

**REGULAR COUNCIL MEETING
KINGSTREE TOWN COUNCIL
MARCH 18, 2024 - 6:30 PM
TOWN HALL MEETING ROOM
FRANK H. MCGILL MUNICIPAL COMPLEX**

ROLL CALL

**COUNCIL
PRESENT**

Darren Tisdale, Mayor
Michelle Butterworth, 2nd District
Derek Fitts, 4th District

Frankie D. White, 1st District
Chris Williams, 3rd District
C.M. (Bubba) Hammet, Jr., 5th District

**COUNCIL
ABSENT**

Stan Williamson, 6th District

**OFFICIALS
PRESENT**

Kipton W. Coker, Town Manager
Erica K. Goodwin, Municipal Clerk
Alvin D. Chambers, Community Development Director
Kimberly Marlow, Police Chief
Tim Duke, Fire Chief
Merianne Cowley, Finance Director

CALL TO ORDER

INVOCATION – Councilman Williams

NOTIFICATION OF MEDIA – Verified

APPROVAL OF THE REGULAR MEETING AGENDA FOR MARCH 18, 2024.

- *Councilman Hammet moved to approve the meeting agenda for March 18, 2024.*
- *Seconded by Councilman Fitts.*
- *The motion carried unanimously.*

DISCUSSION AND APPROVAL OF THE MINUTES FROM THE REGULAR COUNCIL MEETING HELD ON FEBRUARY 19, 2024.

- *Councilwoman Butterworth made a motion to approve the meeting minutes for the regular meeting held on February 19, 2024.*
- *Seconded by Councilman Hammet.*
- *The motion carried unanimously.*

PUBLIC COMMENTS

- *No public comments*

NOMINATIONS FOR KINGSTREE BOARD OF ZONING AND APPEALS (BZA)

- *Councilman Fitts motion to table.*
- *Seconded by Councilman Butterworth.*
- *Councilman Hammet asked for the BZA committee to make a recommendation for nomination for the vacant slot.*
- *The motion carried unanimously.*

MUTUAL AID AGREEMENTS – HEMINGWAY POLICE DEPARTMENT AND WILLIAMSBURG COUNTY SHERIFF'S DEPARTMENT WITH KINGSTREE POLICE DEPARTMENT

- *Town Manager Kipp Coker explained when there is turnover in the position as Chief of Police in a Municipality all mutual aid agreements are null and void, requiring the execution of all new Mutual Aid Agreements which must again be presented to Council for approval. The Mutual Aid agreement between Hemingway Police Department and Kingstree Police Department recently being approved by Council on December 18, 2023, at the Regular Council Meeting under his term as Chief.*
- *Councilman Hammet made a motion to approve the mutual aid agreements between Hemingway Police Department and Kingstree Police Department and Williamsburg County Sheriff's Department and Kingstree Police Department.*
- *Seconded by Councilman Williams.*
- *The motion carried unanimously.*

RESOLUTION 2024-04 - LOSS PREVENTION

- *Councilman Hammet made a motion to approve the Loss Prevention Resolution 2024-04.*
- *Seconded by Councilman White.*
- *The motion carried unanimously.*

PROCLAMATION- AMERICAN RED CROSS MONTH 2024-01

- *March was declared American Red Cross Month for the Town of Kingstree.*

CHIEF OF POLICE – DEPARTMENTAL UPDATE

Chief Marlow introduced herself and thanked Council for the opportunity to serve as the Town of Kingstree's Chief stating her vision is to build upon the foundation that was started by former Chief Kipp Coker and to protect the citizens of the community. Chief Marlow stated she has an outstanding staff and recently hired one fulltime officer who started Wednesday, March 13, 2024. The police department is fully staffed with the exception of the Captain's position, which they are currently in search of.

CHIEF OF FIRE DEPARTMENT – DEPARTMENTAL UPDATE

Chief Duke stated he has been with the Kingstree Fire Department for 29 years, recently retired for 30 days and returned as Chief of the Fire Department. In 2006, he accomplished having the ISO Rating for the Town, which is rated on a scale from 1-10 (1 being the best), lowered from a 5 to 4. In August 2018, he again had the Town's ISO rating lowered to a 3/3y. The 3y being due to the area of town not having fire hydrants, measuring from fire hydrant on Fulton Avenue to fire hydrant on Woodland Drive, the distance of 1000 feet comes to an empty lot. The solution, if someone were to build on that empty lot, is to erect a fire hydrant at that lot. Chief Duke thanked everyone from past, present and going into the future for everything the department has been able to accomplish, for a town of our size and population and being such a small Fire Department, a 3y ISO rating is an incredible accomplishment.

In 2010 and 2011, the Town purchased a Pumper Truck and the first ever ladder truck through a Waccamaw Grant and a Stimulus Grant for a combined cost of approximately \$950,000 in the two trucks. ISO requires Kingstree Fire Department to have 3 pumpers at all times and those trucks are calculated in the overall ISO Rating. The 1995 and 1997 trucks are becoming aged with increasing problems have become costly to repair over the years. There have been numerous attempts over the past several years to replace the oldest, through grants and budgeted in payments, but have been unsuccessful to date. Last year's attempt, applying through the CBDG grant, was again unsuccessful but he intends to apply again this fall. Chief Duke stated they have constantly applied for grants for equipment but only ever received funding toward fire trucks two times.

Kingstree Fire Department provides Fire and Life Safety Training such as school fire drills, education programs for all ages, community outreach for employees, businesses and citizens, fire extinguisher training class for businesses and installation of smoke detectors for homeowners in the area, free fire home safety inspection for citizens and conduct Fire Marshall Inspections. Kingstree Fire Department has continuous daily, monthly, ongoing training both inhouse and through the South Carolina Fire Academy, having 8 SC Fire Academy certified instructors for the department.

Chief Duke invited all of Council to come to your station, the citizens station, and visit anytime. Thanked Council for all the support over the years and offered if there were any questions or if ever any need of anything he is always available.

- *Councilman Hammet emphasized that all the firetrucks seen at the station, the fire hydrants and the distance to these fire hydrants all play a part in the ISO Rating, which effects Homeowners Insurance costs. What Chief Duke and his department have accomplished in bringing the ISO Rating down has in turn brought your insurance rates down and we thank them for that.*

FINANCIAL DEPARTMENT – DEPARTMENT UPDATE

Financial Director Merianne Cowley advised that the Town is two-thirds of the way through the 2024 budget year and planning for the 2025 budget year. Presenting the most up-to-date budget summary through February 29th, the Town as of 5:00pm this afternoon, has \$164,000 in our general fund, \$151,000 in our Water and Sewer Fund, \$941,000 in our Hospitality Fund totaling approximately \$1.8 million in those 3 funds. There is \$935,000 in our American Rescue Plan money, which is set aside for grant matches that the Town has already been awarded for Water and Sewer Projects. She echoed on Chief Marlow and Chief Duke comments in that if council or the public has any questions, she is always available.

Budget Meetings with the New Town Manager and Department Heads will start next week and from there, times will be scheduled for the Council Committee to meet.

TOWN MANAGER COMMENTS

Kipp Coker thanked the Council and Mayor for the opportunity to serve as Town Manager advising the first couple of weeks have been wide open. The agreement was signed on his first day as Town Manager, March 5, 2024, with Hybrid Engineering for the 2023 Water Improvement Project off of 527 past Jennyville and work will soon begin.

Town Manager Kipp Coker, Mayor Darren Tisdale, Chief Tim Duke, and Chief Kimberly Marlow met with the Williamsburg County Supervisor Kelvin Washington over the past couple of weeks regarding the penny sales tax coming up and are looking to try and be put on the Referendum in November. Requested Council to keep this in mind and think about what we would do with the money.

Interviewed for both Main Street Director and Human Resources position. Advised that a Human Resources Director has been hired and he starts April 1, 2024. There has been some turnover recently in the Town, so we are working diligently to fill those positions.

Update for East Main Street, the Holly trees were taken down with the exception of the ones in the powerlines that will have to be cut out by Duke before the Town can remove them.

Cleanup has started on the East Side and planters will be positioned with flowers. The goal is to have the East Side and West Side to match, one Main Street, one Kingstree.

A few policy changes have been made within Town Hall, anywhere there is money being exchanged cameras are being installed. The cameras were ordered and will be installed in the coming weeks.

The past few weeks have been extremely busy, consisting of numerous meetings with consultants, attorneys, engineers, etc.

EXECUTIVE SESSION – Discuss Personnel Matter

- *Councilman Hammet made a motion to enter Executive Session.*
- *Seconded by Councilman White.*
- *Councilman Hammet made a motion to come out of Executive Session.*
- *Seconded by Councilman White.*
- *The motion carried unanimously.*
- *No action was taken by Council while in Executive Session.*

NON-AGENDA COUNCIL COMMENTS

Councilwoman Butterworth

Councilwoman Butterworth welcomed and congratulated everyone, the Town Clerk, the Town Manager and the Police Chief.

Councilman Williams

Councilman Williams thanked and commended the city workers for the beautiful work they did clearing the debris from the stop sign on Church Street. Also thanked SCDOT for answering Councilman Stan Williamson's call for filling the pothole, which was such a rough section in the road at the intersection on Hwy 527 and Longstreet, making it much smoother noting there is still work to be done to make it complete. He welcomed all the new men and women to their new task noting that so much fell on Town Manager Coker at one time, but he is confident that Mr. Coker will see his way through. He thanked Mrs. Erica, Mrs. Marlow as the new Police Chief, and Tim Duke as the Fire Chief.

Councilman White

Councilman White asked the new Police Chief to tell a little about herself as he does not know her and has not yet met her, where she comes from and where she lives.

- *Chief Marlow stated she has lived in Kingstree since she was 8, in law enforcement for 15-16 years, started with City of Manning, moved to Clarendon County Sheriff's Office, then to Lake City Police, a small stint at Pamplico, then came to Kingstree Police Department in 2020 as Sergeant, moving up to 1st Sergeant then Captain and now Chief.*

Councilman Fitts

Councilman Fitts welcomed everyone new, Kipp, Kimberly, Erica, and the Chief. Special condolences to those who retired and returned to work. Acknowledging that Council appreciates each of them and looks forward to the work each will contribute to the Town.

Councilman Hammet

Councilman Hammet thanked the Town employees for being diligent in their work, putting their heart and soul into the cleanup efforts made downtown Saturday. There are several abandoned properties around town which he has received complaints about. These complaints have been turned over to Alvin Chambers to handle. He provided Council with a copy of a Williamsburg County Property Maintenance Guide, which provides a check list, suggesting this guide could possibly be used as an idea for the Town to consider doing something similar. Welcomed Kipp as the Manager and Kimberly as Chief, commending her for the job that she has done for issues that he had to bring to her in the past and he looks forward to her being Chief of Police and welcomed Mrs. Erica aboard.

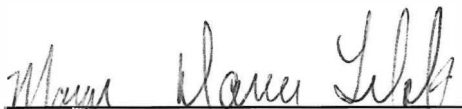
Mayor Tisdale

Mayor Tisdale thanked and welcomed Kipp and Erica, thanked Chief of Fire Department and Chief of Police and Merianne Cowley.

AJOURNMENT

- *Councilman Hammet made the motion to adjourn.*
- *Councilman White seconded the motion to adjourn.*
- *The motion carried unanimously.*


Erica Goodwin, Municipal Clerk


Darren Tisdale, Town of Kingstree Mayor