

A Public Hearing and Special Meeting of the Town of James Island was held on Thursday, July 23, 2015 at 6:00 p.m. in Council Chambers, 1238-B Camp Road, James Island, SC: The following members of Council were present: Mayor Pro-Tem Leonard Blank, Garrett Milliken, Darren “Troy” Mullinax, Joshua P. Stokes, and Mayor Bill Woolsey, who presided.

Also Present: Attorney Brandon Reeser, Wilson & Heyward, Public Works Coordinator, Mark Johnson, and Town Clerk, Frances Simmons.

Opening Exercises: Mayor Woolsey called the meeting to order. He opened in prayer and led the Pledge to the Flag. FOIA: This meeting was published and posted in accordance with the Freedom of Information Act and the requirements of the Town of James Island.

Public Hearing on a Proposed Amendment to the 2015-2016 Fiscal Year Budget of the Town of James Island:

Mayor Woolsey opened the Public Hearing on the Proposed Amendment to the 2015-2016 Fiscal Year Budget at 6:01 p.m. He asked those who signed in to speak to limit their comments to three (3) minutes. The following persons spoke:

Kay Kernodle, 753 Swanson and James Island PSD Commissioner: Commissioner Kernodle addressed Council. She said, as Council knows, the PSD just went through a transformation where they had to make some changes and the way they did it was to get input from the citizens and the people that they service. The PSD set about to have educational conferences to tell the people how they thought they were misusing the people’s money to put it to the best use, so that is what they did. She feels what the Town is doing is sort of putting a rush on things and maybe the Town of James Island should consider having educational conferences to explain to the people of James Island exactly what’s going to be happening to their money, and why it’s being done like this. She said Garrett Milliken has done an extraordinary job of going out of his way in trying to reach citizens to tell them what’s going on; with his emails, his telephone calls, and walking door-to-door to tell people about meetings and asking them to come. But, as you can see, people really don’t get out a lot and that is one reason why the PSD had the three meetings set up in different areas across James Island; to go to the people instead of expecting the people to come to them. She said the educational conferences were extremely beneficial and it helped the people to understand why they were doing it and what they should expect in the future. She spoke on behalf of the James Island Public Service District, who asked her to attend this public hearing, and she was happy to do so. She said it would make everyone on the Island more informed and feel better about the Town and the PSD if the Town would take the time. She knows the Town only has two readings, but she doesn’t think an extra reading would hurt and it would give the Town enough time to reach out to the people of the Island.

Robin Welch, 1362 Stone Post: Ms. Welch addressed Council stating this is the smallest public hearing she has ever attended; there is no doubt in her mind that it is by design. She said Mayor Woolsey is attempting to do something tonight that he knows the Town of James Island would not approve of and has advertised this public hearing as little as he possibly could. She read the wording on the agenda for the proposed amendment to the fiscal year budget and stated that charging a new tax is a hell lot more than a proposed amendment; that’s why there is hardly

anybody here. She knows that three members of Council will pass a new tax tonight; in fact, they are so sure about of it a meeting has already been scheduled for Tuesday to start the process. However, she is here anyway because she want to stand on record in opposition to any new tax being levied on the people of James Island. She stated in all the years that we've been a Town; first, second, third, and now the fourth Town, we've never once had a property tax. In fact, this was one of the two main reasons the town was formed, so everyone get a fair share of the Charleston County LOST tax refunds. Now, after all this time, Mayor Woolsey wants to levy a tax for, of all things, a brand new Town Hall costing taxpayers almost a million bucks. To make matters worse, the Mayor acts like it's a win-win situation for everyone – in fact, he goes so far as to claim the net cost to taxpayers will be zero. She said what Mayor Woolsey is failing to mention is that for years Mary Clark wrote a check to every single taxpayer on this island and she returned their portion of the LOST tax refund. James Island gets nearly \$3 million annually in LOST tax funds and before Mayor Woolsey came along everyone got a wonderful check once a year in their mailboxes. She said never once after Mayor Woolsey has taken office did anyone receive a check. Instead, he just wants a new tax paid to him. She said ironically, that Mayor Woolsey, during his campaign, promised the voters that he would never tax them; apparently that was just a lie and this tax is just a shell game, plain and simple. She said the Mayor can try and trick the public with his fancy math all day long but in the end the Town of James Island owes every taxpayer on this island three years' worth of LOST tax refunds. While there is nothing that she can do to stop this tax from passing tonight; she'll be damn if she's going to sit here and watch the Mayor continue to deprive us of our checks while he pretends the net cost is zero.

Mayor Woolsey closed the public hearing at 6:06 p.m. as no other citizens signed in to speak.

Request for Approval:

\$400 Donation to James Island Football Club for Sign on Field: Mayor Woolsey asked for a motion in favor. Councilman Blank moved, seconded by Councilman Stokes. There was no discussion and the motion passed unanimously.

Executive Session: Mayor Woolsey asked for a motion to enter into an executive session in accordance with 30-4-70(a) Code of Laws of South Carolina for the purpose of discussing legal issues in regards to the suit against the Town. Councilman Blank moved to enter, seconded by Councilman Stokes and passed unanimously. Town Council entered the executive session at 6:07 p.m.

Return to Regular Session: Town Council returned to regular session at 6:18 p.m. Mayor Woolsey announced that Council took no action or a vote while in the Executive Session.

Ordinances up for Second Reading:

- a. Ordinance #2015-06: An Ordinance to Establish Procedures to Levy and Collect Ad Valorem Property Tax in the Town of James Island: Mayor Woolsey asked for a motion in favor. Councilman Blank moved to approve; seconded by Councilman Stokes. There was no discussion. The motion passed upon a vote of 3-2; Councilmen Milliken and Mullinax opposed.

- b. Ordinance #2015-09: An Ordinance to Amend Fiscal Year 2015-2016 Annual Budget for the Town of James Island: Mayor Woolsey asked for a motion in favor. Councilman Stokes moved; seconded by Councilman Blank. There was no discussion. The motion passed upon a vote of 3-2; Councilmen Milliken and Mullinax opposed.

Adjourn: There being no further business to come before the body, the meeting adjourned at 6:20 p.m.

Respectfully submitted:



Frances Simmons  
Town Clerk