

August 20, 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 August 15, 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 August 20, 2012 to order and welcomed those in attendance.

Vice Chairman Smith gave the Invocation and Pledge of Allegiance.

PUBLIC FORUM:

Chairman Willis opened the Public Forum and stated she realized there were many citizens in attendance to speak regarding the Doodle Railroad. Mrs. Willis stated she would allow each person to speak, but ask them to keep comments to a minimum.

DOODLE RAILROAD:

Due to media, municipalities, and other organization discussions regarding the purchase of the old Doodle Railroad, multiple citizens requested to speak at public forum as it relates to this issue.

- 1) Bill Johnston, Johnnelle Raines, Cynthia Wise, Jim McDonald, Junius Smith, Melvin Watson, Weldon Clark, Garvin Bolding, Bill Dell, Russell King, Philip Smith, Susan Crenshaw, Lib Tickle, Raymond Zachary, and Margaret Hendricks. This group of citizens came before Council to speak about their concerns as it relates to the Doodle Railroad being developed into a walking/bike path that would encompass a route from Pickens to Easley, SC. Citizen issues pertained to property rights, safety, public access on or extremely near their property lines, and tax dollars being used for development. Many citizens also quoted statistical data as it pertained to problems with other rails to trails projects in neighboring counties and states. This group asked Council to not promote the development of this project.
- 2) Don Youngblood, Elizabeth McDaniel, Kendra Brown, Sid Collins, Jean Stone, Dixie Duncan, and Jim Mahanes. This group of citizens came before Council to speak about their support of a rails to trails project for Pickens County. Citizens promoted the fact that people in Pickens County often go to other areas that have these trails, therefore spending money that could be utilized in Pickens County. Many citizens discussed the need for more recreation, health, and a means to promote healthier lifestyles. Citizens also discussed the fact that Pickens County did not

have safe areas for bicyclists and joggers. Citizens concluded by realizing the concerns about a project of this magnitude, but thought many issues could be resolved. Council was asked to consider the promotion of the rails to trails project.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES:

- Motion was made by Councilman Sam Wyche, seconded by Councilman Tom Ponder to approve the June 18, 2012 minutes. All members voted in favor of the minutes as presented. Councilman Neil Smith abstained from the vote due to his absence from said meeting.

ADMINISTRATOR'S REPORT:

Mr. Hurst updated County Council on the following items.

- 1) Six Mile Fire Station- This project is on schedule and completion is expected within 90 days.
- 2) Liberty Fire Station- This project is underway, and the engineer has requested this station will function more efficiently by obtaining an additional 50 ft of property. The fire board will endeavor to obtain the additional property so the project can move forward.
- 3) Beautification Grant on Highway 178 at the Pickens County Airport property. Pickens County obtained a beautification grant for the property the County purchased that joins the airport. This beautification project is approximately a \$400,000 project that is coordinated with South Carolina Department of Transportation.
- 4) Dive Team Boat- Pickens County has acquired an 18ft center console boat for the Pickens County Dive Team. This boat was acquired through the Department of Natural Resources and will be a great asset to the Dive and Rescue teams. Mr. Hurst thanked Emergency Services Director, Chuck Haynes for his efforts with this equipment.
- 5) Grant Reimbursement- Pickens County has notification of the \$580,000 grant reimbursement which is the reimbursement for the purchase of the property that joins the Pickens County Airport. Mr. Hurst stated this property will be used as industrial and future expansion of airplane hangars.
- 6) North Sewer Plant- This facility is complete and DHEC has given approval for official use on August 27, 2012. This project was reimbursed with grant money for approximately 50% of cost. This project will provide sewer to Central and surrounding areas.
- 7) Duke Energy Nuclear Exercise- The Pickens County Emergency Operations Center has been practicing for the graded nuclear exercise that will be on September 18th, 2012. The team did a practice drill on August 14th, and FEMA representatives were impressed with the training thus far. This graded exercise is important to Duke Energy for continued permits.
- 8) Economic Development Building-This project is in the engineering phase. Plans and bids should be in by the end of this year. If construction begins in January of 2013, completion should be in June.
- 9) Rocky Bottom Fire District- Rocky Bottom has been working to build a station to house the acquired fire truck and other equipment. The McCall Camp has agreed to work with the County and will allow for a station to be built on the property. Engineer work will begin soon, and this should be a 6 month project.
- 10) BJ Skelton Career Center-The Career Center is in its third year of offering seniors an opportunity to acquire course study in law enforcement, fire, and telecommunications. This year the Pickens County E911 office presented 22 students with certificates of completion in these areas. Also, Pickens County has hired 2 individuals who have completed this program. This program is coordinated with our staff and is working well.
- 11) Hagood Mill Pavilion Project-This project has obtained permits and should be in construction phase soon with anticipation of a January/February 2013 completion.

Mr. Hurst stated that concluded his report, and he would entertain any questions.

Councilman Neil Smith asked about the status of property re-appraisal. Mr. Hurst stated this would begin soon. Mr. Hurst reminded Council that the last evaluation of property was in 2008. The 2008 values are considerably higher than values to date. Thus, the current values will be adjusted to current market. Mr. Hurst stated this could result in as much as a 20% decrease. Expected time for this would be the 2013 tax year.

Councilman Trey Whitehurst asked if the Economic Development Building would be going out for bid. Mr. Hurst stated the request for bids should be going out as soon as plans are complete.

COUNCIL CORRESPONDENCE:

- Chairman Willis stated she would set the September 2012 meeting for September 10, 2012, and for Council to hold the date of September 17th for possible committee meetings.
- Councilman Sam Wyche reported a successful “food fight” bowl, which is a competition between Easley and Pickens that raises money for Pickens County Meals on Wheels. Mr. Wyche stated Easley was the winner of the game, and the competition raised \$32,000. Mr. Wyche also stated that the Grasshopper lawn mower company donated 8 commercial lawnmowers to each school, this was worth over \$140,000 that did not come from tax dollars.

MOTION PERIOD AND NEW BUSINESS:

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

PUBLIC HEARING AND THIRD READING OF ORDINANCE NO. 454 AUTHORIZING PURSUANT TO CHAPTER 44 OF TITLE 12 SOUTH CAROLINA CODE OF LAWS, 1976, AS AMENDED, THE EXECUTION AND DELIVERY OF A FEE AGREEMENT BETWEEN PICKENS COUNTY, SC AND SEALEVEL SYSTEMS AND MATTERS RELATING THERETO:

Chairman Willis opened the floor for the Public Hearing on Ordinance No. 454; the hearing was closed with no comment.

- Motion was made by Councilman Trey Whitehurst, seconded by Chairman Willis and unanimously passed that this constitutes a third and final reading on Ordinance No. 454.

PUBLIC HEARING AND THIRD READING OF ORDINANCE NO. 457, AMENDING ORDINANCE NO. 329 TO ADD THE DECAL PROGRAM AND SET FORTH FINES FOR VIOLATIONS:

Chairman Willis opened the Public Hearing for Ordinance No. 457.

1. Weldon Clark-Mr. Clark stated he was in favor of the ordinance in the fact that he believes these recycling centers should be for Pickens County residents. He did state he believes the Ordinance could still be improved, but overall is in favor.
2. Mr. Wilson- Mr. Wilson stated he was in favor of the decal program, and agrees these facilities should be for Pickens County taxpayers only.
3. Junius Smith- Mr. Smith stated he is not in favor of the fines. And that a person should have to prove they are from Pickens County. Chairman Willis stated that language was now in the Ordinance. Mr. Smith stated in light of that fact, he was satisfied with the Ordinance.

Hearing no further comments, Chairman Willis closed the Public Hearing and called for a motion.

- Motion was made by Councilman Tom Ponder, seconded by Councilman Neil Smith and unanimously passed that this constitutes a third and final reading of Ordinance No. 457.

APPROVAL TO PULL THE HAZARD MITIGATION PLAN FROM THE JUSTICE AND PUBLIC SAFETY COMMITTEE AND APPROVE:

- Motion was made by Councilman Trey Whitehurst and seconded by Councilman Neil Smith to pull the Hazard Mitigation Plan from Committee. Motion was unanimously passed.

Committee Chairman, Trey Whitehurst stated he had been over the plan, and discussed it with Mr. Hurst. Mr. Whitehurst stated this plan is to solidify that the County has a plan in place for the safety of citizens in the event of disasters, and this plan is updating the census and population numbers for 2012.

- Motion was made by Councilman Neil Smith, seconded by Councilman Trey Whitehurst and unanimously passed to adopt the updated Hazard Mitigation Plan for Pickens County.

APPROVAL OF DACUSVILLE FIRE DEPARTMENT APPLYING FOR A GRANT TO PROVIDE FOR VEHICLE EXHAUST EXTRACTION SYSTEM, 6-SCB AIR PACKS, COMMERCIAL WASHER/DRYER. THIS IS A 95% GRANT WITH A COST OF APPROXIMATELY \$5,000.00(coming from Dacusville fire funds)

- Motion was made by Councilman Tom Ponder, seconded by Councilman Neil Smith and unanimously passed to approve.

APPROVAL OF TAX NOTICES SHOWING THE TIF (Tax Increment Financing) DISTRICT REVENUES:

- Councilman Neil Smith moved to show the TIF revenues on tax notices. Motion was seconded by Councilman Trey Whitehurst.

Chairman Willis stated this was placed on the agenda in an effort to understand the TIF portion of the tax bill; however, it may need more clarification.

Mr. Hurst stated the County Auditor is responsible for the tax notice, and he created a one line TIF explanation on the tax bill to show the taxes for a TIF do not go to the school or general tax base, but the majority goes to the municipality that has the TIF. Mr. Hurst stated this would only appear on tax notices of those taxpayers affected by the TIF. (Easley, Clemson, and Liberty). Mr. Hurst stated the language for the tax notice would have to be determined by early/mid September.

Chairman Willis stated she is in favor of showing the TIF, but she does not want it to be confusing. Mrs. Willis stated she does not view the current example user friendly.

Councilman Neil Smith stated the way the current tax notice is sent out, the taxpayer within the TIF has no idea that a portion of revenue is going directly to the TIF. Also, the taxpayer does not realize how much is being taken from the school portion. Therefore, he stated he is definitely in favor of showing the taxpayer the real breakdown. Mr. Smith further asked about an explanation in the form of an insert in the tax notice.

Councilman Trey Whitehurst stated he thought the line on the tax notice could simply state the dollar amount of the TIF.

Councilman Jeff Martin stated he thought Council should consider this issue going to committee due to the fact that the language and comprehension of this issue will be extremely important.

Councilman Sam Wyche asked if a very elementary sample could be attached within the tax notice.

- Councilman Neil Smith stated in light of all being in favor of placing the TIF on the notice, but not sure of how to articulate the message, he moved to amend the motion to send the details regarding this language to staff or committee in order to clarify. Mr. Smith did say if it goes to committee it will have to come out in time to place on the next tax notice.
Chairman Willis concurred that staff should work on a simplistic explanation of the tax notice, and be able to have an Administration and Finance Committee meeting before the September 10, 2012 council meeting.
Councilman Trey Whitehurst stated he would second the motion, but he definitely wanted this item to be on the next tax notices. All members voted in favor of the amendment.
- Chairman Willis called for a vote of the motion as amended. All members voted in favor.

LETTER OF SUPPORT FOR THE PICKENS COUNTY BOARD OF DISABILITIES AND SPECIAL NEEDS TO CERTIFY AS A QUALIFIED NONPROFIT FOR SC HOUSING TRUST FUND FOR 2013:

- Councilman Neil Smith moved to approve the letter of request for Pickens County Board of Disabilities and Special Needs. Councilman Jeff Martin seconded the motion, and all members voted in favor.

APPROVAL OF ACCEPTANCE OF THE UNPAVED PORTION ON ACADEMY DRIVE INTO THE MINIMUM MAINTENANCE SYSTEM:

- Motion was made by Councilman Neil Smith, seconded by Councilman Sam Wyche and unanimously passed to approve.

CONSENT AGENDA:

- Motion was made by Councilman Neil Smith, seconded by Councilman Tom Ponder and unanimously passed to approve the consent agenda.
 - Letter of Support regarding the Student Center at Tri-County Tech-Administration and Finance
 - Letter of Support regarding the YMCA seeking a USDA loan for expansion in Pickens-Administration and Finance
 - Rails to Trails discussion –Administration and Finance
 - Aeronautics Commission Ordinance—Administration and Finance
 - Textile Mill Conversion Project- Administration and Finance
 - Wastewater Impact Fee Ordinance – Public Service Committee

EXECUTIVE SESSION:

- Motion was made by Councilman Tom Ponder, seconded by Councilman Neil Smith and unanimously passed to convene in executive session for the stated purposes.

Boards and Commissions-Pickens Fire District
 Water Authority (at large)
 Planning (at large)
 Aeronautics Commission (district 2)
 Pendleton District

Legal Update

PUBLIC SESSION RECONVENED:

Chairman Willis called the public session back to order and advised Council received information on a legal update with no action. Chairman Willis called for the following motions relating to Boards and Commissions.

Boards and Commissions:

Water Authority – Motion was made by Councilman Neil Smith, seconded by Councilman Tom Ponder and unanimously passed to appoint David Gilstrap to the Water Authority.

Aeronautics – Motion was made by Councilman Trey Whitehurst, seconded by Councilman Neil Smith and unanimously passed to appoint Neil Monaghan to the Aeronautics Commission.

ADJOURN:

Hearing no further Council business, Chairman Willis called for a motion to adjourn. Motion was made by Councilman Neil Smith, seconded by Councilman Jeff Martin and unanimously passed. Pickens County Council stood adjourned at 10:00PM.

Respectively Submitted:

Approved:

Donna F. Owen, Clerk to Council

Jennifer H. Willis, Chairman