

Ronnie Pernell, Mayor

Miles Loadholt
Town Attorney

Ray Crawford
Police Chief

Earthel Walker
Fire Chief

Regina S. Ashba
Town Clerk



Council
Kelvin Isaac
M. Ann Pernell
Frederick B. (Fred) Orr
Allen Harrison
Frenchie Smalls
Enterick Lee

Town of Blackville
Regular Town Council Meeting
Blackville Town Hall
5983 Lartigue Street
Blackville, South Carolina

Minutes
Monday April 17, 2023

The regular monthly meeting of the Town of Blackville's Town Council was called to order by Mayor Ronnie Pernell at 6:30 p.m. on Monday, April 17, 2023, at the Blackville Community Center.

Next Agenda Item: Invocation

Mayor Pernell asked Councilman Orr to give the Invocation.

Next Agenda Item: Roll call

Mayor Pernell asked for roll call to be given by Regina Ashba, Town Clerk. Mayor Ronnie Pernell, present. Councilmembers Present: Kelvin Isaac, M. Ann Pernell, Frederick B. (Fred) Orr, Allen Harrison, Mayor Pro Tem, Frenchie Smalls and Enterick Lee.

In accordance with the South Carolina Code of Laws 1976-30-4-80 (e) as amended the following were notified of the meeting: The Barnwell People Sentinel, The Times and Democrat, and Town Attorney, Miles Loadholt.

Next Agenda Item: Approval of Agenda

Mayor Pernell asked for a motion to approve the agenda. There was a motion by Councilmember Isaac with a second by Councilmember M. Ann Pernell to approve the agenda as presented.

For: All

Against: None

Next Agenda Item: Approval of Minutes

TOWN OF BLACKVILLE

5983 L'Artigue Street • Blackville, South Carolina 29817 • Phone (803) 284-2444 • Fax (803) 284-3243

Mayor Pernell asked for a motion to accept the minutes from Monday, March 20, 2023 - Regular Meeting. There was a motion by Councilmember Isaac, with a second by Councilmember Orr to accept the minutes from the March 20, 2023 -Regular Meeting. Mayor Pernell asked if there was any discussion. There was no discussion.

For: All

Against: None

Next Agenda Item: Financials

The mayor stated that we will start meetings tomorrow to work on the budget. Mayor Pernell asked for a motion to accept the financial report. There was a motion by Mayor Pro Tem Smalls with a second by Councilmember Pernell to accept the financials as submitted. Mayor Pernell asked if there was any discussion. There was no discussion.

For: All

Against: None

Next Agenda Item: Business

a. First Reading of Ordinance 2023.02-Local Revenue Service Program

The mayor stated that council is required by the state to pass this program according to Act 176. They're certain business license taxes that we are not allowed to collect, ourselves. A branch of the Municipal Association collects and then disburses to us. They have been rebranded as LRS, Local Revenue Services and renamed the services ITP for Insurance Tax Program, BTP for Brokers Tax Program and TTP for Telecommunications Tax Program. As a result of the rebranding, we are required by the state to update our ordinance with the Municipal Association. Basically, we are updating our ordinance to show changes that was made by the Municipal Association. The mayor asked if there was any discussion. There was none. Councilmember Isaac made a motion to accept the first reading of the LRS ordinance with a second by Mayor Pro Tem Smalls.

For: All

Against: None

- b.** New Town Hall – We did get the approval of two million dollars to erect a new town hall. We wanted to put it where the old gas station is, but just got news today that it has been sold to another party within the county. We are reaching out to them to see if they are willing to sell it back to the town and we are waiting to hear back from them. We met with the LSCOG, Lower Savannah Council of Governments, today and we were looking for a secondary spot. We were looking at the old manufacturing building next to the Shamrock. The only challenge there is we own the property to the right of Russell's Pizza but the property to the left is owned by Mr. Boyd. We need to

acquire that property. We have reached out hoping he will be willing to negotiate with us or even willing to donate the property to the town. We are waiting to hear back from the county on funding. We are still going through the process and Miss. Regina has submitted the paperwork to the county. The mayor asked if there were any questions. There were none.

c. Remodeling of the Community Center-

Mayor Pernell stated that the contract for the community center had been awarded to Clarence Felder Construction. We have a three-phase contract. First phase-redo main area of floor, kitchen, foyer and walls. Second phase-bathrooms and third Phase is the exterior. The bid we received was much higher than we allocated, but still the work that needed to be done. We plan to reallocate some ARP funds to help with the first phase. Then we will evaluate what we need to do to update the facility.

Clarence has started and his concern was with the flooring. He suggested we just leave the concrete instead of going back with laminate flooring and have to keep replacing it over and over. We can leave the concrete with the slick finish with epoxy over it. The mayor asked for comments from council and their approval to proceed. Councilmember Lee asked if we had a projected amount for the cost. The mayor stated we did not bring it with us and not to quote us, but the first phase is over \$200,000.00. I'm a believer that if we are going to do something, do it right, even if it has to be done in phases. The mayor stated that we are going to extend the stage out about two feet and make the stage easier to access with the stairs. Councilmember Harrison stated that the floor with the epoxy will be more easy to maintain than the wood flooring. Councilmember Lee asked if all this was coming from ARPA and the mayor replied, "yes". The mayor stated that he tries to be transparent and we had talked about reallocating some of the ARP funds to this project. We are expecting some funds to come in for the waste water that will compensate for the waste water. We should be hearing something from that in May and also with the penny sales tax and with the potential Ways and Means Committee funds that I applied for. I'm hoping that will compensate for some of the stuff that we are moving around. The mayor asked if there were any other questions, there were none.

d. Mr. Bob Snead with Southern Palmetto Chamber and Foundation- Mayor Pernell stated that he met with Mr. Snead this morning and he explained to him, better, the food-based program and has him better sold on it than he was before.

- Propel Business Lab Program- Mr. Snead stated that the next deadline is tomorrow for the business accelerator program. It's a twelve-week course for those who want to start a business or for those who already have a business but want to retool. It covers Business Management, Planning, Financial Management and Marketing. There's a pitch competition at the end for a \$10,000.00 funding to help start your business. We just gave away our first funding, one to a Barnwell based business and one to an Allendale based business. You can check our social media page for that.

Potential Blackville Food- Based Business Accelerator-We are currently working on a proposal of a Food-Based Business Accelerator. We thought the old Chinese place would be a good fit. We were exploring what the relationship could be. We have an interest in this, our business accelerator program has four businesses for possible use. We are modeling this after the program in Colleton County, where a food-based business can utilize the kitchen to create their cuisine, sauces or jarring and use a DHEC approved kitchen. A different business would use the counter each day

of the week to serve lunch. You can go into the kitchen and support a small business and also try a unique cuisine, not only would it bring tourism to the area but also drive businesses to the area., like caterers, food trucks or another business that can utilize the kitchen. Colleton County has just under 60 food trucks that utilize the area. Also, just to let you know, we are exploring other areas just in case you say no. We looked at it today and I feel like it is the perfect space especially for the back end to be redeveloped for receiving goods and parking and space for food trucks. Looking at how this works, we would ultimately rent the space from the town and provide y'all with income. We would then work on the planning and redevelopment and programming for the project. There is a grant coming up on May 2nd, that will work on the planning phase of the project. If that is successful then we would move on to the redevelopment of the space and then programming. All of those are grant funded and we would work to find a match and do all of the core development of that project. The mayor stated, we have a lot of caterers in our area, that you see online trying to operate their business from home, which is not the ideal space. This would give them a legitimate way to operate and get out of their home. Hopefully, that will encourage them to say, hey, we have this building to use and there is no excuse not to use it. If not, I guess they are willing to risk their home which is against DHEC regulations anyway. We also have food trucks and people that want to start up food trucks. Mayor Pernell asked Mr. Snead if he was correct in understanding, that we are still planning on putting a restaurant there as well, where people can still come in and sit down and eat. This would be in conjunction with the restaurant. The mayor stated he thought this would be a win-win situation for everybody. If all else fails we still have people that are interested in setting up a business there, so we are still going to pursue those ideas as well. The people who potentially want to set up businesses, are not wanting to go through this process. We are still open to those ideas as well. The mayor asked if there were any questions. There were none. Mayor Pernell thanked Mr. Snead for his presentation.

Next Agenda Item: Public Comments

Mr. Steve Brant stated that him and his wife moved here from Oregon about a year ago. He wanted to thank Mrs. Fonda Patrick for organizing the clean up on Saturday. Unfortunately, the only ones to show up were, Mrs. Patrick and him and his wife. He said to him, living in a small town, the positive thing was you can show spirit, you can have some influence and make some changes in the town. I was a little disappointed. We need more people helping and he thinks we need to do it at least once a month. It only takes one to one and a half hours, so its not taking a big chunk of your day. The mayor thanked Mr. Brant and stated that him and his wife were sick and he called Fonda, disappointed. The mayor stated we are trying to hit all the areas in town. Hopefully, it will get better. The mayor stated that hopefully at the next coordinated meeting we will have some council members and others out there to help clean up the town. Councilmember Pernell stated that her and Councilmember Lee were at the airport for an event with the sheriff's department, otherwise she would have been there. Mr. Brant stated that's why he thought it would be good to have a set time with a certain day and time each month and everyone would know when it is, and he knows that everyone will not make it every time. Terrence Washington reminded everyone of the Music and Arts Festival on May 19th and 20th. and invited everyone out. The mayor stated that he met with Mr. Washington today too. It sounds like it's going to be a big event and we wanted to make sure we have everything set up with the police department, town workers and insurance. The mayor stated that the purpose of any event is to draw people in and see what the town has to offer. He stated that he was meeting and having lunch with someone from Denmark Tech. the

other day and a couple from Utah overheard their conversation. They heard that he was the mayor and told him they were passing through but were thinking about moving here, if he could find the right job. That just shows you what the town has to offer, when you have people from other towns coming in from Oregon, New York and now Utah. Mr. Cook said that with the talk of the new town hall and the renovations of the community center, he noticed there was another break on the water line on South Boundary Street again. He stated he is still dealing with water purity. He filled his granddaughter's pool up yesterday and the water looked like swamp water, coming out of the faucet. He asked with all the money being spent, what is the update on the water system? The mayor stated that the money is allocated in certain situations. The two million dollars for town hall can only be spent for town hall. We cannot use that for anything else. Mr. Cook asked, wouldn't water be an issue? The mayor stated that he has already said, we have applied for a grant that we should hear something from next month. Once we receive something, then we will come up with a plan. Mr. Cook stated he has been there for four years. The mayor said he has only been in office for ten months, you've got to give me some time. It doesn't happen overnight. The water system is something that cost a lot of money. Once we get the money then we will see where we can best utilize it. Mr. Cook stated four years is a long time and the break has been fixed four times, you could have replaced the pipe. The mayor stated that he cannot account for what has happened in the last 3-4 years. He can only say what we are trying to do now. Mrs. Shelly Khatodd stated there was mention about a code enforcement officer in the past, is there any update on that? She said I know we have people moving in but if we are not keeping up what we already have here, then it's kind of off balance. The mayor stated that like everything, it cost money and he thinks, people think that Blackville has an unlimited amount of funds, which is not even close. We are barely able to keep our town workers and police officers now. Right now, we are going through the budget and seeing what it will allow. This is my first time going through the budget. We start going through the budget tomorrow and some things, we will have to prioritize. We have an overview and we will have to make the best call. Shawnta Harrison asked, in relation to the Community Forum, if we have a master list or if something could be made up of the services that are offered. It would be ideal to use social media to inform others who have questions or concerns. The mayor said he would ask Fonda to look into this. He also stated that not to be ugly, but those who ask these things won't go to the page or meetings. They could go sometimes. Social media is good but the ignorance of the community is what they like. Mrs. Harrison stated that when she is here, she doesn't mind helping out. The mayor said we want to update our technology system, but it cost between \$1,000.00-\$2,000.00 a month to maintain, we can't do it right now but we will get there.

Next Agenda Item: Council Comments

Councilmember Orr thanked everyone for coming out and he appreciates the community's concerns. Councilmember Harrison thanked everyone for coming out and the good and negative comments, that pulls everyone together. Councilmember Isaac said thanks to everyone and for their concerns. Mayor Pro Tem Smalls, thanked everyone for coming and reminded everyone of the soccer camp coming up on April 22nd at First Baptist Church from 10 am-4pm for all ages of kids. Councilmember Pernell thanked all for coming out. Councilmember Lee thanked everyone for coming out. He said that if we had not received the ARPA funds, there would be a lot of things we wouldn't have. He wished much success to the Music and Arts Festival.

Terrance Washington wanted to mention the EEW Scholarship, established in 2017, the deadline is April 23rd. The requisites are to have a 2.75 GPA and you plan on going to college for Music and Arts.

Next Agenda Item: Mayor's Comments

Mayor Pernell thanked everyone for coming and he stated we are in compliance with DHEC with our water and it will take more money to make improvements. We have applied for that. We have to apply chemicals to our water at the WWTP, some of those produce a smell. We have a lot of areas with problems. Once we acquire the funds, we will make the plans. The money comes for specific projects. We are working hard to get the services revamped. Don't think your comments are going unnoticed, we just have to get the funds. We start meeting tomorrow on the budget with the police chief, Friday with Earthel on Public Works and next week with Regina. Then we will have our workshops.

Next Agenda Item: Adjourn

There being no further business to discuss, Mayor Pernell asked for a motion to adjourn the meeting. There was a motion by Councilmember Isaac with a second by Mayor Pro Tem Smalls.

For: All

Against: None

Respectfully submitted by:

Regina S. Ashba
Town Clerk