

**Town of Branchville
Council Meeting Minutes
October 26, 2015**

The regular Council meeting for the Town of Branchville was held on Monday, October 26, 2015, at 6 p.m. at the Town Hall. A notice was placed on the door of the Town Hall with the time, date, and place of the meeting at least 24 hours before the meeting. The Times and Democrat newspaper was notified.

The meeting was called to order by Mayor Pro Tem Tom Jennings, followed by the Pledge of Allegiance and prayer.

The roll call showed that Mayor Pro Tem Tom Jennings, Councilman Michael Blankenship, Councilman Sam Whisenhunt, Councilwoman Amy Bryant, and Councilman Gregory Oliver were present. Mayor Glenn Miller and Councilman Chris Ott were absent.

Mayor Pro Tem Jennings welcomed the guest.

Council salary ordinance: Councilman Whisenhunt made a motion to give the council salary ordinance third and final reading. Councilman Blankenship seconded the motion. Motion carried.

Movie Night: The third Movie Night will be Thursday, October 29, 2015, at 7 p.m. at Branch Junction. The clerks were asked to advertise the event on the electronic marquee at Town Hall. There will also be a costume contest. Councilwoman Bryant made a motion to spend up to \$60.00 to buy three prizes for best costume – one winner in each of three age categories. The age categories will be decided at the event, based on participation. Councilman Blankenship seconded the motion. Motion carried.

Mosquitoes: Councilman Blankenship said he had called Orangeburg County twice about spraying for the mosquitoes that arrived after the recent heavy rains. Mayor Pro Tem Jennings said the County is overwhelmed by the need for mosquito spraying. Phyllis Overstreet, news correspondent for The Times and Democrat, volunteered that Gressette Pest Management will do one-time insecticide applications. Councilman Whisenhunt made a motion to spend up to \$100.00 for Gressette Pest Management to spray for mosquitoes at Branch Junction prior to Movie Night. Councilman Blankenship seconded the motion. Motion carried. The town clerks were instructed to make the arrangements immediately.

Supermarket: Mayor Pro Tem Jennings asked Councilman Oliver if he had heard anything further about Save A Lot's interest in conducting a feasibility study for opening a supermarket in Branchville. Councilman Oliver replied that he had not heard any more, but the recent floods in the Columbia area and the resulting damage to their store there may have diverted management's attention temporarily.

Fun Day/Christmas Parade: Mayor Pro Tem Jennings announced that, due to another commitment, he would not be able to lead the effort to organize a Fun Day on the Saturday before Thanksgiving as originally planned. He also said the college football games that day would likely reduce attendance at the Fun Day. He said the Town might want to consider having a Fun Day next spring, perhaps shortly after Easter. He made a motion to have only the Christmas parade on the Saturday before Thanksgiving this year. Councilman Whisenhunt seconded the motion. Motion carried.

Budget work session: Councilman Whisenhunt distributed copies of a preliminary budget for fiscal year 2016, which coincides with calendar year 2016. He said utility revenues so far in 2015 are not as high as expected, and utility-related costs are higher than budgeted. He said the Municipal Court budget, which includes the Police Department, has not needed as much subsidizing from other accounts as anticipated. He made a motion that Council members review the preliminary budget, and if they have any questions, they can contact him, and the Council will hold another budget work session two weeks after the next monthly Council meeting. Councilwoman Bryant seconded the motion. Motion carried.

Property tax rate: Orangeburg County Auditor Roger Cleckley wrote a letter asking the Town Council if they want to keep the property tax rate at 71 mills or change it. Mayor Pro Tem Jennings said the council approved a rate increase just last year. Councilman Blankenship made a motion to keep the rate at 71 mills. Councilman Whisenhunt seconded the motion. Motion carried.

Garbage collection: Under Items for Information, Councilman Greg Oliver asked if the Council wants to let the garbage collection contract roll over, or renegotiate it, or invite other companies to submit bids for the contract. Unless the Town notifies the vendor at least 90 days before the end of the current contract, it will roll over for another year and if that occurs, Councilman Oliver predicted the current vendor (Republic Services) would certainly exercise its option to raise its rates by 3 percent. Councilman Whisenhunt said the Town would have to pass any such increase along to the customers. Councilman Whisenhunt asked the clerks to compile and give him financial information as to how much the Town collects from customers as compared to how much the Town pays the current vendor for garbage collection. The Council also asked the clerks to tell them the deadline for notifying the current vendor that the contract might not be renewed.

Street addresses: Councilman Oliver said Orangeburg County has an ordinance requiring residents to post their street addresses. He asked the clerks to obtain a copy of the ordinance for presentation at the next monthly meeting of Council.

Executive session: Councilman Blankenship made a motion to enter into executive session. Councilwoman Bryant seconded the motion. Council members left the meeting chambers for a time. Upon returning to the meeting chambers, Councilwoman Bryant made a motion to return to public session. Councilman Oliver seconded the motion. Mayor Pro Tem Jennings said Council discussed a contractual matter that did not require a vote.

Adjourn: Mayor Pro Tem Jennings made a motion to adjourn. Councilman Whisenhunt seconded the motion. Motion carried.

Respectfully submitted,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Lee Hendren", written in a cursive style.

Lee Hendren