

SEPTEMBER 23, 2014
LAURENS COUNTY COUNCIL
HISTORIC COURTHOUSE – PUBLIC SQUARE
COUNTY COUNCIL CHAMBERS

ATTENDANCE: **COUNCIL MEMBERS PRESENT-** County Council Chairman Jim Coleman; Council Members Diane Anderson, Ted Nash, David Pitts and Joe Wood.

COUNCIL MEMBERS ABSENT - Vice Chairman Edward McDaniel (illness) and Councilman Keith Tollison (presence by audio).

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

DEPARTMENT HEADS PRESENT: Laurens County Human Resources Manager, Debi Parker and Captain Tyson, Detention Center Administrator.

PRESS: Vic McDonald, *The Clinton Chronicle*; Iva Cadmus, WLBG Radio and Corey Engle, *The Laurens County Advertiser*.

SCHEDULED MEETING AGENDA ITEMS - 1.) Call to Order – Chairman Coleman; 2.) Invocation – Councilwoman Anderson; 3.) Pledge of Allegiance; 4.) Approval of Agenda, September 23, 2014; 5.) Approval of Minutes – September 9, 2014; 6.) Public Hearing, Laurens County Ordinance #770, Fiscal Year 2014-2015, Laurens County Fire Suppression Budget; a.) Third Reading, Laurens County Ordinance #770, Fiscal Year 2014-2015, Laurens County Fire Suppression Budget; 7.) Presentation of Resolution #2014-20 “Sandra Bragg Retirement”; 8.) Second Reading, Ordinance #773 - “Project Bullog” – “An Ordinance Authorizing a Fee-In-Lieu-Of-Tax Arrangement and an Infrastructure Financing Agreement On Behalf of “Project Bulldog” (the “Company”) Pursuant To a Fee-In-Lieu-Of-Tax Agreement Between Laurens County, South Carolina (The “County”) and The Company And The Amendment to Lease Agreement Dated December 1, 1999 and Fee-In-Lieu-Of-Tax Lease Agreement Dated December 23, 1997; 9.) Report - County Council Committee on Health, Welfare and Public Safety – Diane Anderson, Committee Chair; 10.) Administrative Report, Ernie Segars, County Administrator; 11.) Public Comments; 12.) Comments from Council Members; 13.) Executive Session – Employment Matter; 14.) Adjournment.

MEETING NOTIFICATION - The County Council Members, Department Heads and the Press were informed of the budget session meeting in a timely manner.

CALL TO ORDER – Councilman Coleman called the September 23, 2014 session of Laurens County Council to order at 5:30 P.M. in the Council Chambers of the Historic Courthouse.

Chairman Coleman noted that Vice Chairman McDaniel was still recovering and may be strong enough to attend the next meeting of Council. And, that Councilman Tollison was absent due to work out of state.

Chairman Coleman invited all to stand for the Pledge of Allegiance followed by the invocation provided by Councilwoman Anderson.

APPROVAL OF AGENDA – Chairman Coleman called for approval of and any additions to the agenda. Administrator Segars asked for the addition of one (1) Employment Matter. COUNCILMAN NASH made the MOTION to approve the agenda as presented with the executive session added item and COUNCILWOMAN ANDERSON SECONDING; VOTE 5-0.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES – COUNCILWOMAN ANDERSON made the MOTION to approve the minutes from the September 9, 2014 regular session of Council. COUNCILMAN PITTS SECONDING; VOTE 5-0.

THIRD READING, ORDINANCE #770, FISCAL YEAR 2014-2015, LAURENS COUNTY FIRE SUPPRESSION BUDGET – Chairman Coleman opened the public hearing for comments at 5:35 P.M. Having no one wishing to address Council, Chairman Coleman closed the hearing at 5:36 P.M.

THIRD READING, ORDINANCE #770, FISCAL YEAR 2014-2015, LAURENS COUNTY FIRE SUPPRESSION BUDGET - COUNCILWOMAN ANDERSON made the MOTION to approve Ordinance #770 upon third reading as presented. COUNCILMAN WOOD SECONDING for discussion.

Greg Lindley, Director of Fire Suppression, said, “After the Committee meeting discussions, I would like to suggest Council approving the hiring of a part time maintenance position to make the maintenance repairs to the various Volunteer Fire Departments. We presently have over one million dollars in reserve that could be transferred over to accommodate this position. The position would only require twenty to thirty (20/30) hours per week and would need a vehicle. This is not in the current budget but can be transferred over if approved”.

Chairman Coleman stated that for Council to vote on the budget first with follow-up discussions involving the position salary, benefits and other equipment needs would be needed. Administrator Segars asked if changes were needed could it be done by Resolution of Ordinance? Attorney Cruickshanks replied that should Council decide to approve the position that an amendment could be implemented to adapt the changes made in the budget ordinance.

Administrator Segars said, “I think the whole idea for the maintenance position grew out of the discussion held last week and has been suggested due to the majority of the repairs within the rural departments noted are simply maintenance issue. If bond money could be saved by doing this, it needs to be discussed in more detail”.

Councilman Wood stated, “I really do not have much to say about the budget but I tend to agree with Mr. Lindley, if we fix these items now, something is going to be needing repairs a year from now. This would be money well spent”.

Councilman Pitts questioned the budget content as to switching a part time employee to a full time employee. Mr. Lindley replied, “There were three (3) part time positions; two positions are open. We advertised for the position and did not receive any qualified applicants for a number of reasons. One being that you can not be a volunteer and be a paid employee at the same time and normally they do not want to leave their volunteer station. When we got the ISO ratings back, one of the weakest points was on training and paperwork. My thoughts are since we could not fill those positions, we could promote the part time person to a division Chief and then take our Division Chief / Fire Marshal employee....turning his position into Fire Marshal / Training Officer. This would also help our departments with code enforcement. This would then give us three (3) Division Chiefs that are equally serving the department. When I came on board, the Fire Marshall was just the Fire Marshall and did not respond to calls. I made the decision to split his duties as a Division Chief to help the departments out more. The Division Chiefs are more mobile due to having vehicles and can go from one department to another. This is only reassignment of duties with no true additional funding; only turning part time money into full time money”.

COUNCIL VOTED 5-0 towards Ordinance #770, the County Fire Budget for 2014-2015.

PRESENTATION OF RESOLUTION #2014-20 “SANDRA BRAGG RETIREMENT”- Chairman Coleman explained, “This Resolution was approved at the last meeting of Council with anticipation of presenting it to Mrs. Bragg at this meeting. Unfortunately, Mrs. Bragg could not attend due to other commitments and having already moved from Laurens County. We will schedule this for another time”.

SECOND READNG, ORDINANCE #773 - "PROJECT BULLDOG" – "AN ORDINANCE AUTHORIZING A FEE-IN-LIEU-OF-TAX ARRANGEMENT AND AN INFRASTRUCTURE FINANCING AGREEMENT ON BEHALF OF "PROJECT BULLDOG" THE "COMPANY") PURSUANT TO A FEE-IN-LIEU-OF-TAX AGREEMENT BETWEEN LAURENS COUNTY, SOUTH CAROLINA ("THE COUNTY") AND THE COMPANY AND THE AMENDMENT TO LEASE AGREEMENT DATED DECEMBER 1, 1999 AND FEE-IN-LIEU-OF-TAX LEASE AGREEMENT DATED DECEMBER 23, 1997". – Attorney Cruickshanks stated that this is a three million dollar expansion investment of an existing industry and creating approximately twenty (20) new jobs.

COUNCILMAN NASH made the MOTION to approve Ordinance #773 upon second reading as presented with COUNCILMAN PITTS SECONDING; VOTE 5-0.

Chairman Coleman recognized Mr. Tom Martin, the Attorney representing the Industry during its expansion.

COMMITTEE REPORT – COUNTY COUNCIL COMMITTEE ON HEALTH, WELFARE AND PUBLIC SAFETY - Councilwoman Anderson, Committee Chair, stated that the Committee consisting of Council Members Pitts, Wood and several staff members, met on September 15, 2014 to review capital improvements proposals from the Fire Service. The Committee received updates from the County Fire Director, the County Administrator and Theodore DuBose, the County Bond Attorney. The discussions resulted in the Committee voting unanimously to refer the proposal to the full Council for final decisions on the matter.

Councilman Nash said, "The only thing that I am concerned with, is the enforcement employees within the Fire Department need to be more sensitive on how they present themselves and not just tell the people that they are going to be fined. Don't just tell them they are breaking the laws but to tell them how they can fix the problem and comply with fire code".

Councilman Wood said, "I was a part of that meeting and I am not new to the fire service as I spent seven to eight (7-8) years with a rural department. I have seen them trying to raise funds from chicken stews to knocking on doors asking for donations. The Fire Departments are now equipped with quality equipment and are prepared to serve. We need these volunteers in these departments and there is no way that these fire department can be run without the volunteers. If I have been misunderstood with my comments from previous meetings, I am not against the fire departments; it was intended to be a statement that this County Council takes money from the taxpayers and distributing it out to the fire departments by agreements. There is no one on this Council that would do harm to any fire department".

Councilman Pitts asked for several reports to be presented to the full Council for clarification purposes. Those are as follows:

- 1.) How many residents are affected within the five (5) mile radius if stations are constructed?
- 2.) Are we increasing our fire service just to increase it or help those within the five (5) mile radius?
- 3.) Do all of the households have fire service;
- 4.) What will be the reoccurring costs:
 - a.) Will they have to be manned?
 - b.) Equipment needed/costs?

Councilman Pitts said, "This will not just be a onetime expense for us and the taxpayers".

ADMINISTRATIVE REPORT:

- 1.) Laurens County Literacy Council, Open House, September 25, 2014 from 11:00 A.M. to 1:00 P.M.

- 2.) Hillcrest Construction – Underground utilities are still in progress after being slowed down due to rain; the back parking lot is being excavated with level grading.

PUBLIC COMMENT – Chairman Coleman opened the floor for public comment at 6:00 P.M. Having no one wishing to address Council, Chairman Coleman closed the session at 6:01 P.M.

COUNTY COUNCIL COMMENTS:

- 1.) Councilman Pitts asked for an update on the proposed allocation of funds for the demolition of a building in downtown Laurens.

Administrator Segars explained that the document putting this allocation in place needs to be terminated due to State funds being applied towards this demolition. The vacant corner will now be used as greenspace with plantings and lattice work.

- 2.) Councilman Wood stated that he wished to thank his wife publicly for forty eight (48) years of marriage.
- 3.) Councilman Nash expressed his appreciation for the continued progress Laurens County is making.
- 4.) Chairman Coleman noted the recent ribbon cutting last Friday at the Hunter Industrial Park for Alupress and asked for all to encourage those that needed jobs to submit applications to Alupress and ZF.

EXECUTIVE SESSION – TWO EMPLOYMENT MATTERS: COUNCILMAN PITTS made the MOTION for Council to move into Executive Session to discuss two (2) employment matters (6:05 P.M.) with COUNCILWOMAN ANDERSON SECONDING; VOTE 5-0.

BY CONSENSUS Council moved back into open session at 7:10 P.M.

Chairman Coleman reported:

- 1.) Employment Matter – No action taken.
- 2.) Employment Matter – No action taken.

ADJOURNMENT – With no further action required by Council, Chairman Coleman adjourned the meeting at 7:12 P.M.

Respectfully Submitted,



Betty C. Walsh
Laurens County Clerk to Council