman Kenner welcomed everyone to the meeting and asked for public comments. There were none.

**Updates**

Savannah River Remediation

President Stuart MacVean said the SRR had been awarded a 6 year contract by the DOE for waste cleanup at the SRS and that the contract had been extended 2 years to 2017. SRR employed 2,100 employees, with 150 being Barnwell County residents and its focus was on safety in managing waste tank space, treating/dispositioning waste, and closing waste tanks.

Lower Savannah Council of Governments

Director Dr. Molnar reviewed the various programs that the LSCOG was involved in, such as the Workforce Center, Family Caregivers Support, Rural Elderly Transportation, Long Term Care Facilities and block grant projects. Amanda Sievers was working on a 5 year update of the Hazard Mitigation Plan and Tourism Director, Mary Keisler for Thoroughbred Country would be touring various attractions in Barnwell County with two members of the National Travel Media.

Pruitt Nursing Home

Administrator Kirk Broom said Pruitt Health operated 94 nursing homes with 16 being in SC and was rated a 5 star facility by Medicaid. Although still a long term care facility, Pruitt was focusing more on short term care and rehabilitation.

Southern Palmetto Hospital

Administrator, Michael Patterson said SC had approved the "Transformation Plan" in 2014 which set aside monies to help rural hospitals and that Southern Palmetto had entered into an agreement with the SC Office of Rural Health to develop a transformation plan to assist the hospital in building a sustainable health care system in the community.

Economic Development Commission

Jim Gambrell, the EDC's Interim Director, said a company which was investing in solar farms in SC and NC was interested in investing \$56,000,000 in 6 parcels of land located in the City of Barnwell, the Town of Blackville and Barnwell County. At present, the 6 parcels were generating approximately \$2,000 property taxes yearly. The fees from the solar farms would generate \$79,000 yearly but would not generate employment. Additionally, the Company was requesting a FILOT at a tax rate of 6% and a 20 year special source revenue credit which would further reduce the tax rate. Mr. Gambrell said that both he and Administrator Williams were not inclined to accept the company's terms without further negotiations but were more concerned that if the farms were ever decommissioned, the County would be burdened financially to clean up the properties. Mr. Gambrell said language would need to be included in the ordinance, such as requiring a bond be posted or a reserve account be set up to protect the County should that happen. Before proceeding, he wanted to know if Council was interested in having solar farms in the County. Council expressed interest but said that there needed to be some negotiating in the terms and language would need to be included in the ordinance to protect the County from financial burden should the sites be decommissioned.

Administrator

Administrator Williams said that he and Roger Riley had attended a meeting regarding receiving a \$100,000 Hazard Mitigation grant for a generator for the replacement jail building and that it was likely the grant would be approved. He and Roger had also met with the State Emergency Management Division regarding PAX ice storm expense reimbursements from FEMA. Pumper testing would be performed on October 23<sup>rd</sup> and 24<sup>th</sup> and the County should have an updated ISO rating soon. Rainbow Drive was nearly complete except for a few billing items with the contractor. The clearing on the Williston Road Project was about 85% complete. There was a bid opening for the striping project and a contractor had been selected. Several bids had been received regarding the RFP to paint the Ag Building.

Committee Reports

Science Tech. & Reg. Matters, SCRDA, Healthcare, Finance, Personnel, and Housing

There were no reports for the above Committees.

Financial Update

Administrator Williams reviewed the financial report for August.

Boards & Commissions

Axis 1	Appointment of Conner Parker for District 45, Seat 3 – term expiring 2018
Library Board	Nomination of Carol Padgett for District 4 (residing in District 6)
Recycling Committee	Appointment of Ericka McKnight for District 4 (residing in District 2) – term expiring 2017

Government

Chairman Kenner said a meeting would be scheduled soon and that everything with Orchids was proceeding well.

Judicial

Councilman Buckmon said construction on the replacement jail had begun. Bids had been received for determining needed Courthouse repairs and a contractor had been chosen. Councilman Jowers said he had seen pictures of the damage to the Courthouse and believed it would be a good idea to schedule a time so that the public could view the pictures to fully understand the amount of damage needing to be repaired.

Services

Councilman Buckmon thanked Vice Chairman Sloan and Administrator Williams in securing a place to store the recycling containers to be used at the November 14<sup>th</sup> Recycling Day Event. Several containers were being repaired so they could be placed at the schools. Councilman Houston said it had been brought up during a 3 Rivers meeting, that many of the Counties which had been involved in recycling were now having difficulty in its disposal. Councilman Buckmon said the focus of the recycling program was going to be on cardboard, not on glass or plastic, due to its being easier to store. Councilman Smith said that the company which was formerly Climax Global would begin operations soon and said they would be using 7 tons of plastic in a 24 hour period. This would include television casings, car bumpers, etc. and would be an excellent source for the County to dispose of the plastics stored at the Landfill. Vice Chairman Sloan said the Citizens for Nuclear Technology Awareness had an opportunity to earn a matching grant with the deadline of October 31<sup>st</sup>. He asked that Council, as a show of support to the CNTA, make a small donation of \$200 to assist with the grant match. Councilman Smith moved for approval of a \$200 donation to the CNTA to assist with the grant match. Councilman Creech seconded the motion and it passed.

Economic Development

Councilman Smith said, it was still in the planning and solicitation stage, but a company was looking at land in the Blackville Park and the Elkay property had been approved to be transferred back to them. A new part time employee, Pam Nobles, was hired to assist Jim Gambrell at the EDC.

Transportation

Councilman Smith said Rainbow Drive was nearly complete. Paving had already begun on the Williston Road Project. Quotes were needed on the engineering layout for the Kimberwick Project.

Safety

Councilman Creech said that there was an ongoing disagreement between the Fire Department and Medshore regarding 1<sup>st</sup> responders. There was discussion regarding complaints from the citizens concerning slow response time.

**New Business**

1<sup>st</sup> Reading of an Ordinance Related to Joint County Industrial Park with Aiken County

This Ordinance was read in name only.

1<sup>st</sup> Reading of a Flood Damage Prevention Ordinance

This Ordinance was read in name only.

Line of Credit for Generations Unlimited

Generations Unlimited Director, Lisa Firmender, explained that Generations Unlimited has a good cash flow and while she doubted they would ever need to use it, a credit line of \$100,000 would be helpful as a safety net as their budget is reimbursement based. Because many of the grants they receive require matches, excess cash flow needed to be available when necessary. The credit line of \$100,000 did not exceed the amount already budgeted for Generations Unlimited for FY '15-'16. Council raised concerns that the \$100,000 would affect the County's bond limit as it would be considered possible debt that the County could incur. Because it was within the County's budget, Councilman Houston moved to approve allowing a credit line, provided that prior authorization is received from the County Administrator before utilizing it. Councilman Buckmon seconded the motion and it passed.

A motion was made to enter into Executive Session. The motion was seconded and it passed.

**Executive Session**

No action was taken in Executive Session.

**Open Session**

A motion was made to adjourn. The motion was seconded and it passed.

The meeting adjourned at 9:30 pm.

Respectfully submitted,

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Kim Futrell, Clerk of Council

  
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David Kenner, Council Chair