

Regular Pickens County Council Meeting
March 17, 2014
6:30 PM

County Council met in regular session, in the Auditorium, County Administration Facility, with Chairman G. Neil Smith presiding. Agendas, bearing date, time, and location of meeting were mailed to Council members and local news media on March 7, 2014.

Council Members in attendance:

G. Neil Smith, Chairman
Tom Ponder, Vice Chairman
Jennifer H. Willis, V.C. Pro-Tem
Jeff Martin
Trey Whitehurst
Randy Crenshaw

Donna Owen, Clerk to Council

Staff:

Ralph Guarino, Interim Administrator
Ken Roper, County Attorney

WELCOME AND CALL TO ORDER:

Chairman Smith called the meeting of March 17, 2014 to order and welcomed those in attendance. Councilman Jeff Martin led the Invocation and Pledge of Allegiance.

PUBLIC FORUM:

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

- 1) Don Plotnick-Mr. Plotnick came before Council to discuss the issue of litter on Highway 123 between Easley and Clemson. Mr. Plotnick stated he has been in discussion with both Gerald Wilson and the Department of Transportation. While Mr. Plotnick stated he has seen some improvement, and he also realizes this is a State Highway, he questioned the policy of not using prison labor anymore for the purpose of highway litter clean-up. Also, Mr. Plotnick stated he thought it would be a revenue source to collect a tax on fast food for the purpose of picking up the litter with that revenue.
- 2) Junius Smith-Mr. Smith updated Council regarding the Supreme Court ruling that it is unlawful to take land from people for the purpose of Rails to Trails projects. Mr. Smith state that law now provides that the railroad project in Pickens cannot take land away from property owners for that project. Mr. Smith also noted that he has had issues regarding the property in front of his home. Mr. Smith stated the right of way in front of his home is his property and he would place political signs on that property. However, he had recently been told that he could not. On another issue, Mr. Smith pointed out that the Oath of Office for elected officials is specific in their duties to defend the Constitution. Mr. Smith said he hopes the Council continues upholding the law and does not practice illegal methods of mishandling their duties, as he suspects the School Board is not practicing legal methods and may be open to a lawsuit.
- 3) Weldon Clark- Mr. Clark gave Council a handout packet from the South Carolina Policy Council. Mr. Clark pointed out many of the flaws at the State level such as criminal investigations, and the inequity of road funding for Pickens County versus Charleston and Horry

Counties. Mr. Clark further discussed the gas tax, and the elimination of over \$3M to Pickens County and the school district. Mr. Clark urged Council to read the information packet.

- 4) Philip Smith-Mr. Smith stated that he was notified by Philip Bowers and informed that Representative Hiott had complained that political signs were in the right of way. Mr. Smith also stated his father was correct in that the signs were on personal property, and were not in violation.
- 5) Randy Williams- Mr. Williams stated that his affiliation with legislative issues were recently enlightened as he and his wife accompanied Michelle Wiles to a Spartanburg County Council meeting where they learned that Spartanburg was having meetings with their State legislative representatives. Mr. Williams stated the Spartanburg Delegation strongly suggested that a member of County Council should go to committee meetings in Columbia and be involved in getting funds back to the County. Mr. Williams stated he thought that was the responsibility of the Delegation. However, he wanted to share with Council about these recommendations, and hopes Pickens County will follow-up.

>>Council members stated a meeting with the Pickens County Delegation is in progress; however, the way unfunded mandates are pushed onto local government is an exhausting process especially when the rules tend to change at the State level. Council Member Whitehurst stated the average person has no idea of how the Delegation suspends their own rules in order to keep funds from the County.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES – February 10 and February 24, 2014:

- Motion was made by Councilman Randy Crenshaw, seconded by Councilwoman Jennifer H. Willis and unanimously passed to approve the minutes as presented.

ADMINISTRATOR’S REPORT:

Mr. Guarino informed Council and the public of the following issues.

1. Library Closing- All the Library branches will be closed April 19th and 20th for maintenance.
2. Liberty/Central Rescue-the County has received letters from the Liberty and Central Rescue squads to request their rescue be under the County emergency management, and this can be facilitated during the budget process.
3. Meal on Wheels-the 5th Annual Wings & Wheels for meals will be April 12, 2014 beginning at 10:00 a.m. This is sponsored at the Pickens County Airport and is a fundraiser for the Meals on Wheels program. There will be food, plane rides, helicopter rides, and a classic car show.
4. Add a contractual issue to the executive session- Mr. Guarino requested a contractual item be added to the executive session.
5. Recognition of the Pickens Beautification, Education and Environmental Committee- Mr. Guarino recognized Gerald Wilson, Public Works Director to say a few words about the annual trash bash.

Mr. Wilson introduced members of the Beautification Committee and discussed they had completed another successful Trash Bash. This program is recognized throughout the State as being vital to the education of litter, recycling, and stormwater. Also, the committee gave a special award to Dr. Ben Kissam for being a founder of this program, and his fourteen years of dedication to this Committee.

>>Council and the public gave heartfelt applause for the outstanding volunteerism that this group of citizens provides.

COUNCIL CORRESPONDENCE:

- Chairman Smith made mention that he was asked to endorse a grant for Meals on Wheels. The draft letter is at the table, and unless anyone opposes, he will be signing the letter.
- Chairman Smith also stated the Appalachian Council of Governments would be using the auditorium to hold a public meeting for the CDBG grants. This pertains to the water

system of Easley/Central. Mr. Smith stated this is a success story in that the sewer project is complete, and the water project is utilizing an old textile plant that was otherwise obsolete.

MOTION PERIOD AND NEW BUSINESS:

Chairman Smith opened the floor for new business.

- Motion was made by Councilwoman Jennifer H. Willis to add a contractual item to the executive session. A second was given by Councilman Trey Whitehurst and unanimously passed.
- Motion was made by Vice Chairman Tom Ponder to add a personnel issue to the executive session. A second was given by Chairman Smith and unanimously passed.

Hearing no further items, Chairman Smith closed the Motion Period.

FIRST READING OF AN ORDINANCE TO REPEAL ORDINANCES NO. 264, 284, AND 380 AS IT RELATES TO CONDUCTING MUNICIPAL ELECTIONS:

- Motion was made by Vice Chairman Tom Ponder, seconded by Councilwoman Jennifer H. Willis and unanimously passed that this constitutes a first reading of said ordinance to repeal ordinances as it relates to conducting municipal elections.
>Chairman Smith stated that while the ordinance language includes municipal elections, his point is the fact that the responsibility of elections is a State issue.

CONSENT AGENDA:

- Motion was made by Councilwoman Jennifer H. Willis, seconded by Councilman Jeff Martin and unanimously passed to approve the consent agenda as proposed.
 - 1- Request for the Relocation of Alexander Road & Crowe Creek Parking lot. Public Service Committee.
 - 2- Request from the City of Liberty for assistance with demolition. Public Service Committee.
 - 3- Memorandum of Understanding relating to Animal Control. Administration and Finance.

EXECUTIVE SESSION:

- Motion was made by Councilwoman Jennifer H. Willis, seconded by Vice Chairman Tom Ponder and unanimously passed to convene into executive session for the stated purposes.
 - Legal/Personnel Update
 - Boards and Commissions
 - Contractual Items (7)
 - Contractual Item and Personnel item added in motion period.

PUBLIC SESSION RECONVENED:

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

Magistrates Building-

- Motion was made by Councilwoman Jennifer H. Willis and seconded by Councilman Trey Whitehurst to approve the bid for the magistrates building from J. Floyd Construction Company.

Anderson, Pickens, Oconee Mental Health Board of Directors-

- Motion was made by Councilman Neil Smith, seconded by Vice Chairman Tom Ponder and unanimously passed to appoint Karen Roper to the Mental Health Board.

ADJOURN:

Hearing no further Council business, Chairman Smith called for a motion to adjourn. Motion was made by Councilwoman Jennifer H. Willis, seconded by Councilman Trey Whitehurst and unanimously passed. Pickens County Council stood adjourned at 10:00 p.m.

Respectively Submitted:

Approved:

Donna F. Owen, Clerk to Council

G. Neil Smith, Chairman