

SPECIAL CALLED MEETING OF THE FLORENCE COUNTY COUNCIL, THURSDAY, AUGUST 2, 2013, 8:00 A.M., COUNCIL CHAMBERS ROOM 803, CITY-COUNTY COMPLEX, 180 N. IRBY STREET, FLORENCE, SOUTH CAROLINA

PRESENT:

James T. Schofield, Chairman
Alphonso Bradley, Vice Chairman
Waymon Mumford, Secretary-Chaplain
Mitchell Kirby, Council Member
Roger M. Poston, Council Member
Kent C. Caudle, Council Member
Willard Dorriety, Jr., Council Member
Jason M. Springs, Council Member
K. G. Rusty Smith, Jr., County Administrator
D. Malloy McEachin, Jr., County Attorney
Connie Y. Haselden, Clerk to Council

ALSO PRESENT:

Randy Godbold, VA Officer
Sam Brockington, Fire/Rescue Services Coordinator
Lindsay Buchanan, Morning News
Ken Baker, WMBF News

ABSENT:

Russell W. Culberson, Council Member

A notice of the special called meeting of the Florence County Council appeared in the August 1, 2013 edition of the **MORNING NEWS**. In compliance with the Freedom of Information Act, copies of the Meeting Agenda and Proposed Additions to the Agenda were provided to members of the media, members of the public requesting copies, posted in the lobby of the City-County Complex, provided for posting at the Doctors Bruce and Lee Foundation Public Library, all branch libraries, and on the County's website (www.florenceco.org).

Chairman Schofield called the meeting to order. Secretary-Chaplain Mumford provided the invocation and Vice Chairman Bradley led the Pledge of Allegiance to the American Flag. Chairman Schofield welcomed everyone attending the meeting.

PUBLIC HEARINGS:

The Clerk Published The Title And Chairman Schofield Opened The Public Hearing For The Following:

ORDINANCE NO. 04-2013/14

An Ordinance To Impose A One Percent Sales Tax, Subject To A Referendum, Within Florence County Pursuant To The Capital Project Sales Tax Act; To Define The Specific Purposes And Designate The Projects For Which The Proceeds Of The Tax May Be Used; To Provide The Maximum Time For Which The Tax May Be Imposed; To Provide The Maximum Cost Of The Projects Or Facilities Funded From The Proceeds To Be Raised By The Tax; To Provide For A County-Wide Referendum And To Concur In The Contents Of The Ballot Question In Such Referendum; To Establish The Priority In Which The Proceeds Of The Tax Are To Be Expended; To Authorize The Issuance Of General Obligation Bonds Of Florence County, Subject To Such Referendum, To Defray Costs Of Projects And Issuance Costs; To Provide For The Conduct Of Such Referendum; To Provide For The Administration Of The Tax; To Provide For The Payment Of The Tax; And To Provide For Other Matters Relating Thereto.

There were two (2) signatures on the sign-in sheet for Public Hearing:

- 1) Chief Kerry Tanner, Johnsonville Fire District – Chief Tanner stated he was of the opinion that the one cent tax would provide much needed funding to address dire needs the various fire departments had such as infrastructure to support emergency services, the replacement of the outdated County radio system which was a priority for emergency service providers, and replacement of old vehicles and other outdated equipment currently used by the fire departments in an effort to save money and utilize what was available to them. He asked for support of the one cent sales tax to provide the infrastructure so desperately needed to keep Florence County progressive and up to date with the equipment the first responders use to preserve the life and property of the citizens.
- 2) Murray Jordan, Citizen – Mr. Jordan expressed his support of the one cent sales tax and stated he saw this as a significant opportunity to solve some pressing problems for the County without adding to the property tax burden on its citizens.

There being no additional signatures on the sign-in sheet for Public Hearing, Chairman Schofield closed the public hearing.

ORDINANCES IN POSITION:

ORDINANCE NO. 04-2013/14 – SECOND READING

The Clerk published the title of Ordinance No. 04-2013/14: An Ordinance To Impose A One Percent Sales Tax, Subject To A Referendum, Within Florence County Pursuant To The Capital Project Sales Tax Act; To Define The Specific Purposes And Designate The Projects For Which The Proceeds Of The Tax May Be Used; To Provide The Maximum Time For Which The Tax May Be Imposed; To Provide The Maximum Cost Of The Projects Or Facilities Funded From The Proceeds To Be Raised By The Tax; To Provide For A County-Wide Referendum And To Concur In The Contents Of The Ballot Question In Such Referendum; To Establish The Priority In Which The Proceeds Of The Tax Are To Be Expended; To Authorize The Issuance Of General Obligation Bonds Of Florence County, Subject To Such Referendum, To Defray Costs Of Projects And Issuance Costs; To Provide For The Conduct Of Such Referendum; To Provide For The

Administration Of The Tax; To Provide For The Payment Of The Tax; And To Provide For Other Matters Relating Thereto. Councilman Dorriety made a motion Council approve second reading of the Ordinance. Councilman Mumford seconded the motion.

Chairman Schofield stated that he wanted to try to set the ‘tone’ for the next ninety days. “It is time for us to have a 2020 vision. In seven short years, the year 2020, we will either look forward with confidence in the ability to lead this State or will still be scrambling to provide adequate public safety services. Which vision do you have? Will we have no vision; still struggling to provide critical infrastructure or will we restore a 2020 vision to our community and be able to say, ‘we made the right choice?’ Will we say we have restored our vision of our County and our municipalities, one of hope and a bright future? Will we have invested in ourselves? Only the people of this County can decide.

What I tell you is keep the penny and keep us safe. We have the penny on; it is not a new penny. The people are paying this now and it is their choice to either leave it on come May 1, 2014 or take it off. We have talked about the many needs and we are going to go across this County talking about the needs. Whether it is EMS, fire, the radio system; whether it’s the need for a fire station out in West Florence area to keep the kids safe in the new high school. Keep the penny. It gave the people of Oakdale and Pineneedles the relief they needed. That was a terrible situation for many years. The penny that is currently in place solved that problem.

Highway 378, Timmonsville Highway and the TV Road are next; the money is in the bank, they are ready to be bid, we are waiting on approval from the Federal government, but they will get started in the next months. [Highway] 51 is next and the money is in the bank. This penny is ending. The people of this community have fulfilled their commitment to get the \$250 million match. These roads will be built.

Think about it, in seven years from now do you have the vision? All these major highways have been built, every one of them. Significant strides have been made to pave the dirt roads and our radio system is state-of-the-art. Our fire departments have been upgraded for our safety. Our ability to respond to you has been greatly improved. Our water systems are better; providing safe, clean drinking water and a reserve for fire protection. We will have invested in our children in recreation. We will have invested in our workers for economic development and jobs. Keep the penny; invest in yourself. Invest for your children and your grandchildren.

Seven years will determine the future path of Florence County. What can you buy with a penny? Florence County can take care of itself and build all of these roads, all of its fire, EMS, radio systems and improvements or we can sit back and do nothing. Do you believe that the State of South Carolina is going to come fix this for you? Do you believe Washington is going to fix this? Look at Timmonsville. How long have those people put up with sewer running in the streets? Did the State act in a timely fashion? If we want a better community, better jobs and safety for our citizens, it is up to us. No one is coming from the outside to save us. They are not going to invest. It is up to you to keep the penny.

Think about it - Otis, Heinz, Honda - they have invested millions in our community. Won't you do the same? Won't you invest a penny? How do we expect them to invest in our community millions if we don't do the same? Depending on the State and Washington has not worked. The State has cut funding by \$7 million. If we are going to be safe and move forward, it is in you the people's hands. This is not something Council can do. We simply do not have the power, and even if we did, it really should come from you the people. Permission to move forward to invest in our community should come from you the citizens. You decide. It's your community, your home, your children. What can you buy with a penny? You and your children's safety, jobs and the future of Florence County. Close your eyes: imagine you are on Highway 52, the Darlington highway and see the old pecan plant and see buildings that are not productive. The choice is yours. Ride on Moulds Road or Cato Road and it's a dirt road. The choice is yours. County Council has withstood the barrage from those who would not invest in the most critical life-safety issues of our day. Depend on the State, *really*? Depend on Washington? Not me. Washington and State government is broke and you see it. They are paralyzed by partisan bickering. Depend on yourself and keep the penny.

Which vision do you want? The old vision where the politicians in Columbia and Washington are in charge? Or do you want the one where the people are in charge? A new vision where Florence County first listens to you the public in nine public meetings. This Council took that initiative and took a constant barrage of criticism that we weren't doing this thing right. We have withstood that criticism so that you the voters get a choice. You want to go with the old vision where the State knows best and the people know nothing? Or the new 2020 vision of our future where we depend on our citizens? Which vision will you choose? A vision that says you talk to the people and you let them tell you what they want; a vision that lets you decide. There about ninety days, will you commit yourself for years of progress? Kids are going back to school to do their homework. It is time we did our homework. We've done a lot of it to this point. But we need to talk to the citizens, answering their questions, explaining this vision. I invite you the Council, the Mayors, and other community leaders to stand up and join us in having a 2020 vision for the future. Keep the penny and keep us safe. Seven years, in 2020. Let us talk to the citizens and listen to their questions and give them honest answers.

If I knew a way to save the taxpayers of Florence County \$50 million would you do it? Well I know a way to do that and that's keep the penny because it will raise almost \$150 million and \$50 million of it the people from outside this County will pay it. Life is about choices, are you willing to pay the price? The choice you make on November 5, 2013 will affect your life and the lives of your children for many years to come. Will you choose to invest a penny? Will your voice be a voice of complaining or construction? Will you choose to take the two-lane road, the dirt road, and choose to depend on Washington or the State? Or will you choose the four-lane road that we will choose our own destiny and we will provide our own public safety. We will do as the Bible teaches us in Galatians *'whatsoever a man soweth that shall he reap.'* Where we will invest wisely our time, our talent and our treasure. Ben Franklin said 'a penny saved is a penny earned.' This penny can do a lot. Which road will you travel? The dirt road or the four-lane road and the resurfaced road? Will you choose adequate public safety or will you choose to risk waiting on the officials in Columbia and Washington? We see how they

have produced; delay, delay, delay, for essential public service. They have cut SLED, the highway patrol, education, you name it. As for me, I'm going to depend on the people of Florence County. Will you invest in the future, in your grandchildren's future? Will you invest in your life and the lives of those who work to save you, the EMS, fire and law enforcement, who come to save you in your time of need? It's your choice. In seven years Florence County can be at the forefront of strength and economic development in South Carolina. It is your choice. Will you have a 2020 vision?

Vision 2020. See clearly, the year 2020 will be a time in Florence when we look back and understand that those who had the courage and those who had a vision; those who invested wisely in Florence County, Florence City, Lake City and all of our other communities. People are investing in Florence County at this time. You see it; we see it. It is time to see with 2020 vision. Seven years, that's how long this tax will last. 2020 is on the way. It is time to invest in our safety and security. Keep the penny; keep us safe."

Second reading of Ordinance No. 04-2013/14 was approved unanimously. Councilman Poston presented a 'Proxy' vote on behalf of Councilman Culberson, which was a 'yes' vote on the question of second reading of the Ordinance.

ORDINANCE NO. 06-2013/14 – INTRODUCED

The Clerk published the title of Ordinance No. 06-2013/14 and the Chairman declared the Ordinance introduced: An Ordinance In Order To Provide Additional Operating Funding For The Hannah-Salem-Friendfield Rural Fire District And Other Matters Related Thereto.

REPORTS TO COUNCIL:

JOHNSONVILLE RESCUE SQUAD/PROCUREMENT

AMBULANCE PURCHASE

Councilman Poston made a motion Council Authorize The Use Of Florida Association Of Counties Bid #11-10-1202 Awarded To Wheeled Coach Industries To Purchase An Ambulance For The Johnsonville Rescue Squad In The Amount Of \$128,213 From Peach State Ambulance, Inc., Tyrone, Georgia, The Authorized Regional Representative For Wheeled Coach Industries, To Be Funded From FY14 Previously Budgeted Funds. Councilman Caudle seconded the motion, which was approved unanimously.

There being no further business to come before Council, Councilman Dorriety made a motion to adjourn. Councilman Poston seconded the motion, which was approved unanimously.

COUNCIL MEETING ADJOURNED AT 8:28 A.M.