

BLYTHEWOOD TOWN COUNCIL MEETING

THE MANOR
100 ALVINA HAGOOD CIRCLE
BLYTHEWOOD, SC 29016
MONDAY, DECEMBER 15, 2021
6:00 PM

MINUTES

Members Present

Mayor B. Franklin
Councilman E. Baughman
Councilman D. Brock
Councilman S. Griffin
Councilman R. McKenrick

Staff Present

Carroll Williamson, Town Admin
Shannon Burnett, Town Attorney
Saralyn Yarborough, Asst. Admin
Melissa Cowan, Town Clerk

I. CALL TO ORDER

A. ROLL CALL

Mayor Franklin called the meeting to order at 7:00 pm. Five Council members were present, constituting a quorum.

B. NOTIFICATION AND POSTING OF THE MEETING AGENDA

Town Clerk confirmed the agenda was properly posted and the media notified.

C. APPROVAL OF AGENDA

Councilman Brock made a Motion to approve the agenda. The Motion was seconded by Councilman S. Griffin. **All in favor; 5-0**

D. PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

Councilman Griffin led the Pledge of Allegiance.

E. INVOCATION

The evening's invocation was given by Councilman Griffin.

F. COUNCIL MEMBERS' REMARKS

Councilman Brock made the following remarks:

- Thank you to Town staff for helping the Town improve.
- Thank you to all the organizations that dedicated your time and resources to the Town, from advertising to promoting, putting the Town in a positive light and bringing people to the town.
- A special thank you to the Blythewood Historical Society for keeping the history and spirit of the Town of Blythewood alive.
- I would also like to send a special thank you to the Blythewood Chamber of Commerce for putting together the BW Christmas parade at the last minute.
- I would also like to send a heartfelt see you later to Saralyn Yarborough. I wish you the best on your future endeavors.

Councilman Baughman made the following remarks:

- On Saturday, December 11 VFW Post 8346 hosted a Santa Claus visit. Santa was delivered to us by the Fairfield County Fire Service, who brought him in on a fire truck for two hours. I would like to thank

Barbara Ball and Tonya Page for putting the event in their papers. There were over 200 people in attendance and I believe it was due to advertising.

- I would like to thank Phil Frye and staff for organizing the Christmas Parade. It was a wonderful parade with one of the largest crowds I've seen.
- I would also like to thank the Town staff for everything that you do for the town.
- I wish Saralyn Yarborough nothing but the best in your future endeavors.

Councilman McKenrick made the following remarks:

- Thank you to everyone joining us live tonight and on YouTube.
- Thank you to Town staff for what you do.
- Thank you to the Chamber of Commerce the Christmas parade was great.
- I had the opportunity to attend several events around the Town over the last month. There were a lot of citizens sharing their thoughts on how we can move Blythewood forward.
- I had an opportunity to meet with several small business owners over the last month.
- I would like to wish everyone a safe and happy holiday season.
- Saralyn we are going to miss you and thank you for everything.

Councilman Griffin

- I would like to thank the staff for what you do for everyone. You are greatly appreciated.
- Saralyn God speed to you. I know that you will do well in whatever you set your mind to.
- Thank you Phil Frye and the Blythewood Chamber for a wonderful parade.
- I wish you all a happy holiday season.

G. Mayor Franklin made the following remarks:

- I want to also send a thank you to all of our volunteer commissioners on the Board of Zoning Appeals, Board of Architectural Review and Planning Commission. We appreciate your volunteerism and your spirit to keep Blythewood moving in the proper direction.
- Thank you to Steve Hasterok and staff. The holiday market was wonderful. Thank you for all that you do.
- The Christmas tree lighting was wonderful and the Christmas parade gets better and better each year. The decorations in the town are just phenomenal.
- Thank you to Saralyn for what you have done for the Town of Blythewood.
- Blessings to everyone for a new year. I wish you all prosperity and safety as we move forward this holiday season.

H. Town Administrator's Report

- I would like to show my appreciation for Saralyn and her contribution to the town. She has been a very dependable, hardworking and honest assistant. I have no doubt that she will succeed in her next career.
- I would like to introduce Andrew Gadgadar he is our new videographer. He will provide some significant upgrades to our capabilities.
- We are moving forward on the plans to have an early budget workshop on January 28.
- We are finalizing the applications for Hospitality Tax funding and the deadline for submitting those applications will be February 28, 2022. We will have the applications on the website soon and will be notifying previous applicants directly.

I. APPROVAL OF MINUTES

Councilman McKenrick made a Motion to approve the TC meeting minutes of November 22, 2021. The Motion was seconded by Councilman Griffin. **All in favor; 5-0**

Councilman Brock made a Motion to approve Special Call meeting minutes of 11/23, 11/29, 11/30, 12/7/2021. The Motion was seconded by Councilman Griffin. **All in favor 5-0**

II. PRESENTATION

A. Gary Bailey of Love Bailey & Associates – Blythewood Financial Audit (Year End June 30, 2021)

The fund balance for total government funds on the town's balance sheet at June 30, 2021 was \$5,235,762, reflecting an increase of \$300,000 over the balance at the end of the previous fiscal

year. The report also indicated that all individual fund balances also showed increases with the general fund up by 30%

The focus of the Town's funds is to provide information on near-term inflows, outflows, and balances of spendable resources. Such information is useful in assessing the Town's financing requirements. Specifically, unassigned fund balance can be a useful measure of the government's net resources available for spending at the end of the fiscal year.

The fund balance for Total Government Funds on the Balance Sheet dated June 30, 2021 was \$5,235,762, showing an increase of \$910,303 or 21.04% over the fund balance at the end of the previous fiscal year. The individual fund balances showed increases over those at the end of the previous fiscal year except for capital projects fund down by 2%, General Fund up by 27%, Accommodations Taxes up by 13%, and Hospitality Tax up by 15%. The Enterprise Fund, which shows the operation of The Manor, shows a loss, which is mainly related to cancelations due to the COVID-19 pandemic.

Funds Revenue

The General Fund is the principal fund that accounts for the daily operations of the Town. Total revenue for fiscal year 2021 was \$2.12 million.

The Town's General Fund received about \$849,878 in revenue from business license and franchise fees. State shared revenue was \$1,126,013. Other revenues totaled about \$151,046.

Included in Other revenues, the Town received \$124,213 from Building Fees and Permits, Inspection Fees of \$2,025, Park Rentals of \$10,010, Interest Income of \$216 and various other of \$14,582.

Funds Expenditures

General Fund expenditures at June 30, 2021 totaled approximately \$1.63 million. Of this amount, approximately \$973,064 went toward general government operations, \$278,563 went toward public works and \$318,602 for principal and interest on debt.

State and local accommodation taxes and hospitality taxes are used to fund tourism projects in the Town.

Fund Balance

Total fund balance in the General Fund increased mainly due to increase in revenues. As previously noted, increases in both the Accommodation Taxes and Hospitality Tax funds were due to increases in revenues.

Governmental expenses are funded by fees for services, grants and contributions, and general revenues, as noted the "General Revenues" section of the Statement of Activities.

Gary Bailey of Love Bailey & Associates stated that the Town was given an unmodified opinion (Best Opinion the Town can receive). He also stated the following comments;

- The town received an unmodified opinion issued
- No findings and weaknesses
- There were no journal entries
- Our recommendation is to continue to use SHG for accounting services.
- Overall the Town is in a strong financial position.

III. APPOINTMENTS

A. Board of Architectural Review- Ms. Cindy Nord

Councilman Griffin made a Motion to approve the appointment of Cindy Nord to the BAR. The Motion was seconded by Councilman Baughman. All in favor; 5-0

- B. Planning Commission- Mr. Ja'maal Mosely and Mr. Martin Wells

Councilman Griffin made a Motion to approve Ja'maal Mosely and Mr. Martin Wells to the PC. The Motion was seconded by Councilman Baughman. **All in favor; 5-0**

IV. ACTION ITEMS

Citizens Testimony Regarding Action Items (As item is presented)

A. FIRST READING

Issue

LED strip lighting is becoming more common and it is not in keeping with the architectural requirements of commercial buildings in the Town because of their colors and brightness.

Discussion

Staff finds that the brightness and color of LED strip lighting used as signs in windows do not have "compatibility between signage and site architectural building materials, colors, graphics, and other architectural features" as stated in Section 155.503 of the Zoning Ordinance. Below is an example of LED strip lighting used as a window sign:

ORDINANCE 2021.015 Discussion and Approval of an Ordinance to Amend the Zoning Ordinance to Add a Definition for Window Signs (Section 155.427)

Councilman Brock made a Motion to approve first reading of Ordinance 2021.015. The Motion was seconded by Councilman Griffin. **All in favor; 5-0**

- B. **ORDINANCE 2021.016** Discussion and Approval of an Ordinance to Add a Subsection Prohibiting the Use of LED Strip Lighting in Window Signs with Exceptions (Section 155.430)

Councilman Brock made a Motion to deny first reading of Ordinance 2021.016. The Motion was seconded by Councilman Griffin. **All in favor; 5-0**

- C. Discussion and Approval of an H Tax Request for FY22 Soda City Classic Girls Softball Tournament

Town Administrator Williamson explained that this application, submitted by Blythewood High School Softball Booster Club, is past the application deadline for FY 2022. The tournament will be held on April 9, 2022. The applicant acknowledges that this is past the deadline but is requesting \$4,000 of hospitality tax funding for this event. For last year's tournament, Town Council on March 2, 2021 awarded \$2,980 for the tournament that was held on April 3, 2021.

- A. FY 2021. "Soda City Classic"

- a. Requesting organization/person; Blythewood High School Softball Booster Club, Jordan Atkinson
- b. Date of event: April 9, 2022
- c. Location: Kelly Mills Sports Complex/Blythewood High School
- d. Attendance: Minimum of 12 teams from across the state
- e. Total Event Cost: \$4,000
- f. Amount requested: \$4,000 Amount awarded last year: \$2,980
- g. Major expenses include park rental and umpires

Councilman McKenrick made a Motion to deny HTAX request as presented based on the applicant not being in attendance. The Motion was seconded by Councilman Brock. **A roll call vote was taken. Mayor Franklin-No, Councilman Baughman-No, Councilman Brock-Yes, Councilman Griffin-Yes, Councilman McKenrick-Yes. The Motion passed with a vote of 3-2**

V. OPEN CITIZENS COMMENTS

George Shuller co-owner of Blythewood Tobacco Vape and Hookah spoke on Action Item B.
John and Teresa Edwards owners of Blythewood Cigar and Wine spoke on Action Item B.

VI. **EXECUTIVE SESSION- Per SC Section 30-4-70**

A. Receipt of legal advice relating to claims and potential claims by and against the Town and other matters covered by attorney-client privilege

B. Discussion of negotiations incident to proposed contractual arrangements- Town Attorney

Councilman Baughman made a Motion to go into executive session at 7:23pm. The Motion was seconded by Councilman Brock. **All in favor; 5-0**

VII. **RECONVENE**

Councilman Brock made a Motion to come out of executive session at 8:07 pm. The Motion was seconded by Councilman Griffin. **All in favor; 5-0**

No action was taken in executive session.

VIII. **POSSIBLE ACTIONS BY COUNCIL IN FOLLOW UP TO EXECUTIVE SESSION**

Councilman Brock made a Motion to authorize Mayor Franklin and/or his designees to enter into contract negotiations with candidate 4 and, upon successful negotiation, execute said contract. **The Motion was seconded by Councilman Griffin. All in favor; 5-0**

IX. **ADJOURNMENT**

Councilman Brock made a Motion to adjourn the meeting at 8:10 pm. The Motion was seconded by Councilman Griffin. **All in favor; 5-0**

Respectfully submitted,

Melissa Cowan

Melissa Cowan, Town Clerk