

TOWN OF BRANCHVILLE  
COUNCIL MEETING MINUTES  
October 13, 2014

The Branchville Town Council held its regular monthly meeting on Monday, October 20, 2014, 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 meeting was called to order by Mayor Glenn Miller. The Mayor, Council and all of those present stood for the Pledge of Allegiance, followed by prayer.

All Council members were present.

Mayor Miller welcomed the guests.

**Executive session:** Mayor Miller said, "We're going into executive session for a short discussion and we'll be back." Council returned to public session 38 minutes later and Mayor Miller said, "In executive session we had a discussion but there is nothing that needs to be voted on."

**Minutes:** Councilman Christopher Ott made a motion to approve the minutes of the Sept. 8, 2014, regular monthly Council meeting. Councilman Michael Blankenship seconded the motion and it was approved without dissent.

**Financial report:** Mayor Miller said the Council will notice in the Municipal Court P&L statement two checks for the same amount, \$631.85, to Jim Bilton Ford. He said check number 8301 was canceled. Councilman Ott made a motion to approve the financial report. Councilman Sam Whisenhunt seconded the motion and it was approved without dissent.

**HealthPlex lease:** Mayor Miller said it's time to renew the lease under which the Town rents the building next to Horton Field to the Regional Medical Center of Orangeburg & Calhoun Counties, which operates a HealthPlex there. Mayor Pro Tem Tom Jennings made a motion "to leave the lease like it is" with rent of \$300 per month. Councilman Ott seconded the motion and it was approved without dissent.

**Budget meetings:** Mayor Miller said it's time to set dates for budget work sessions.

Councilman Whisenhunt said he wants Lori Salley or someone else from McGregor and Company to attend at least one of the budget work sessions. He suggested having the first meeting on Oct. 20 and if Ms. Salley cannot make it that night, Council could meet Oct. 27. He also suggested having work sessions on the first and third Mondays in November and December: Nov. 3, Nov. 17, Dec. 1 and Dec. 15.

Mayor Pro Tem Jennings made a motion to meet on Monday, Oct. 20, at 6 p.m. Several council members seconded the motion and it was approved without dissent.

**Movie night:** Councilwoman Amy Bryant said "there's nothing here to do" and it would be "nice for us to bring a little more entertainment to the Town with Christmas time coming up." She

suggested having a "Movie Night Under the Stars" at the railroad depot museum in early December. The movie "Polar Express" would be shown and admission would be free. Other movies would be shown throughout the year if it works out. A projector could be rented, and a nonprofit such as the Beta Club or the Booster Club could sell concessions like popcorn and soft drinks. Council members said they liked the idea but took no formal action.

**Old elementary school:** Councilwoman Bryant said the old elementary school gymnasium could be fixed up with new basketball goals, flooring, tables and eventually a kitchen making it suitable for rent for events such as family reunions and weddings. Mayor Miller asked her to obtain some prices for the improvements.

Mayor Miller said it would do no good to spend money to fix up the gym unless procedures were put in place to ensure it will be taken care of properly. He suggested forming a committee of people who are willing to commit themselves to the upkeep of the building.

**Securing buildings:** Mayor Miller said that last month the Council talked about securing Town-owned buildings that are not in use. He said he contacted Cox Wood about purchasing second-grade plywood but was told they no longer sell or give it to the general public. They suggested calling building supply stores but those stores have waiting lists for it.

Councilman Gregory Oliver suggested contacting the lumber yard in the Town of Williams.

Mayor Miller said, "If anybody knows where we can get second-grade lumber, tell us."

**Halloween:** Mayor Pro Tem Jennings said the Branchville High School football homecoming is on Friday, Oct. 31. He said maybe the trick-or-treating hours need to be earlier this year. Other council members disagreed. Mayor Pro Tem Jennings made a motion to set the hours as 6:00 p.m. to 9:00 p.m. Councilwoman Bryant seconded the motion and it was approved without dissent. Times and Democrat correspondent Phyllis Overstreet asked if the Council was going to set an age limit. Council replied that anyone in costume could trick-or-treat, regardless of age.

**Utilities:** Mayor Miller gave Councilman Whisenhunt (who is in charge of the water and sewer department) a packet from the S.C. Department of Health and Environmental Control for the 2015 water distribution permit. Mayor Miller said, "We have 180 days to get it done."

Councilman Whisenhunt said the DHEC wastewater audit is coming up on Oct. 27.

**Holiday Fun Day:** Mayor Pro Tem Jennings said he talked with Councilman Whisenhunt and Mrs. Whisenhunt about the Christmas parade and came up with the idea of "a day of fun" starting with individual yard sales and including hay rides, bingo, cake walk, a parade and a lighting ceremony with soup or apple cider. He said people might be invited to place and decorate a Christmas tree in honor or in memory of someone. As a nightcap, a movie could be shown at the train depot museum. He said, "We're not looking to have a big hoopla," just a holiday season kickoff event that everyone can participate in. He said Jenny Elliott and Lee Hendren are chairing the committee that will organize and conduct the parade.

**Audience comments:** Reggie Bruce said he would like to see something done with the old Lockett Elementary School gymnasium. He said he will try to find some grant money unless anyone objected. Mayor Miller said, "I don't think anybody would have a problem with getting some money."

Marianna Street said she noticed that both of the picnic tables at the playground next to Horton Field are broken. She asked if the Town could replace them. Mayor Miller said he has new tables: "I was holding them for the grand opening of the spray park" But because the old tables are broken, he said, "I'll put the new ones in. We'll put those out tomorrow."

Betty Glover complained about high grass and weeds near her residence on Logan Street.

Mayor Miller said, "That's railroad property. Mr. Steelman was supposed to send his supervisor out and look at that area."

Ms. Glover said she was referring to the other side of Logan, near the intersection of Evans. She also complained about the "terrible" condition of some of the roads in Branchville.

Mayor Miller said the owners of the property she is complaining about live in Atlanta, Ga. He said, "I'll call the owner of that property. She needs to do something. It will be taken care of."

Mr. Bruce said, "I've killed seven snakes in my yard." He added that he believes they are coming from the old school property and a ditch near his residence.

**Items for Information:** Councilman Oliver said there was a need for a place where Council members could meet with visitors at Town Hall. He said the conference room is too hot and the council chambers/courtroom is not always suitable. So he cleaned out the old squad room in the maintenance shed.

Councilman Oliver said he also worked on improving the condition of items stored in the loft. He said, "That loft was a mess. It's going to take more than a few days" to clean it up. But it needs to be cleaned up for several reasons. One reason is to locate town records. He located several boxes full of court records and delivered them to the office of the clerk of court. Another reason is that "a lot of stuff we've purchased over and over again is lying up there waiting for someone to put it in order," including police officer uniforms and office supplies.

Councilman Oliver said he had requested and obtained from the town clerk a list of current business license holders. He said several businesses that had licenses in previous years and are still in operation have not renewed their licenses this year. He said enforcement action might need to be taken, but he asked the town clerk to "send out letters first and see what the response will be."

Mayor Miller thanked Councilman Oliver for his efforts.

Mayor Pro Tem Jennings made a motion to adjourn. Councilman Whisenhunt seconded it, and it was approved without objection. The meeting was adjourned at 7:24 p.m.

