

**City Council Minutes
September 17, 2024**

Orangeburg City Council held its regularly scheduled meeting on Tuesday September 17, 2024, 6:00 PM in Council Chambers, 933 Middleton Street with Mayor Michael C. Butler presiding.

PRESENT:

Michael C. Butler, Mayor
Annette Dees Grevious
Jerry Hannah
Dr. Kalu Kalu
L. Zimmerman Keitt, Mayor Pro Tem
Sandra P. Knotts
Richard Stroman

A motion was made by Councilmember Kalu, seconded by Councilmember Stroman to approve the September 3, 2024, minutes. The motion was unanimously approved.

Reverend Larry D. McCutcheon and Mr. Walter Bennett, III, MUSC Health appeared before Council concerning the Clean Air is Fair initiative.

City Administrator Evering addressed Council concerning Serve and Connect Partnership. He stated, "Serve and Connect is a non-profit organization founded and led by Dr. Cassie Ray that has made a tremendous impact throughout the state. Their primary objective is to bridge gaps between the community and law enforcement. They have worked closely with Chief Austin and the Department of Public Safety and are good partners in Orangeburg. They have begun a new partnership with our Parks and Recreation Department. Parks and Recreation Director Shawn Taylor is here to explain."

Parks and Recreation Director Taylor stated, "We are excited about this partnership with Serve and Connect that will offer safety and beautification enhancements to the Parks Department. The following projects are planned, replace an exterior gate at the Adden Park, replace access bridge to Summers Park, replace the information kiosk at the Edisto Memorial Gardens, paint the Canteen Building and add blinds, tables, and chairs."

A motion was made by Councilmember Kalu, seconded by Mayor Pro Tem Keitt to approve the third reading of an ordinance to amend the budget for the operation of the Department of Public Utilities of the City of Orangeburg for the Fiscal Year October 1, 2023, through September 30, 2024. The motion was approved 6-1. Councilmember Hannah opposed.

DPU Manager Harley addressed Council concerning third reading of an ordinance to adopt a budget for the operation of the Department of Public Utilities of the City of Orangeburg for the Fiscal Year October 1, 2024, through September 30, 2025, (2) adopt amended Electric Rates effective October 1, 2024, (3) adopt amended Natural Gas Rates effective October 1, 2024, (4) adopt amended Water Rates effective October 1, 2024, and (5) adopt amended Wastewater Rates effective October 1, 2024. He stated, "As you recall, we amended the budget to Option One which raises Water and Wastewater rates. The rate increase will generate approximately \$2.9 million in additional revenue bringing our total operating income for FY 2024-25 to \$129.6 million and operating expenses are expected to be at \$112.9 million. There are no changes in this budget from the last reading."

Councilmember Stroman stated, "I have opposed the DPU budget. I asked other utility companies whether they made money on water. Their response was yes. I am changing my vote in favor of the budget. Also, I would like to make statement. In the future, I recommend we name the Wastewater Plant, Fred A. Boatwright."

Mayor Butler stated, "That will need to be discussed at a later date."

A motion was made by Mayor Pro Tem Keitt, seconded by Councilmember Kalu to approve second reading of an ordinance to adopt a budget for the operation of the Department of Public Utilities of the City of Orangeburg for the Fiscal Year October 1, 2024, through September 30, 2025, (2) adopt amended Electric rates effective October 1, 2024, (3) adopt amended Water rates effective

October 1, 2024, and (4) adopt amended Wastewater rates effective October 1, 2024. The motion was approved 6-1. Councilmember Hannah opposed.

A motion was made by Councilmember Stroman, seconded by Councilmember Knotts to go into Executive Session concerning discussion of negotiations incident to proposed contractual arrangements and/or the receipt of legal advice where the legal advice relates to pending, threatened, or potential claim or other matters covered by the attorney-client privilege, settlement or legal claims, or the position of the public agency in other adversary situations involving the assertion against the agency of a claim S.C. Code Sec. 30-4-70(a)(2) a) Fire Contracts, b) Town of Norway, c) Health Insurance Contract, d) Hillcrest Lease and e) Citizens Advisory Panel (CAP) and discussion of employment, appointment, compensation, promotion, demotion, discipline or release of an employee, a student or a person regulated by a public body, or the appointment of a person to a public body S.C. Code 30-4-70(a)(2) Employee Handbook The motion was unanimously approved.

A motion was made by Councilmember Stroman, seconded by Councilmember Kalu to return to open session. The motion was unanimously approved.

City Administrator Evering addressed Council concerning second reading of an ordinance to authorize the execution and delivery of a Fire Service agreement and contract to purchase real and personal property with Orangeburg County, authorizing the termination of individual fire contracts. He stated, "As you recall, a month ago, you gave first reading in title only to this ordinance. We have been negotiating with the County on a fire service agreement which would eliminate fire contracts. The County would then add a millage to the property taxes that will allow us to receive payment for the services that we provide. The payment will be \$1.25 million the first year and there will be a 2% escalator or increase for each additional year. We are still negotiating the term. The current term is five years with two, five-year renewals. We think this will be of benefit to the citizens in the fire service area, with the majority of whom should receive a better ISO rating. The majority of whom will pay less in taxes than they do for a fire contract. It will be less burdensome administratively and from a budgeting standpoint, it will allow us to have a more certain expectation of what we will receive in terms of funding."

A motion was made by Councilmember Kalu, seconded by Mayor Pro Tem Keitt to approve second reading of an ordinance to authorize the execution and delivery of a Fire Service agreement and contract to purchase real and personal property with Orangeburg County, authorizing the termination of individual fire contracts. The motion was unanimously approved.

A motion was made by Councilmember Stroman, seconded by Councilmember Knotts to adjourn the meeting. The motion was unanimously approved.

Respectfully submitted,

Linda McDaniel

Linda McDaniel
City Clerk

