

TOWN OF BRANCHVILLE  
BUDGET WORK SESSION MINUTES  
DECEMBER 1, 2014

A Budget Work Session of the Town of Branchville was held on Monday, December 1, 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. All present stood for the Pledge of Allegiance followed by prayer. Roll call indicated that all Council members were present. There were no guests.

**Water Department budget for 2015:** Councilman Sam Whisenhunt said, "I don't see making any adjustments in that department." No one expressed any objections.

**Employee compensation:** Councilman Whisenhunt said he had revised the spreadsheet showing employees' compensation including salaries, Social Security, Medicare and retirement. He said it incorporates a 40-hour work week for all employees except police officers, who will continue on a 48-hour work week. He said the budget is approximately \$17,000 short under this scenario. Councilman Whisenhunt said there are two ways to eliminate the shortfall and balance the budget:

- Reduce the police officers' work week to 44 hours, which would result in less police coverage.
- Give all employees a raise of 75 cents per hour instead of \$1.50 per hour.

Council members indicated they prefer the latter option.

**Christmas bonus:** A motion was made by Mayor Pro Tem Tom Jennings and seconded by Councilman Michael Blankenship that each employee receive a net Christmas bonus of \$100.00. The motion carried.

**Christmas party:** A motion was made by Councilman Whisenhunt and seconded by Councilman Blankenship to accept the proposal from Main Street Bar-B-Que to serve as the venue for the annual Christmas party for employees and council members. Town Clerk Jenny Elliott has received, per Council's request, the menu and price. Motion carried.

Mayor Miller asked if the Council would consider going to an out-of-town restaurant.

Mayor Pro Tem Jennings said that at a recent meeting the Council had "voted to keep it in Branchville," partly to support local businesses and partly to ensure that all employees have the option to attend if they so wish, including the police officer working that shift.

A motion was made by Mayor Pro Tem Jennings and seconded by Councilwoman Amy Bryant that the Town Christmas party be held on Thursday, December 18, 2014, at 6:30 p.m. at Main Street Bar-B-Que. All employees and Council members are eligible to come and bring one guest each. Motion carried.

**Pay raise:** A motion was made by Councilman Christopher Ott and seconded by Councilman Blankenship to raise all employees' pay 75 cents an hour effective with the first paycheck in January. Motion carried.

**Garbage fee:** Councilman Gregory Oliver proposed raising the garbage collection fee by 50 cents per cart, per month. The present fee is \$10.75 per month. Councilman Whisenhunt said there are 222 carts in Branchville so a 50-cent increase would raise \$1,332 a year and a 25-cent increase would raise \$666 a year. Council took no immediate action on the proposal.

Councilman Oliver asked if the garbage hauler (Republic) is allowed to have customers outside the Town limits, and if they are interested in doing so. If so, he suggested inserting a flyer in the water bills to see how many people would be interested in signing up for it.

Mayor Pro Tem Jennings said the Council would like to meet and talk with a representative of Republic but the vendor has not accepted such invitations in the past. Mayor Miller said he will contact Republic and try to set up a meeting with the Council.

**Budget ordinance:** A motion was made by Mayor Pro Tem Jennings and seconded by Councilwoman Bryant to give first reading to the 2015 budget proposal, in name only, with the figures provided. Council agreed to schedule a public hearing and second reading for 5:30 p.m. Monday, Dec. 8.

**Timber:** Councilman Blankenship asked whatever happened to the proposed tree cutting.

Mayor Miller said selling timber can be tricky and he is waiting on the Clemson Extension “expert to tell me how to look out for the pitfalls” in selling timber. He said he will call her the next day.

Councilman Blankenship said he thought Caw Caw submitted a bid. Mayor Miller said they had not.

Councilman Blankenship said the Caw Caw representative recommended that the Town clear-cut it and set aside “a couple thousand dollars” from the proceeds so, in a year or so, the Town can hire another crew to spray the area to kill the gum trees and vegetation, then replant the acreage with pines.

Councilman Whisenhunt said the Town needs to obtain several bids for the timber. Mayor Miller said an ad can be run in the newspaper.

**Movie Night:** Councilwoman Bryant asked if the portable 15 mph speed limit signs could be placed along Freedom Road near the railroad depot during Movie Night. Captain Ira James said that it could be done.

Councilwoman Bryant asked Council to grant a budget of \$40 or \$45 to buy prizes for the Polar Express Movie Night on Friday, Dec. 5. A motion was made by Mayor Pro Tem Jennings, seconded by Councilman Oliver, to budget up to \$50 for prizes for the Polar Express Movie Night on Friday, Dec. 5, with the understanding that Councilwoman Bryant will submit receipts for reimbursement.

**Radios:** Councilman Oliver asked if the utility employees could use the Motorola two-way radios in the Town trucks instead of Town cellphones to save some money on cellphone bills. He said if the Town does not use what it owns, we’re wasting resources. Mayor Miller said the radios could be used if the antenna is re-installed and a base station is installed in the clerk’s office. He said he will look into it.

**Dump truck:** Mayor Pro Tem Jennings asked if the Town can sell the truck and if so, what it is worth. It was purchased with grant money. Mayor Miller said he had not yet asked Rural Water if it can be sold.

**Other vehicles:** Councilman Whisenhunt said some of the town vehicles need various repairs and aren’t being cared for properly. He expressed concern that the repairs have not yet been done. Mayor Miller said Stillinger’s Body Shop ordered a new bumper for one truck and they are just waiting for it to arrive. He said there’s not enough credit on the credit card to buy a new starter for another truck. A damaged tailgate was also discussed. Council members asked how much insurance coverage the town carries on certain vehicles. Mayor Miller said he did not know off the top of his head and would have to find out.

**Adjourn:** A motion was made by Mayor Pro Tem Jennings and seconded by Councilman Whisenhunt to adjourn. Motion carried.