

ANDERSON COUNTY COUNCIL
ANDERSON, SOUTH CAROLINA

Called Meeting - May 22, 1984 - 5:00 p.m.

Robert L. Wiles, Presiding
Council Chambers

M I N U T E S

PRESENT:

Fred G. Alexander, District #1
Prue L. Gilreath, District #2
Robert L. Wiles, Chairman, District #3
Daniel A. Rhodes, District #4
A.M. "Al" Lynch, District #5
Billy D. O'Neal, Administrator
Joseph G. Wright, III, County Attorney

Mr. Wiles called the meeting to order and Mr. Alexander gave the invocation. Everyone stood and pledged allegiance to the flag. Mr. Wiles stated that primary purpose of the meeting was to hold a public hearing and first reading of the 1984-85 proposed budget.

Mr. Trey Senn told Council about the newly inacted state law effective July 1, 1984 - Accommodations Tax. It is estimated that the County would receive some \$50,000 to be used generally for recreation/tourism promotional purposes in Anderson County. Approximately \$6,700 is mandated to be used for promotional literature for Anderson County. He suggested that the County and the City combine the tourism promotion portion (\$6,700). This \$50,000 could be used as matching fund money for PRT grants. The advisory committee would have to be made up of five (5) people minimum. The majority would have to be in the tourism/recreation business who will advise the Council how to spend the money. With the \$50,000 the County will receive, the first \$25,000 the Council can spend as they wish, the \$6,700 would have to be spent on promotional literature, the remainder of that \$25,000 is to be used as recreational/tourism type things. Mr. Stephen Crawford was present and urged Council to use the money for recreational and recreation/tourism related expenditures.

Mr. Rhodes read a letter from Carl Hust, Director of PRT. He then read a proposed Resolution for Council's consideration (#226) that the monies from the S.C. Tax Accommodations Act be utilized for the express purpose of tourism/recreation, then all monies not expressly to be used for tourism/recreational promotion literature (approximately \$6,700) be given to the Anderson County Recreation Commission for the express purpose of acquiring lands and/or facilities for recreational purposes. He moved that this be approved. Mr. Lynch seconded the motion. Mr. Gilreath told the Council that more study and planning is needed at this time and moved that the motion be tabled for further study to come up with something that is in keeping with Anderson County. The motion to table was seconded by Mr. Alexander. Mr. O'Neal recommended that the Council form a committee and let them advise the Council on what to spend the money on. Mr. Alexander stated he was not against the resolution. Vote on the motion to table was 2 for and 3 against. Voting in favor: Gilreath and Alexander, voting against: Wiles, Lynch and Rhodes. Mr. O'Neal didn't include any accommodations money in the 1984-85 budget. Vote on the original motion to adopt resolution #226 was 5-0.

Mr. Rhodes moved that the Sewer Election for Loblolly Pines be rescheduled for July 24 instead of November 6 as previously decided. The election commission would be able to use a portable building at Centerville to hold the election. Vote was 5-0. Mr. Alexander seconded the motion.

Mr. Wright presented Ordinance #136 (Airport Commission) for approval on second reading. Mr. Rhodes made a motion to table the ordinance until Council had time to study. Mr. Lynch seconded the motion. Vote was 4 in favor and 1 opposed. Voting in favor: Gilreath, Lynch, Rhodes & Alexander. Voting in opposition: Mr. Wiles

Mr. Wright explained to Council that DHEC had recommended that a dual consent order be executed by the City of Anderson and Anderson County on the HEmbree Creek Lift Station situation. The recommendation was that two consent orders be signed. One to be signed by the City and one to be signed by the County. The Sewer Authority agrees that this is the best course of action.

Mr. Gilreath moved that the agenda be amended for the purpose of discussing problems arisen over last years budget. Mr. Rhodes seconded the motion. Vote was 5-0. The following questions were asked by Mr. Gilreath to remove any and all doubt as to what happened when the budget was approved and voted on last year.

1. The budget that passed, Mr. O'Neal, that required a 3.4 mill tax increase effective July 1, 1983, based on your calculation, a person living in a \$50,000 home, what would this cost a person in additional taxes? Also, on a \$25,000 home.

Mr. O'Neal: \$6.80 increase--\$25,000 home would be half that.

2. Mr. O'Neal, that budget passed on third and final reading on June 21, 1983, were you aware of the 3 mill tax increase?

Mr. O'Neal: No Sir, I was not.

3. Mr. O'Neal, when were you aware of the need of a 3 mill tax increase and what agencies were involved in acquiring this?

Mr. O'Neal: I don't remember the exact date, Mr. Gilreath, I remember when I finally got the final data from the Auditor. I recognized that we needed a millage increase in the new budget, because the existing budget that we were operating under had generated a half million dollars less revenues in the property tax than we had anticipated and appropriated in the budget.

4. Can you say approximately what date that was, Mr. O'Neal?

Mr. O'Neal: It was sometime after I got the data from the Auditor, I'm not sure when that was.

5. Mr. O'Neal, when you became aware of this, was it well past the third reading of the budget?

Mr. O'Neal: Yes, Sir.

6. What were the real reasons for the need for this tax increase?

Mr. O'Neal: We had appropriated \$3,500,000 in property taxes in the budget. We did not generate \$3,500,000, we generated \$3 Million. Now there is two reasons why that could happen. 1 - millage set to low, 2 - tax collection was poor or below what was anticipated. In my opinion, the millage was to low.

7. In your opinion, the millage was set to low; was it set by the preceding council?

Mr. O'Neal: Yes, Sir or somebody.

8. Mr. O'Neal, if the preceding Council set the millage correctly would the 3 mill tax increase been necessary in the 83-84 budget?

Mr. O'Neal: I don't think we established that the Council actually set the millage, somebody set the millage. The Council appropriated the money

dollars and cents in the budget. The auditor was to establish the millage that would generate that amount of money. That's the way the budget is written, read the budget. But any case the point is, in my opinion, the millage was set to low, if in fact the collection rate was not 96.7%. In either case, the lesser percentage of collection than what was quoted to me, or a low millage rate would result in the appropriate amount of money not being generated or collected or a combination of both.

9. Mr. O'Neal, on what date did you actually inform Council concerning the 3 mill tax increase?

Mr. O'Neal: Sometimes in August.

10. Was it well on beyond when Council voted on the budget?

Mr. O'Neal: Yes Sir.

11. Were you aware sir, of the Council resolution stating that there would be no tax increase?

Mr. O'Neal: Yes Sir, I was also aware that if you keep the taxes where they were you would be a half million dollars short again next year, and you would not be able to operate the current budget. There was one alternative, go back and cut a half million dollars out of last years budget. In my professional opinion, I recommended what I thought was fiscally responsible and a sound decision to operate.

Mr. Gilreath stated that it was a deficite by the last council and the millage that they had set did not produce the revenue that was required to support the budget by the preceding Council and the idea that this Council voted for a tax increase was erroneous.

Mr. Rhodes moved that the Council ask the Administrator to cut taxes 3 mills. Mr. Lynch seconded. Mr. Alexander moved that the motion be tabled and Mr. Gilreath seconded. Mr. Alexander added that it could be untabled after the election. Vote was 3 for - 2 against. Wiles, Gilreath, & Alexander voting to table. Rhodes and Lynch opposed. Motion carried.

Mr. O'Neal went over the changes in the proposed 84-85 budget from the previous draft. Under the summary of revenues - source #591 - Employment and Training (state reimbursement) his recommended change was from \$119,527 to \$114,073, 2.-Source #594 - Accommodations fund changed to zero (0), for a total projected revenues of \$11,391,980. Under the summary of appropriations the recommended changes: 1. delete the merit increase and go with a straight 5% across the board raise for county employee, this, along with adjustments freed up approximately \$103,057. He then recommended that the Arts Council - acct.#530 be changed from \$11,000 to \$13,000 and Mental Health - acct. #470 be changed from \$92,000 to \$150,000, account #000 (unappropriated) be \$28,057 instead of \$53,057. This would make the total county ordinary \$11,381,980. At this time, Mr. O'Neal opened the public hearing for written or oral comments on the proposed budget. Mr. Ruben Siegel asked Council to please consider the recommendation of \$150,000 for Mental Health. Mr. Hurley Badders asked for consideration for the Pendleton District Historic and Recreation Commission budget request. Mr. Bleckley spoke. There were no other comments.

Mr. O'Neal read Ordinance #135. On the motion of Mr. Alexander, seconded by Mr. Lynch, Council voted 5-0 to approve ordinance #135 (84-85 budget) on first reading. Mr. Rhodes reserves the right to amend the ordinance at a later date.

Mr. Wiles recognized the chairman of the airport commission, Gary Holcombe. He

urged Council to adopt ordinance #136 (rules and regulations for the Airport Commission).

On the motion of Mr. Alexander, seconded by Mr. Gilreath, Council voted 3-2 to reconsider their earlier action on ordinance #136 to table on second reading. Mr. Wiles, Mr. Gilreath and Mr. Alexander voted in favor with Mr. Lynch and Mr. Rhodes voting in opposition.

Mr. Wiles moved that Ordinance #136 (Airport Commission) be approved on second reading as presented. Mr. Gilreath seconded the motion. Vote was 3 in favor and 2 opposed. Mr. Gilreath, Mr. Wiles, and Mr. Alexander voted in favor, Mr. Lynch and Mr. Rhodes voted against.

Council heard from concerned citizens at this time.

On the motion of Mr. Alexander, seconded by Mr. Wiles, Council voted unanimously to adjourn at 6:30 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Linda

Linda N. Gilstrap, Clerk
ANDERSON COUNTY COUNCIL