

MINUTES
LAURENS COUNTY COUNCIL
SEPTEMBER 24, 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, Diane Anderson, Ted Nash, David Pitts, Keith Tollison and Joe Wood.

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 24, 2013; (2) Approval of Minutes from the September 10, 2013 Regular Session; (3.) Laurens County United Way, Mr. Jim Firmin, 2013 President and Tara Glenn, Executive Director; (4.) Second Reading Approval - Ordinance #757 – “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 Relating Thereto”; (5.) First Reading Approval – Ordinance #758 – “An Ordinance Amending Ordinance #754, “Providing A Special Education Appropriation For Fiscal Year 2013-2014”; (6.) Approval of a funding package and a Resolution (Resolution #2013-11) for the purchase of vehicles; (7) Administrative Report – Ernie Segars, County Administrator; (8) Public Comment; (9) Comments from Council Members; (10) Executive Session – Administrative Matters; (11) Executive Session - Employment Matter – Building Codes; (12) County Council Committee Meeting on Criminal Justice and Public Safety, Keith Tollison, Chairman - Council Members Anderson and Wood - Immediately following the regular session of Council.

AMENDED AGENDA ITEMS – SEPTEMBER 23, 2013 – 9:05 A.M. - (1) Approval of Resolution #2013 – 12 – “Resolution Authorizing an Amendment to the Fee Agreement Between Laurens County, South Carolina and Unifor Brass Forgings, Incorporated, to Provide for the Addition of a Sponsor to Such Agreement”;

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 24, 2013 regular scheduled meeting of Council to order at 5:30 P.M. in the Council Chambers of the Laurens County Historic Courthouse. Chairman Coleman asked for all to remember former Laurens County Emergency Preparedness Director, Wesley Ward.

Chairman Coleman offered an invitation to stand for the invocation and the Pledge of Allegiance. The invocation was delivered by Councilman Tollison.

APPROVAL – AGENDA – SEPTEMBER 24, 2013 – VICE CHAIRMAN MCDANIEL made the MOTION to approve the agenda for the September 24, 2013 meeting with any additions or deletions. The motion was SECONDED by COUNCILMAN PITTS for discussion. Administrator Segars asked for approval of an Executive Session matter for a contract.

COUNCIL VOTED 6-1 to approve the agenda as presented and amended (Councilman Wood in opposition).

APPROVAL – MINUTES – SEPTEMBER 10, 2013 – REGULAR SESSION OF COUNCIL –VICE CHAIRMAN MCDANIEL made the MOTION to approve the minutes from the September 10, 2013 regular session of Council, **SECONDED** by COUNCILMAN PITTS; COUNCIL VOTED 7-0.

LAURENS COUNTY UNITED WAY – Speaking on behalf of the Laurens County United Way, Mrs. Tara Glenn, Executive Director, provided a brief summary of the operations of the Laurens United Way and introduced Mr. Jim Firmin, 2013 President.

Continuing Mrs. Glenn said, “The Laurens County United Way is a unique organization that has made great impacts on Laurens County for the past sixty (60) years. We have a staff of two (2) that manages the day-to-day operations. Last year we contributed over two hundred seventy five thousand dollars (\$275,000) to local programs. The Laurens County United Way invests donor dollars into our local community with the goal of making positive impacts in the areas of education, income, and health. The investment process is in place to provide funding for specific programs delivered by non-profit organizations that can demonstrate measurable results and impact on specific community issues. Investment panels, comprised of donors and community volunteers representing a variety of expertise and backgrounds have been established to oversee all of the community investment process. The local program requests are submitted by local agencies and are evaluated annually by this team who in turn provides the United Way’s Board of Directors with recommended levels of investment. As always we appreciate the support provided by the employees of Laurens County and encourage all to give to make Laurens County a better giving community”.

Chairman Coleman thanked Mrs. Glenn for addressing Council and noted the great things the agency does for Laurens County.

SECOND READING - ORDINANCE #757 – “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 RELATING THERETO” – Chairman Coleman said, “The question still remaining is whether the County should issue bonds for the three hundred seven million dollars (\$3,700,000) included in the referenced ordinance, or should the County borrow a less amount and appropriate the balance from the county’s reserve accounts to finance new construction and improvements at Hillcrest Square. A final decision will need to be made prior to the third reading in October”.

Administrator Segars added that third reading and public hearing has been scheduled for October 8, 2013.

COUNCILWOMAN ANDERSON made the MOTION to approve Ordinance #757, upon second reading, for the issuance of a General Obligation Bonds for the full cost of the project and to not exceed the \$3.7 million. COUNCILMAN TOLLISON SECONDING; VOTE 7-0.

FIRST READING – ORDINANCE # 758 - “AN ORDINANCE AMENDING ORDINANCE #754, PROVIDING AN EDUCATION APPROPRIATION FOR FISCAL YEAR 2013-2014.” Chairman Coleman explained that this is an amending Ordinance that clarifies and provides for a one mill special education levy – ninety percent (90%) to Piedmont Technical College and ten percent (10%) to the University of South Carolina at Union at Laurens.

COUNCILMAN PITTS made the MOTION to approve Ordinance #758 upon first reading with COUNCILWOMAN ANDERSON SECONDING for discussion.

Councilman Tollison said, “I think a lot of us had the impression that USCU was leaving Laurens County. I know I was one that was against providing them the ten percent (10%) based on them leaving. Now we all understand that they are just moving to another location and this ten percent will continue to fund their operational budget”.

Councilman Nash stated, “I just feel that Council is rushing into this and that USC Union has made arrangements to rent a facility and they have no students with us still funding the ten percent. I feel that we should have discussed more before we changed the ordinance. This Council never went through the normal discussions before acting on something”.

Chairman Coleman stated, “As an order of clarification, this is clearing it up from tying it to the Higher Education Facility and offering support for the two (2) institutions”.

Councilman Wood said, “This is why I objected to the agenda. There never was a motion by this Council to request an amending ordinance nor was there any motions, seconds or votes cast for an amending ordinance. We had an original ordinance to offset maintenance for the Higher Educational Center. If you take money from the intended maintenance, these funds will be going to pay maintenance on a shopping center. This is very premature with creating a new ordinance because there are seven (7) members on this Council to do this. That is not what happened here. This ordinance has not even been discussed with the full Council; only the one from the budget session was discussed. They moved out of the Higher Education Center, so they should not get that portion of the money anymore. Now we have an ordinance in front of us now that we have not even discussed. The proper was is to put it before this Council first. This levy was set up to provide for maintenance at the Higher Education Center, not for rent. The reason they got kicked out of the Center was because they did not do what they said they were going to do. They had classes but with only two or three students in them. The classroom space was wasted with only two students in it. The new Director spoke to Council and said that she was going to change the direction of the program and would be moving to a shopping center. I just feel that this is something that needs to be revisited in a year or two allowing us to see what they will be doing in this new facility. This is not about Gamecocks nor Tigers...it is not about football and appears to not even be about education as far as I am concerned. It is about seeing how much money we can get. I brought this up before...about how they waste money. This highest paid person by the State of South Carolina is Steve Spurrier from USC...Jeni Sanders was paid fifteen thousand dollars to make a fifteen minute speech...Nicholas Sparks twelve thousand five hundred dollars to make a fifteen minute speech....Dutch Goldman, Star of the Food Network, Ace of Cakes....Herman Broom high school coach five thousand five hundred dollars to make a fifteen minute speech....Ben and Jerry Ice Cream thirty five thousand dollars to make a fifteen minute speech Coach Lou Holtz fifteen thousand dollars. They have money to throw away...we do not have to take this money away from the Higher Education Center”.

Councilwoman Anderson stated that she approved the ordinance because the funds assist the citizens and residents of Laurens County.

Chairman Coleman said, “Thru the years, this Council has always supported education in various forms. This is an ordinance that provides one (1) mill collectively for Piedmont Tec and the University of South Carolina Union at Laurens. The one (1) mill is to be split – ninety percent (90%) to Piedmont Technical College and ten percent (10%) to the University of South Carolina at Union at Laurens. As to the instruction for this Ordinance, I asked for one to be created”.

Administrator Segars added that he asked for the County Attorney to write a draft ordinance for consideration.

COUNCIL VOTED 5-2 (Council Members Nash and Wood were in opposition).

APPROVAL OF A FUNDING PACKAGE AND RESOLUTION #2013-11 FOR THE PURCHASE OF VEHICLES – Mr. Wilson explained that this package involves the approval of a lease/purchase agreement being awarded to BB&T for the purchase of twenty one (21) vehicles for various county departments costing seven hundred seventeen thousand dollars (\$717,000) at 1.03 percent interest. Ads were placed in local newspapers as per the County Procurement Ordinance.

COUNCILMAN NASH made the MOTION to approve the Resolution concerning the lease / purchase agreement with COUNCILWOMAN ANDERSON SECONDING for discussion.

Councilman Pitts asked Mr. Wilson if any reports had been reviewed as it relates to the vehicles safety, fuel and holding up under the extensive use by law enforcement. Mr. Wilson replied, “I had talked with the South Carolina Highway Patrol Officer that uses the SUV and was told that the proposed SUV’s were five to seven hundred dollars more and that the gas mileage was all within one (1) mile per gallon difference and, that they held up as well as the Crown Vics. We were able to test a Chrysler product that was already dressed out for use and proved to not be adequate for our patrol officers and their equipment...that an SUV would provide the best use.

Councilman Tollison questioned if the SUV was a certified police pursuit vehicle? Mr. Wilson replied that they are.

COUNCIL VOTED 6-1 (Councilman Pitts was in opposition).

ADMINISTRATIVE REPORT – ERNIE SEGARS, COUNTY ADMINISTRATOR – Administrator Segars informed Council of two (2) recent deaths of County Employees; Mr. Wesley Ward, former County Emergency Management Director and Deputy Bollman, Laurens County Sheriffs Department.

AMENDED AGENDA ITEM – RESOLUTION #2013-12 – “A RESOLUTION AUTHORIZING AN AMENDMENT TO THE FEE AGREEMENT BETWEEN LAURENS COUNTY, SOUTH CAROLINA AND UNIFOR BRASS FORGINGS, INCORPORATED, TO PROVIDE FOR THE ADDITION OF A SPONSOR TO SUCH AGREEMENT” – Attorney Cruickshanks explained that this Resolution provides for other ownership of the sponsored affiliation as to real estate.

COUNCILWOMAN ANDERSON made the MOTION to approve the Resolution as presented with COUNCILMAN PITTS SECONDING.

Councilman Tollison asked for clarification as to Unifor Brass Forging versus Unifor Brass Fittings. Attorney Cruickshanks replied that this will not change any previous fee-in-lieu-of arrangements but just added an additional company that had internal holdings with Unifor.

Councilman Tollison asked if the company had met previous agreement criteria? Attorney Cruickshanks replied that the company was in good standings with the State Department of Revenue.

COUNCIL VOTED 7-0 to approve the Resolution.

PUBLIC COMMENTS – Chairman Coleman opened the floor for public comments at 6:00 P.M. With no one else wishing to address Council, Chairman Coleman closed the session at 6:01 P.M.

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

- 1.) Councilman Pitts asked for Mr. Marvin Moss, Laurens County Development Corporation to provide an update on the spec building. Mr. Moss stated, “All construction has been completed and grass was planted three (3) weeks ago. The landscaping is being held off until the waterlines can be constructed. We are currently looking for grants to accommodate sewer upgrades. We hopefully expect to hold a ribbon cutting in the very near future”.
- 2.) Councilman Tollison said, “I agree with the comments made by Councilman Wood and Councilman Nash as to actually seeing the progress made of the move. We will most certainly revisit this ordinance at the next budget session allowing time for each of us to review the progress. There were also some word changes made in the ordinance as to the maintenance of. These funds are going to their general budget but it also helps to offset tuition rates for the students”.
- 3.) Chairman Coleman reminded Council of the forthcoming reception for Mr. Skinner – October 1, 2013 from 1:00 P.M. to 3:00 P.M.

EXECUTIVE SESSION – COUNCILWOMAN ANDERSON made the MOTION to move into Executive Session at 6:05 P.M. to discuss an employment matter and a contractual matter. COUNCILMAN NASH SECONDING; VOTE 7-0.

There was a COUNCIL CONSENSUS to reconvene in open session at 6:42 P.M.

- 1.) Employment Matter – Building Codes – COUNCILMAN TOLLISON made the MOTION for Council to approve the authorization of the staff to proceed with filling the position for the Building Codes Officer. COUNCILMAN PITTS SECONDING; VOTE 7-0.
- 2.) Contractual Matter – Veterans Affairs Vehicle – COUNCILMAN WOOD made the MOTION for Council to approve for the purchase of a vehicle for the Veterans Officer not to exceed twenty thousand dollars (\$20,000). To include that Greenwood County, who holds an intergovernmental agreement with Laurens County for the Officer, to contribute to half of the designated amount. COUNCILMAN NASH SECONDING; VOTE 6-1 (Vice Chairman McDaniel in opposition).

ADJOURNMENT – With no further business, Chairman Coleman adjourned the meeting of Council at 6:50 P.M.

Respectfully Submitted,



Betty C. Walsh
Laurens County Clerk to Council