

**BARNWELL COUNTY COUNCIL**  
**June 2, 2016**  
**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 for a Special Called Council meeting on June 2, 2016 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., and Clerk to Council Kim Futrell. Also present were Melinda Merrill with the SC Office of Rural Health (SCORH), Sarah Hughes and Josh Berlin with Dixon Hughes Goodman (DHG) Healthcare, various members of the Medical Care Advisory Team, and Laura McKenzie with the People Sentinel.

The meeting was called to order, the invocation given, a quorum declared and the agenda was approved. Chairman Kenner welcomed everyone and asked for public comments. There were none.

Sarah Hughes said the SCORH worked in partnership with the SC Hospital Association and the State Department of Health and Human Services to evaluate the healthcare needs in SC rural communities. Prior to the closing of Southern Palmetto Hospital, the SCORH had been working with Josh Berlin and Sarah Hughes with the DHG to assess the community's healthcare needs particularly as they related to the stability of the hospital. Despite the hospital's closing, the State had given special permission for the DHG to continue in their assessment to help in providing their recommendations on potential models and partnerships that might be feasible for the County to pursue.

Josh Berlin discussed the possibility of partnering with a hospital in one of the surrounding counties to have an emergency facility located in Barnwell County as well as the status of the situation with the current lien holders of the hospital.

Council, Mr. Berlin, and members of the Medical Care Advisory Team discussed the condition of the hospital and the probability that DHEC would not allow the hospital to reopen without substantial renovations to bring it up to code, the inability to move forward with any type of facility without the certificate of need which was being retained by the hospital's lien holders, the possibility of receiving grant money to build a new facility and the likelihood of the hospital's lien holders re-opening the hospital using a portion for an emergency facility and the expiration date of the certificate of need.

Council concurred that the County needed to move forward expeditiously considering all possible options as an emergency facility was very much needed and the deadline for the DHG to complete their study was June 30<sup>th</sup>.

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

The meeting adjourned at 7:46 pm.

Respectfully submitted,



Kim A. Futrell, Clerk to Council



David Kenner, Council Chairman

