PRESENT: Mayor Barbara Jo Blain-Bellamy, Mayor Pro Tem Larry A. White, and Council members Thomas J. Anderson II, William M. Goldfinch IV, Shane Hubbard, Ashley Smith, and Jean M. Timbes

STAFF: Adam Emrick, City Administrator; Vicky Lefler, Deputy City Administrator; Kevin Chestnut, Public Works Director; Mary Catherine Hyman, Planning Director; Robert Cooper, Building Official; James Friday, Public Utilities Director; Addison Jarrell, Parks, Recreation and Tourism Director; Reggie Jenrette, Solid Waste Director; Tammy Carter, Police Captain; Timmy Williams, Grounds and Maintenance Director; Taylor Newell, Public Information Officer; Lynn Smith, Human Resources Director; Le Hendrick, Fire Chief; Allison Williams, Finance Director; Barbara Tessier, City Clerk

OTHERS: Abdulla Mustafa, Hillary Howard, Matt Varnadore, Jerry Brown, Kathy Ropp and others

The requirements for posting notice of this meeting under South Carolina’s Freedom of Information Act (FOIA) were met.

CALL TO ORDER: Mayor Blain-Bellamy called the meeting to order. She introduced Rev. Rhett Talbert, Kingston Presbyterian Church, who gave the invocation. City Council and those in attendance recited the Pledge of Allegiance.

APPROVAL OF AGENDA: Motion: White made a motion, seconded by Timbes, to approve the agenda as presented. Vote: Unanimous. Motion carried.

CONSENT AGENDA:

A. Special event request: Laurel Street Yard Sale, Saturday, April 6, 2019 – Hillary Howard, Executive Director, Conway Downtown Alive

B. Minutes of City Council meeting – January 7, 2019

Motion: Timbes made a motion, seconded by White, to approve the consent agenda as presented. Vote: Unanimous. Motion carried.

PUBLIC INPUT:

Abdulla Mustafa informed Council that he had been before them several years ago concerning issues with the Housing Authority regarding substandard housing, evictions, and City police
harassment as well as no youth programs available for the residents who rented from the Housing Authority. Mustafa asked Council’s assistance to alleviate these issues.

Alexis Page informed Council that she had parking issues with Housing Authority personnel while visiting a resident of the Cochran projects.

Rosette Miller, a resident of Darden Terrace Apartments, informed Council that she ministers youth at her home and is harassed for doing so. She complained that police officers sit outside her apartment.

Passion Green informed Council that she has been on the waiting list at the Housing Authority for an apartment for years and is concerned that the residents are selected on the basis of favoritism.

Mayor Blain-Bellamy addressed the public by saying that although Public Input was not generally interactive, she would address this particular issue by saying that the City did not have authority over the Housing Authority, as that was the jurisdiction of HUD, and that the City did not appoint all of the Housing Committee board members. The Mayor expressed the hope that Mr. Mustafa had been in contact with HUD. Mayor Blain-Bellamy said the City had pride in its programs for children and they should continue this conversation at a later date. **Motion:** Goldfinch made a motion, seconded by Anderson, to close Public Input. **Vote:** Unanimous. Motion carried.

**SPECIAL PRESENTATIONS:**

A. **Presentation of 2018 City of Conway Audit Report – Bob Calliham, Smith Sapp Bookout Crumpler & Calliham.** Mr. Calliham was unable to attend and Glen Bodenheimer made the presentation to Council. Bodenheimer thanked the Finance Department for their assistance during the audit. Bodenheimer presented the results of the audit which included a clean opinion on the City’s financial statements. He also reported that a review of the City’s internal controls revealed no material weaknesses and no instances were noted of any compliance matters required to be reported under Government Auditing Standards. Bodenheimer advised Council that the City is in a very sound financial position.

B. **Special event request: RJ Corman Railroad Company TIGER Grant Groundbreaking Ceremony, February 4, 2019.** Jarrell informed Council that this event would be attended by approximately 100 people and was scheduled from 11:00 a.m. to 12:30 p.m. on February 4. The applicant has requested the closure of Laurel Street from the City fountain at the Riverwalk entrance to Elm Street from 10:00 a.m. until 12:30 p.m., and that no other City services were requested. **Motion:** Goldfinch made a motion, seconded by Hubbard, to approve the special event request for the TIGER Grant Groundbreaking Ceremony. **Vote:** Unanimous. Motion carried.

C. **Special presentation by Conway Rotary Club to City Council.** Kim Sauls, President of the Conway Rotary Club, thanked the City for their support of the annual Reindeer Run event. A portion of the funds from the December 2017, and all of the revenues from the 2018 Reindeer Run, a total of $24,360, would be given to 117 major Conway flood victims. Sauls presented a medal from the 2018 Reindeer Run to Council Members and the City Administrator.
D. Employees of the Month Award: Jeromy Herndon, Steve Warren, Matt Melvin, Jonathan Deal, Travis Murdoch, Hayden Witt and Jason Kotterman – Fire Department.

Employee of the month awards were presented to Jeromy Herndon, Steve Warren, Matt Melvin, Jonathan Deal, Travis Murdoch, Hayden Witt and Jason Kotterman by Hendrick.

ITEMS FOR CONSIDERATION:

A. Purchase of truck lift for Public Utilities Department Vehicle Maintenance. Friday advised Council that an allocation of $55,000 was included in the budget for the Vehicle Maintenance Shop to purchase a lift truck. Quotes were received from eight companies that met the required specifications; however, all of them were significantly over the budgeted amount. Heavy Duty Lifts out of Georgia and North Carolina was the lowest bidder. Discussion followed about using the local vendor, but policy states that a bid cannot be more than 5% the lowest bid. The overage will be covered by the Vehicle Maintenance Shop’s overall budget. Motion: Goldfinch made a motion, seconded by Smith, to authorize the purchase of the truck lift from Heavy Duty Lifts. Vote: Unanimous. Motion carried.

B. Selection of Contractor to implement City of Conway Wayfinding Signage Plan. Emrick advised Council that bids went out on December 10, 2018 for this project. Seven bids were received although two were disqualified for not meeting the deadline for submission. The remaining five bids were ranked on quality of the proposal, understanding the concept, price, completeness of the submission, and experience with related projects. While Palmetto Pirate Printing, based in Little River, had the lowest price, Signs, Etc., based in Charlotte, NC, scored highest overall. Signs, Etc. is most experienced in implementing similar projects, but exceeds Palmetto Pirates bid by $165,640. Signs, Etc. submitted two options, one based on the City’s concept and one based on what they would recommend based on their experience. The two choices are to go with the least expensive or go with the most experienced.

Anderson suggested Council see work done by the top three vendors before they voted. Tabling the issue was discussed until samples from the top three vendors had been reviewed. Motion: Goldfinch made a motion to table the item. Smith commented that this should not be tabled indefinitely. Goldfinch rescinded his motion. Motion: Goldfinch made a motion, seconded by Smith, to table the motion and have samples for review at the February 4, 2019 Council meeting. Vote: Unanimous. The motion carried.

CITY ADMINISTRATOR’S REPORT:

- To date eight properties have been purchased as part of the FEMA buyout program.
- The Old Oak Tavern, which was recently purchased through the FEMA buyout, has been demolished and clean-up will continue until the site has been returned to grass and trees.
- Questions have arisen about moving the houses in the buyout program rather than demolishing them. This is not a possibility under the program as the opportunity for fraud is high, given flood insurance payments and the buyout proceeds.
- There have been complaints about traffic due to the Main Street Bridge closure. Requests to place police officers at intersections to direct traffic have been made, but doing so would not resolve the traffic issues.
• The Magnolia/Maple Drainage project is nearing completion. A larger drainage issue was discovered, which will require new larger culverts being installed under Grainger Road. Grainger Road, near Rose Hill cemetery, will be temporarily closed starting on January 28th for the work to be done. It is anticipated that the road will be closed less than two weeks.
• Main Street Bridge supports will be painted as part of the bridge rehab project. A color closest to the City’s Pantone Green color will be chosen.
• The Public Safety Building’s lobby is available for anyone who needs a safe, warm place to stay during cold weather. The Police Department reached out to homeless citizens to make them aware of its availability.
• A budget workshop is scheduled for Monday, January 28 at the Public Safety Building beginning at 5:30. The Budget Retreat is March 7-9.
• A meeting of the Inclusive Playground Committee will be Thursday, January 24 at the Recreation Center at 6:00.
• The AC unit in the Court needs replacement as it has leaked into the downstairs at City Hall. Bids are being sought.
• There is grading work being done at the parcel on the corner of Mill Pond Road and Church Street. There are no plans for this parcel at this time.
• Staff will attend a meeting in Georgetown on January 25 concerning Hazard Mitigation Planning. Council is also invited to attend.
• Work at Kingston Park is progressing. The water feature has been installed along with the sidewalks. The historic brick edging has not been done at this time.

COUNCIL INPUT:

Smith received phone calls concerning Creel Street being used as a drag strip and asked if staff would look at the possibility of installing a speed bump or something else that would force the traffic to slow down in that area.

Smith mentioned the CORE youth programs and suggested Mustafa and Recreation Director Jarrell meet to discuss them and the Police basketball league would be starting soon as well.

Goldfinch encouraged everyone to call their state representative and SCDOT regarding the diversion of tourist traffic.

Anderson encouraged Ms. Miller, from the Darden Terrace, to support the use of the Conway Recreation Center for the apartment complex’s youth. He stressed the number opportunities that were available.

Thanked the Fire Department for its quick response to a fire at one of his rental properties. He also strongly urged the firefighters to shower and change clothes due to the contaminants that might get onto their clothes and bodies from fighting fires.

Suggested that a lot at Crabtree Swamp be used to rent paddleboats. He and his children had taken paddleboats out recently and found it enjoyable.

Expressed concern over road closures in the City, including the upcoming Grainger Road closure.
Timbes mentioned that the various road closings and road work were causing interruptions that should be watched because they were causing frustration that lead to wrecks.

White suggested that the funeral home and churches in the area of the Grainger Road closing be made aware before the road closed.

Hubbard wanted to reiterate that the City had no input or control of over the road closures that SCDOT has done.

Mayor Blain-Bellamy thanked Mr. Mustafa for coming to the meeting in the past and continuing to come when there were issues, and that although she did not have an answer, there were federal agencies that were responsible for funding and programs that would assist those in need of public housing. The Mayor also spoke to Ms. Miller encouraging her to look into programs at the City’s Recreation Center for the children she mentored.

Although not directly related to the recent type of disaster events in the City, Chief Hendrick, Taylor Newell, Adam Emrick, and she received training and Disaster Certification from FEMA.

The Mayor also attended the Police Department’s Award Banquet, which was enjoyable and commented on the need for the Police Department to continue the community policing effort.

WORKSHOP:

A. Presentation and discussion on findings of employee salary and compensation study – Evergreen Solutions, LLC. Queenell Fox, with Evergreen Solutions, informed Council of the results of the employee salary and compensation study they had performed for the City. Fox advised Council that the City pay was approximately 3% lower than other municipalities in the state. There are several options available to raise City employee’s pay and their associated costs to the City to meet industry standard levels.

Discussion followed the presentation concerning the difference between the various municipalities that were compared and the loss of employees to higher paying jobs. The Mayor commented that this was too important an issue to decide in a workshop setting. Emrick interjected that Evergreen Solutions had been invited to come to the Budget Retreat. Outcome: This item was tabled until it could be reviewed in depth at the Budget Retreat in March.

B. Discussion on proposal from Matt Varnadore to amend lease agreement relative to management of marina boat slips and transient dock spaces and other improvements to the Riverfront. Jarrell presented a proposal to Council to amend the agreement with Varnadore to permit him to manage the marina, the boat docks, the transient dock, and the old transient dock. This would put Varnadore in charge of getting signed agreements for the boat slips as well as accepting payment, which would then be transferred to the Recreation Department. This would also allow Varnadore to more readily assign the boat slips when one became open. Emrick commented that the older transient docks that were not used could be used for short-term stays and suggested this should be policy.

Varnadore also asked that he be given permission to place a sign on the bulkhead under the gazebo, facing the river, that would provide information and direction to boaters to the marina.
and the shop. A question arose about guidelines for such a sign and Emrick informed Council that the Community Appearance Board would have to review the signage request.

Goldfinch commented that additional responsibilities should require compensation. Jarrell remarked it would be at the discretion of Council. The Mayor asked for a recommendation from staff as to the proper compensation. Jarrell commented that he could research compensation for similar type positions.

Goldfinch asked Varnadore if there was anything else that he would like to sell. Varnadore responded that beer and wine sales were something he was asked about regularly. Varnadore was open to the idea, but wanted to see if it would be economically feasible for him. Goldfinch was in favor of allowing Varnadore to handle the gas sales as well. **Outcome:** Staff will research compensation and will draft a lease amendment for Council’s review.

**C. Discussion on proposal to rebid the six-inch water main installation project on Main Street.** Friday informed Council that six bids were received for the six-inch water main project on Main Street and that the lowest bid was $600,000 over the budgeted amount. SCDOT is requiring that all materials be removed from the roadbed and replaced with new materials. This has increased the cost of the project exponentially. The new bid request will be for a price to do the work in segments, Segment A: Main Street from 16th Avenue to 15th Avenue; Segment B: Main Street from 14th Avenue to 12th Avenue; and Segment C: Main Street from 12th Avenue to 10th Avenue. Should monies allow, Segment D would be Main Street from 10th Avenue to 7th Avenue.

Friday was asked if the new sidewalks along Main Street would be dug up in order to install the water main. Friday informed Council that currently the engineered plans were to go along the curb and to dig up the sidewalks at fire hydrant location; however, boring under the sidewalks or digging bore pits may also occur. **Outcome:** Staff will return with a new bid for Council’s review.

**D. Discussion on request to rezone approximately 1.30 acres located at 3304 4th Avenue from Professional to Highway Commercial.** Hyman advised Council that the applicant intends to open a veterinarian office and clinic, but the property was not zoned appropriately to do so. The property would not be used as an outdoor kennel. Goldfinch suggested amending the UDO to allow veterinarian services in the Professional zoning district; however, doing so would delay the ability to open the clinic. Timbes suggested they amend the UDO to permit veterinarian services in the Professional zoning district after rezoning the property. **Outcome:** Council will consider the rezoning request at the February 4, 2019 Council meeting.

**E. Discussion on request to annex and rezone approximately 7.53 acres of property (10 parcels) located on Four Mile Road from Horry County Office/Professional/Institutional to City of Conway R-1.** Hyman informed Council that in order for the properties to receive water and sewer services, they would have to be annexed into the City. Staff has several issues with the annexation. The parcels were recently subdivided in the County and met the County’s requirements. Horry County considers 11 or more lots to be a major subdivision whereas the City considers 5 lots or more to be a major subdivision. If the large parcel had been annexed into the City and then subdivided, requirements would include open space, sidewalks, street trees, and a stormwater plan. Chestnut said if it had been subdivided in the City, on-site
retainage ponds would have been required and all stormwater requirements would have to be met.

Forrest Beverly, the developer, said the property could be left in the County, but they wanted the benefit of City services at a lower price. Timbes voiced concern that this could open the door for other developers to be able to circumvent City requirements. Emrick advised that there were three options available to the City - 1) the properties are not made to annex into the City, but Restrictive Covenants would be signed for each of the properties, and properties would be built upon in the County and pay a higher water rate; 2) we require the major development requirements to be met; or, 3) they are permitted to build on the properties individually, which would not require City standards to be met.

Anderson suggested the properties be annexed as requested, but require the sidewalks. Anderson commented that the City would get the tap fees and permit fees, and the immediate taxation if the properties were annexed as requested. Mayor Blain-Bellamy asked Beverly if he anticipated building the houses some distance from the road to allow for potential future widening of the road. Beverly replied that they wanted them set back off the road and that could be done since the lots were deep enough. **Outcome:** Council will consider the R-1 annexation request at the February 4, 2019 City Council meeting.

F. **Discussion on possible amendment to Article 2 and Article 11 of the Unified Development Ordinance relative to Electronic Message Centers/LED Digital Displays.** Hyman advised Council that in 2016 the City amended the UDO relative to electronic message centers/LED digital displays, in part, to permit this type of signage along Highway 501, but with that the requirement that there be a 500' distance between such signs. Hyman informed Council that Ekkleisa Christian Church wants to have an electronic message center, but cannot meet the distance requirements. Staff is proposing an amendment to change the required separation distance of the signage from 500' to 300'; however, parcels that had 200' of frontage would be exempt. Ebbie Phillips, with Tyson Sign Company, advised Council that the space requirement between signs was generally applied to billboards and not onsite signage. Debbie Jenkins, also with Tyson Sign Company, responded to the question of whether this amendment would allow HTC to have electronic signage. She replied that it would not because of the electronic message signage across the street. Hyman advised that the amendment would say on the same side of the street and not across the street. Jenkins said if a business met the setbacks, that they should not have to meet a space requirement for on-premises signage as well. Council input seemed to suggest that they support digital displays without any separation requirements. **Outcome:** Staff will draft a new amendment with no spacing between on-premises electronic message centers or digital signage.

**EXECUTIVE SESSION:** **Motion:** White made a motion, seconded by Goldfinch, to enter into executive session to consider appointments to boards, commissions, and committees; and pending legal claims. **Vote:** Unanimous. Motion carried. While in executive session, no decisions were made and no votes were taken.

**RECONVENE FROM EXECUTIVE SESSION.** **Motion:** Goldfinch made a motion, seconded by Hubbard, to come out of executive session. **Vote:** Unanimous. Motion carried.
ACTION ON MATTERS DISCUSSED IN EXECUTIVE SESSION:

Appointments to Boards, Commissions and Committees [pursuant to SC Code § 30-4-70(a)(1)]. Motion: Goldfinch made a motion, seconded by Anderson to approve the following appointments as discussed in executive session. Vote: Unanimous. Motion carried.

Accommodations Tax Advisory Committee: Reappointed Rein Mungo and Russell F. Fowler each to a three-year term ending December 31, 2021.

Community Appearance Board – Appointed Matthew Richardson to a four-year term expiring December 31, 2022. Richardson will replace Jason Pippin.


Election Commission – Appointed Carol Woodard to a six-year term starting on April 26, 2019 and expiring on April 26, 2025.

Lakeside Cemetery Committee – Appointed Sims Gasque to a three-year term expiring December 31, 2021.


Recreation Advisory Board – Reappointed Brandon Anderson to a three-year term expiring December 31, 2021.

Rose Hill Memorial Gardens Committee: Reappointed Levern Hill, Queen Ester Rodgers and Joseph Smalls each to a three-year term expiring December 31, 2021.

Smith Jones Joint Venture Committee – Reappointed Mary Singleton to a three-year term expiring December 31, 2021.


Zoning Board of Appeals – Reappointed Blake Hewitt to a three-year terms expiring on December 31, 2021.

ADJOURNMENT: Motion: White made a motion, seconded by Timbes, to adjourn the meeting. Vote: Unanimous. Motion carried.
APPROVAL OF MINUTES: Minutes approved by City Council this 
February, 2019.

Barbara A. Tessier, City Clerk