

MINUTES
Laurens County Council
Budget Work Session
Tuesday, July 16, 2013
Council Chambers, Laurens County Court House

Council Members Present- Chairman Jim Coleman; Vice Chairman Edward McDaniel; and Council Members Diane Anderson, David Pitts, Ted Nash, Keith Tollison and Joe Wood

Staff Present: Greg Lindley, Director of Fire Services; County Attorney Sandy Cruickshanks; and County Administrator Ernest Segars

Press attending: Reporter for GoLaurens.com

Chairman Jim Coleman called the July 16, 2013 Work Session of Laurens County Council to order at 5:30 p.m. in the Council Chambers of the Laurens County Court House. Chairman Coleman delivered the invocation and all participated in the Pledge of Allegiance to the Flag. Chairman Coleman said the primary purpose of the Work Session was a continuing discussion and review of the FY 2014 budget for the Laurens County Fire Service.

Council had also set aside time of the Agenda for members of the Fire Service to ask questions and express concerns about the draft budget. Director Greg Lindley said that his office had provided copies of the draft budget electronically to the chiefs of the Fire Departments in the county. Mr. Lindley also advised the referenced fire officials of the date, time and location and Council's Work Session. There were no representatives of the Fire Departments at the meeting on July 16.

Prior to discussion of the FY 2014 Fire Budget, Administrator Segars gave an administrative briefing on his proposal to return to the Coordinating Council for Economic Development of the SC Department of Commerce \$200,000 in unused grant funds. In December of 2012, the Coordinating Council approved a grant (No. C-12-0340) of \$2.2 million for the purchase of properties for the expansion of ZF Transmissions in Laurens County. The county purchased the required properties for a total of two million dollars, leaving a balance of \$200,000. All of the anticipated expenses for the project have been met and paid for, and the county is in a position to return the unused funds to the state. A Memorandum detailing this process is included as part of these Minutes. Council members had no objection to the proposal by Administrator Segars.

Chairman Coleman asked Director Lindley to provide an update on a major house fire on July 9, 2013 that destroyed the home of Colonel Niles Clark, near the Town of Waterloo. Mr. Lindley said the fire was the result of a lightning strike and heavy rainfall and severe weather that evening were major obstacles in fighting the fire. Council expressed its sympathy to the Clark family in its loss.

Director Lindley had previously presented an over-view of the draft FY 2014 budget to Council. In his comments on July 16, he noted that budgets for the Volunteer units may vary from year to year, depending upon the needs of the departments. He also pointed out that many units in the county have been successful in receiving grants for items such as nozzles, hose and turn-out gear. He also said that the County Fire Service is standardizing the various components of firefighting. This standardization of equipment and gear provides economic advantages and will also improve the efficiency of the entire service.

In response to a question from Mrs. Anderson, Director Lindley said that he and his staff have been preparing for an ISO review of the Laurens County Fire Service in mid-August, 2013. The goal of the Fire Service is to receive a standard, county-wide ISO rating and to eliminate those districts that receive a "split rating." ISO should provide its county rating by the fall of 2013.

Mr. Lindley also said that he and his staff are working on plans to eliminate those relatively isolated areas of Laurens County that have a "Class 10" ISO rating. These areas are located more than five miles from any functioning fire station and he said that the only solution for this problem is to construct fire stations to serve these areas.

In response to a question from Vice Chairman McDaniel, Director Lindley said that he will make minor adjustments to the projected salary account in the Fire Director's Office and he will include in the Budget an Addendum to reflect income and expenses resulting from the fire that destroyed the Ekom Fire Station and all of its equipment earlier this year.

With no further questions from Council, Administrator Segars said Council can approve the FY 2014 budget on second reading at its meeting on July 24, 2013. County Administration will work with the Fire Director to have the required Public Notice published to allow for a Public Hearing and final approval of the budget within the next month.

The meeting was adjourned at 5:55 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,



Ernest B. Segars

Laurens County Administrator