

July 20, 2009
Regular Council Meeting
6:30 PM

County Council met in regular session, in the Auditorium, County Administration Facility, with Chairman Neil Smith presiding. Agendas, bearing date, time, and location of meeting were mailed to Council members and local news media, July 10 2009.

Council Members in attendance:

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

Donna Owen, Clerk to Council

Staff: J. Chappell Hurst, County Administrator

Absent: Ken Roper, County Attorney

WELCOME AND CALL TO ORDER:

Chairman Smith called the meeting of July 20, 2009 to order and welcomed those in attendance. Invocation and Pledge of Allegiance was led by Mrs. Jennifer Willis.

PUBLIC FORUM:

Chairman Smith opened the public forum and requested a list of participants from the Clerk.

Junius Smith. Mr. Smith informed Council that he was speaking on behalf of Conservatives of the Upstate, previously known as Conservatives of Pickens County, the name change is because the organization has grown to a regional level. Concerns that were expressed by the Conservatives were the documentation of abnormal growth, the 2008 audit report as it relates to over collection of taxes, and the fact that Pickens County government and Pickens County School District have obtained over twenty million dollars in contingency. Mr. Smith stated the Conservatives are prepared to pursue legal action if refunds are not made to the taxpayers.

Weldon Clark. Mr. Clark stated that it was very important for citizens to realize the impact of not submitting proper information to the Planning Commission. Mr. Clark stated that School District had failed to submit the site location for Daniel High school, and now the stadium for that area is in a poor and dangerous location.

Hearing no further participation, Chairman Smith closed the public forum.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

- Motion was made by Jennifer Willis, seconded by Tom Ponder and unanimously passed to approve the minutes of June 15, 2009.

ADMINISTRATOR’S REPORT:

Mr. Hurst informed/updated Council of the following issues and projects.

- Solid Waste Report the new Solid Waste Report sited Pickens County as number one in the State in recycling, showing that 33.8 % of solid waste is being recycled. The departments are still working with the municipalities to further increase that number.
- Cemetery Project- 50 cemeteries have been identified and signs are being made in order for citizens to locate older and, sometimes historic cemeteries.
- Grant for the Sewer line on Highway 123 this grant was successful, and the county has received over \$500,000 for the project. This will open up this entire corridor for business opportunities.
- Social Services study--Studies show a need for a \$12 million dollar increase for social service programs such as food stamps. This increase will enable Pickens County citizens who have been hurt in this bad economy to seek assistance.
- Fire training facility – this facility will begin construction, this grant was successful because the county utilized dirt from the airport project in order to move the access dirt to the fire training property.
- Hiring Freeze-Pickens County continues its hiring freeze, and is continuing to use employees in other areas when needed instead of filling positions. Mr. Hurst stated his intention was to keep slower departments busy during this economic downturn.
- Energy Grant- An energy grant is underway, and a study is being conducted to see where energy can be saved; this includes small items such as lights, etc.

Council Correspondence:

Chairman Smith encouraged everyone to read the material that was submitted by the County attorney regarding how boards and commissions should properly conduct meetings and various other issues as it relates to boards appointed by Council.

MOTION PERIOD AND NEW BUSINESS:

1. Tom Ponder moved to pull log item number 7 from the committee log and allow minimum maintenance for roads Merrill Way and Whitmire. Motion was seconded by Randy Crenshaw and unanimously passed.
2. Tom Ponder moved to add a personnel issue to executive session. Motion was seconded by James London and unanimously passed.
3. James London moved to add a contractual matter to executive session. Motion was seconded by Tom Ponder and unanimously passed.

PUBLIC HEARING AND APPROVAL OF RESOLUTION NO. 09-01, IN SUPPORT OF THE ISSUANCE BONDS BY THE SOUTH CAROLINA JOBS-ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT AUTHORITY:

Chairman Smith opened the public hearing and allowed anyone to speak on the bonds resolution.

Junius Smith asked about the law firm that was handling the bonds. Kathy McKinney was the attorney present. She stated that by State law, bonds which were issued and sold had to hold a public hearing in the County Seat where the organization was housed; in this case it is the Palmetto Hospital.

Bob Foundry stated he thought the fact that bonds were called Job Economic Bonds were misleading.

Chairman Smith reiterated that the bonds have no bearing on taxes, or county debt, and this was simply an issuance of bonds that were done for non-profit organizations about every 2 years.

Hearing no further discussion, Chairman Smith closed the public hearing.

- Motion was made by Jennifer Willis seconded by James London and unanimously passed to approve the Resolution for JEDA bonds.

APPROVAL FOR BIDS AS IT RELATES TO THE ROAD PAVING:

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

CONSENT AGENDA:

- Motion was made by Jennifer Willis, seconded by Randy Crenshaw and unanimously passed to approve the consent agenda as presented.

1. Railroad crossing issues relating to speed – Public Safety Committee
2. Proposed Addition to Paving List- Public Service Committee

EXECUTIVE SESSION:

- Motion was made by Jennifer Willis, seconded by Sam Wyche and unanimously passed to go into executive session for the stated purposes.
 - Personnel Issues
 - Contractual matter
 - Boards and Commissions as needed or requested

PUBLIC SESSION RECONVENED:

Chairman Smith called the public session back to order and stated that a contractual matter and personnel matter had been discussed with no action necessary. Appointments were discussed, and the following motions were forthcoming.

- Jennifer Willis moved to reappoint Bill Seel and Dennis Latham to the Library board. Motion was seconded by Randy Crenshaw and unanimously passed.
- Jennifer Willis moved to appoint Shirley Reese to the Cultural Commission. Motion was seconded by Tom Ponder and unanimously passed.
- Randy Crenshaw moved to reappoint Dean Finley to the Public Service board. Motion was seconded by Jennifer Willis and unanimously passed.

ADJOURN:

Hearing no further business, Chairman Smith called for the motion to adjourn. Such motion was made by Jennifer Willis and seconded by Randy Crenshaw. Pickens County Council stood adjourned at 8:30 PM.

Respectively Submitted:

Approved:

Donna F. Owen, Clerk to Council

G. Neil Smith, Chairman
Pickens County