

TOWN OF BRANCHVILLE
COUNCIL MEETING MINUTES
January 12, 2015

The regular Council Meeting for the Town of Branchville was held on January 12, 2015, at 6 pm 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 at 6 pm. Mayor, Council, along with all those present stood for the Pledge of Allegiance followed by prayer.

Roll call indicated all Councilmembers were present with the exception of Councilwoman Amy Bryant.

Mayor Miller welcomed the guests.

Approval of Minutes: Councilman Michael Blankenship made the motion to approve Nov. 3, Nov. 17, and Dec. 8 minutes. Councilman Chris Ott seconded the motion. The motion carried.

Financial Report: Councilman Sam Whisenhunt asked how motels are selected when overnight stay is required. Mayor Miller said there is usually a recommendation in the brochure. Councilman Whisenhunt said he thought \$200 a night was too expensive. Mayor Pro Tem Jennings made a motion when overnight stay is required to check with the 3 nearest hotels and the one lowest in price is where they would stay. Councilman Michael Blankenship seconded the motion. The motion carried.

Councilman Chris Ott said there were two checks with his name in General Fund and one needed to be voided. Jenny Elliott said one had been voided. Councilman Whisenhunt made a motion to approve the financial report. Councilman Ott seconded the motion. The motion carried.

Bids on Timber: Mayor Miller said there was one bid on the timber. Councilman Whisenhunt read the bid from Caw Caw Land and Timber. Caw Caw Land and Timber bid \$24 per ton for pine saw timber, \$16 per ton for pine chip and saw, \$11 per ton pine pulpwood, and \$11 per ton for hardwood pulpwood with access. Council discussed why the Town needed to provide access when the timber could already be accessed. Councilman Blankenship said he would contact Caw Caw.

Police Department: Councilman Blankenship said Chief Randy Clark's radar unit is broken and he needs a new one. Councilman Blankenship made a motion to purchase a new radar unit for the Chief. Councilman Whisenhunt seconded the motion. The motion carried.

Councilman Blankenship said the personnel policy states the police officers are to work holidays for regular pay if it is their scheduled time to work for regular pay. He also said the personnel policy states police officers do not receive holiday pay like the other employees of the town. Councilman Blankenship made a motion for officers to receive double time when they work a holiday and 12 hours holiday pay for holidays. Councilman Chris Ott seconded the motion. The motion carried. Councilman Blankenship made the motion for double pay and holiday pay to be retroactive for Christmas Eve 2014, Christmas Day 2014 and New Year's Day 2015. Councilman Ott seconded the motion. The motion carried.

Councilman Blankenship said the employees of the Town accrue 7 hours a month (1.62 a week) of sick and vacation leave. He said this results in the Town employees, with the exception of the police officers,

receiving 10 days of sick and vacation leave a year, while the police officers only receive 7 days due to them working 12 hours a day. Councilman Blankenship said for the police officers to have 10 days off a year they would need to accrue 2.31 hours a week. Councilman Blankenship made the motion for police officers to accrue 2.31 hours a week for sick and vacation leave. Councilman Whisenhunt seconded the motion. The motion carried.

Water Report: Councilman Whisenhunt said the smoke testing on the sewer had been done. He said he would like to thank Rural Water for sending 3 guys to do the smoke testing for free. He said the Town's maintenance workers Nelson Goldsmith and Brian Delk did a good job. He said they found 35 broken clean outs, 21 broken service connections, 7 man holes that had cuts or were off the foundation, and 2 storm drains that were draining into the sewer system. Councilman Whisenhunt said Larry McDowell from Rural Water would come back with cameras to help find the leaks and help with mapping. Larry McDowell is going to help Councilman Whisenhunt and the maintenance workers obtain their water system operator licenses.

Councilman Whisenhunt said as he was reading the radio read meters last month the laptop went out on him twice. He said it took four days to get the reading due to the laptop blacking out. Councilman Whisenhunt made a motion to purchase a laptop for the water department up to \$1,000. Councilman Gregory Oliver seconded the motion. The motion carried.

Lillie Williams: Lillie Williams said she was parked at the Dollar General in a handicap parking space with her handicap placard. While she was waiting on her son to come out of the store Capt. Ira James asked her what she was doing. She told him she was waiting on her son to come out of the store. Lillie Williams said Capt. James told her if she wasn't going in the store she wasn't allowed to park there. She said he told her the next time he saw her parked in a handicap parking space and not going in the store he would give her a ticket. She said all she could say was God Bless. Mayor Miller said he wanted to speak on this saying Ms. Williams had come to him and made a formal complaint and he went down the chain of command and gave a copy of the complaint to Chief Clark. Mayor Miller said that he looked on the Internet and didn't see anything saying she couldn't park there. Chief Clark said you have to go back to the definition of parking which is loading and unloading. He said the law states that it is unlawful for a person who is not disabled to park in a handicap parking space. Chief Clark said someone who was disabled and going in the store could have used the handicap parking space. Councilman Blankenship asked if there was a ticket written. Lillie Williams said there was not a ticket written. She said he told her if he caught her parking there again he would give her a ticket. She told him she would continue to park there. Daniel Williams said Capt. James yelled at Ms. Williams and was disrespectful. Mayor Miller apologized to Ms. Williams if she felt she had been treated unfairly. Mayor Miller said when there is a complaint from a citizen he takes it to Chief Clark. Mayor Miller said he respects Chief Clark and in the past he has taken care of things. Chief Clark said he had spoken with Capt. James and the incident had been properly documented and they had moved on. He said if anyone was offended he apologized. Councilman Chris Ott made the motion to get body cameras for the police officers. Councilman Gregory Oliver seconded the motion. The motion carried. Mayor Miller said he would pull up the body cameras the next day and they will be ordered. Luvenia Williams said she needed clarification on the handicap placard. She said she wasn't able to go in the store, so why couldn't she park in a handicap space and her daughter go in the store. Chief Clark asked if she was getting out of the car. She said no. Mayor Miller said he went on the Internet and it didn't say you had to get out of the car. Chief Clark said if someone with a disability is not getting out of the car, someone else with a disability may need it. Luvenia Williams said she heard Chief Clark and Mayor Miller apologize but had not heard Capt. James

apologize. Capt. James said Ms. Williams if I offended you I apologize but I was going by what the law said.

Police Department: Mayor Miller said Capt. Eric Bonnett was not there and he was going to briefly speak for him. Mayor Miller said that Capt. Bonnett had completed his 6 months and was given a raise like all the officers in the past. He said he was under the impression that he had received his raise until Capt. Bonnett brought it to his attention that he had not. Mayor Miller said he wanted to ask Town Clerk Jenny Elliott what happened. Jenny Elliott said she received an email from Councilman Whisenhunt stating the new rates of pay for all the town employees. She then called Councilman Whisenhunt and told him Mayor Miller had given Capt. Bonnett a raise. Councilman Whisenhunt told her council had not approved the raise and she had to do what council said. Mayor Miller said he considered that extreme subordination. He said he had given her a direct order and she called council. Jenny Elliott said she had called council when Councilman Whisenhunt sent her an email. Councilman Whisenhunt said he had also sent an email to Mayor Miller with the pay raises. Mayor Miller asked Councilman Whisenhunt why nothing was said when the other officers received their raises. Mayor Miller asked when Capt. Bonnett's probation was up. Jenny Elliott said October. Mayor Miller said it was his fault that Capt. Bonnett's raise is past due. Mayor Miller said for the last two years the officers have received a raise after 6 months and no one said anything. Councilman Whisenhunt said during budget meeting Council had gone over salaries multiple times. Mayor Miller said they didn't go over salaries; they were paying past due debts. Councilman Whisenhunt asked council if they went over salaries. Council said they had. Councilman Whisenhunt said a fifty-cent raise had not been brought up. Councilman Whisenhunt asked why the Mayor had waited so long after Capt. Bonnett's probationary period was up to give him a raise. Mayor Miller said it was the Town Clerk's fault for not reminding him. Jenny Elliott said she didn't know they received raises after 6 months. Councilman Blankenship said there seems to be an issue with the Town Clerk speaking to council. He said he is not here every day and asked if the Town Clerk was not allowed to inform council if there was something going on. Mayor Miller said she had been doing it all the time. Councilman Blankenship asked again if the Town Clerk was not allowed to speak to Council. Jenny Elliott said Mayor Miller told them they were not allowed to speak to council. Councilman Whisenhunt said council meets each month to discuss these issues and it should all be transparent. Councilman Whisenhunt asked Clerk of Court Lee Hendren if Mayor Miller had told him not to speak to council. Lee Hendren said Mayor Miller told him to be very careful what he says to council. Councilman Whisenhunt said the town's employees work for council. Mayor Miller said he does not trust the people that work for him. Mayor Miller said he did not tell the employees not to talk to council. Jenny Elliott said they were actually told they would be fired if they talked to council. Councilman Whisenhunt asked Chief Clark if Mayor Miller had told him he would be fired if he talked to council. Chief Clark said yes. Mayor Miller said he is requesting a SLED investigation. Chief Clark said that he wasn't going to lie for anyone. Frank Dickson said this should be taken into executive session. Mayor Miller said no, that there was too much hidden now. Mayor Miller said he was going to have himself and the employees take a polygraph test in an open session.

\$150,000 CD: Mayor Miller said that with the debt the Town was in he would like to cash in the \$150,000. CD. Councilman Whisenhunt questioned how the town had a \$150,000 CD. Mayor Miller said he wasn't sure. Mayor Pro Tem Tom Jennings said he thought according to the auditor part of the CD was reserves.

Sewer Line on Ellis Ave.: Mayor Miller said 15 years ago the town was paid to run wastewater lines to a building. He said the town got an easement to go through James Jones' property. Mayor Miller said DHEC was contacted and he spent a lot of money correcting the town's problem. Mayor Miller asked

where a property owner's responsibility for the line ends. Councilman Whisenhunt said at the edge of the property. Councilman Whisenhunt asked Mayor Miller if the sewer lines were there when he brought the property. Councilman Whisenhunt said that Mayor Miller and the other property owner should have come to an agreement. Mayor Miller said no, he paid the town to run the lines. Councilman Whisenhunt asked if the town installed the tap. Mayor Miller said they did. Councilman Whisenhunt said the town fulfilled their part of the agreement. Thelma Davis said the past Mayor came to her mother's house and asked for permission to run a sewer line through her yard for someone's property. She said the past mayor told her if there was a problem with the sewer line the town would be responsible. Councilman Whisenhunt asked if they had an agreement. Thelma Davis said they didn't have anything in writing. Councilman Whisenhunt said the past mayor is no longer here and it cannot be proven what he said. Councilman Whisenhunt said it is important to have it in writing. Councilman Blankenship said the owner of the property may not allow the town to dig the lines up to repair them and agreed that it needs to be in writing. Councilman Oliver said he had a water line for another property that runs under his house and questioned what would happen if that line had a break. Councilman Whisenhunt said the town would turn off the water until they had his permission to repair the line on his property. Councilman Chris Ott asked if there was a pipe broken somewhere. Councilman Whisenhunt said Mayor Miller had a sewage line leaking in a ditch but he didn't think it was his responsibility to repair it. Councilman Whisenhunt said he didn't think the town was responsible for the repair. Councilman Whisenhunt said he called DHEC and they said it was Mayor Miller's responsibility to repair the line.

Ways to Increase Revenue: Councilman Oliver said there are several ways for the Town to increase revenue. Councilman Oliver said the town could increase revenue through Raylrode Daze. He said other towns get revenue from events in their towns. He said the town is losing money with the garbage pickup. He said the fee could be increased by a few cents. Councilman Oliver said if council worked together people would be more willing to come to Branchville. Councilman Oliver said there are businesses in town operating without a license.

2nd Reading of 2015 Budget: Councilman Blankenship asked if adjustments needed to be made since there was extra money being authorized tonight on payroll, body cameras and a radar unit. Councilman Blankenship said the Police Department also needs Tasers. Chief Clark said his Taser is not working. He said the police officers need secondary weapons. Councilman Ott asked if Chief Clark's Taser could be repaired. Chief Clark said it would cost more to repair it than it would to buy a new one. Councilman Blankenship made a motion to purchase three Tasers for the officers. Councilman Ott seconded the motion. The motion carried.

Councilman Whisenhunt made the motion to approve the 2nd reading of the 2015 budget. Councilman Ott seconded the motion. The motion carried.

Public Comments: Frank Dickson said on Main Street in front of the park the street is not level. He said the county has their own equipment and they fix several miles a year. Mayor Miller said he is going to meet with our County Representatives in a few days and he would see if they could help. Mayor Miller said he would report at the next council meeting.

Thelma Davis said on several occasions big trucks come by and shake the Town Hall.

Items for Information: Councilman Oliver said he had plywood and he was going to have the door at the old fire station and the old elementary school covered. Councilman Oliver said the plywood is unfinished

and he would like council to agree to buy paint. Councilman Blankenship made the motion to spend up to \$250 on paint. Councilman Ott seconded the motion. The motion passed.

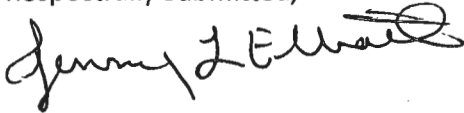
Mayor Miller asked for the money to spend on a polygraph test for him and the employees. Chief Clark said he may know someone who would do it for free. Mayor Miller asked if Lee Hendren had written down what the question for the polygraph test was going to be. Lee Hendren responded: Did Glenn Miller say if you speak to council you will be fired. Mayor Miller asked who was going to take the test. Chief Clark responded: Ira James, Randy Clark and Jenny Elliott. Jenny Elliott asked what would happen if the test came back that she was telling the truth. Mayor Miller said the people here would call me or you a liar.

Councilman Whisenhunt said the lights outside the Town Hall have been replaced but they continue to turn on and off. He said this happens because the ballast is bad. Councilman Whisenhunt said the lights cost \$80 per light to replace and \$60 per light for the ballast. Councilman Whisenhunt said the lights could be replaced with LG natural fit lights that are \$150 per light with a 10 year warranty. Councilman Ott made the motion to replace 20 lights with the LG natural fit lights. Mayor Pro Jennings seconded the motion. The motion carried.

Councilman Whisenhunt said over the next year the town will need to fix some equipment. He said the lawnmowers will cost almost \$350 each to fix; one is going to need a new deck. Councilman Whisenhunt said the small truck is down because the belt came off. He also said that pump station 5 will need a serviceman.

Mayor Pro Tem Jennings made the motion to adjourn. Councilman Ott seconded the motion. The motion carried.

Respectfully Submitted,

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

Jenny Elliott