



**BUDGET RETREAT MINUTES  
FRIDAY, APRIL 8, 2016  
INN AT THE CROSSROADS  
128 WEST MAIN STREET  
6:00 P.M.**

**MAYOR/CITY COUNCILMEMBER PRESENT**

Mayor Lovith Anderson, Jr.  
Councilmember Richard Cook  
Councilmember Sondra Fleming-Crosby

Councilmember Wilhelmena Scott  
Councilmember Tony Whitlock  
Mayor Pro Tem Billy Brown

**STAFF**

Teresa Benjamin      Judge Frierson      Shawn Bell      Lenessa Hawkins

PURSUANT TO FREEDOM OF INFORMATION ACT SC CODE 30-4-80: WRITTEN NOTICE WAS DELIVERED The Budget Retreat Meeting and agenda written notice was emailed to members of the media and posted on the bulletin board at the Lake City Municipal Complex by Wednesday, April 6, 2016.

**CALL TO ORDER at 6:08 p.m.**

Mayor Lovith Anderson, Jr. stated that Councilmember Nicole Singletary would not be in attendance tonight; she had a meeting Columbia, S.C. He called the meeting to order and asked Judge Frierson to give the Invocation.

Mayor Anderson thanked everyone for coming and asked if Mayor Pro Tem Brown would begin by giving his overview of the previous year and goals for the upcoming year.

**MAYOR PRO TEM BILLY BROWN** – He thanked Mayor and Council for the past year and he felt that it was a successful year. He feels that in his district that there are several issues that need to be addressed and he needs to get out to meet with his constituents.

- Closing the jail was a significant accomplishment, and he stated it was a smooth transition. He feels that the City of Lake City needs to work on getting a permanent Police Chief.
- He stated that Mayor and Council work well together and hope this will continue in the coming year

**COUNCILMEMBER WILHELMENA SCOTT** – She stated there has been a lot of great accomplishments. She said there have been some complaints, which is not far from the norm, but she utilizes this information as a tool to gauge what needs to be improved upon as we move forward. A main issue in her area are pot holes, grass maintenance or the lack of grass cutting and something needs to be put in her district to enhance this area. Some laws or guidelines to hold everyone accountable for upkeep of their area. She stated the attendance for her district Crime Watch meeting was not good. She got a better attendance when she combined with another district, her constituents came out in greater numbers when she did that. This upcoming Crime Watching meeting, she plans to partner with Councilmember Sondra Crosby in hopes that they will have better participation.

- She stated that some citizens expressed their concerns about businesses closing in Lake City.
- Some complaints pertained to some citizens feeling that they were treated improperly when Lake City Police Department had been dispatched. She stated she spoke to Interim Police Chief Jeff Johnson pertaining to this matter. He promised he would address this issue and work with Mayor and Council to make improvements about issues like this. As issues are presented to her, she will bring them back to Mayor and Council so they can receive the attention they need. She stated that some issues have been addressed by City Administrator Shawn Bell and how promptly he handles them as well as responding back to her. This is very instrumental as the Mayor is not in the office every day, so having the City Administrator Bell take care of these matters is very helpful.
- Sanitation and road conditions - she would like to see these issues be addressed and improved upon going forward. She expressed that she would like to see the whole city look like Lake City.
- Welcomed all the new staff and she looks forward to working with each one as we continue to move forward. She was pleased to see Judge Frierson, who has been with the City of Lake City for some months now, but she was glad to see him in attendance participating with this part of the City's business.
- Councilmember Scott said she called Shawn about some streets in her district. She said he did what he could but he responded back to her promptly. There are so many potholes and several lights are out in the community. She said she is concerned about summer coming and people are walking all night long. She said she stresses to people to come out because if they work together as a community, they can make a difference. She said if she calls a meeting and no one shows up with any concerns, then this is a battle they can't fight. They have to come together. She said she received a lot of good responses. They want to make Lake City a better and safer place to live. Crime will always continue but it can be less if we work together. She said she is looking for greater things for 2016.

**COUNCILMEMBER SONDR FLEMING CROSBY** – She stated she would like to see more attention placed on lighting at abandoned properties.

- More signage
- Maintenance to streets and pot holes
- Crime

**COUNCILMEMBER RICHARD COOK** - He stated there are several good things that have been accomplished; it's been well over a year and hiring the City Administrator Shawn Bell was a definite plus. He feels that he has fit in and works well with Mayor and Council in meeting the needs of the City of Lake City. City Administrator Shawn Bell will respond to your call it may not be the answer you want but he will follow up with any issue(s) you bring to his attention. He commended him for that.

- Closing of the City of Lake City jail - they fought for that and accomplished that goal. The interim Police Chief Jeff Johnson is cleaning up and around the Police Station, which looks good.
- Changing of the City Judges – this has minimized the complaints from citizens and Police Officers.
- Closing Sanitation Department – he feels by moving to a private company could be a good thing and opens the possibilities of existing/former employees an opportunity to make more money. Most private companies can pay more than working for a municipality.
- Main Street - he wants to see the Roundabout come but a major concern about it coming is that business owners want to be informed of what is going on with this project especially how it will affect their businesses. There is a Lake City Business Association and Mayor Lovith Anderson stated we have a Chamber, as well, they can get information from them pertaining to what is going on in the community. He stated that meetings with the business owners before and after the start of this project would be beneficial.
- Parking and the lack of parking – this is a big issue especially on Main Street, mainly the south side and the north side there aren't any towards Sauls. This could be a major problem as the City of Lake City continues to grow.
- Clean-Up - he stated he thinks this could be a good thing for the community, but he feels that we need to put some teeth in this matter and enforce it. At this time, he doesn't feel it's beneficial to the city and will not participate.
- LCDC - it needs to be fully dissolved and done away with because the city is in debt for more than \$300,000.00. He would like to see this issue resolved and not carried over to the next year. He stated that would not be a good thing to start the next year paying the

Department of Commerce \$300,000.00 right off the bat. He feels that his constituents would not take this well because taxes would have to be raised to get rid of this debt.

**COUNCILMEMBER TONY WHITLOCK** – He wanted to reiterate all the good things that have taken place for the City of Lake City. He thanked City Administrator Bell for all his hard work and placed emphasis on how the city is working smartly and more efficiently. He wanted to reiterate the issue of littering and how it is a growing problem for the City of Lake City. The Police Department needs to focus on this and start ticketing offenders. Councilmember Cook stated if this problem is addressed and offenders start receiving fines, the word will get out and hopefully there will be a decrease in littering

- Public Works, Public Safety, public employment and quality of life - he would like to see the City do more to bring more industry and companies to the City as to offer the citizens more employment opportunities. He feels Lake City Fire and Police Departments do a good job, but our Public Works department is over-worked and are constantly out working on water leaks. He's not sure as to what can be done to improve our infrastructure but something really needs to be done.

Mayor Anderson thanked all the Councilmembers for their input. City Administrator Bell asked if he could present next with the Mayor's permission.

**CITY ADMINISTRATOR SHAWN BELL** - thanked Mayor and Council for allowing him to be here for another year.

- The City of Lake City is seeing a significant growth in new businesses coming to this area. He pointed out some examples like Taco Bell, Subway, IGA has gone through a massive expansion and the new hotel Inn at the Crossroads, since opening has increased its occupancy every single month; and there have been several businesses that have opened downtown in the past year. Lake City economy has made shift upward in growth as well as the revenues has increased. Lake City is on the rise.
- Closing the jail was a significant accomplishment - the Police Department appreciate the moving of dispatch so that the citizens can utilize 911 dispatch (in doing this, there is a record of each call which is tracked better by using this system). Now Lake City Police Department can focus more on servicing the community better by providing more patrolling of area that have been reported as high crime areas. Crime data should be better in showing our data more efficiently.
- The penny sales tax has been beneficial and instructmental in completing one project: The Nesmith pump station, is one project he pointed out to Mayor and Council and encouraged them to go out an examine it.

- Closed the Carolina Girls Club - there was some monetary cost, as far as legal fees, associated with this but the crime rate decreased significantly. A great step towards public safety for the citizens of Lake City.
- The Mayor Anderson and City Administrator Bell have made several requests to the CTC this past year and from that two roads have been funded. The two that have been targeted for repairs are Independence and Cedar. This project will start some time in the next year or so.
- The Judicial Department has been rocking and rolling with the two new judges.
- With the partnership with the Lake City Partnership Council and the Community Foundation, you will see the new facades on Main Street and several should be completed before the start of ArtFields festivities.
- AWS, our new partners with Sanitation, will have a headquarters in one of the vacant building with a new façade. These new facades do work and when new businesses see these new facades they want to go in there.
- The creation of the Greater Lake City Downtown Development office, that group is in the process of developing a Downtown Master Plan. The Downtown Master Plan will take a while to construct, but they are formulating a large Stakeholder group from citizens all over the community. They will have the opportunity to do a Stakeholder Buy-In, this will allow for different people to be brought in to see how we want our downtown to look going forward.
- Free Pedestrian Master Plan, will be finished by the end of the fiscal year.
- Municode - when he came to the City of Lake City, one of the first things he looked at having all the Ordinances re-codified and updated and have them available online for the first time. This project should be complete by the end of the fiscal year.
- Planning Commission started working on updating the Comprehensive 20/20 Plan.

He stated that the items he has brought to the Mayor and Council, which they are approving and working on shouldn't be taken lightly. A lot of these items are crucial for the citizens of the City of Lake City and a lot has been accomplished.

**MAYOR LOVITH ANDERSON, JR.** – He thanked Council and City Administrator Bell for the update.

- In order to maintain our rating with our Fire Department; one of the items that will need to be looked at is the Lake City Fire Department. Lake City Fire Department is in desperate need of a new first responder truck. The truck they have now has been in place for some years and he has been told by some of the guys in the Fire Department; the truck will not start some times. In our system, this truck is needed every time there is an accident and emergency situations.

- Lake City Police Department, the new interim Chief Jeff Johnson is a meticulous person, no nonsense, by the book but he is a compassionate person. Since the closing of the jail, there was some conversation that the City of Lake City was taking jobs away. For the record, he stated that there were jobs offered at the Florence County Sheriff office and those who choose not to go that was their option. The jobs were there and he just wanted to state that for clarification.
- Recreation, there is the big park over on Blanding and Graham road. Plans have started for developing this property. There are some funds from the penny sales tax and other alternative funding, such as grants and other funding option, is being looked at. The group from Clemson will be coming to do an assessment to look at our Parks program to see how they are growing and how we can expand. With the growth of the Park program, one vital part is encouraging parents to volunteer instead City workers.
- A sit down park is needed in Lake City; he feels this will pull the community together as the citizens come out with their family to enjoy the park.
- The park on Church Street is coming along, but there have been some hic-cups in completing this project. The City Administrator and Mayor Anderson are working together to ensure that the ball will not get dropped on this project. The completion of these projects is very important in order to receive additional funding for other projects. The community is really anticipating the opening of this park. Councilmember Cook stated that citizens have shown an interest as to when it the park will open and what is going on with it? Mayor Anderson stated the hic-cups are not on our side but this project is in our community and we will see it through to make sure it is done right.
- Sanitation Department - Seven employees will be affected by the change to AWS. Pre-employment conversations have taken place with both parties and everything looks good as far as job offers. It's up to each individual is they want to work for AWS, so jobs will not be lost in this area. AWS will open up an office downtown Lake City, South Carolina as well.
- Public Works – He agreed with Councilmember Whitlock that we have some aging infrastructure; construction is underway moving the water system and installation of new pipes to the opposite shoulder of Independence so when paving begins this should not be an issue. Cedar Street, the Recycling Center is located here, which make it a high traffic area for trucks. The north end of Cedar Street is rough and in need of repairs. He met Sherwin Welch at Senator Letterman's get together in Scranton, South Carolina. This was ironic because several correspondence has been sent to Mr. Welch but when the Mayor met him he didn't realize who he was until he started talking. Mr. Welch asked that since this is a major issue for South Carolina, send him like two or three roads at a time instead of a whole list. So the next list will consist of Carver and Gaddy, repairs to these will begins once Independence and Cedar are complete.
- Crime Watch Meetings – He has attended all the districts meetings. He lives in District #1, Councilmember Nicole Singletary, and the participation is very low. This is not because she is not getting the word out, she works hard to get the notice to all of her constituents. Then when something happens everyone wants to react to it instead coming out and voicing their concerns during these meetings. Councilmember Scott cooked at one of her meetings and the attendance was higher at this meeting. We need to get our senior citizens to urge the younger generation to attend these meetings, because they carry some influence over the younger generation.
- The Carolina Girls Club closing – He received a call pertaining to the club closing and his response to that call was this, “we're here to protect and save lives”; since the club has closed

we've seen a reduction in crime which is a plus for our community. There are a number of businesses that individuals can invest in that employ people besides clubs.

- Good to hear that our finances are getting back on track. Last year, we were able to reduce the taxes, 2 mil because of influence the hotel put on our revenue this year. Other businesses that have opened up the Japanese restaurant. Hibbett's Sporting Goods (ranked #1 in the south at this point) and the Plaza is not empty.
- The Greater Lake City Development Organization – There are two plans taking place going on. one is the Comprehensive Plan by Pee Dee COG and the other is a Master Plan by CDO. Both of these plans are concurrent, which should provide answers that may not be found in one the other should be able to provide. This will allow us to bring in other method of economic development to this area.
- Abandoned property – the blue house across from Sharon Askins has been demolished. There are some others that will be coming down soon. He has spoken to Ricky Sims, Chief Randy Driggers and Building/Code Enforcement Officer Craig Hurst; what people are willing to sign off on so we can demolish and clear off the property. The charge for this normally is \$300.00 (Three hundred dollars).
- Signage – we have got to develop for our Police Department and Sanitation Workers or Public Service Workers a form that they can keep in their vehicles when they see signs down or damaged they can record it.
- Thanked the new staff members; three of these new members are present here tonight. He told Judge Frierson that he is thankful for the change and now the citizens don't complain about unfair treatment in our judicial system.
- Lake City Boys and Girls club received another \$5,000.00 (Five Thousand Dollars) donation from Blue Cross and Blue Shield on last week.
- Florence County, he discussed economic development, Marion Lowder and Redman Montgomery represent Lake City, South Carolina on the new board that was just established to help smaller towns and cities: Lake City, Scranton, Coward, Johnsonville, Pamplico, and Olanta.
- Round-A-Bout: He received a call and it was mentioned that Richie McCutcheon was not aware and heard it through the grapevine. Wilbur Brown, he wasn't too pleased about this and feels that all parties need to sit down and discuss the changes that may take place. He stated that there is a real need for one because when he left the former City Clerk, Cherline Wolf's Retirement Party; he came down Kelley and made a left to go back home and there was an eighteen wheeler turning off of Main Street trying to make that right turn at the BP Station. It looked like an accident waiting to happen; he barely missed a utility pole.
- Litter Control – he had some flyers pertaining to the All Community Clean-Up that was scheduled for April 16, 2016. The main focus was the downtown area, but he was trying to get some other children to focus on some of the other areas around town. The litter problem is two-fold: everyone needs to know that litter affects us all; it looks bad. He asked if anyone has ever gone to Greelyville, South Carolina? He stated it's the cleanliest town because everyone takes part in keeping it clean. Another point, more trash cans need to be placed in areas that have high concentration of trash. He stated maybe placing them in some locations as a trail to see how effective this action could be for the community.
- Thanked all of Council, as they worked together for the best interest for the citizens of Lake City, South Carolina. He enjoys working them and it's been a great year. Councilmember Scott

wanted to point out about the donation from Blue Cross and Blue Shield for the Boys and Girls Club. She stated she lives across the street from the facility and watch the children. There is no shelter for the children especially in the summer months, they are exposed to direct sunlight. She would like to recommend that those funds be used to construct some type of shelter for the children. Mayor Anderson stated he will look at possibly getting a picnic shelter installed for them. There are some other plans for the Boys and Girls Club facility as it exists today, it's only in phase the first phase of a four-page plan. He stated that we need to encourage the membership, because with that increase will allow for other improvements to be made.

- Blanding Street Park – the community park, working on getting that project completed; this could allow a place for some of the children to congregate and provide shelter from the sun. A sit down type of scenario is needed especially in a small town. This develops communication skills and social skills. Councilmember Cook asked about the garage attached to the facility what is housed in there? The Armory? Mayor Anderson stated this is an overflow area for the city but the initial plan is turn this facility into a Teen Center. If the number of teens can be built up to maybe fifty on average, then plans can proceed to turn it into a Teen Center. Councilmember Cook asked about opening the doors on both sides if that could not be used to provide some shelter? Mayor Anderson asked City Administrator to ask each department head to take an inventory of what is stored there, most of the items need to be removed. As a short term solution, if they could open both doors to provide some shelter. Mayor Anderson stated that they would check on that as a short term solution.
- Mayor Pro Tem Billy Brown asked about the Fire Station needing to purchase a new truck and are there funds in the budget to do this? City Administrator Bell stated that our budget to date has one capital item on the budget and it's for a brand new roof; which is estimated to cost somewhere around \$87,000.00 (Eighty-Seven Thousand Dollars). Councilmember Cook asked what type of roof? City Administrator re-iterated the cost would be \$87,000.00 (Eighty-Seven Thousand Dollars) because of the type of roof that will need to be installed, a pitch roof will not work. The leaks and the patchwork fixes is causing other issues to come about; it's crucial that the roof really needs to be repaired. Mayor Pro Tem Brown asked if that was the only capital improvement project that was budgeted for and City Administrator Bell response was no, that's the only for the Fire Department. Councilmember Cook stated that those are the types of things that need to caught on the front end instead of lingering until it just has to be repaired, because one can say it only cost \$2,000.00 to repair it but in all actuality it cost more than that when you factor in the patch work it took to keep it going.
- City Administrator Bell stated that the Chamber of Commerce would like for Mayor and Council to consider giving back the land, that is sits on, to the Chamber. Under Mayor La Rue Administration, the Chamber donated this land to prevent them from paying property taxes. The Chamber did not realize at the time they could have filed under a non-profit status; this would have prevented them from paying property taxes. Since then they have filed under the non-profit filing; they want the land back so that they can apply for a CSX grant and pursue other grant opportunities as well. This would increase their funding tremendously on an annual basis. The lease agreement states the term of the agreement would be for 50 (fifty) years in the amount of \$1.00 (One Dollar) per month. The Chamber agreed with these terms and paid it up front.

**Meeting adjourned at 7:10 p.m.**