



**TOWN OF SULLIVAN'S ISLAND, SOUTH CAROLINA  
ADMINISTRATION COMMITTEE OF COUNCIL MINUTES**

Thursday, July 8, 2021

A meeting of the Administration Committee of Council was held at 8:30am, Thursday, July 8, 2021 at Town Hall, 2056 Middle Street. All requirements of the Freedom of Information Act having been satisfied. Present were Committee members: Council members Justin Novak (Chair), Kaye Smith and Scott Millimet; Staff: Administrator Benke, Deputy Administrator/Comptroller Blanton and Committee secretary Pamela Otto.

**I. Call to Order.** Chair Novak called the meeting to order, stated the press and public were duly notified pursuant to state law and all Committee members were present. There were no members of the public or media present.

**II. Personnel Handbook** – in progress, to be reviewed by Council upon completion. Chair Novak mentioned that the Town is currently using Town Ordinance 16. The most recent draft of the handbook was last edited August 6, 2019. Administrator Benke summarized the history of the need for this handbook and the process up until now, stressing that personnel policy should be flexible in order to update and keep current.

Chair Novak asked what the next step would be. Administrator Benke recommended sending the most recent draft to department heads as well as Council for any input, then send to the Town labor attorney. There then must be a move to vacate Chapter 16.

**Motion:** Chair Novak made a motion to refer the current draft of the proposed personnel handbook to Council as a whole for review and comment as it is concurrently sent to department heads so the final version can be sent to the Town's labor attorney for review, it was amended to add, for discussion at the August Workshop. Mr. Millimet seconded; this motion passed unanimously.

**III. Codification of Town Ordinances** – in progress, to be reviewed by Council upon completion. Chair Novak stated there is a process for evaluating the current Town ordinances to make them easier to understand and to remove antiquated ordinances. Benke said that the codification is underway using American Legal. They will change the format of the ordinances but not the text, except the ones that no longer apply, due to changes in state law, for example.

Chair Novak mentioned that once the process is finished, then Council will readopt the ordinances as a whole. There is no further action that needs to be sent to Council at this time.

- IV. Discussion of Improving Participation in Public Meetings** – including consideration of remote/live Hybrid meeting platforms. Chair Novak pointed out that there are two (2) parts to this: expanding the current process to improve public participation and whether Council members could possibly participate remotely, which would require an ordinance change.

Mr. Millimet feels this should move forward to expand the access the public has to the local government process but asked whether we would need to amend the way the public can address Council. Ms. Smith agreed that it is necessary in order to be prepared, that the pandemic has proven things can change quickly and it is important to be ready.

Benke said that we can currently live stream Council meetings and all meetings are recorded and uploaded to the website for viewing after the meeting. There was some discussion of the platforms available and the company currently used by the Town for recording meetings and livestreaming, BIS. Benke mentioned there might be a delay due to the availability of supplies needed. Chair Novak felt they should still be able to make a presentation of what they could offer.

**Motion:** Chair Novak made a motion to request that BIS make a presentation to Council at the August 2, 2021 Council Workshop regarding what technologies are available for increasing both member and citizen participation in public meetings. Ms. Smith seconded; this motion passed unanimously.

- V. Discussion of Adopting Community Outreach and Communication Technology** – including mobile application to enhance citizen engagement. Ms. Smith feels the current system of citizen contact is cumbersome with emails and website changes, and that an app might streamline the process. Two other cities were mentioned that use apps for citizen communication, Corpus Christi, Texas and Dauphin, Alabama both have apps similar to what it would be.

Benke mentioned that the Town had previously tried the Mobile 311 app through the state and that there were not many who used it. Ms. Smith recommended reaching out and checking with municipalities to get their feedback on the app. Chair Novak asked Benke and Town staff to look into the options and ascertain the cost and benefits. Benke said he would.

**VI. Discussion of Potential Additional Town Personnel**

**A. Grant Writer** – Chair Novak stated that the process for applying for grants involves a very specific skill set to successfully receive funds. Benke stated that the Town put out

an ad and received 4 responses. There is somebody who works on federal grants for the Town Administrator and he is happy with them. The smaller grants can be done in house. Benke said the budget right now does not have any funds set aside for grant funding. Grants usually require matching funds of some type. Benke felt that next year's budget should include a set aside for grant funding, this budget year has no plan for any grant funding. Benke feels at this point it is premature to seek a grant writer when we have no funds to set aside.

**Motion:** Chair Novak made a motion to refer the consideration of earmarking certain funds for grant applications to the Finance Committee for their consideration. Seconded by Mr. Millimet; this motion passed unanimously.

**B. Assistant to Town Administrator** – Ms. Smith mentioned that Benke works long hours already with the Fire House and other projects, that we also have a limited amount of time to use the outstanding bond money, less than two (2) years. Benke feels there must be some deep consideration into the hiring of this position. They should be able to deal with cumbersome federal paperwork, present to the DRB (Design Review Board) about Town projects, and other needs that arise.

Mr. Millimet feels that Benke's input on the job description is crucial, Benke is the one who knows what skill set the Town needs. Ms. Smith feels that while funds are available, the Town should go for them, so the position is important. Benke feels the Town should be looking for a Capital Projects person.

Chair Novak asked if this position is going to be a permanent position, or if the position will fade with the need three (3) years from now when all of the projects are finished. He feels that the position is more of a Deputy Administrator as the Town would benefit from someone who can learn the Administrator position from Benke at the same time.

Chair Novak proposed that Benke sketch out a job description for the position and a salary range to let Council know what the Town is looking for and the potential cost.

**VII. Discussion of Solicitation of Candidates for Boards and Commissions** – terms expiring in September 2021. Chair Novak listed the seats that will be expiring; one (1) on the Planning Commission, five (5) on the Board of Zoning Appeals, two (2) on the Design Review Board, two (2) on the Tree Commission and one (1) on the Election Commission. Benke stated that we have placed ads in the Post and Courier, Island Eye News and on the Town Website, but he feels that the most valuable tool for the procurement of these seats is Town Council.

Mr. Millimet stated that many are under the impression the re-applicants will get their seat and there is no purpose to apply. Chair Novak agreed and said it was important to let everyone know that all applications will be carefully considered so those who want,

should apply. Ms. Smith feels most potential applicants fear they are not qualified. Benke said training will be provided by staff.

Chair Novak asked that staff send out an email to Council to remind them that their recruitment efforts are very important to the process of filling these seats.

### **VIII. Adjourn**

**Motion:** Ms. Smith made a motion to adjourn; seconded by Chair Novak, this motion passed unanimously and the meeting adjourned at 9:57am.

Respectfully submitted,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Pamela A. Otto". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large initial "P" and a distinct "A" and "O".

Pamela Otto