

MINUTES
LAURENS COUNTY COUNCIL
SEPTEMBER 10, 2013 – 5:30 P.M.
HISTORIC COURTHOUSE – COUNTY COUNCIL CHAMBERS - PUBLIC SQUARE

ATTENDANCE: COUNCIL MEMBERS PRESENT- County Council Chairman Jim Coleman and Vice Chairman Edward McDaniel and Council Members, Ted Nash, David Pitts, Keith Tollison and Joe Wood.

COUNCIL MEMBERS ABSENT – Councilwoman Anderson (family business matters).

ADMINISTRATIVE STAFF: Laurens County Administrator, Ernest Segars; Laurens County Clerk to Council, Betty C. Walsh and Sandy Cruickshanks, Laurens County Attorney.

ATTENDING - LAURENS COUNTY DEPARTMENT HEADS: Laurens County Fire Director, Greg Lindley; Laurens County Finance Department Director, Lisa Kirk; Laurens County Human Resources Manager, Debi Parker; Laurens County Vehicle Maintenance / Purchasing Director, Billy Wilson; Laurens County Detention Center, Captain Tyson; Laurens County Codes and Inspections Director, Buddy Skinner and Laurens County Emergency Medical Service Director, Chad Burrell.

PRESS: Iva Cadmus, *WLBG-Radio*; *The Laurens County Advertiser*, Corey Engle; *The Clinton Chronicle*, Vic MacDonald, and Billy Dunlap of *Go-Laurens.com*.

SCHEDULED SESSION AGENDA ITEMS – (1) Approval of Agenda, September 10, 2013; (2) Approval of Minutes from the August 13, 2013 Regular Session; (3.) Dr. Alice Taylor-Colbert, University of South Carolina; (4.) Funding Request – Laurens County Fire Service – Greg Lindley, Director; (5.) Approval of Commendation Resolution #2013-09, Buddy Skinner, Director of Codes and Inspections; (6.) Approval of Resolution #2013-10 that “Authorizes the Execution and Delivery by Laurens County, of a Second Amendment to the Fee Agreement with International Paper”; (7) Report - County Council Committee on Public Works, concerning plans and funding for the construction of new county office space - Councilman Joe Wood, Committee Chairman; (8) First Reading Approval - Ordinance #757 – For the issuance of not exceeding \$3.7 million in General Obligation Bonds for Laurens County; (9) Administrative Report – Ernie Segars, County Administrator; (10) Public Comment; (11) Comments from Council Members; (12) Executive Session – Administrative Matters.

MEETING NOTIFICATION - The County Council Members, Press and requested public notifications were informed of the meeting in a timely and appropriate manner.

CALL TO ORDER – Chairman Coleman called the September 10, 2013 regular scheduled meeting of Council to order at 5:30 P.M. in the Council Chambers of the Laurens County Historic Courthouse. An invitation to stand for the invocation and the Pledge of Allegiance. The invocation was delivered by Councilman Nash.

APPROVAL – AGENDA – SEPTEMBER 10, 2013 – VICE CHAIRMAN MCDANIEL made the MOTION to approve the agenda for the September 10, 2013 meeting with any additions or deletions. The motion was SECONDED by COUNCILMAN NASH for discussion. Councilman Tollison stated that he would like to acknowledge and schedule a County Council Committee meeting.

COUNCIL VOTED 6-0 to approve the agenda as presented and amended.

APPROVAL – MINUTES – AUGUST 13, 2013 – REGULAR SESSION OF COUNCIL – VICE CHAIRMAN MCDANIEL made the MOTION to approve the minutes from the August 10, 2013 regular session of Council, SECONDED by COUNCILMAN TOLLISON; COUNCIL VOTED 6-0.

REPORT - UNIVERSITY OF SOUTH CAROLINA UNION AT LAURENS – Attending were Dr. Alice Taylor-Colbert, Dean, University of South Carolina at Union; A.C. “Bubba” Fennell, III, Board of Trustees; Herbert Adams, former Board of Trustees University of South Carolina; Melissa Redmond, Director, University of South Carolina Union at Laurens and Connie Parker, Community Outreach Director, Director, University of South Carolina Union at Laurens.

Dr. Colbert said, “I was appointed in early May by Chancellor Elkins of the South Carolina Palmetto College to serve the Union University location. My plans are to lead USC Union to greater heights and creating new endeavors. The Palmetto College consists of four (4) regional campuses at Lancaster, Salkehatchie, Sumter and Union. We also offer an online bachelor’s degree; all to meet the needs of the state’s education needs. As we all know, an educated workforce is essential to having a strong economy in South Carolina”.

Continuing Dr. Colbert said, “We have enrolled for the Fall one hundred fifty four (154) students. In the Spring we hope to add at least sixty (60) more from the school districts. In our development, we have quickly learned that our adult students simply can not attend during the day and work too. We are planning to offer more night classes as well as on line capabilities. Again, we look to expand our possibilities in education. I would like to inform Council that our classes will be moving to a new location in Laurens on North Harper Street. The facility will be leased and final drawings are expected in October”.

Chairman Coleman thanked those in attendance for reporting to Council of the expected changes for the University of South Carolina – Union at Laurens.

FUNDING REQUEST – LAURENS COUNTY FIRE SERVICE – Referencing Laurens County Resolution #2010-15, Laurens County Fire Service Director, Greg Lindley approached Council requesting to use forty one thousand five hundred dollars (\$41,500) of Fire Reserve Funds to purchase twelve (12) Motorola PM-1500 mobile radios; inclusive of antennas, programming and installation and, fifty (50) Motorola Minitor V Pagers including dual channel, stored voice and standard chargers.

The Resolution allows for the establishment of a separate Fire Reserve Fund: “Such funds generated shall be separated and segregated from the general funds of the fire service and receipts and disbursements relative to such reserve fund shall be reported to Council quarterly. Expenditure of funds from the reserve shall occur upon the recommendation of the Director of Fire Services and approval by majority vote of a Resolution of Laurens County Council. Laurens County Council shall review the reserve fund at the time of annual budget considerations for the fire service. Annually, Council, in its sole discretion may modify, reduce or increase the provisions for the reserve as it deems in the best interest of the fire service and the citizens of the unincorporated areas of Laurens County. Use of these funds shall be limited to provisions for unexpected expenditures, economic conditions, shortfalls in revenues, federal and state regulatory compliance and sound accounting principles, as well as necessary and unanticipated needs with the goal of maintaining adequate and responsible fire and rescue protection for the County as may be deemed proper by the Laurens County Council and which remain consistent with the purposes and objectives of Ordinance #359, as amended.”

Mr. Lindley reported that there was a fund balance of two hundred ninety seven thousand, two hundred nine dollars (\$297,209) in the Fire Reserve Fund and the Fire Coordinator’s account has a surplus of over five hundred thousand dollars (\$500,000).

COUNCILMAN TOLLISON made the MOTION to approve the request to purchase the equipment using the Fire Reserve Fund monies with COUNCILMAN PITTS SECONDDING for discussion.

Councilman Tollison asked why pages and radios? Mr. Lindley replied that it was not cost effective to provide the expensive radios to all of the three hundred fifty (350) volunteers.

Vice Chairman McDaniel asked if the Sheriff’s Department mandates the radio systems and if the fire service could talk with the sheriff? Mr. Lindley replied that the Sheriff’s Department occupies a different frequency and that the only other agencies that they could talk with are Emergency Medical Service and the Laurens and Clinton City Fire Services.

COUNCIL VOTED 6-0 to approve the purchase of the equipment by using the Fire Reserve Fund.

RESOLUTION #2013-09 – BUDDY SKINNER, DIRECTOR OF CODES AND INSPECTIONS – Chairman Coleman stated that Mr. Skinner would be leaving Laurens County due to his acceptance of a position with the City of Greenville and that his official last day with Laurens County will be Tuesday, October 1, 2013.

COUNCILMAN NASH made the MOTION to approve the proposed Resolution for Mr. Skinner with COUNCILMAN WOOD SECONDING.

Jokingly, Councilman Tollison said that if he is waiting on me to approve this, he is going to have to wait.

Councilman Nash thanked Mr. Skinner for all of his hard work; and, in his opinion has done an outstanding job for Laurens County.

Councilman Wood said, “It is very hard to put into words how appreciative I am for all the good Mr. Skinner has implemented in Laurens County. I am certainly going to miss the BBQ. I do know that Mr. Skinner has gone over and above what was required of him and that he continued to provide Council with the monthly reports of the activity in the Codes Department”.

Vice Chairman McDaniel state that his years of service with Laurens County has been honorable and that his work is very noticeable to contributing to the growth of Laurens County.

Councilman Pitts stated that he has only known Mr. Skinner for a few short years but the contributions he has made towards the outlying areas of Clinton and Joanna were to be commended.

Mr. Skinner thanked all for the gracious comments and that he appreciated and honors the time spent working with Laurens County.

Chairman Coleman stated that a reception is being planned and most likely will be held on October 1st.

RESOLUTION #2013-10 - “AUTHORISES THE EXECUTION AND DELIVERY BY LAURENS COUNTY, OF A SECOND AMENDMENT TO THE FEE AGREEMENT WITH INTERNATIONAL PAPER – In briefing Council of the requested Resolution, Attorney Cruickshanks said, “About three (3) years ago, International Paper announced an expansion of \$6 million dollars. Now they have exceeded their original \$6 million initial investment and wish to invest an additional \$4 million. The requested Resolution authorizes for the execution of a Second Amendment to the Fee Agreement.

COUNCILMAN TOLLISON made the MOTION to approve the Resolution as presented with COUNCILMAN PITTS SECONDING; VOTE 6-0.

REPORT – COUNTY COUNCIL COMMITTEE ON PUBLIC WORKS – Councilman Wood explained, “The Council Committee on Public Works was charged by the Chairman of Council to review the possibility of building new offices for the Administrative Departments. The Council Committee consisted of Council Members McDaniel, Nash and myself. Also at this meeting were Council Members Anderson and Pitts. We have met on several occasions with Mr. Ashley and staff to discuss plans and funding options for the construction of new county office space. Mr. Ashley presented a revised plan for consideration that places the new area off of the front of the present building to the right.

The Committee offers this as findings for the full Council to consider. The Committee took no voting action on the matter but are presenting the proposed plan to the full Council with the estimated cost of the project being between \$3.5 and \$3.7 million dollars. The present bond for the Hillcrest facility is paid in full. Using what bonding millage is in place now to fund the administrative project would not cause for any increase of taxes. We would just be using what is already in place now for earlier construction that is now paid off. This plan is a no frills, very usable plan. This Council needs to find the right tool to take this County into the future. The tool I

am referencing is the Administrative building. We get books on a monthly basis from the State Association and I see in these books where other Counties in this State have spent ten to thirty million dollars on their facilities that will not accomplish any more than this building will and will cost much less than ”.

Administrator Segars said, “Councilman Wood explained everything that we have discussed during this process. Basically it will be an eighteen thousand square foot (18,000 sqft) building located on the right front of the existing Hillcrest Square building. It will house all of the offices currently at the Church Street Complex and also allowing for expansions and additional storage space. We also have in attendance tonight Mr. Theo DuBose, our Bond Attorney”.

Dennis Ashley, Project Architect said, “The big issue here is like a good tool; the present offices do not have the tools to do a good job. The employees are piled up on top of each other; the filing and storage is beyond capacity. The proposal is very modest and offers room to grow and meet the future obligations. The big challenge is the connection to the existing building for afterhours access by the Department of Probation and Parole and administrative meetings. There are sixty eight (68) parking spaces to be added to the rear of Hillcrest and used for contractor mobilization and parking areas following the construction. Twenty six (26) parking spots will be lost. We initially looked at putting the addition to the rear of the building but, thankful for a Council Members recommendation to come off of the front will overall save money as it relates to utilities”.

Chairman Coleman stated, “The Committee has reviewed the options and this Council needs to look to the future. The Church Street offices are in dire need of space. I am looking now for a motion from Council to move forward with this project”.

COUNCILMAN TOLLISON made the MOTION, based on the County Council Committee recommendations and the Architects proposed plans and to move forward towards approving further options for this project. COUNCILMAN NASH SECONDING; VOTE 6-0.

FIRST READING - ORDINANCE #757 – FOR THE ISSUANCE OF, AND NOT TO EXCEED, \$3.7 MILLION IN GENERAL OBLIGATION BONDS FOR LAURENS COUNTY – Bond Attorney, Theo DuBose provided Council of the following details as it relates to Council considering securing the issuance of a general obligation bond: As of January 1, 2013, the total debt limit for the County was \$12,251,538; The outstanding general obligation bond debt is \$6,195,000 – leaving an eight percent (8%) capacity of \$6,056,000.

Continuing, Mr. DuBose said, “If bonds are to be issued in the year of 2013, three readings and a public hearing will need to be held. If first reading is approved tonight, then a public hearing could be held in early October with the funds in the bank by December”.

Councilman Pitts questioned how much of the debt service will be coming off this year. Mr. DuBose replied that the last payment for the Hillcrest Square Bond was three hundred eighty two thousand dollars (\$382,000).

Councilman Wood said, “The Committee did talk about two options in funding the project. One, was for the issuance of a General Obligation Bond for the full cost of the project \$3.7 million; and, issuing a General Obligation Bond for a lesser amount and an applying the balance from the county’s existing reserves”. Mr. DuBose replied that that has been mentioned but highly suggested that until Council makes this decision to approve the full \$3.7 million”.

Councilman Tollison asked if the furnishings were included in the project amount. Administrator Segars replied that it did not include the furnishings. Chairman Coleman stated that he felt Council should go with the bond at \$3.7 million and possible use the reserve monies to help with the furnishing costs.

Chairman Coleman read the heading from the proposed bond ordinance as being “An Ordinance to provide for the issuance and sale of not exceeding three million seven hundred thousand dollars (\$3,700,000) General Obligation Bonds of Laurens County, South Carolina for the issuance of notes in anticipation of such bonds, to prescribe the purposes for which the proceeds of such obligations shall be expended to provide for the payment thereof, and other matters related thereto” and asked for a motion from Council.

COUNCILMAN TOLLISON made the MOTION to approve Ordinance #757, upon first reading, by title only for the issuance of a General Obligation Bonds for the full cost of the project and to not exceed the \$3.7 million. COUNCILMAN PITTS SECONDING for further discussion. Council VOTED 6-0.

Councilman Tollison stated that now is a good time for the people of Laurens County to let us know how they feel about this building.

Chairman Coleman stated that this is long overdue and we are being very frugal. And, that he invited anyone to walk through the officers at Church Street to see the working conditons.

Councilman Tollison asked what was the proposed construction time line for the project. Mr. Ashley stated that he has projected seventeen (17) months construction time.

ADMINISTRATIVE REPORT – ERNIE SEGARS, COUNTY ADMINISTRATOR- Administrator Segars informed Council of surgery today with Joey Avery, E-911 / Communications Coordinator and that he would be out for several weeks during recovery.

Administrator Segars called upon Billy Wilson, Laurens County Vehicle Maintenance / Procurement Officer to address the status on the bids and delivery of vehicles to Laurens County.

Mr. Wilson said, “We have finished up our bid process and have reviewed the bids. During the budget workshops, Council approved for the purchase of twenty one (21) vehicles. BB&T will be conducting the financing. We were able to buy the majority locally. There were some of the vehicles that had to come from the state contract from another source and another vendor. The pricing just could not be met locally. We ere at seven hundred seventeen thousand dollars (\$717,000), three (3) year term at 1.03% interest. There yearly payments fall into what was budgeted. The actual interest rate came in less than what was discussed”.

Councilman Tollison asked what vehicles were purchased and that his after thought when approving the vehciles was the ability to transfer the present equipment instead of buying to fit this year. Mr. Wilson replied, “There were eight (8) SUV’s, six (6) pickups and one (1) sedan. The pickups will be fitted for the investigators. It has worked well so far with this and eliminates us having to call in a wrecker and charged for a tow. There are four (4) crown vics that will need to be striped up”.

Councilman Pitts asked for confirmation that all franchise dealers in Laurens County were given the chance to get involved with the bid process as per procurement policy. Mr. Wilson replied, “They will be. I am still working with Cooper in Clinton for one (1) vehicle. The local GM Dealer here did not get the Tahoes; they had to come through the state”.

PUBLIC COMMENTS – Chairman Coleman opened the floor for public comments at 6:30 P.M. With no one else wishing to address Council, Chairman Coleman closed the session at 6:31 P.M.

COUNCIL COMMENTS – Chairman Coleman asked if there were any comments from Council.

- 1.) Chairman Coleman noted the proposed Drop In for Mr. Skinner on October 1st.
- 2.) Councilman Tollison noted a meeting of the Council Committee on Criminal Justice and Public Safety immediately following the next meeting of Council to continue discussions involving the retention methods for County Law Enforcement Officers.
- 3.) Councilman Nash expressed his gratitude for all the progress Laurens County as a whole is making.
- 4.) Councilman Wood expressed his concern over the vandalizing recently at the Boyd’s Mill Park; “I can not understand why anyone would want to do things like this. Someone put holes in the new pier by

throwing boulders thru the pier decking. The Park had to remain closed during the entire Labor Day Weekend”.

- 5.) Vice Chairman McDaniel said, “We are celebrating the Fiftieth Anniversary of the March on Washington. Fifty (50) years ago women and minorities were not represented. Twenty five (25) years later there were two (2) minority county employees...both were in the Sheriff’s Department. Then again, twenty five (25) years later there is only three percent (3%) or less minority employees in Laurens County. Before each Council meeting, we open the meetings with the Pledge of Allegiance. It always strikes me that the ...one nation under God with liberty and justice for all...the one nation always intrigues me because we are separated still now but allowed on some issues. Look at education in South Carolina now, education has not changed that much...it is more of the have and have not’s more than the racial issues now. I have found that we cannot talk about important issues. Several weeks ago, Ms. Sandra Ligon came before this Council to speak about the Human Affairs Commission. This was not even deferred to a County Council Committee. It is hard for us to talk about certain issues. It is interesting to me that Greenville, Greenwood, Spartanburg all lead the upstate with functioning and effective Human Relations Committees. We tried once in Laurens County and it sort of phased out. I walk in other Courthouses and it makes me feel ashamed to walk in Laurens. Opportunity is the names of the game and it is still denied with certain people. I have two (2) sons, both college graduates and neither one will come back to Laurens. Opportunity is the key. You need more than education. I know of one female that has worked her way to City in Administrator not too far from here. I look at all the folks that leave Laurens County for other places. As far as elected officials, there has never been a minority elected other than in a minority elected district. Something is still wrong with that picture. Until we can get to the point where we can believe in what the pledge of Allegiance says, then everybody is going to suffer. There are people that tell me to be quiet...I don’t need a job....I had a job about forty (40) years ago that taught me a good lesson.. I accept the fact that certain things have changed and we are making progress but we still have a long way to go”.

EXECUTIVE SESSION – COUNCILMAN NASH made the MOTION to move into Executive Session at 6:39 P.M. to discuss an employment matters; COUNCILMAN TOLLISON SECONDDING; VOTE 6-0.

There was a COUNCIL CONSENSUS to reconvene in open session at 7:05 P.M.

Chairman Coleman reported that no action was taken on the employment matter.

ADJOURNMENT – With no further business, Chairman Coleman adjourned the meeting of Council at 7:10 P.M.

Respectfully Submitted,



Betty C. Walsh

Laurens County Clerk to Council