



Town of Sullivan's Island, South Carolina
Town Council Special Meeting
Meeting Minutes
Monday, April 1, 2024

A Special Meeting of Town Council was held on the above date at approximately 6:00 p.m., all requirements of the Freedom of Information Act having been satisfied.

Present were: Patrick M. O'Neil, Mayor
Justin Novak, Mayor Pro-Tem
Jody Latham, Councilmember
Ned Higgins, Councilmember
Carl Hubbard, Councilmember
Scott Millimet, Councilmember
Gary Visser, Councilmember

Mayor O'Neil called the meeting to order at 6:00 p.m. and stated the press and public had been notified in accordance with State Law. There were 2 (two) members of the public and two (2) members of the media present. Staff members present were Andy Benke, Jason Blanton, Charles Drayton, Greg Gress, Amanda Hawver, Joe Henderson, Police Chief Glen Meadows, Monty Anders, Town Attorney Larry Dodds, Max Wurthmann, Fire Chief Anthony Stith, and Bridget Welch.

II. Executive Session

Motion was made by Councilmember Visser, seconded by Councilmember Higgins, to go into Executive Session at 6:02 p.m., passed unanimously.

A. Legal Advice – Attorney Sheedy to provide legal advice viz Zoom connection to Council regarding contractual negotiations with Charleston Water System.

Motion was made by Councilmember Millimet, seconded by Councilmember Hubbard, to come out of Executive Session at 6:55 p.m.

III. Upon Returning to Open Session, Council may take action on items discussed during Executive Session.

Motion was made by Mayor Pro-Tem Justin Novak, seconded by Councilmember Latham, “As many of our residents know, the Town of Sullivan’s Island decommissioned its deep water well system after it sustained severe damage as a result of Hurricane Hugo and chose to enter into a written contract with Charleston Water System to provide water for use by the town’s residents including paying approximately \$2 million dollars at that time for the beneficial terms of that agreement. That signed contract constitutes a valuable asset of the town and provides certainty regarding the rates that our residents pay for water. Years ago, Charleston Water System decided to raise our rates as if our signed contract did not exist. The town disputed that rate increase and has continued to pay the undisputed amount owed in accordance with our long-standing, signed agreement and placed the disputed amounts in escrow pending a resolution of the dispute. Charleston Water System now wants the town to ignore other terms of our signed agreement. Unfortunately, as stewards of the town’s assets and the rights of our residents, the town cannot in good conscience accept any of the current proposals made by Charleston Water System to resolve this long-standing contractual dispute. The town must stand firm on the principal that signed contracts are signed contracts. Based on the receipt in February from Charleston Water System of the information required by the town’s nationally recognized rate consultant to calculate the amount of the arrearage actually owed, the town now has the information required to satisfy the arrearage. Accordingly, I move that Town Council authorize the payment of \$227,361 to satisfy in full the disputed portion of arrearage now calculated to be owed under the terms of our written agreement with Charleston Water System, passed unanimously.

Councilmember Millimet thanked the negotiating team for honoring the confidentiality agreement during the discussions and not negotiating in the press.

IV. Adjourn

Motion was made by Councilmember Latham, seconded by Mayor Pro-Tem Novak to adjourn the special meeting at 6:58 p.m., passed unanimously.

Respectfully submitted,



Bridget Welch