

May 4, 2009  
Regular Council Meeting  
6:30 PM

County Council met in regular session, in the Auditorium, County Administration Facility, with Chairman G. Neil Smith presiding. Agendas, bearing date, time, and location of meeting were mailed to Council members and local news media, April 28, 2009.

Council Members in attendance:

G. Neil Smith, Chairman  
Jennifer H. Willis, Vice Chairman  
James B. London, Vice Chairman Pro-Tempore  
Randy Crenshaw  
Tom Ponder  
Sam Wyche

Donna Owen, Clerk to Council

Staff: J. Chappell Hurst, County Administrator  
Ken Roper, County Attorney  
Olivia Vassey, Special Projects Coordinator

**WELCOME AND CALL TO ORDER:**

Chairman Smith called the meeting of May 4, 2009 to order and welcomed those in attendance. Tom Ponder gave the invocation and led the Pledge of Allegiance.

**PUBLIC FORUM:**

Chairman Smith opened the floor for public forum and asked the Clerk for a list of citizens who have signed in to speak.

Charles "Chuck" Munt- Mr. Munt came before Council and expressed his concern about the upcoming budget cut as it relates to Veterans Affairs. Mr. Munt stated that he personally had used the VA office on several occasions and the current secretaries that were in the office were an asset to the veterans in Pickens County. Mr. Munt stated he hoped funding would remain for those employees.

Weldon Clark- Mr. Clark was interested in the outcome of the education stimulus for Pickens County. Mr. Clark also stated that he was on several boards and commissions with Pickens County and he thought the boards could be more efficient with contractors and businesses as they are trying to accomplish many items and some of the processes do not accommodate an efficient time table.

COUNCIL CORRESPONDENCE:

Chairman Smith announced that Dr. Stewart has resigned from the Tri-County Technical College board. Chairman Smith stated that Dr. Stewart was serving as interim school superintendent and is extremely busy.

Chairman Smith also noted the May 11, 2009 invitation from Blue Ridge Electric.

Veterans Affairs and other budget issues:

Chairman Smith commented regarding the veteran's concerns that council has faced a \$1.1 million dollar cut from the State. Mr. Smith stated that many departments and items have been looked at to determine how the county will balance a budget while dealing with massive cuts. Chairman Smith stated that council has had no formal vote regarding cuts to the Veterans Affairs office, but that does not mean that it will not happen. Mr. Smith indicated he could not say what will happen because no vote has been rendered. However, the budget this year is a serious issue, and the State is not finished with reducing the County aid.

Councilman Wyche also stated that many rumors have been ongoing as it relates to the Veterans Affairs Office. Mr. Wyche stated veterans were being told that Council was going to eliminate positions of the two secretaries; again, Mr. Wyche said these were vicious rumors. Mr. Wyche stated that he and Council were well aware of the good job the secretaries do for the veterans of Pickens County. Mr. Wyche further thanked the veterans for the service to our Country.

Councilman Ponder stated he had received many phone calls from upset veterans who have erroneously heard that Council was going to fire one or both support staff in the Veteran Affairs Department. Mr. Ponder stated that he knew both of the secretaries, and he had much admiration for them and the service they provide to the veterans. Mr. Ponder stated this was a rumor and an attack on Council, and further stated no action on his part would be to eliminate the secretarial positions.

**APPROVAL OF MINUTES:**

- Jennifer Willis moved to approve the minutes of April 13, 2009 as presented. Randy Crenshaw seconded the motion and all members voted in favor with the exception of James London who abstained due to his absence.

**ADMINISTRATOR'S REPORT:**

1. Clean up programs are ongoing and Mr. Hurst stated the Solid waste department has adopted (2) Fridays of May 8<sup>th</sup>, and May 15<sup>th</sup> to coordinate with the containers to be in the neighborhoods for the clean up.
2. Economic Development- Mr. Hurst stated he would like to see the County's Economic Development Alliance take part in grant funding analysis study. Mr. Hurst stated this study actually targets industries for a particular area, and further is one of the best marketing tools available. Mr. Hurst encouraged Council to persuade the Alliance to take advantage of this opportunity.
3. H1N1 Virus- Mr. Hurst stated that Lynn Fisher Emergency Preparedness Director has been in constant communications with DHEC and Medical facilities regarding this virus. Mr. Hurst stated that departments have held meetings about how they will respond in the event of a pandemic.

**MOTION PERIOD AND NEW BUSINESS:**

- Jennifer Willis moved to add a personnel issue to the executive session. Motion was seconded by Tom Ponder and unanimously passed.
- Jennifer Willis moved to add a contractual issue to the executive session. Motion was seconded by Randy Crenshaw and unanimously passed.

### **THIRD READING OF ORDINANCE NO. 419, TO AMEND FY 2008/2009 BUDGET ORDINANCE:**

- Motion was made by Tom Ponder, seconded by James London that this constitute a third reading of Ordinance No. 419.

During discussion, Chairman Smith wanted to clarify that the amendment does not specify where the \$200,000 education stimulus funding is coming from because it is not showing on the amendment. Also, is the money coming from Federal money or Pickens County money?

Mr. Hurst stated that on the first reading, the \$425,000 should have included the \$200,000 because it was \$225,000 for the sewer project and \$200,000 for the education piece. Mr. Hurst also said the funding was coming from Pickens County, and it was discovered that Federal funds were only going to certain income levels, therefore Federal stimulus was not an option.

Jennifer Willis stated it was defined that the \$200,000 would be put up as matching funds for grants and other agency involvement. Mrs. Willis stated the funding would have to go back to committee if there are no matching funds, and if the funds are to be distributed in other ways.

Chairman Smith stated he was comfortable with acknowledging that the funding was in place and was part of the amendment, but he was not comfortable with the new information of no matching funds and with the formulas being different. Also Chairman Smith noted that he had not been in favor of the original motion due to the budget situation and the fact that agencies such as health clinics and senior programs are in question of funding.

James London stated the funding for the education project was upfront money in order to enter into agreements with State and Federal money. James London stated the program was never supposed to be funded by the County, but to be upfront for Federal stimulus. He further thought the funds would be forthcoming.

Tom Ponder stated the funding was prior to some of the major State cuts, and also he was under the assumption that the funds were not even going to be spent, but be there for the purpose of showing the intent.

Sam Wyche stated that many of the programs were already ongoing because he thought Council had already voted and it was approved. Mr. Wyche stated that Council was aware of budget issues when the education stimulus was approved.

Jennifer Willis stated the concept is approved, but the funds (\$200,000) were attached to very specific guidelines or it has to go back to committee. Mrs. Willis also stated that these funds are now part of the bigger picture of the possibility that the State is going to further reduce budgets.

Chairman Smith agreed with Mrs. Willis, and further stated he had no problem with the money being in place, but the dispersing of it (the funds) should be in committee. Chairman Smith stated a positive vote on this ordinance provides the funds.

Sam Wyche stated that he hoped Council and the public realized that to invest in the educational system is to help the economy and it ultimately keeps people out of trouble. Mr. Wyche also stated that much of the programs are now underway, and that Mr. Hurst and he have had meeting with agencies and a press conference about the program is scheduled for May 5, 2009 as well as the job fair for May 21, 2009.

Chairman Smith asked Mr. Hurst if it was known how much funding was going to be needed for the programs that are in place to date. Mr. Hurst stated it would be difficult to say how much funding is needed until the job fair determines the citizens who qualify for Federal stimulus. The funding is difficult to negotiate because there is no mechanism to spend the funding because of the original guidelines for the money.

- Jennifer Willis moved to amend third reading of the budget amendment to subdivide the \$200,000 to allow \$50,000 to be allowed immediate for start up programs in order to complete the job fair and realize the potential interest for staff to report back to committee; and the \$150,000 will go back to committee as specified by the original motion of March 16, 2009. James London seconded the motion. Amendment was unanimously passed.
- Third reading of Ordinance No. 419 was unanimously passed as amended.

**APPROVAL OF A PROPOSAL FOR A HIRING FREEZE FOR PICKENS COUNTY:**

- Motion was made by Jennifer Willis, seconded by Tom Ponder and unanimously passed to have a hiring freeze for Pickens County. Chairman Smith stated that exceptions will go to the administrator in the event that a position is one that must be filled, and in the event, the Council will be notified.

**CONSENT AGENDA:**

- Motion was made by Jennifer Willis, seconded by Randy Crenshaw and unanimously passed to approve the consent agenda.

Minimum maintenance roads- Public Service Committee  
Accommodation Tax recommendations– Administration and Finance Committee  
Airport financing- Administration and Finance  
Liberty Fire building financing -Administration and Finance  
Workers compensation issues –Administration and Finance  
Historic building reinvestment district – Administration and Finance  
State Issued Certificate of Franchise Authority – Administration and Finance

**EXECUTIVE SESSION:**

- Motion was made by Jennifer Willis, seconded by Sam Wyche and unanimously passed to approve the executive session as amended.  
Boards and Commissions  
    Easley Central Water  
    (other boards nominations as needed)  
new items—Personnel and Contractual

**PUBLIC SESSION RECONVENED:**

Chairman Smith called the public session back to order and advised no action on personnel or contractual. The following appointments were allowed.

Tourism: Neil Smith moved to appoint Carla Whitlock to the Tourism Bard for District 4. Motion was seconded by Jennifer Willis and unanimously passed. Also, Randy Crenshaw moved to appoint Michael Campbell to the Tourism Board for District 2. Motion was seconded by Tom Ponder and unanimously passed.

Easley Central Water District: Randy Crenshaw moved to re-appoint Larry Henderson and Franklin Cantrell to the Water District. Motion was seconded by Tom Ponder and unanimously passed

Library Board of Trustees: Tom Ponder moved to appoint Mr. Terry Manigault to the Library Board. Motion was seconded by Jennifer Willis and unanimously passed.

**ADJOURN:**

Hearing no further business, Chairman Smith called for a motion to adjourn. Motion was made by Jennifer Willis, seconded by James London and unanimously passed. Pickens County Council stood adjourned at 8:55 PM.

Respectively Submitted:

Approved:

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Donna F. Owen, Clerk to Council

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G. Neil Smith, Chairman  
Pickens County Council