



**City of Fountain Inn  
Regular Council Meeting Minutes  
Thursday, March 11, 2021 ~ 6:00 PM**

**Live YouTube Link**

<https://www.youtube.com/channel/UC6JiyIrM1NUcM8Ea8BLXCfA>

The following members of City Council were in attendance: Mayor George Patrick (GP) McLeer, Jr., Mack Blackstone, Phil Clemmer, Anthony Cunningham, Anjeanette (AJ) Dearybury, John Mahony and Jay Thomason.

Others present: Shawn Bell, Roger Case, Lori Cooper, Greg Gordos, Rebecca Mejia-Ward, Ronnie Myers, Eduardo Noriega, and Sandra Woods

Visitors: 4

**Call to Order** – Mayor McLeer

**Invocation** – Pastor Josh Martin, Palmetto Hills Presbyterian Church

**Pledge of Allegiance**

**Public Forum** – No one signed up to speak

**Consent Agenda** – **There will be no discussion of Consent Agenda items unless a Council member so requests in which event the item in question will be considered separately.**

Approve February 11, 2021 Council Meeting Minutes  
Approve March 2, 2021 Council Work Session

Motion by Councilmember Clemmer, second by Councilmember Blackstone to approve the consent agenda as presented. The motion carried unanimously 7/0.

**City Administrator's Report – Shawn M. Bell**  
(Attached)

## **Unfinished Business**

None

## **New Business**

### **R 2021-3 A Resolution that directs the Planning Commission and the City Administrator review the existing Zoning Ordinance, The Land Development Regulations, and the 2017 Master Plan**

Statement from Mayor McLeer:

At our January Council Retreat, the number one discussion item was growth. It has been the number one discussion item for all of us in Fountain Inn.

The growth we are experiencing is a compliment to the type of community we have, and a reflection of our local economy's strength, but it presents its own set of challenges.

The issue with our growth is not a family or business making personal decisions about their property - a right explicitly and exclusively theirs. The issue is the framework that allows for development - our zoning laws. If the laws are not helping create the type of development a community wants, then the laws are the issue, not necessarily just the development.

Local government's role and authority in managing growth is rooted in our zoning laws. Zoning is the primary legal tool we have at our disposal that balances property rights with the needs and character of our community. Additionally, our future land use map, developed with public input and adopted by Council, is another guiding document when growth occurs - allowing us to look in and around our community and set targets for the kinds/types of uses we want to see or think is most appropriate. All of this, so that when a private property owner decides they want to build something, we can be sure it is something the community wants to see.

These tools, our zoning, land development regulations, and future land use map, find their home in our city's Comp Plan. By law, our city must update and adopt a new Comprehensive Plan every ten years, and review that plan five years in between.

In 2017, we adopted our current Comp Plan. That process involved numerous public meetings (I attended each of them), and the Plan was adopted by Council - and in 2022 we are scheduled to review it.

Tonight though, after discussion at our Retreat, I have asked staff to draft this resolution which expedites the review process and intends to expand it beyond just a simple review. This resolution directs staff and the planning commission to begin their review of our Comp Plan, ahead of schedule, and to recommend any necessary changes to City Council.

Resolutions can sometimes be very wonky and full of "legal lingo". However, I encourage everyone to read this full resolution. It is full of some very useful information and does a great job framing Council's intention.

I have spoken with the Chair and Vice Chair of our PC, as well as staff. Everyone is on board with this and has expressed an eagerness to start this work. This process will include public input and will be thorough. But it will not happen overnight. Our zoning laws have plenty of tweaking, fixing, and reconsideration that is needed. To do this right, it will take a couple of months, so I ask the public to stay patient, but most importantly, to stay involved along the way.

But you have to start somewhere, and this Resolution is the first step.

Motion by Councilmember Clemmer, second by Councilmember Blackstone to approve R 2021-3

The motion carried unanimously 7/0

**R 2021-4 A Resolution to approve and adopt a ten-year Capital Improvement Program for the Fountain Inn Fire Service Area, Greenville County, South Carolina**

City Administrator, Shawn Bell stated that the City of Fountain Inn has a contract with Greenville County to provide fire suppression and other fire protection related services to county residents residing outside the City Limits (Fire Service Area).

In order to provide the required services to meet the requirements of the contract and to meet the fire protection needs to the residents of the Fire Service Area certain capital improvements must be undertaken. Proper planning and management for the provision of the fire services in the Fire Service Area requires a long range, ten-year plan to keep up with and adequately respond to the growth and demand for service in the area. Not only is the Capital Improvement Program necessary to adequately service the needs of the residents of the Fire Service Area, but if implemented, will greatly enhance the level of those services.

The City provides full time, professionally trained staff of firefighters certified as EMT's who continue to undergo rigorous additional training to be ready and skilled in fighting fires, saving lives, and protecting property. Implementation of the Capital Improvement Program will result in reduced response times for calls of service, reduce ISO rating resulting in potential savings in homeowner's and commercial property insurance premiums, enhance fire protection services being provided throughout the Fire Service Area and the real potential of saving lives an increasing safety for firefighters.

The City has not asked for a millage increase in some time. The current FSA operating millage is 29.4 and the current debt millage is 4.4. The City is requesting 3.29 operating millage increase and 5.59 debt millage increase totaling 8.79 increase.

Motion by Councilmember Jay Thomason, second by Councilmember Cunningham to approve R 2021-4 as presented.

The motion carried unanimously 7/0

**Z 2021-1 First Reading – Railroad Street, 301 North Main Street**

Z 2021-001 would rezone 0.64 acres TMS# 0344000201500 P/O from R-15, Residential District to C-1, Central Business District.

The Planning Commission voted unanimously (4-0) in favor of the rezoning at the March 1, 2021 meeting.

The property owner, Lauren Davis, spoke on the proposed rezoning. She stated the proposed use for the portion of property was to construct a triplex unit for her immediate family members (multigenerational housing).

The original request from the applicant to the Planning Commission was to rezone to R-M Residential, Multifamily. The Planning department staff report reflects this request and recommended approval. The Fountain Inn Planning Commission suggested the applicant change the zoning request to C-1 and the applicant consented to the change.

Motion by Councilmember Blackstone, second by Councilmember Dearybury to approve Z-2021-1 on first reading.

The motion carried unanimously 7/0

**Approve 2021 Employee Handbook**

Human Resources Director, Rebecca Mejia-Ward presented the 2021 Employee Handbook to Council.

Motion by Councilmember Clemmer, second by Councilmember Thomason to approve the 2021 Employee Handbook as presented.

The motion carried unanimously 7/0.

**Approve Clinton-Newberry Gas (CCNGA) Interconnect Agreement**

Gas Manager, Eduardo Noriega, reviewed the Gas Interconnect Agreement with Council.

**Phase I**

FING solicited bids for the design, construction, and installation of a new natural gas interconnecting station between FING and CNGA. The purpose of the station is to provide a back feed to the entire FING system in the event of an emergency shutdown by our current gas supplier or another type of emergency that would compromise the delivery of gas to almost 10,000 customers.

The low bid of \$93,100 was submitted by IGM. In addition, there will be an additional \$15,000 to \$20,000 for misc. incidentals not part of the bid, but necessary to complete the work:

- Security Fencing
- Station protection (steel piles around it)
- Establishing electrical service by Laurens Electric
- Inlet and outlet valve installations
- Computer hardware/software

The cost for the station came well below the \$200,000 budgeted.

## **Phase II**

Installation 5,200 ft. of 6" high-pressure steel at an estimated cost of \$650,000. Phase II if approved is scheduled for completion in November 2021.

Motion Councilmember Thomason, second by Councilmember Mahony to approve the Clinton-Newberry Gas (CCNGA) Interconnect Agreement as presented.

The motion carried unanimously 7/0

## **Ordinance 2021-003 - Gas Rates 1<sup>st</sup> reading**

Mr. Noriega reviewed with Council the proposed gas rates, tariffs, and charges for Industrial customers of the Fountain Inn Natural Gas Department.

- Clarifies FING's existing Firm Service Tariff for large industrial accounts and introduces a late payment charge of 1% of the amount due.
- Introduces three (3) new tariff options:
  - a. Interruptible Service Rate
  - b. Firm Transportation
  - c. Interruptible Transportation

To provide clarity and consistency to our large industrial gas customers, we have clarified and better-defined FING's Firm Service Tariff, and we have added the industry standard 1% late payment charge fee. In addition, as we continue to grow and expect new industrial customers to require our services, we have created three (3) additional gas tariffs:

- Interruptible Service
- Firm Transportation
- Interruptible Transportation

Each of these tariffs is clearly defined and explain in the attachment to the ordinance. These new tariffs are commonly used in the gas industry and provide new and existing gas customers the ability to choose which tariff they would like to use (if they meet the requirements of the tariff), as well as help FING manage its gas purchases and deliveries during peak and non-peak periods.

Motion Councilmember Mahony, second by Councilmember Blackstone to approve Ordinance 2021-003 Gas Rates, First Reading

The motion carried unanimously 7/0.

**Approve New Public Works Director**

Shawn Bell stated our current Public Works Director, Roger Case, has been with the city for 32 years and he recently informed the city that he will be retiring by the end of June. The job was posted, and the candidates were interviewed by a panel. The panel recommends Russell Slatton as the new Public Works Director. He comes to us from the City of Hartsville.

Motion Councilmember Cunningham, second by Councilmember Clemmer to approve Russ Slatton as the new Public Works Director.

The motion carried unanimously 7/0

**Executive Session**

**For the discussion of a contractual agreement with the School District of Greenville County.**

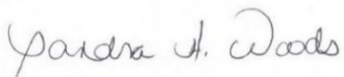
**On coming out of executive session, Council may take action on those items discussed in Executive Session.**

Motion by Councilmember Cunningham, second by Councilmember Blackstone for Council to meet in Executive Session. The motion carried unanimously 7/0.

Back in Regular Session

Mayor McLeer stated that Council only received information during executive session. No votes were taken.

Motion by Councilmember Mahony, second by Councilmember Clemmer to adjourn the meeting. The motion carried unanimously 7/0,



Sandra H. Woods, CMC  
Municipal Clerk