

November 5, 2012
Regular Council Meeting
6:30 PM

County Council met in regular session, in the Auditorium, County Administration Facility, with Chairman Jennifer H. Willis presiding. Agendas, bearing date, time, and location of meeting were mailed to Council members and local news media on October 24, 2012.

Council Members in attendance:

Jennifer H. Willis, Chairman
G. Neil Smith, Vice Chairman
Tom Ponder, Vice Chairman Pro-tem
Jeff Martin
Trey Whitehurst
Sam Wyche

Donna Owen, Clerk to Council

Staff:

Chappell Hurst, Administrator
Ken Roper, County Attorney

WELCOME AND CALL TO ORDER:

Chairman Willis called the meeting of 11/05/2012 to order and welcomed those in attendance. Mrs. Willis gave a special welcome to Brian Dickard and Troop 37 Boy Scouts from Easley First Baptist. Councilman Tom Ponder gave the Invocation and Pledge of Allegiance.

PUBLIC FORUM:

Chairman Willis opened the Public Forum and requested the Clerk to introduce the speakers who have signed up.

- 1) Junius Smith-Mr. Smith informed Council of legal forums and information that has been sent to Columbia, SC regarding Rails to Trails. Mr. Smith stated he and his organization have stated issues of clean up and environmental responsibilities that would be the responsibility of the municipalities that pursue this project. Mr. Smith stated it was imperative that County Council not be involved with the municipalities regarding this 8.5 mile project that runs from Pickens to Easley. Mr. Smith stated the liability for this project will be enormous for the tax payers. Mr. Smith concluded by stating that Senate candidate Rex Rice has stated he is opposed to this project.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES:

- Motion was made by Councilman Tom Ponder, seconded by Councilman Jeff Martin and unanimously passed to approve the minutes of October 1, 2012.

ADMINISTRATOR'S REPORT:

Mr. Hurst informed Council of the following issues.

- 1) Metropolitan Planning Organization, (MPO)- Mr. Hurst informed Council that the Department of Transportation (DOT) has written a letter responding to the fact that they (DOT) agree that Pickens County is better served with one MPO. Mr. Hurst stated the DOT is only considering the one MPO as originally submitted.

- 2) County Bridges- Mr. Hurst stated that Pickens County Council and Roads and Bridges have had a goal to bring all county bridges up to a standard of safety, with no weight limits. Mr. Hurst stated that the county is now within reach of that goal with only (11) left. This should be done within a two-year time frame. Mr. Hurst stated Pickens County is one of the few counties that will be able to have this distinction.
Councilman Neil Smith noted the importance of citizens and future Councils realizing the need for long-term budgeting for these projects.
- 3) Dock at Mile Creek Park-Mr. Hurst stated he will be asking assistance through fuel taxes for funding to upgrade the dock at Mile Creek. Mr. Hurst stated this was a good use of these funds as Mile Creek Park is utilized by many citizens.
- 4) North Plant – USDA Rural Development will be having a dedication ceremony for the opening of the Central North Plant. Mr. Hurst reminded Council this plant received stimulus money, and the USDA would like to dedicate this plant on December 3, 2012 at 4:00 PM.
- 5) Fire Training Facility- Mr. Hurst -this facility is complete, and the Fire Associations have been great to work with, and the districts are extremely proud of this facility. Mr. Hurst stated he may have to have some extra funds for minor items that are needed, but overall everything is ready.

COUNCIL CORRESPONDENCE:

- 1) Proclamation for National American Indian Heritage Month. Chairman Willis stated she would be signing a proclamation to proclaim November as National American Indian Heritage month.
- 2) Duke Relicensing Meeting-Chairman Willis stated she was contacted by Duke Energy regarding relicensing meetings, and she and Mr. Hurst would be attending at the end of this month. Mrs. Willis stated she would update council after the meeting.
- 3) College All-stars game Mr. Wyche stated this game will be March 23, 2013 at 3:00PM. Mr. Wyche stated he thought this was an exciting process, and should be beneficial for the athletes to have the opportunity to play a college game with live TV coverage. Further, this is a chance for professional scouts to watch for those seeking professional football and graduate school opportunities.
- 4) Railroad Issues- Mr. Wyche stated he was in conversation with Mr. Simms from the Railroad Company, and he asked Mr. Wyche to convey that they own the property along the railroad, and the railroad is 8.5 miles long and roughly 50 ft wide in most areas. They have paid taxes on the property in both municipalities and the county. Mr. Wyche stated they very much want to see the cities buy this property for a rails to trails project. Mr. Wyche informed the public that he understands that an environmental study of the property has not begun, and further stated that nothing can move forward until the study is complete. Mr. Wyche stated there is a Federal Act entitled the Rails to Trails act of 1991 that states adjoining property owners do not own the rail lines, and cannot keep others from purchasing the property, but they can also opt to purchase if the municipalities and or Combined Utilities do not purchase the property. Mr. Wyche stated he was simply giving a report as requested, and thanked council for the time.

MOTION PERIOD AND NEW BUSINESS:

Chairman Willis opened the floor for new business. Hearing none, new business was closed with no action.

APPROVAL FOR DACUSVILLE FIRE DISTRICT TO USE RESERVE FUNDS TO PURCHASE TURN-OUT GEAR IN THE AMOUNT OF \$50,000:

- Motion was made by Councilman Neil Smith, seconded by Councilman Tom Ponder and unanimously passed to approve the funding for Dacusville Fire District. Chairman Willis noted these funds are available within the district's reserve, and are not new funding request.

APPROVAL FOR HOLLY SPRINGS TO USE RESERVE FUNDS TO PURCHASE A BRUSH TRUCK AND UPDATE EQUIPMENT IN THE AMOUNT OF \$57,500:

- Motion was made by Councilman Tom Ponder, seconded by Councilman Neil Smith and unanimously passed to approve the funding for Holly Springs Fire District. Chairman Willis noted these funds are available within the district's reserve, and are not new funding request.

APPROVAL FOR AN EASEMENT REQUEST AT DACUSVILLE SCHOOL:

Mr. Hurst explained that the county has been contacted by Cornerstone Bank for an easement from Earls Bridge Road to Philpot Plantation Drive.

>During Council discussion Council stated that an easement was not in the best interest. Councilman Neil Smith further moved to not do an easement, and to simply take in the lower portion into the county road system and make the road a public road. Mr. Smith further clarified by stating to declare the portion of Dacusville School Circle from Earls Bridge Road to Philpot Plantation Drive into the county road system, motion was seconded by Councilman Tom Ponder and unanimously passed.

APPROVAL TO MATCH FUNDS FOR THE MOBILE FIRE SAFETY HOUSE:

- Motion was made by Councilman Neil Smith, seconded by Councilman Jeff Martin and unanimously passed to match grant funds in the amount of approximately \$20,000 for a mobile fire safety house. Council noted this mobile unit is widely used as a vital teaching tool for children.

CONSENT AGENDA:

- Motion was made by Councilman Neil Smith, seconded by Councilman Trey Whitehurst and unanimously passed to approve the consent agenda as presented.

1) City of Easley/incubator business building- Administration and Finance

EXECUTIVE SESSION:

- Motion was made by Councilman Jeff Martin, seconded by Councilman Neil Smith and unanimously passed to convene in executive session for the stated purposes.
 - Boards and Commission—Behavioral Health and Accommodations Tax
 - Legal Update
 - Economic Development Update

PUBLIC SESSION RECONVENED:

Chairman Willis called the public session back to order and advised the following.

- 1) Behavioral Health Services- Motion was made by Chairman Willis, seconded by Councilman Tom Ponder and unanimously passed to approve the appointment of Bart Turner and Rhonda McWhorter to the Behavioral Health Board of Directors.
- 2) Accommodations Tax – Motion was made by Councilman Neil Smith, seconded by Chairman Willis and unanimously passed to appoint Helen Hockwalt to the Accommodations Tax Committee.

ADJOURN:

Hearing no further Council business, Chairman Willis called for a motion to adjourn. Motion was made by Councilman Tom Ponder, seconded by Councilman Trey Whitehurst and unanimously passed. Pickens County Council stood adjourned at 8:00 PM.

Respectively Submitted:

Approved:

Donna F. Owen, Clerk to Council

Jennifer H. Willis, Chairman