



**Town Council Regular Monthly Meeting  
Monday, September 14, 2020  
Presiding Mayor Phillip Gunter**

**I. Call to Order**

The Town Council of Eastover conducted its monthly scheduled Town Council Meeting on Monday, September 14, 2020 at the Eastover Town Hall Council Chambers. Mayor Phillip Gunter called the meeting to order at 6:00 pm. The Council members present were The Honorable Mayor Pro-tem Leroy Faber, the Honorable Heyward Patterson and the Honorable Rhudine W. Robinson.

**II. Invocation**

The invocation was given by Mayor Phillip Gunter.

**III. Adoption of Agenda**

Upon a motion made by Councilwoman Rhudine W. Robinson and seconded by Mayor Pro-Tem Leroy Faber, Council voted unanimously to approve the adoption of the agenda.

**IV. Welcome**

Mayor Gunter welcomed everyone to the Town Council Meeting.

**V. Briefing from Agencies/Commission Appointees  
Richland County Sherriff Department - Representative**

Lieutenant Davis gave an up-dated report about the break-ins occurring in the town. A former resident from Lewis Scott Court called and stated that she no longer lives there and have moved to Aiken, SC. Upon receiving this information, Lieutenant Davis contacted Ms. Bridgette with The Columbia Housing Authority and it was confirmed that the apartment is vacant. The RCSD followed up with an investigation at the apartment. The investigation led to ticket issuance to (2) underage minors for the possession of marijuana. An investigation for the burglary charge is pending. Once the report was completed, Lieutenant Davis contacted Ms. Bridgette, who later came and secured the apartment. Lieutenant Davis is encouraging the residents to continue to report all break-ins. All questions and concerns from the Council members were answered by Lieutenant Davis. The case of Mr. David Huff is still under investigation. An updated report will soon be provided by RCSD.

#### **IV. Unfinished Business**

##### **A. Demolition Old Eastover School**

Mayor Gunter and Councilman Faber will be getting quotes for the demolition project. Mayor Gunter stated there is no timeline. Funds from Central Midlands will be available within two to three weeks. Councilwoman Rhudine W. Robinson was under the impression that the Town had a contractor; Councilman Faber stated there was no existing contractor. Mayor Gunter stated that some engineering was done. Councilwoman Robinson asked if any of the buildings can be saved for a historical mark. Mayor Gunter stated we were looking to save the Gymnastics Building, but the cost was too expensive. It would cost over a million dollars to restore the building. Councilman Faber suggested to Mayor Gunter to give Mr. Gregory Sprouse a call to schedule a meeting with the council members to discuss how can we save a part of the building for a historical marker for The Town of Eastover.

##### **B. Marquee Sign (Location)**

Mayor Gunter thanked Councilman Heyward Patterson for taking pictures and marking the location for the sign. Mayor Gunter stated that the sign will be placed on the right side of North Main Street across from the police station next to the railroad track. Councilman Heyward Patterson asked what about electricity for the sign. Councilman Faber suggested we invest in a solar panel. Mayor Gunter stated the sign has been paid for in the amount of (\$26,938.44). Mayor stated Atlantic Sign will install the sign.

##### **C. Renovation of the J.A. Byrd Mercantile Building**

Mayor Gunter gave an update of the renovation. The doors are finished. (Boudreaux) Mayor Gunter stated the next phase would be windows but not at this time (too expensive). The next phase is to be determined at a later time. Councilman Faber suggested to meet with Boudreaux to find out the next phase and cost. Councilman Faber asked what is the balance in the Capital Improvement Account. Mayor Gunter stated around (\$120,000).

##### **D. Richland County Sewer Bills**

Mayor Gunter along with Jay Kates, Water Systems Incorporated of West Columbia, Town's Attorney Kenneth Gaines, and Georgianna Graham, HPG Engineering Company met with Richland County to discuss the outstanding sewer bills. Mayor Gunter stated the meeting went well and Richland County agreed to work with the Town about the outstanding bills. Attorney Gaines stated Mayor Gunter and Mr. Kates did a great job negotiating with Richland County.

#### **VII. New Business**

##### **A. Town Clerk**

Mayor Gunter stated to the council members, that the town clerk position will be filled by the council board members. Mayor Gunter stated we need to look at the applications and decided on a town clerk soon. Councilwoman Rhudine W. Robinson stated she was only aware of one application. Mayor Gunter responded that there are three applicants. Councilwoman Rhudine W. Robinson and Councilman Patterson stated we need to hire a clerk as soon as possible because the town is in need of a full-time clerk, even though Amie is helping out. The council members agreed to meet on next Tuesday September 22, 2020 @ 5:00pm.

## **B. Grant Writer - Robert Reese**

Mayor Gunter introduced Mr. Robert Reese, the new Grant Writer for the Town of Eastover. Mayor Gunter shared his priority for funding for the year with Mr. Reese. Based upon their conversation the following grants were pursued. Mr. Reese thanked Amie and Joann for their help.

1. South Caroling Rural Infrastructure Authority – (180,000) submitted today  
Purpose of grant – to refurbish and renovate the coating on the inside and outside of the water tower.
2. Seeking a grant to assist with Richland County Sewer Bills due to water infiltration in the sewer system. This grant will help lower water bills because you have excessive rainwater going into the sewer systems. The rainwater does not need to be treated. If you find out ways to divert that water outside of the sewer system, it lowers the amount of water the being infiltrated into that system and it will lower your bill.
3. Central Midlands Council of Governments – Community Development Block Grant – This grant helps people with repairs and renovations. He has made contact with them.
4. Mr. Reese stated the demolition project grant funded by CMCG that has been awarded and on-going. The Town of Eastover will be eligible to reapply for a second grant up to \$700,00 around springtime. We need be on their calendar. He stated that this grant will replace the water meters and the infiltration system. The above referenced grants are state funded grants.
5. Mr. Reese stated that he has looked at federal grants that are available to us. He has a list of federal grant.

Mr. Reese stated that the Department of Commerce looks closely at these types of grants that municipalities receive. The town will be notified by November 2, 2020 if we have been approved for the grant. If the town is not approved for this grant we can reapply in May.

Our Senator, Darrell Jackson is a Senior Senator and that helps with getting grants. South Carolina Infrastructure Authority has a 25% matching program that we can get a waiver for because our demographics and economics. Mayor Gunter stated that with the help of Mr. Reese and his experience we will focus on getting these grants to improve the town. Mr. Reese stated that grant writing is one way, but there are other ways to increase revenue for the town. He will be looking into the other ways and report back. Mr. Reese stated that upon the town's approval for the grant, we should have secured other means to pay the matching part if the waiver is not approved. The Mayor stated that he sent out the information about International Paper and how much money they spend in the community. The town will be checking with them on ways for the town to receive some of this money. Councilwoman Robinson stated that if the local office of International paper does not cooperate that we need to go to the corporate office. She said that since they came into this community as Union Camp, they said the community would be a better place with them here.

**C. Dowdy Street**

Attorney Gaines stated that the attorney representing title company insured Dowdy Street Extension and wanted to know if the town would like to abandon that piece of property. It is a swamp area that the town could keep and develop it for future use. Council need to look at it before deciding. Mayor Gunter stated that he forwarded the plats to Council and that the property will be surveyed again. Attorney Gaines stated its worth looking at.

**D. Michael Dantzler**

The Mayor forwarded Mr. Dantzler's new contract to the council. He will continue with the newsletter that helps keep the community involved. He needs the information in a timely matter, and this will tie in with the Marquee Sign and the website. Mayor Gunter thanked him for keeping the town abreast to what going on in the community.

**E. Abandon Properties**

Mayor Gunter stated that these properties can bring revenue into the town. Attorney Gaines and Captain Connors have agreed to push the ordinances and enforce fines. Attorney Gaines stated that if the owner of the property does not fix the property, the town can place a lean on the property for the fees/cost of fixing or demolishing it. Mrs. Rhudine W. Robinson mentioned the building on Chalk Street. Councilman Patterson asked the question "how long do you give the owner to clean it?" Attorney Gaines said the important thing is to find out who really owns the property and then send a certified letter. Following the necessary steps will avoid law suits.

**F. Concerns/Suggestion – Council Members**

Mayor Gunter offered Council the opportunity to talk about anything. Councilwoman Rhudine W. Robinson stated that the meeting was a good meeting and making progress. Mayor Gunter agreed.

**VI. Reports**

**A. Attorney K. Winchester Gaines**

Attorney Gaines stated that he reported the accident to the insurance company and they are investigating to decide if they are going to pay the claim.

**B. Development and Service Committee – Councilman Heyward Patterson**

Councilman Patterson stated that Maintenance is on track. He asked if they became a full-time employees would they receive benefits? Mayor Gunter stated that someone will be on site with maintenance for certain jobs to check and see if money can be saved.

**C. Community Relations Committee – Councilwoman Rhudine W. Robinson**

Councilwoman Rhudine W. Robinson is requesting help in planning Christmas activities for the youth. The Cancer Walk, Night Out Celebration and Christmas Parade had to be canceled due to Covid-19. She stated that Council need to make a plan on how to get Christmas boxes delivered to the residents. She wants some ideas for the holidays for the next meeting. She wants to do something to let the community know Council is still active.

**D. Economic Development Committee – Mayor Pro-tem Leroy Faber**

Mayor Pro-tem Faber mentioned that the maintenance shop needs a new roof. Mayor Gunter said it was brought to his attention. Mayor Pro-tem Faber asked what is the threshold for bidding for a job and it was stated by Joann that it is 10,000. Mayor Gunter stated he knows someone that can do the job and will include Council in on the decision. Mayor Pro-tem Faber mentioned that he has experience with contracting and can offer advice on the roofing job and the demolition of the old school but would like to maintain it instead.

**E. Mayor's Report**

Mayor Gunter stated that when he gets more information about Ms. Felder, he will let council know. He also stated that Eastover is on its own electrical breaker and will have less problems with outages or if electricity goes out it will be back up in no time. Councilwoman Robinson said someone came to her with a complaint about the boomboxes at night. The officers stated they could not do anything about it and to check with the magistrate office. An update was given on Mr. Nathan sewer/water issues. Attorney Gaines is drafting a letter on the sewer/water refund. DHEC has to come out to do a perk test before he can get a septic tank. Mayor Gunter went to look at the property on Nelson Street.

**VII. Adjournment**

Upon a motion made by Mayor Gunter and seconded by Mayor Pro-tem Faber. Council voted unanimously to adjourn at 8:00pm.

**This is to verify that the minutes of September 14, 2020 the Town of Eastover Council was Approved and adopted on September 14, 2020.**

**During a Town Council meeting upon which a quorum of the Eastover Town Council was duly authorized and present.**

Approved by \_\_\_\_\_ Initials: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: September 14, 2020  
Phillip Gunter, Mayor of Eastover