COUNCIL PRESENT: Mayor Gayle Beaudrot; Mayor Pro Tem Bob Mock; Council Members Beck Eleazer, Jay Lown, and Kitty Storey
COUNCIL ABSENT: Chris Myers
STAFF PRESENT: Kayla Davis, Clerk/Treasurer; Police Chief David Maxwell; Fire Chief Roy McClain, Utility Superintendent Lewis Saxton, Attorney John Andrew Bishop

I. CALL MEETING TO ORDER—Mayor Beaudrot at 6:00 p.m.

II. PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE/INVOCATION
Mayor Beaudrot led in the Pledge of Allegiance and the invocation was offered by Mayor Beaudrot.

III. RECOGNITION OF VISITORS
Mayor Beaudrot recognized Marty Yanarella as a visitor and thanked him for coming. Mayor Beaudrot also introduced Kandace McCoy, a town resident and explained that Ms. McCoy requested to be on the agenda and she gave her the floor. Ms. McCoy began by requesting that the town allow senior banners to be hung. She stated that she is willing to raise for the brackets and banners and is to provide further information for the town to analyze to make the decision.

Ms. McCoy also brought up the due date for the utility bill. She stated that her husband has been paying the power bill online using bill pay through their bank. Her main concern is that they don’t receive the bill in the mail until the 6/7 of each month and it is due on the 10th. Ms. McCoy asked that council consider moving the due date for the utility bill or giving a grace period to allow for payments to be made after the 10th with no penalty. She also requested that the town consider sending the bills electronically so that the customer can know the day the bills are created what is due.

Mayor Beaudrot thanked Ms. McCoy for her concerns and told her that there would be no decisions about either today. Mayor Beaudrot stated that she would like further information regarding the banners but would be putting together a subcommittee to discuss changing the due date.

IV. REGULAR TOWN COUNCIL BUSINESS ITEMS
A. A motion was made by Council Member Jay Lown and 2nd by Council Member Beck Eleazer to approve the minutes of the Regular Town Council Meeting from November 20th. Motion carried unanimously.
B. A motion was made by Council Member Beck Eleazer and 2nd by Council Member Kitty Storey to approve the minutes of the Civic Events Committee from December 1, 2023. Motion carried unanimously.
C. A motion was made by Council Member Jay Lown and 2nd by Council Member Beck Eleazer to approve the September 2023 financial statements as information. Motion carried unanimously.
D. A motion was made by Council Member Bob Mock and 2nd by Council Member Kitty Storey to approve the October 2023 financial statements as information. Motion carried unanimously.
E. A motion was made by Council Member Beck Eleazer and 2nd by Council Member Jay Lown to approve the November 2023 financial statements as information. Motion carried unanimously.

VI. LEGISLATION
A. ORDINANCE NO. 12-2023
Mayor Beaudrot conducted the first Reading on Ordinance No. 12-2023—An ordinance of the Town of Due West, S.C., amending the business license ordinance of the Town of Due West to update the class schedule as required by Act 176 of 2020.

A motion was made by Council Member Bob Mock to accept the ordinance by title only and 2nd by Council Member Kitty Storey. Motion carried unanimously.

VII. REPORTS
A. MAYOR’S REPORT
Mayor Beaudrot advised everyone that she has spent the majority of the month on financial matters, interviewing accountants to do the audits when our new Town Clerk/Treasurer was hired. She has met with department heads to get a better understanding of accounts specific to their department regarding where the money came from and how it could be spent. She met with Erskine’s event planning department regarding events which had been proposed several months earlier, and realizing no action had been taken on the Town’s part, are now scheduled to be addressed in 2024. Mayor Beaudrot met with Chief Maxwell regarding personnel issues within his department. She researched databases and spoke with MASC regarding employee bonuses. After gathering much information a special council meeting was held to address these issues. Bonuses were approved for both full and part-time employees. She stated an audit by PEBA revealed several items that needed to be addressed and are still being looked into by the Town Attorney. Mayor Beaudrot planned a successful Christmas dinner for the employees of the Town and it was catered by Aramark and held at Erskine’s Founders Dining Room. The food was good and the attendance was also good. Mayor Beaudrot stated that the Town’s Christmas parade was rescheduled due to weather conditions from December 1 to December 8. She advised this was not an easy decision and we did lose some entries because of this but overall the parade was a success thanks to Beck Eleazer and the Civic Events committee. The Lions Club tree lighting with cookies and cocoa with Santa at the Town Park after the parade was also successful. Lastly, Mayor Beaudrot discovered a mandatory ordinance regarding business licenses which had not been addressed by the town and is now under consideration as required.

B. ATTORNEY JOHN ANDREW BISHOP
Town Attorney John Andrew Bishop advised that there was nothing on his end that needed to be shared.

C. FIRE
Fire Chief Roy McClain began by apologizing that he did not have a report to give everyone. He advised that everything at the fire department is going well and there have been a few calls that the fire department has responded to. He advised that the fire engine left for repairs last Monday and it should be back in service by this Friday. He is hoping we will continue to do well with calls through this cold snap.

D. POLICE
Police Chief David Maxwell advised that he would be introducing a new employee tonight but he is not able to be present due to a prior engagement. The Police Department has hired Lt. Benjamin Loughner in their open Lt. position. Chief Maxwell advised that Andrew Lollis has left the Police Department as of December 15, 2023. He stated that there is now one spot open and he is in the process of finding a qualified employee. Chief Maxwell stated that this is an unusual staffing situation this year. Chief Maxwell advised that there were arrests made regarding the arson at the high school but other than that school is now out and it is quiet again for a little while. Chief Maxwell reminded everyone that the town was participating in squirrel eradication so it would be likely that people in the community would hear gun shots because of this.

F. UTILITIES
Utility Superintendent Lewis Saxton stated that there was nothing to report at this time.

IX. OLD BUSINESS
No old business to discuss.

X. NEW BUSINESS
Council Member Jay Lown brought up to how he wants to prevent 18 wheelers coming through town. Utility Superintendent Lewis Saxton stated that it had been tried before and they were not successful. Council Member Beck Eleazer agreed that it is awful but the GPS brings them straight through town. Council Member Jay Lown asked if those that helped him before with the stop signs would be good to contact regarding this and Utility Superintendent Lewis Saxton agreed that they would be a good place to start.

XI. ANNOUNCEMENTS
A. Mayor Beaudrot reminded everyone that the Town offices would be closed on December 22, 25, 26 for the Christmas holiday.
B. Mayor Beaudrot reminded everyone that the Town offices would be closed on January 1, 2024 for New Year’s Day.
C. Next Regular Council Meeting is scheduled for January 8, 2024. Town offices will be closed on January 15, 2024 in observance of Martin Luther King, Jr. Day.
D. Mayor Beaudrot reminded everyone that there would be a special election for the open council seat on February 6, 2024.
XII. ADJOURNMENT
Mayor Beaudrot asked if there was no other business, please make a motion to adjourn. Council Member Bob Mock made a motion to adjourn at 6:30 PM, 2nd by Council Member Jay Lown; all were in favor.

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MAYOR

______________________________________________
CLERK/TREASURER