

**Minutes from November 14, 2023  
Hanahan City Council Meeting - 6:00PM  
Debbie Lewis Municipal Chambers  
1255 Yeamans Hall Road Hanahan, SC 29410**

A City Council Meeting was held on Tuesday, November 14, 2023, at 6:00pm. The agenda was posted on the City of Hanahan webpage, and a copy of the agenda was posted on the lobby bulletin board at least 24 hours prior to the meeting. An updated agenda was also posted within the 24-hour timeframe. Mayor Rainwater presided. Council Members that were present at tonight's meeting were – Mayor Pro Tem Sally, Council Member Hedgpeth, Council Member Boggs, Council Member Spurlock, Council Member Chandler, and Council Member Dyson. We had a quorum for tonight's meeting.

Staff members that were present were: Courtney Soler - City Administrator, Allyson Driggers – City Treasurer, Gale Dollar – Clerk of Court, Tyler Dempsey – IT, Joseph Pigg – IT, Katelyn Pippin – Recreation , Larry Sturdivant – Building Official, Lee Lawson – City Planner, Fire Department Staff, Tawnie Kirven, Shana Bowen, Police Chief Rick Gebhardt, Chief Norman Hritz – Fire Department, Cameron Spencer – Assistant to City Administrator, Latarsha James, Clerk of Council.

**CALL TO ORDER**

Mayor Rainwater called the Tuesday, November 14, 2023, City Council Meeting to order at 6:00pm.

**INVOCATION**

The Invocation was led by Adam Spurlock of Restoration Community Church.

**PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE**

Council Member Boggs led us in the Pledge of Allegiance.

**RECOGNITIONS:**

- 1. Citizens of the Month** – Mayor Rainwater recognized our Citizen of the Month, Audrianna Amara. She asked Audrianna to come forward. Mayor Rainwater stated that in 2022 the Hanahan High School band was conducting a fundraiser for their trip to Washington, DC. They were selling Krispy Crème donuts for \$12/dozen. Given that the fundraiser started in November with a delivery date in December, Audrianna put her creative spin on it and determined how to be of service while also raising money. She took the orders and delivered them to the local VA hospital in Charleston. Any additional funds that were donated were used for coffee and juice. The initial gift will continue this year as she is currently in the midst of her 2023 Krispy Crème donut campaign.

A certificate of appreciation and a gift card were presented to her. Pictures were taken with Council.

**2. Employees of the Month** – Mayor Rainwater then called up Police Chief Rick Gebhardt to introduce our Employees of the Month. Chief Gebhardt then called up Sgt. Flor “Chico” Reyes and Det. Manuel “Manny” Valderrama. On September 30, 2023, officers responded to 6220 Murray Drive, the South Pointe Apartments, in reference to shots fired. Upon arrival, officers located two individuals with gunshot wounds. Both succumbed to their injuries. Investigators, including Sgt. Reyes and Det. Valderrama, immediately responded to the scene. Since the incident occurred, both Sgt. Reyes and Det. Valderrama have worked tirelessly to solve this double homicide. They have spent countless hours following leads, scouring for evidence, and interviewing people. They often worked after-hours and on weekends, ensuring “no stone went unturned.” Through their hard work and determination, they were able to identify two suspects. Both have been apprehended and face the following charges: two counts of murder, possession of a firearm during the commission of a violent crime, and unlawful possession of a handgun. Sgt. Reyes and Det. Valderrama should be commended for their dedication to duty and unwavering commitment to ensuring those responsible for this heinous crime are brought to justice. We are extremely grateful for their loyalty, hard work, and dedication. Certificates of appreciation and gift cards were presented to both employees. Pictures were taken with Council.

**3. Special Recognition – Hanahan Fire Department Promotions**

Mayor Rainwater invited Fire Chief Hritz to recognize the newly promoted firefighters. Chief Hritz explained that when he came to Hanahan Fire Department, they were short staffed, and they are now fully staffed. He also discussed the promotional process and how each person tested very well in order to satisfy the requirements of moving to the next level. He then called upon each of the firemen and their families and read their biographies (attached with the council packet). Lt. Zachary Frank, Lt. Drayton Hancock, Lt. Brian Diaz, Lt. Jonathan Turpin, Lt. John Episcopo, Engineer Kelli Tenney, Engineer Jacob Lieberman, and Engineer Gerald Decocker were all pinned by their families and pictures were taken with Council. Mayor Rainwater thanked them all for a job well done and for all they do for the city.

**4. New Firefighter(s) Swearing In** – Next, Chief Hritz remained up front for the swearing in of our new firefighters, James Combs, Sara Henry, and Juan Jimenez.

Chief Hritz read their bios, which stated:

- **James Combs** - Sam comes to us from Alaska. He obtained his firefighter one in the spring of 2017 from Kenai Peninsula College. He continued his education there obtaining his paramedic in 2018. In 2019 he joined the University Fire Department in Fairbanks Alaska. During his time there he worked training new firefighter EMTs. He earned his bachelor's degree in Homeland Security and Emergency Management at the University of Alaska in Fairbanks. In 2020 he joined the Central Emergency Services in Soldotna Alaska. He left there in 2023 and joined the Hanahan Fire Department
- **Sara Henry** - Sara was born in Quincy Massachusetts but raised in nearby Brockton. She graduated high school in 2014 and immediately joined the Navy. Following her graduation from boot camp she was trained at Great Lakes, IL as a gas turbine technician. She was then assigned to the USS Mason from 2015 to 2019 where she deployed twice. In 2019 she was transferred to the Navy Nuclear School house in Charleston. In 2020 she began volunteering at Goose Creek Rural Volunteer Fire. She left the military in 2022 and pursued her career as a firefighter.
- **Juan Jimenez** - Juan Jiménez was born and raised in Santiago, Dominican Republic. Finished high school in 2010. He later moved to New York City and attended college only 2 semesters because he needed to work to bring food to the table instead of finishing a degree. One summer afternoon, 2015, an FDNY recruiter handed him a pamphlet; that piece of paper changed his life, discovering a new passion: the fire service. In November 2018 he joined a volunteer department in Rockland County, NY, called Nyack Fire Dept. He was an active member for 1 1/2 years. A friend, Justin Fortin, from Nyack FD had joined Hanahan Fire Dept. Juan heard about an open position, applied, and joined HFD October 2020. Juan left the department for family reasons and is now rejoining Hanahan FD.

The respective parties signed their Oath(s). Pictures were taken with family/friends that were in attendance, along with Council.

5. **New Police Officer(s) Swearing In** – Next, Mayor Rainwater wished to introduce and invite up Chief Gebhardt up for the swearing in of our new police officer, Ken Duncan.

Chief Gebhardt read his bio, which stated:

- **Ken Duncan, Police Officer** - Officer Duncan grew up in Hanahan and graduated from Hanahan High School. After high school he attended CSU and earned his bachelor's degree in criminal justice, as well as a master's in management and law enforcement leadership from American Military University. Officer Duncan has been working in law enforcement for nearly four years. He began his law enforcement career with the Sheriff Al Canon Detention Center, then worked for the North Charleston Police Department. Now, he is home with the Hanahan Police Department. In his time in law enforcement, he has worked in both patrol and as a school resource officer. While in the SRO unit he was awarded a letter of recognition for assisting in identifying a student who had been kidnapped from his assigned school. Officer Duncan wanted to come back to where he grew up due to recently getting married. He has family that still lives in Hanahan, and he enjoys the close-knit community that Hanahan offers. In his spare time, he enjoys spending time with his family and wife. Officer Duncan enjoys traveling and going to the mountains for vacation. He also spends time off roading my jeep. The respective parties signed the Oath(s). Pictures were taken with family/friends that were in attendance, along with Council.

6. **Pancreatic Cancer Awareness Day Proclamation** – Council Member Hedgpeth read the Pancreatic Cancer Awareness Day Proclamation, which stated: November 16, 2023, is recognized as World Pancreatic Cancer Day. This is a time for communities around the world to come together to renew their dedication and help raise awareness for this disease. Pancreatic Cancer is the 14<sup>th</sup> most prevalent cancer and the 7<sup>th</sup> leading cause of cancer mortality worldwide, the incidence of pancreatic cancer differs dramatically between nations. A modest number of risk factors have been discovered for pancreatic cancer, including smoking, genetic vulnerability, and advancing age. Changes in lifestyle could significantly reduce the incidence of pancreatic cancer without causing serious negative effects.

- *A motion to approve the Pancreatic Cancer Awareness Day Proclamation was made by Council Member Spurlock.*
- *A second was made by Council Member Boggs.*
- *There was no further discussion.*
- *The motion was called, and the vote was 7-0.*

**7. Small Business Saturday** – Mayor Pro Tem Sally read the Small Business Saturday Proclamation, which stated: Small Business Saturday is an annual event that was created to encourage consumers to shop locally in person and online at small businesses. Founded by American Express in 2010 and officially cosponsored by the Small Business Association since (SBA) 2011, Small Business Saturday has become an important part of small businesses’ busiest shopping season. Historically, reported projected spending among U.S. consumers who shopped at independent retailers and restaurants on Small Business Saturday reached an estimated \$17.9 billion according to the 2022 Small Business Saturday Consumer Insights Survey commissioned by American Express. Please join SBA and organizations across the country in supporting your local businesses by shopping at a small business.

- *A motion to approve the Pancreatic Cancer Awareness Day Proclamation was made by Council Member Hedgpeth.*
- *A second was made by Council Member Mayor Pro Tem Sally.*
- *There was no further discussion.*
- *The motion was called, and the vote was 7-0.*

## **CITIZEN COMMENTS REGARDING AGENDA ITEMS ONLY**

**There were no citizen comments.**

### **CONSENT AGENDA**

Consent Agenda items are adopted with a single motion, second, and a vote unless a request for removal is heard from a Council Member. Items on the November 14, 2023, Consent Agenda were:

1. Approval of the Minutes from the October 10, 2023, City Council Meeting
2. Approval of the Minutes from the October 30, 2023, Special City Council Meeting
3. Approval of Emergency Repair Unit 43
4. Approval of Emergency Plumbing Repair – Cat Room
5. Approval of State Contract Purchase – Police Department

- *A motion to approve the items on the November 14, 2023, Consent Agenda, was made by Council Member Boggs.*
- *A second was made by Council Member Hedgpeth.*
- *The motion was called, and the vote was 7-0.*

## **NEW BUSINESS**

Mayor Rainwater asked Police Chief Rick Gebhardt, to come up front for the Adoption of the Memorandum of Understanding for Mutual Aid Agreements Between the City of Hanahan Police Department, Berkeley County Sheriff's Office, and Charleston County Sheriff's Office. Chief Gebhardt along with Sheriff Duane Lewis came forward to discuss what the mutual aid agreements were and how they affected the city (the representative from Charleston County had to leave). These agreements allow for all three agencies to extend their services in the event of natural disaster, disorder, special events, emergency situations, and any other law enforcement activities. Hanahan Police Department and Berkeley County Sheriff's Office also entered into a Task Force agreement which states that Hanhan, Goose Creek, and Moncks Corner Police Departments will all work together on a drug force task. Sheriff Lewis explained how the Police Department and the Sheriff's Office are already working together to support each other and as the Sheriff he is here to help and support Hanahan. Mayor Rainwater thanked the Sheriff for his support and wisdom, especially during times of natural disasters and for always being ready and willing to help.

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- *A motion to approve the **Adoption of Law Enforcement Memorandum of Understanding for Mutual Aid Agreements between Hanahan Police Department, the Berkeley County Sheriff's Office and Charleston County Sheriff's Office** was made by Council Member Boggs.*
- *A second was made by Council Member Chandler.*
- *There was no further discussion or questions.*
- *The motion was called, and the vote was 7-0.*

## **REPORTS AND COMMENTS:**

### **A. CITIZENS COMMENTS**

- Pat Phillips - 125 Brookside Drive addressed council about the need for speed bumps in Belvedere Estates. She referred to when she previously came before council and felt that the situation is getting worse. She asked that they reconsider the dates for this project to be completed. Mayor Rainwater asked Chief Gebhardt to have some officers monitor the speed until further improvements can be made.
  
- Linda McClary – River Rock Road stated that there is a need for speed bumps or something to slow traffic down coming from the school. There is only one way in and one way out and sometimes you have to sit for 40 plus minutes if there isn't a crossing guard. Council Member Hedgpeth stated that this is true and asked if the state can put the school signs back up as they have been removed. Courtney was asked to check into this by Mayor Rainwater.
  
- John Gombar – 7125 Sweetgrass Blvd asked who is responsible for cutting the walking trail. He had previously spoken to Danny and said that the city doesn't own that property and the HOA has to do it. The HOA has stated that it does not belong to them either and they aren't responsible for maintaining it. Per Mayor Pro Tem Sally, the HOA had to give permission for the trail to be built therefore, the HOA is in fact responsible, and Courtney will check with the HOA for verification.
  
- Edward Rappold – 44S Basilica Rd stated that he received a trailer violation. He did say that he doesn't meet the length requirement, but his trailer is not for recreational purposes but to pack his family up when it's time to move (military). He was advised to get with Larry and Lee to see if something could be done because his trailer cannot fit into his backyard.
  
- Steven Allen – 5736 Oleander Drive thanked the staff and council for all they do. His concern was about the bushes being too high at railroad crossing and if someone could have them cut down, so citizens aren't getting slapped in the face. He is proud of the changes that have taken place in Hanahan and proud to be a part of the culture.

## **B. CITY ADMINISTRATOR'S REPORT**

Courtney presented her monthly report to Council. As a part of her report, she wanted there to be some clarification about the recreation rental fees. Courtney asked Katelyn Pippin from the Recreation Department to come up as Danny, Recreation Director, was away for training. An apology was offered because it was stated originally that there would not be a fee increase but with the additions to the Hawks Nest the existing rental fees had to be updated to make Hanahan more comparable to neighboring agencies. Katelyn clarified that it was previously stated that there would be no increase or changes to the Mabeline and Yeamans Hall gyms. Unfortunately, that was incorrect. They no longer allow for all-day rentals. They are offered at an hourly rate for the non-profit entities. The price to rent the picnic tables used to be \$10 an hour is now \$50 an hour. The outdoor facilities will remain 1<sup>st</sup> come; 1<sup>st</sup> serve but we encourage the rental process so they can utilize the area for the time in which they would like.

### **1) Park Bond Projects:**

- a. The Hawks Nest Park-  
Maintenance Buildings: The permits have been approved and construction has begun.
- b. Steward Street Park-  
The City attorney reviewed and made suggestions to the contract, the design firm will review the changes and send to the contractor. Once the contract is signed and approved BluTide can move forward.

### **2) Phase 3 Tanner Trail timeline:**

- Construction activities will take approximately 9 months and estimated completion date of August or September 2024

- 3) In this fiscal year's budget, we were given \$100,000 by Berkeley County to update the Bettis Boat Landing. SCDNR is currently working on the design of the boat landing.
- 4) We received a PARD Grant from South Carolina Park, Recreation and Tourism Department for \$18,000, with a \$3,600 match. This work was completed in October and there was a surplus of funds which will be used towards replacing the padding on the gym walls and the metal columns inside the Mabeline Gym. Mayor Rainwater asked Courtney if there was a way to look into pricing for boat ties or temporary docking when boaters need to get out for a quick moment to maybe use the restroom or something quick.
- 5) The capital project, approved in the budget to replace the rotten wood at the Hanahan Recreation Complex has been put out for bid and awarded to IPW Construction and they have already started this work and plan to be finished by mid-December.
- 6) The City won a grant to finish the curb and gutter along Yeamans Hall Road in the area we refer to as the Town Center. The South Carolina Office of Resilience is managing this Downtown Storm Water Improvement Project and they just awarded the design bid to Stantec, for surveying, landscape architecture, and engineering. This is great news since



Stantec was the design firm for the Town Center revitalization that took place several years ago.

- 7) Berkeley County 1 cent sales tax project: Tanner Ford Blvd and Foster Creek Road intersection work is still under way. While this is not our project I'm sure a lot of Hanahan citizens would like know that there has not been any significant delays and the completion date is still set at 1/30/2024.
- 8) The City's Red, White, and Blue Festival was an incredible success. There was over 150 veterans and their guests that enjoyed the ceremony and lunch. The estimated total attendance throughout the day was between 2,500 and 3,000 people. We had over 15 groups that provide resources to veterans, 50 retail vendors and 10 food vendors.

**Upcoming Dates:**

- **Wednesday 11/15 12PM- Thanksgiving Luncheon at the Senior Center**
- **Friday 11/17 12PM- City Staff Thanksgiving Luncheon**
- **Thursday/Friday 11/23 and 11/24 City Offices closed for Thanksgiving**
- **Friday 12/1 6PM- City Tree Lighting at the Amphitheater**
- **Saturday 12/2 10AM- Exchange Club's Christmas Parade**
- **Our next regular monthly City Council Meeting is scheduled for Tuesday, December 12, 2023, at 6:00pm.**
- **Friday 12/15 630-9PM- City Staff Christmas Party at The Hawks Nest Multipurpose Room**

**C. MAYOR AND COUNCIL COMMENTS**

- Council Member Hedgpeth acknowledged the Hanahan High School Football team. He stated that they had a phenomenal year, and the coach has changed the culture of the game not only for the players but for the fans as well. He commended the booster club for all of their hard work from the start of the game to the end. Kudos to all!

There were no further comments from Council.

## **EXECUTIVE SESSION**

Mayor Rainwater stated that Council needed to go into Executive Session to receive legal advice concerning a former employee and potential claims covered by the attorney client privilege.

- *A motion to go into Executive Session was made by Council Member Hedgpeth.*
- *A second was made by Council Member Boggs.*
- *There was no further discussion or questions.*
- *The motion was called, and the vote was 7-0.*
- *Executive Session began at 7:27pm.*

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- *Council returned from Executive Session at 8:04pm.*
- *A motion to return to Regular Session was made by Council Member Chandler.*
- *A second was made by Mayor Rainwater.*
- *There was no further discussion or questions.*
- *The motion was called, and the vote was 7-0.*

## **ADJOURNMENT**

- *There being no further business to discuss tonight, a motion to adjourn was made by Council Member Hedgpeth.*
- *A second was made by Council Member Boggs.*
- *All were in favor.*
- *There was no discussion.*
- *The motion was called, and the vote was 7-0.*
- *The meeting adjourned at 8:05pm.*