



**OFFICIAL MINUTES  
RINCON CITY COUNCIL MEETING  
MONDAY, SEPTEMBER 25, 2023  
COUNCIL CHAMBERS  
107 WEST 17TH STREET  
7:00 PM**

**Councilmember Present:**

Ben Blackwell  
Michelle Taylor  
Patrick Kirkland  
Levi Scott Jr  
Reese Browher

**Present:**

Ken Lee, Mayor  
Jonathan Lynn, City Manager  
Raymond Dickey, City Attorney  
Dulcia King, City Clerk  
Jonathon Murrell, Police Chief  
Lou Reed, Fire Chief  
Terri Lewis, Planning and Development Director  
Tim Bowles, Public Works Director  
Elizabeth Cartwright, Finance Director  
Bryan Bessinger, Golf Course Manager

The meeting was called to order at 7:02 PM.

Jason Bragg, Clerk of Superior Court, swore in Kevin Exley.

Mayor Lee swore in Lou Reed as the City of Rincon's first full time Fire Chief.

The Invocation was given by Councilmember Blackwell and Pledge to the Flag was recited.

**Approval of Agenda:**

Motion to approve: Councilmember Scott  
Second: Councilmember Blackwell  
Vote by Council: Unanimous

### **Approval of Minutes:**

Approval of the September 11, 2023 minutes with the correction of two grammatical errors.

Motion to approve: Councilmember Browher  
Second: Councilmember Scott  
Vote by Council: Unanimous

### **Public Hearing:**

Open public hearing: 7:09 PM

### **Public Hearing on the 2022 Millage Rate for the City of Rincon.**

Attorney Dickey asked if this was advertised in the legal organ of the County, Mr. Lynn said this is correct. Mr. Lynn said this is the required public hearing for our millage rate. It is projected to be 6.441 mils and we will roll that back to zero.

Close public hearing: 7:10PM

### **New Business:**

#### **1. Vote to approve the 2023 Millage Rate for the City of Rincon.**

Mayor Lee said once again we are able, with Council's approval, to roll back that millage to a .net of zero. Since 1998 we have been able to do this as a city.

Motion to approve: Councilmember Taylor  
Second: Councilmember Kirkland  
Vote by Council: Unanimous

#### **2. Lameisha Estelle request to appear before Council.**

Juanita Estelle, Lameisha Estelle, and Shanellia Estelle, 604 Jaudon Street was present. Lameisha Estelle said that the Council had a hearing on a petition filed by Belinda Hunt for access to Ms. Hunt's property that is located in front of her mother's house on Jaudon Street. She is looking for proof that the road is owned by the City of Rincon. From her memory that was a dirt road. Her mother was concerned about them walking to the school bus and appealed to the City of Rincon to pave the road. At no point in time has her mother deeded any portion of her property to the City. Shanellia Estelle said had questions about the zoning. Juanita Estelle said she is the property owner. The property has been in her family for over 80 years and she will not give Belinda Hunt permission to come across her property. She can access the property from West 7<sup>th</sup> Street.

Mr. Lynn said there was a plat book that showed there was a 60 foot right of way.

They just want some clarity. Mr. Lynn said we will do some more research and will have an update at the next meeting.

**3. Request a revision to a Council condition on the Surcheros Fresh Mex Restaurant site plan approval. The property is located at 612 Towne Park Loop; the parcel is owned by SAP Rincon LLC and is zoned GC (General Commercial). (Parcel #: R2640012)**

Jared Mock, with Maxwell Reddick and Associates was present. Mr. Mock said at the last meeting a condition was placed on the plan approval to construct a sidewalk along Highway 21. This was not mentioned at the Planning meeting, and they were a little caught off guard by it. There was discussion on sidewalks in the City. Councilmember Scott asked was there a plan drawn up a couple years back where we were focusing on running sidewalks up the old Kroger, was there some language there that proposed that each business that build on the front contribute to sidewalks, Ms. King said she looked back to 2021 and will do further research. Mr. Mock said when a sidewalk is constructed, there is a ditch that will have to be piped and usually there are utilities in the way. It is not as simple as laying a sidewalk, that is a lot of major work.

Mr. Metzger said there are sidewalks out to bid now. The plan that they kind of backed off from was down to the old Kroger, they were taken off for budgetary reasons. Right now, they do not have plans for the side that Surcheros is on. Councilmember Blackwell said eventually the sidewalk on Highway 21 will be on the businesses across the road next to Queensborough Bank, a sidewalk going on your side next to the flood plain is not going anywhere. Councilmember Browher said it makes no sense for us to make him put the sidewalk in on Highway 21. Councilmember Taylor asked about cameras outside to deter crime. The motion is to remove the condition for sidewalks on the Highway 21 side only.

Motion to approve: Councilmember Scott  
Second: Councilmember Browher  
Vote by Council: Unanimous

**4. Request approval for Coastal Contracting LLC to repair the restrooms at Giles Park in the amount of \$12,100.00. LI #320.6100.541125**

Mr. Lynn said this is one of the bathroom quotes we received. We reached out to several contractors and this one came in under the threshold to bid it out. Macomber Park is out for bid. The line item is a SPLOST line item. Mayor Lee said this has been an ongoing issue, we have had a lot of damage, vandalism done to all of our restrooms especially this one. We need to do the repairs, but we need to take steps to do whatever we can to prevent this from continuing. We need to work out details of how we are going to control this and prevent it from happening. Councilmember Taylor said we need to have sign up and they need to be prosecuted. Councilmember Kirkland mentioned cellular cameras. Mr. Lynn said we will look into that. Councilmember Blackwell asked was this the only bid, Mr. Lynn said this is the only company that came out to give us a quote. Councilmember Scott said

we need to look at lighting. Councilmember Exley said we need more lighting, and they need to be locked, you can't just leave it open and allow people to roam in and out and tear it up.

Motion to approve: Councilmember Scott  
Second: Councilmember Kirkland  
Vote by Council: Unanimous

**5. Savannah River Utilities request approval of pay request #1 in the amount of \$72,000.00 and pay request #2 in the amount of \$324,090.00 for the Public Works Department Paving Project. LI #320.4100.541214**

Alec Metzger said Savannah River Utilities have completed the concrete work, they have looked at it and agree with the request. They are still holding the retainage and there is some additional money left.

Motion to approve: Councilmember Taylor  
Second: Councilmember Exley  
Vote by Council: Unanimous

**6. Request approval to purchase meter registers from Delta Municipal Supply in the amount of \$32,250.00. LI #320.4440.522255**

Tim Bowles said this is for inventory.

Motion to approve: Councilmember Scott  
Second: Councilmember Blackwell  
Vote by Council: Unanimous

**7. Request approval to purchase a 10 ton trailer from Verde, Inc in the amount of \$16,995.00. LI #506.4325.542528**

Mr. Bowles said this was advertised on the State website. It is a trailer for the new mini excavator. There were four bids that came in, one came by email, so it was disqualified. Verde. Inc came in with the lowest bid.

Motion to approve: Councilmember Blackwell  
Second: Councilmember Browher  
Vote by Council: Unanimous

**8. Request to surplus 0.11 acre remnant parcel (R2030007J00) located in the 500 block of West 7th Street.**

Mayor Lee said Mr. Lynn has researched this property and got an appraisal. This is a small wedge of property that a family that owns the adjoining property has inquired about. Mr. Lynn said it came in at \$2000. We will have to surplus to go through the process of getting

bids. It is a substandard lot by our definition. Councilmember Scott said the appraisal letter said it has no value to the individual as well as the City, the value he sees is that if the property owner has it, they will keep it clean. A motion was made to surplus the property.

Motion to approve: Councilmember Scott  
Second: Councilmember Blackwell  
Vote by Council: Unanimous

#### **9. Rob Collum request to appear before Council.**

Mr. Collum notified the City Clerk earlier that he was not able to attend the meeting.

#### **10. Administrative Reports:**

**City Manager** – Mr. Lynn said Trunk or Treat will be held Saturday, October 21; the budget workshop will be on October 13 and 14; he will have the draft bid documents for lease of Bistro out to Council tomorrow; reminder he will be out Friday attending ICMA conference.

Mayor Lee asked about an update for Cheryl Jackson, Mr. Lynn said he did provide an update to Ms. Jackson last week. He has ordered a survey for the property; Councilmember Browner asked about the tree on Georgia Avenue, Mr. Bowles said it way back off the road. It does not look like it is on the right of way. Ms. Jackson said she was told that is City property. Mayor Lee said once we get the survey complete that will tell us all the information, we need to know to address this properly. Mr. Bowles said several years ago we trimmed some trees in the back that we could reach.

**City Engineer – Mr. Metzger** said he sent an email updating the project list.

**Chief of Police** – Chief Murrell said he emailed Council about incident that happened Saturday night. Councilmember Blackwell asked about homeless camps in the area. Chief Murrell said we don't have a problem.

**Building/Zoning Dept.** – Mrs. Lewis said the letters related to the 7<sup>th</sup> Street Utility Improvement Easements went out last week and they have already gotten some green cards back. For the 9th Street Sidewalks Improvements, there were four, two said they would give the easements, one they are in conversations with and one they are still trying to contact. Mrs. Lewis gave an update on the pallet fence. It was in the location that it was permitted to be in per the fence permit, and it was not in disrepair. There is a small area at the rear of the site that looks like it is leaning a little bit, but her concern is, if that was the case then they would be on the hook to go and look at all fences in Rincon to see if there were any others in that same situation. Councilmember Taylor asked how can she have this over her driveway. Mrs. Lewis said she is required to have a driveway on a residential lot. If you look at the pictures before she brought the lot the driveway was broken up. They are going to work with her to reestablish a driveway on her property. There was question on whether the property owner moved the fence. Mrs. Lewis said she started putting up the

fence without a permit and was told to stop. The fence was too far forward so she had to relocate that fence back as part of the permit she received so that it would be in compliance.

**Rincon Golf Course** – Laura Eichmann, 212 Pineland asked a question about the background check on the golf course superintendent. She wanted to know why it was edited out of the City Council tape. Mrs. Eichman’s belief is that the Facebook Live was edited and had nothing to do with the Internet being unreliable. Councilmember Exley said he did go back and research some things. He took an oath of not hiding anything. Councilmember Exley said going back and doing some research on this, he too saw that it was deleted off and it was very frustrating to him that it was cut off when questions were asked. Councilmember Exley said he was elected for a reason and that reason was transparency. This gentleman was hired in June, he was working off of a timecard with no contract. How does he get hired as a contractor with no contract, he was paid \$90,000. His services were not approved until December 12, and he still does not have a contract to this day. There was discussions on contracts and contractors. There was discussions on the Golf Course Superintendent, how he was able to work for the Golf Course and background checks.

Councilmember Taylor went over the beautification of the Golf Course. They are very proud of what they got done.

Bryan Bessinger said it has been very hard. He lost an employee due to drama, another team member is thinking about leaving, and he is not doing too good working 60 hours a week and fighting an uphill battle. The course looks phenomenal. They have been very busy in September.

Councilmember Taylor said they did get the new door and the equipment is secure. Mr. Bessinger said we have had vandalism every night and it is expensive.

Councilmember Kirkland said it appears we are operating in the black and he contributes him and his team. He heard some great things about the tournament that was held on Saturday. He told Mr. Bessinger that they are doing a good job.

Councilmember Exley asked about the meter and said we need to try to put a percentage of the water that we are getting rid of because we say that we are running in the red on the golf course, but we never really looked at what the benefit is. The benefit is the water we get rid of.

**11. Executive session to discuss personnel, pending litigation, attorney client privilege, and real estate.**

Motion to approve: Councilmember Blackwell

Second: Councilmember Taylor

Vote by Council: Unanimous

Motion to return to meeting: Councilmember Taylor

Second: Councilmember Blackwell  
Vote by Council: Unanimous

**12. Follow the statutes of executive session, to put on file an executive session affidavit and resolution.**

Motion to approve: Councilmember Browher  
Second: Councilmember Scott  
Vote by Council: Unanimous

**13. Take any action that is needed on the items from executive session.**

Motion to approve: Councilmember Taylor  
Second: Councilmember Blackwell  
Vote by Council: Unanimous

**Adjourn:**

Motion: Councilmember Blackwell  
Second: Councilmember Scott  
Vote by Council: Unanimous