

**MINUTES**  
**Town Council Meeting**  
**August 17, 2004**  
**PROSPERITY, SC 29127**  
**Public Hearing**  
**6:30 pm**  
**(Public Hearing Regarding Electrical Rate Increase)**

Council Attendance: Mayor Bruce Connelly, Councilmen Larry Spotts; Derek Underwood; Allen Gallman; G. W. Dawkins

General Attendance: Andrea Cantrell, Town Administrator; Janet Chastain, Clerk/Treasurer

Mayor Connelly called the Public Hearing to order at 6:30 pm. He asked for any public input. There were no comments or questions. Mayor Connelly closed the Public Hearing at 6:35 pm.

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**PROSPERITY, SC 29127**  
**7:00 pm**

Council Attendance: Mayor Bruce Connelly, Councilmen Larry Spotts; Derek Underwood; Allen Gallman; G.W. Dawkins

General Attendance: Andrea Cantrell, Town Administrator; Hank Bufkin, Town Attorney; Janet Chastain, Clerk/Treasurer; Chief Benji Sease; Fred Sexton, Public Works Director

Mayor Connelly called the meeting to order. Councilman Gallman opened the meeting with prayer.

**APPROVAL OF MINUTES:**

Mayor Connelly presented the minutes of the July 20, 2004 council meeting to Council for approval. Councilman Dawkins stated that he had a correction under the "Sanitation and Streets" report. He made the correction that it should be stated in the minutes that the roads would be repaved in the Town from railroad to railroad, not the railroad areas repaved. He asked that this correction be made.

**A MOTION** by Councilman Underwood to approve the minutes of July 20, 2004 with the previously stated correction; Seconded by Councilman Gallman and so approved unanimously.

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Mayor Connelly welcomed all for attending.

## **OPEN SESSION**

There was no one present to speak at this time.

## **REPORT OF COMMITTEES:**

**Electrical, Fire Department, & Parade:** Councilman Underwood stated that at the first of the month there was a power outage. He stated that Mr. Sexton had informed him that the City of Newberry line crew came out to help them with this outage. We would like to thank them at this time for their help. Mayor Connelly stated that a wreck on South Main Street caused this outage. The insurance of the driver will be paying for repairs to the power pole damaged.

Councilman Underwood stated that he had no report for the Fire Department at this time.

**Sanitation and Street:** Councilman Dawkins stated that he had no report at this time. Mayor Connelly asked that Councilman Dawkins do some research on individuals using the Town as a garbage pickup for outside garbage. He stated that he has gotten reports that an individual is doing garbage pickup outside the city limits and bringing it back in Town for the Town workers to pick up. He asked that Councilman Dawkins along with Mr. Sexton look into this and report back to Council.

**Building, Recreation and Parks:** Councilman Gallman stated that he had no report at this time.

**Police Department:** Chief Sease stated that he has hired someone to fill in the part time position that vacated by Officer Bill Griffin. The new employee is Robin Rucker. He is the former chief of Abbeville Police Department. Chief Sease stated that he will be on duty as of next week.

Chief Sease stated that he had consulted with Mr. Bufkin and they are ready to begin the reserve program. He stated that he had gotten ten applicants but had narrowed it down to four. This program will begin in October.

Chief Sease stated that he would like to recognize Ms. Wendy Steiner for her efforts in raising funds for the Police Departments K9 program. He presented her with a plaque of recognition. Mayor and Council thanked Ms. Steiner for her support. Chief Sease stated that Zora, the police dog, is not doing well right now. She is currently being treated by a local veterinary. Councilman Gallman asked how much money Ms. Steiner had raised. Chief Sease stated that it was around \$475 to \$480.

**Water and Sewer Department:** Councilman Spotts stated that this on August 5<sup>th</sup> the Town had an eight inch water main break behind Town Hall. He also stated that there

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have been some electrical problems with Lift Station #1. These problems have now been repaired. Mr. Sexton stated that they had a small water leak today on Circle Drive but it has been taken care of. Mayor Connelly asked who Mr. Sexton was using with the electrical problem. Mr. Sexton stated that he had been using Wayne Gibson. It seems to be working out well.

**Town Administrator:** Ms. Cantrell reminded everyone about the Prosperity's Hoppin' festival is coming up this weekend. She asked for council's help in spreading the word about the upcoming event. Mayor Connelly stated that festival committee has worked very hard. He asked that Council be available to support them when needed this weekend for this event.

**Town Attorney:** Mr. Bufkin stated that he no report at this time.

**Old School Renovations:** Mayor Connelly stated that the committee is still meeting regularly and working very hard on this project. He stated that he would be offering tours this weekend during the festival.

## **NEW BUSINESS**

**First Reading of Retail Telecommunications Services Ordinance:** Ms. Cantrell stated that the Municipal Association sent this ordinance to the Town. She stated that this ordinance would give the Municipal Association the room they need to move forward on this regardless of which way State law is passed. Ms. Cantrell read the ordinance to Council (see attached copy). Regardless of what is passed at the State level this will allow the Municipal Association to collect the maximum rate when they take in those fees for the Town. Mayor Connelly encouraged Council to support this ordinance. Ms. Cantrell stated that the Municipal Association is already collecting this fee for the Town. They were collecting 3% until the Legislature made the ruling that they could only collect .75%. These negotiations are now taking place between the Municipal Association and the Legislation of Telecommunications businesses to get this amount back up to a reasonable amount.

**A MOTION** by Councilman Underwood to approve the First Reading of the Retail Telecommunications Ordinance; Seconded by Councilman Gallman and so approved unanimously.

**Bishop Hydrant Service Contract:** Mayor Connelly stated that Council had a copy of this contract to review. The contract will end this year. Ms. Cantrell stated that the new contract would be for the same rate. Mayor Connelly questioned if County funds were used for the inspections in the past. Councilman Underwood stated that a portion of County Fire Funds are used for this purpose. Fred stated that documents produced by Bishop are used in conjunction with our hydrant flow test program and this information is also utilized by DHEC. There are two hydrants in Town (one on Langford Street and one

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on Elm Street) that are not able to be used because of bad lines. Mayor Connelly questioned what would be needed to get these hydrants back on line. Mr. Sexton stated that one line would have to be upgraded and the other line would have to be incorporated into the system once approved by DHEC. Mr. Bufkin questioned if any study had been done to find out whether or not the hydrants available meet the Town's needs. Councilman Spotts stated that when a new line is installed they install hydrants on the line at that time. Mayor Connelly recommended that Councilman Spotts and Mr. Sexton look into the status of the hydrants and report back to Council next month. Mr. Bufkin also questioned if hydrants support adequate pressure in case of a large fire in Town. Councilman Spotts stated that a report of that nature is sent to DHEC twice a year.

**A MOTION** by Councilman Spotts to sign another three year contract with Bishop Hydrant Service; Seconded by Councilman Dawkins and so approved unanimously.

**OLD BUSINESS**

**2<sup>nd</sup> Reading of Electric Rates Ordinance:** Ms. Cantrell presented the policy for cutoff and late fees. (See attached copy of policy)

**A MOTION** by Councilman Dawkins to approve the second reading of the Electric Rates Ordinance; Seconded by Councilman Gallman and the vote carried four to one with Councilman Spotts opposing.

Mayor Connelly stated that this rate had to be increased to meet the expenditures in this budget for the next fiscal year that Council had approved. He also stated that the emergency reserves had been cut from \$880,000.00 to \$490,000.00 in two years. The budget has been balanced in the past by using these emergency reserves. There were several expenditures that were not approved because funds were lacking. The Mayor reviewed several expenditures (Prosperity Parade, Prosperity's Hoppin', spraying for mosquitoes, recreation, air condition repairs and Fire Department expenditures) and pointed out that even if these items had been taken out of the budget it still would not have balanced. The only choice was to raise revenue in some manner. Mayor Connelly thanked Council for their support in helping work through this issue. He stated that everyone is trying to look out for the future of this Town by not continuing to deplete the emergency reserves.

**GENERAL INFORMATION**

Mayor Connelly stated that he had received a letter from Bedenbaugh Realty and forwarded each Council member a copy. It stated that the public was not notified of the billing due date policy change. Mayor Connelly stated that notification was given before this policy was passed. Ms. Cantrell stated that a notification was posted in Town Hall. Councilman Underwood stated that the letter should be addressed by sending them the notification that was posted and the minutes where it was discussed. He also stated that a notification has also been posted by the drop box outside to allow all customers to receive this information. Ms. Cantrell stated that these notifications were originally put out in

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August of 2003. Councilman Underwood stated that the complaint that he had received dated back for months. Councilman Dawkins questioned if this notification was put on the bill. Ms. Cantrell stated that the new policy did go on the bill. She also stated that it has always been the Towns policy that the 10% penalty would go on the bills on the morning of the 11<sup>th</sup>. All payments received after 5:00 p.m. on the 10<sup>th</sup> will be assessed a 10% penalty. Councilman Underwood pointed out that if a payment is dropped in the drop box at 5:01 p.m. after the office is closed, it will not be put on the computer until the next day and there is no way to backdate payments. Ms. Cantrell stated that even on our old system there was no way to backdate a payment. Councilman Underwood requested that this letter be addressed and sent copies of these policies and minutes. Ms. Cantrell stated that upon reviewing the history of one individual that has complained, this individual has always had late fees on their account. Ms. Cantrell stated that if the customers will get their payments into Town Hall by 5:00 p.m. on the 10<sup>th</sup> or before then there will be no question of whether or not a penalty should be assessed. Ms. Chastain stated that the drop box is always checked at 5:00 p.m. and if anyone comes in Town Hall right before or around 5:00 p.m. on the 10<sup>th</sup> their payment is also posted for that business day. Ms. Cantrell stated that this has been the policy for a long time now. She also stated that there has been a lot of turnaround in the Utility Clerk position lately. She stated that she could not state for sure that everyone involved has done that job correctly but this was the policy. Mayor Connelly requested that documentation be sent in response to this letter.

Mr. Bufkin wanted to recognize the Police Department in their efforts in helping direct the traffic at the elementary school in the morning. They are not patrolling just to catch speeders but they are trying to help the community.

**A MOTION** by Councilman Dawkins to adjourn the Council Meeting at 7:43 p.m.;  
Seconded by Councilman Gallman and so approved unanimously.

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Janet Chastain  
Clerk/Treasurer