

**MINUTES  
ORANGEBURG COUNTY COUNCIL  
MARCH 7, 2011  
5:30 P.M.**

**Pursuant to the Freedom of Information Act, the news media was notified and notice was posted on the bulletin board 24 hours prior to the meeting.**

**MEMBERS PRESENT:**

**Johnnie Wright, Sr., Chairman  
Janie Cooper, Vice Chairman  
Clyde B. Livingston  
Heyward H. Livingston  
Willie B. Owens  
Johnny Ravenell  
Harry F. Wimberly**

**MEMBERS ABSENT:**

**OTHERS PRESENT:**

**Bill Clark, County Administrator  
D'Anne Haydel, County Attorney  
Jacqueline P. Turner, Clerk to Council**

**CALL TO ORDER**

**Johnnie Wright, Sr., Chairman**

**MOMENT OF SILENCE**

**Moment of silence observed**

**APPROVAL OF MINUTES**

**Motion for approval of minutes of February 22, 2011 with corrections, if any, made by Councilwoman Cooper, seconded by Councilman Ravenell. Motion passed unanimously.**

**PUBLIC COMMENTS: AGENDA MATTERS**

**NO COMMENTS**

**PUBLIC COMMENTS: OTHER MATTERS**

**Chairman Wright asked the County Administrator to make comments relative to the blue law issue prior to soliciting comments from the public. Mr. Clark stated the staff is working on preparing materials to be able to have a public hearing on the issue. It is expected the materials will be completed in the coming week, at which point a time and date will be scheduled for a public hearing at a time and location most convenient for the public to be able to participate. The hearing will be prior to the end of the month with notice going to the local press and the**

**County's website about the time and location of the public hearing, once these issues have been determined.**

**Chairman Wright stated the majority of Council felt it incumbent upon Council to hold a public hearing on the issue so the pros and cons of the public can be heard, giving all in the community a voice. There will be one public hearing held in an orderly process, which is what the staff is working to establish.**

**The Chairman opened the floor for any comments on agenda items, but no comments were forthcoming. The Chairman opened the floor for comments on other matters, cautioning the public to be mindful of how long each person speaks, being mindful of other people wanting to speak. If a group of 3-5 people are present to speak on the same issue, and they have previously been before Council, it would be nice to have one person speak for the group.**

**Several people spoke, many of whom had already appeared before Council giving their views, reading from Scripture and presenting additional petitions. One speaker, Ms. Debbie Hammond, staff member of the Senate Judiciary Committee, reminded Council a public hearing is scheduled for 6:30 p.m. March 23, 2011, Orangeburg Calhoun Technical College, to get input on redistricting of state Senate, House and Congressional districts. She asked Council to keep this date in mind when arranging for the public hearing on repealing the blue laws.**

**Following the end of public comments, Council returned to the regular agenda.**

**RESOLUTIONS OF HONOR: Councilwoman Janie Cooper with the support of Chairman Wright, read the Resolutions of Honor presented to Reverend Dr. Caesar R. Richburg, Dr. Arthur Evans and the National Women's History Month resolution.**

**Motion by Councilwoman Cooper, seconded by Councilman Ravenell, approving the adoption of resolutions presented to County Council. Motion passed unanimously.**

**Reverend Richburg and Dr. Evans expressed their appreciation for the honor of receiving resolutions.**

**1. ORDINANCE – FIRST READING (TITLE ONLY)**

**AN ORDINANCE AUTHORIZING ORANGEBURG COUNTY TO ENTER INTO A CONTRACT TO LEASE PROPERTY TO BRANCHVILLE YOUTH SPORTS, LLC**

**Chairman Wright asked Mr. Clark to give a summary of this ordinance for clarification to the public. Bill Clark explained the County owns property in the town of Branchville, less than one acre, adjacent to an existing athletic field downtown. The lease would be for the purpose of providing parking and safer access by the public to the athletic field. Branchville Youth Sports is the entity whom the proposed lease is intended for. Branchville Youth Sports would assume responsibility for maintenance and improvements to the property as needed. A full copy of the ordinance and lease for Council to review, will be ready at second reading.**

**Motion by Councilman Wimberly, seconded by Councilman Clyde Livingston, that ordinance be accepted for first reading by title only. Motion passed unanimously.**

**2. PUBLIC WORKS DEPARTMENT – REQUEST TO ABANDON MAINTENANCE – BLAZE ROAD (OC2287)**

**Chairman Wright asked Bill Clark to explain this request. Bill Clark stated Blaze Road is a short road located in a very rural area in the western part of the county, near the county line. It appears to be a good candidate for the request to abandon maintenance; however, it is the policy to make referrals of these type of requests to the Public Works Committee so that the public may have an opportunity to comment, if they care to do so, and that is his recommendation.**

**Motion by Councilman Heyward Livingston, seconded by Councilman Owens to refer the request to abandon maintenance on Blaze Road to the Public Works Committee for review. Motion passed unanimously.**

**3. RECOMMENDATION FROM TAX & TOURISM ADVISORY COMMITTEE**

**Chairman Wright asked for comments from Bill Clark. Bill Clark explained the Committee met February 22, 2011 and developed the following recommendations for County Council. The first four requests all deal with festivals which have a track record with the County and have been funded on previous occasions. The**

**fifth item was presented by the Town of Santee, but was later withdrawn for funding assistance.**

- (1) The Santee Birding and Nature Festival for funds to assist with promoting their event April 29-May 1, 2011, Santee Cultural Arts and Visitors Center, for \$1,000.**
- (2) The Raylrode Daze Festival for funds to assist with advertising on two billboards and radio advertising in the amount of \$3,900.**
- (3) The Grand American Coon Hunt to assist with funds to present the Hunt at the Orangeburg County Fair Grounds in 2012 in the amount of \$7,000. In past years the Grand American Hunt made requests in advance of the event, as they have done this year, and the funds were held in escrow until such time as the Grand American was ready to expend the funds. This amount is not expected to be expended until later in the year.**
- (4) The Town of Springfield Governor's Frog Jump Committee to fund assistance related to sponsoring the Governor's Frog Jump event in the amount of \$5,000.**

**Total of all requests is \$16,900; the funds are available should County Council wish to accept the recommendations of the Tax & Tourism Advisory Committee.**

**Motion made by Councilwoman Cooper, seconded by Councilman Owens, to accept the recommendation of the Tax & Tourism Advisory Committee in the amount of \$16,900.00. Motion passed unanimously.**

**Motion for an executive session to discuss contractual matters with The Regional Medical Center and the Broadband project made by Councilman Heyward Livingston, seconded by Councilman Owens. Motion passed unanimously.**

**Councilman Owens addressed Council relative to his statement about the need for a Chain Gang in Orangeburg. It does not have to be called a Chain Gang, but it needs to be called something. Councilwoman Cooper said work release, which Councilman Owens indicated could be discussed later. He stated crime in Orangeburg has gotten out of hand, and he praised the Sheriff for making it a rainy day for a lot of the criminals. Sheriff Ravenell furnished Councilman Owens with a number of statistics which Councilman Owens requested, and wants to share with the citizens of Orangeburg County.**

From 2004 to 2009, the County had 10 murders, 3 still unsolved; 40 rapes; 174 robberies; aggravated assault, 393; assaults, 42; burglaries, 829; breaking and entry, 1,585; property crime, 4,852; larceny, 2,604; motor vehicle theft, 663; violent crime offense, 617. Compared with the state, the County is up 70.3%, the state 72.9%, the national crime rate is 45.5%.

He is encouraging communities to organize crime watches to help defend themselves against the hoodlums who are going fool in their communities. All the statistics for the County rank high for 2009, and he feels the County should be concerned. He stated he has received more than 1,000 calls and he's not sure how many people in the street have patted him on the back; he's only had 3 people who were against what he talked about. Whatever it is called, there is a need, and it is time for Orangeburg County Council to act. He has talked with the Senators and has asked to schedule a meeting so the County can look at passing some legislation in Columbia that deals with people who go through the revolving door, 30 days in jail, out, 2 weeks later they are back in. This is why he says work the hell out of them. If they have to pick up litter, busts rocks, clean up grave yards, the County needs to find something for them to do. They will not be so interested in returning back to jail; recidivism would not be as great as it is.

Councilman Owens stated it is incumbent upon people in Orangeburg County to deal with the problem that we have. He further stated he is willing to follow through and he thinks Council will attest to the point that we must be concerned. He asked Sheriff Ravenell to stand, stating it was good to see him and his Chief at the meeting, thanked them for what they are doing, indicating the County is looking forward to working with them and the Chief of Orangeburg City DPS in trying to find some way to help curb crime in Orangeburg County. He has received calls from neighboring counties wondering how Orangeburg County is doing it. He indicated he must be a Chain Gang consultant. He is going to ask Council sooner or later to have a public hearing on crime in Orangeburg County, encouraging people to come together and talk about what needs to be done and how it needs to be done.

Councilwoman Cooper expressed her support of Councilman Owens, but she is against the Chain Gang and people in chains. However, her main point raised was about installment plans for paying taxes; nothing has been done and it is on the back burner; no meetings have been held; she mentioned it at the Retreat, but no meetings have been held. If it is not going to be pursued, she needs to know. People who own property for generations are losing property because they cannot pay their taxes. Councilwoman Cooper stated, "let's not let Orangeburg County become another Dufuskie Island".

**Chairman Wright stated he had already spoken to the Treasurer, who has promised him he will look at the issue, and will advise the Chairman when a meeting can be set up. Chairman Wright stated he spoke with the Treasurer three weeks ago and will touch bases with him to see what has happened.**

**Councilman Heyward Livingston echoed his support for what Councilman Owens said, and stated he is with him 100%. He is exactly right; whatever we can do, we need to do. Councilman Ravenell voiced his support. Councilman Ravenell stated the majoring of the population in jail are not for violent crimes, but for child support. Any study needs to address this as well. If people have a child and can't work, some solution needs to be sought so they can be out making a dollar instead of being jailed.**

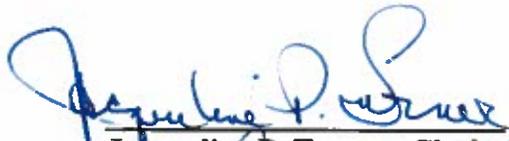
**Chairman Wright stated when it comes to crime Council certainly wants to make sure Orangeburg County is the best that it can be. Council needs to be proactive and work together in a team effort.**

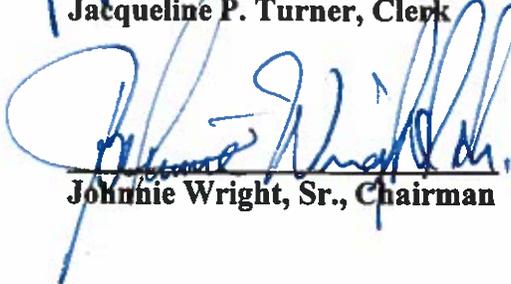
**Motion made by Councilman Owens seconded by Councilwoman Cooper, to adjourn for an executive session to discuss The Regional Medical Center and the Broadband issue. Motion passed unanimously.**

**Executive session.**

**Motion to adjourn made by Councilman Heyward Livingston, seconded by Councilwoman Cooper. Motion passed unanimously.**

**Meeting adjourned.**

  
Jacqueline P. Turner, Clerk

  
Johnnie Wright, Sr., Chairman