

March 2, 2009
Regular Council Meeting
6:30 PM

County Council met in regular session, in the Auditorium, County Administration Facility, with Vice Chairman Jennifer H. Willis presiding. Agendas, bearing date, time, and location of meeting were mailed to Council members and local news media, February 24, 2009.

Council Members in attendance:

Jennifer H. Willis, Vice Chairman
James B. London, Vice Chairman Pro-Tempore
Randy Crenshaw
Tom Ponder
Sam Wyche

Absent: G. Neil Smith, Chairman

Donna Owen, Clerk to Council

Staff: J. Chappell Hurst, County Administrator
Olivia Vassey, Special Projects Coordinator
Ken Roper, County Attorney

WELCOME AND CALL TO ORDER:

Vice Chairman Willis called the meeting of March 2, 2009 to order and welcomed those in attendance. Councilman James London was asked to lead the Invocation and Pledge of Allegiance.

PUBLIC FORUM:

Mrs. Willis opened the floor for public forum, and asked the Clerk to call upon citizens who have signed up.

Weldon Clark- Mr. Clark asked that Council be aware of a meeting regarding the Republican Party reorganization, March 9th, 2009. – Mr. Clark also wanted to commend the efficiencies of the Public Service staff as it relates to the various ways they handle communication with the public and other agencies. Also Mr. Clark stated that grants should be of the utmost importance regarding the stimulus package funds.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES:

- February 09, 2009- Motion was made by Tom Ponder, seconded by Randy Crenshaw and unanimously passed to approve the minutes as presented.

ADMINISTRATOR'S REPORT:

1. Roads, Bridges, and EMS- Mr. Hurst recognized employees from these departments for their work during the snow storm that came through the area. Mr. Hurst stated our roads were sanded and debris was removed very expediently for the safety of citizens.
2. Stimulus Funds- Staff is currently breaking down the stimulus funding requirements. Council was informed that salaries for firemen are being requested. Funding will also be available for fire stations, and various other needs that are safety related and projects that are deemed 120 day ready.

3. Sewer Project- Mr. Hurst stated that he would like to utilize the stimulus funds to build the North Plant which is on the list for required updating. Mr. Hurst stated in order to apply for the stimulus funds, the county would be required to have the project under the "120 day ready" criteria. Mr. Hurst asked for this item to be placed in the Public Service Committee for an expedient review.
4. Airport– Hangars should be going up at the airport beginning this week, and the project should take 60 to 90 days.
5. Census information- Census workers are now riding around verifying addresses for the 2010 census. Mr. Hurst wanted citizens to know that census workers are not supposed to be entering homes, they are only verifying addresses. Also Mr. Hurst stated that committees need to be formed utilizing citizens groups for the upcoming 2010 census. Mr. Hurst stated the accuracy of the census is extremely important to each County because funding is based on population.
6. Recreation- Council was informed about a recreation meeting that would be held at the Administration Facility on March 12 at 6:30 PM.
7. State Budget Cuts- If the State eliminates the aid to counties as proposed, it would impact Pickens County by 3 million dollars. Mr. Hurst stated if the legislators vote for cutting the County funds, these are the funds that support the state services for Voter Registration, Department of Social Services, Veterans Affairs, and Magistrates. Thus, these services would no longer be provided without large tax increases. Mr. Hurst urged all council and citizens to speak with their legislative delegation. Mr. Hurst reiterated that Pickens County has a balanced budget without a tax increase, and any tax increase would be due to cutting this funding.

>>Council asked Mr. Hurst to make sure the Water Districts also know about grants or loans that could be utilized for updating the water districts.

>>James London stated that the census should utilize the GIS department and the ability of the County staff.

>>Sam Wyche also reiterated to the citizens that census workers are not supposed to be in homes, and citizens should be suspicious of anyone asking to enter a home.

COUNCIL CORRESPONDENCE:

Chairman Appointees – Vice Chairman Willis gave the following appointments which are made by the Chairman of County Council

Appalachian Council of Governments—Neil Smith and Randy Crenshaw

GPATS – Jennifer Willis

Upstate Alliance – Neil Smith

April Meeting- Mrs. Willis stated that she and the Chairman have discussed the fact that 2 members of Council have conflicts during the first week in April, therefore the Chairman has moved the April meeting to April 13, 2009 and that will be the only meeting of Council for that month. The budget work sessions will follow all during the month and if council needs another meeting, there will be opportunity.

MOTION PERIOD AND NEW BUSINESS:

- Proposed funding for the upgrades to the North Plant. Motion was made by Tom Ponder, seconded by Randy Crenshaw and unanimously passed to place this item in the Public Service Committee.
- Proposed property for parks- Sam Wyche moved to place in the Education, Recreation, Health, Welfare, and County Planning Committee the issue relating to the Southerland property. Mr. Wyche stated the owner of said property would like to see the County use

it for parks and recreation. Tom Ponder seconded the motion and it was unanimously passed.

REQUEST ACCESS STUDIES FOR ADGER ROAD AND SIMMS SCHOOL ROAD:

- Motion was made by Randy Crenshaw, seconded by Tom Ponder to take \$40,000 from contingency to use for the study of Adger and Simms School Road. The motion also included that a refund be requested from the C-fund Committee.

Randy Crenshaw also stated that if only one road was looked at, that Simms School Road should be the priority. Motion passed with a unanimous vote.

REQUEST FROM COUNCILMAN WYCHE, ISSUE RELATING TO THE PICKENS COUNTY STIMULUS/INCENTIVE PROGRAM:

Sam Wyche requested that the issue of a Pickens County stimulus program be discussed. Mr. Wyche stated this was a (3) pronged program dealing with stimulating the economy within Pickens County. Mr. Wyche stated the first issue was to present a debit card (P-Card) that a Pickens County Citizen could purchase for \$200.00, but would have \$300.00 worth of credit to be spent within Pickens County only, and would only be good for 90 days. However, Mr. Wyche stated the debit card piece is not as desirable at the present because of budget constraints being placed on the county from the State. However, the second issue of the stimulus package would deal with education (GED) and training so that citizens could get back to work in the event they have lost jobs, or they could learn needed skills. The last part would deal with citizens who may desire to start their own business. Mr. Wyche stated a need for people to know how to begin a business venture.

- Mr. Wyche moved that this issue be further reviewed in the Education, Recreation, Health, Welfare, and County Planning Committee. Motion was seconded by Tom Ponder and unanimously passed.

APPROVAL OF BIDS FOR THE DSS BUILDING EXPANSION:

- Motion was made by Randy Crenshaw, seconded by Tom Ponder to approve the low bid from J. Davis at \$252,288.00. Motion was unanimously passed. Jennifer Willis mentioned that the State has already contributed \$250,000.00 for the expansion.

CONSENT AGENDA:

- Motion was made by Tom Ponder, seconded by Randy Crenshaw and unanimously passed to approve the consent agenda.

Cemetery project – refer to the Education, Recreation and County Planning Committee
Legal Policy- refer to the Administration and Finance Committee

EXECUTIVE SESSION:

- Motion was made by Randy Crenshaw, seconded by Tom Ponder and unanimously passed to convene in executive session for the following purposes.
Appointments to the Urban Land Institution.

PUBLIC SESSION RECONVENED:

Vice Chairman Jennifer Willis called the meeting back to order and advised that the council submitted names for the Urban Land Institute but would need no formal action. Mrs. Willis instructed the clerk to submit the names to Chairman Smith.

ADJOURN:

Hearing no further business, Jennifer Willis called for the motion to adjourn. Motion was made by Tom Ponder, seconded by James London and unanimously passed. Pickens County Council stood Adjourned at 7:35 PM

Respectively Submitted:

Approved:

Donna F. Owen, Clerk to Council

Jennifer H. Willis, Vice Chairman