

Mayor
Elise Partin

Mayor Pro-Tem
Tim James

Council Members
Phil Carter
Hunter Sox
Byron Thomas

City Manager
Tracy Hegler

Deputy City Manager
Jim Crosland
Assistant City Manager
Michael Conley



**City of Cayce
Regular Council Meeting
Wednesday, February 21, 2024**

The February 21, 2024, Regular Council Meeting was held this evening at 5:00 p.m. in Council Chambers. Those present included Mayor Elise Partin, Mayor Pro Tem Tim James and Council Members Hunter Sox and Byron Thomas. City Manager Tracy Hegler, Deputy City Manager Jim Crosland, Assistant City Manager Michael Conley, Municipal Clerk Mendy Corder, Police Chief Chris Cowan, Fire Chief Steven Bullard, Finance Director Kelly McMullen, Human Resources Director Lynn Dooley, Utility Director Betsy Catchings, IT Director Jamie Beckham and City Attorney Danny Crowe were also in attendance.

Mayor Partin asked if members of the press and the public were duly notified of the meeting in accordance with the FOIA. Ms. Corder confirmed they were notified.

Call to Order

Mayor Partin called the meeting to order and Mayor Pro Tem James gave the invocation. Mayor Partin led the assembly in the Pledge of Allegiance.

Public Comment Regarding Items on the Agenda

No one signed up for Public Comment.

Presentations

- A. Recognition of City Employee, Betsy Catchings, being awarded the Water Environment Association of South Carolina Capital District Engineer of the Year

Mayor Partin stated that Ms. Betsy Catchings, the City's Director of Utilities, was being recognized for being awarded the Water Environment Association of South Carolina Capital District Engineer of the Year and stated that this award was even more special because she was nominated by one of her staff members. Mayor Partin stated that as the Utility Director Ms. Catchings had a vast area of responsibility, which included a 25 MGD wastewater treatment facility, a 9.6 MGD water treatment facility, a 600,000 gallon pretreatment grease and septic facility, an extensive water and sewer distribution center, which covers over 70 lift stations, approximately 500 miles of force and gravity sewer lines and over 250 miles of potable water lines. Mayor Partin stated that Ms. Catchings keeps the City in compliance with SCDHEC and manages over 71 employees and is also responsible for staffing in the Utility Department. She stated that Ms. Catchings completes yearly budgets of several million dollars and ensures all her areas are able to function within those numbers and also anticipates utility needs and

has future planning in place for those projects. Mayor Partin stated Ms. Catchings has been instrumental in getting staff motivated and excited and has a positive attitude and strong work ethic which have made an impact on morale in the Utility Department. She stated that Ms. Catching's 20 plus years of professional engineering knowledge provides the City with a means to improve and to upgrade its infrastructure. She stated that she has initiated several policy changes that have been a huge help to staff retention and she has been the driving force in getting the newest operators enrolled in the required courses. She stated that Ms. Catchings donates countless hours of her time to WEASC activities and is always raising awareness for the District Scholarship Fund. Mayor Partin stated that Ms. Catchings staff says that while any department and municipality has its challenges with Betsy as their director the City will be better for it. Mayor Partin asked Ms. Catchings to join her in front of the assembly. Ms. Catchings stated that receiving the award was an honor and thanked Cayce staff.

B. Presentation by Ms. Miriam Atria and Ms. Vickie Davis with Capital City Lake Murray Country regarding Updates on Regional Tourism Marketing

Mayor Partin stated Ms. Miriam Atria and Ms. Vickie Davis with Capital City Lake Murray Country were present to update Council on regional tourism marketing. Ms. Atria stated that she brought Ms. Vicki Davis, who was promoted this year, to Senior Vice President of Funding and Special Events along for the presentation to share what they were doing for the City of Cayce from the tourism perspective. Ms. Atria shared an ad that received national recognition by the Academy of Visual Arts as the best communicator award of tourism products. She stated that it had played across the world for the last year and a half and had been viewed by millions of people. Ms. Atria stated that since Cayce was part of the Capital City Lake Murray Country region, they were able to get ads for Cayce in the state visitor guide at a lower cost. She stated that they also placed Cayce in a four-page advertorial spread for a food and travel magazine as Cayce has some cool dining experiences. Ms. Atria stated that Cayce was also in "Playcation" the generic tourism marketing done all across the United States to get people to think about coming to play and stay. She stated that Forbes Magazine did a feature story on the Midlands region as the Jewel of the Palmetto State. She stated that they do a lot with Google ads, search with keywords, etc. and that LakeMurrayCountry.com encompasses a four-county region and all the communities within that region, so the website has gained a lot of notability. Ms. Atria stated that since the first of July, 14 million impressions were tracked on the website from across the world and there was strong international visitation on the website.

Ms. Atria stated that Lake Murray Country was producing a lot of blog articles and that they had a contract with Laurie Rowe Communications of Atlanta. She stated that in the last year, they published 296 articles with a marketing value well over \$40 million. She stated that they believed in content and telling stories versus buying a full-page ad in a magazine because that's what people are looking for. She stated that they promoted anything and everything concerning the City of Cayce as a special event area

and had the details in the calendar of events on lakemurraycountry.com. Ms. Atria stated that since the first of July there had been an increase of 61% new users, specifically looking for information on the website for the City of Cayce. She shared the Google Search impressions that showed the top three events in the City that people were interested in were Cayce Fall Fest, the Holiday Parade of Lights and the Christmas Tree Lighting and that each year they would share this information with Council so Council could start seeing the build of traffic specific to the City of Cayce.

Ms. Atria stated that the City of Cayce was in the Discovered Visitor Guide with an ad that was coordinated with City staff and paid for with Accommodations Tax money they received. She stated that they were helping to promote Soiree on State and that they had a heavy social media presence with a lot of traffic coming into that. She stated that Lake Murray Country just announced the Southeastern Barbecue Showdown along with 14 other special events that they were bringing in from across the United States from golf, to fishing, to culinary events. She stated that they were going to bring the Twisted Cat Outdoors Catfish Tournament to the streets and that in 2025 there was going to be a parade of fishing boats coming in with the big catfish out of Lake Murray on them, ending in a street festival. Ms. Atria stated that there would be television coverage as it really draws a crowd and it was going to be a fun and exciting event for Cayce. She stated Bassmaster's Elite was in town last April and the Midlands region was on national television on a Sunday morning for five and a half hours, because the fishermen were interviewed and during the commercials a community video that Lake Murray County helped them produce aired. She stated that the ad was shown on Fox Sports One and that they would be coming back in May.

Ms. Atria stated they were continuing the Revolutionary War promotions and working with the communities on that and that they announced this year that they formed another Dam Committee for the 100th anniversary Dam Celebration, which would occur in 2027 and that they asked Mayor Pro Tem James to help in the planning. She stated that the purpose of that event was to mimic the Eclipse event with a one-week celebration around the whole region to celebrate all things water. She stated that the band Alabama would perform at the inaugural Southeastern Barbecue Showdown in Segra Park. She stated that on the website they had a hotel booking engine with a capacity of 10,000 and they were marketing this outside the region because they wanted tourists to sign up and book hotel rooms. She stated she was sure that the City's hotels and restaurants would see a large increase in sales during this time.

Mayor Pro Tem James asked what street the Twisted Cat Outdoor location would be on. Ms. Atria stated that was still being discussed to determine how many boats would be involved and what size street they would need, along with a time frame on when they would need to close the streets to stage vehicles. Ms. Davis stated they would also need an end site for more activities and once they had a spec sheet they would coordinate with Council. Council Member Thomas asked if Lake Murray Country marketed the type of fish that were in the river by the boat ramp in Cayce. Ms. Atria

stated that they market the four-county region and everything in the rivers and lakes and anything to do with outdoor recreation. She stated they had recently interviewed Mr. Michael Mayo for their podcast and that they had a new booth for conferences that was made to look like it was on the river to help people see all this area has to offer. Council Member Sox asked what night Alabama would be performing. Ms. Davis stated it was Saturday night. Ms. Atria stated there would be a Shag Night with South Carolina Barbecue Association doing a chicken wing cook off on Friday night with Band of Oz playing. She stated that on Saturday there would be Boston butts and ribs with competition between chefs from all over the world potentially and there would be a tasting for the public with the concert beginning at 8pm and fireworks at the end.

Mayor Partin stated she had listened to the podcast with Michael Geddings and enjoyed learning about how he could draw at a young age and had a photographic memory. She stated that he had his art questioned in first grade and had to draw in front of adults to prove he could create such detailed art. Ms. Atria stated that was the point of the podcast, to tell unknown stories and that it would go out once a month and that they have a huge audience with 18 affiliates carrying that podcast across the United States. She thanked Council for their support.

Item for Discussion and Possible Approval

A. Discussion and Approval of Letter of Support for the Disposition of Public Housing for the Cayce Housing Authority

City Manager Tracy Hegler stated that the City's attorneys had a good conversation with the Housing Authority and were reviewing the letter. She asked Council to give them until March to finalize that agreement. Mayor Pro Tem James made a motion to defer the item to the next Council Meeting. Council Member Thomas seconded the motion which was unanimously approved by roll call vote.

Ordinance

A. Discussion and Approval of Ordinance 2024-02 Granting Lumos Fiber of South Carolina, LLC a Nonexclusive Franchise for the Use of Public Streets and Public Rights-of-Way for Facilities for Telecommunications Services – Second Reading

Ms. Hegler stated that there have been good conversations between the City and Lumos but that they still did not have an agreement to bring before Council and asked the item be deferred until the March meeting. Council Member Sox made a motion to defer the item until the next Council Meeting. Council Member Thomas seconded the motion which was unanimously approved by roll call vote.

Committee Matters

- A. Appointments and Reappointments**
Accommodations Tax Committee – One (1) Position
Cayce Housing Authority – One (1) Position
Events Committee – Two (2) Positions
Municipal Election Commission – One (1) Position
Museum Commission - One (1) Position

Mayor Partin stated that the Cayce Housing Authority had one (1) open position and Council received applications in the following order from Ms. Evony Reed, Mr. Rusty Rabon, Mr. Daniel Yackel, Ms. Kelly Wuest and Ms. Diana Bray. Mayor Pro Tem James made a motion to appoint Ms. Reed. Council Member Thomas seconded the motion which was unanimously approved by roll call vote.

Mayor Partin stated there were two (2) open positions for the Events Committee and that Council had received three (3) applications in the order of Ms. Ashley Hunter, Ms. Jean Boiteau and Ms. Diana Bray. Mayor Pro Tem James made a motion to appoint Ms. Hunter and Ms. Boiteau. Council Member Thomas seconded the motion which was unanimously approved by roll call vote.

Mayor Partin stated that for the Municipal Election Commission the agenda stated there was one (1) open position, but that Council had been notified there were actually two (2) positions open and that there were two (2) applications, one from Mr. Fletcher Smith and one from Ms. Diana Bray. Council Member Sox made a motion to appoint Mr. Smith and Ms. Bray to the Municipal Election Commission and Mayor Pro Tem James seconded the motion which was unanimously approved by roll call vote.

Mayor Partin stated that Ms. Charlita Earle submitted her reappointment application for the Museum Commission and she regularly attended meetings and would like to serve again. Mayor Pro Tem James made a motion to reappoint Ms. Earle. Council Member Sox seconded the motion which was unanimously approved by roll call vote.

City Manager's Report

Ms. Hegler stated that there had been great media attention at the Steel Paws press event where the City had introduced the new K9 Nero and his handler, Officer Hartley. She stated that the City's fleet team was currently attending weekly meetings on the new software package that Council supported and it would hopefully be in the fleet soon. She reminded Council of the upcoming Broadacres neighborhood cleanup on Saturday, March 2, 2024.

Council Comments

Council Member Thomas stated it was his birthday and he was thrilled to be spending it with Council and City staff. He stated that he attended the new African American exhibit opening at the Cayce Historical Museum and there was a lot of energy and love there. He stated that Mayor Partin did a great job speaking as well as the other speakers and it was a great night to learn about the history of Cayce and how far the City has come. He stated that the exhibit was permanent, and he urged everyone to go see it. Council Member Thomas thanked Lieutenant West for letting him know about the Riverland Park Neighborhood Association meeting held on President's Day. He stated that he was able to attend the neighborhood meeting but unfortunately was not able to attend their cleanup in March.

Executive Session

- A. Receipt of legal advice relating to claims and potential claims by and against the City and other matters covered by the attorney-client privilege
 - 1. Update on Lexington County's Cancellation of Road Maintenance Agreement
 - 2. Claim for Improvements to Taylor Street at New State Road
 - 3. Claim for Improvements to Spencer Place


Mayor Pro Tem James made a motion to move into Executive Session. Council Member Sox seconded the motion and which was unanimously approved by roll call vote.

Reconvene

After the Executive Session was concluded, Council Member Sox made a motion to reconvene the Regular meeting. Council Member Thomas seconded the motion which was unanimously approved by roll call vote. Mayor Partin announced that no vote was taken in Executive Session other than to adjourn and resume the Regular meeting.

Adjourn

Council Member Sox made a motion to adjourn the meeting. Mayor Pro Tem James seconded the motion which was unanimously approved by roll call vote. There being no further business, the meeting adjourned at 6:16 pm.



Elise Partin, Mayor

ATTEST:



Mandy Corder, CMC, Municipal Clerk

