



MINUTES
MARCH 24, 2015
LAURENS COUNTY COUNCIL
HISTORIC COURTHOUSE – PUBLIC SQUARE
COUNTY COUNCIL CHAMBERS

ATTENDANCE: **COUNCIL MEMBERS PRESENT-** County Council Chairman Joe Wood; Vice Chairman Keith Tollison; County Council Members: Diane Anderson, Stewart Jones, Ted Nash and David Pitts.

COUNCIL MEMBERS ABSENT – Councilman Edward McDaniel (deceased).

COUNTY STAFF: Laurens County Administrator, Ernest Segars; Laurens County Clerk to Council Betty Walsh and Laurens County Attorney, Sandy Cruickshanks.

DEPARTMENT HEADS PRESENT: Laurens County Human Resources Manager, Debi Parker; Laurens County Communications Director, Joey Avery; Laurens County Sheriff, Ricky Chastain; Laurens County Emergency Medical Services Director, Chad Burrell; Laurens County Fire Director, Gregg Lindley; Laurens County Public Works Director Rob Russian and Captain Tyson, Detention Center Administrator.

PRESS: Vic McDonald, *The Clinton Chronicle*; Iva Cadmus, *WLBG Radio* and Corey Engle, *The Laurens County Advertiser*.

SCHEDULED MEETING AGENDA ITEMS - **1.)** Call to Order – Chairman Wood; **2.)** Invocation – Councilwoman Anderson; **3.)** Pledge of Allegiance; **4.)** Approval of Agenda, March 24, 2015; **5.)** Approval of Minutes – March 10, 2015; **6.)** Public Hearing, Ordinance #782, “To Provide For The Issuance And Sale Of Not Exceeding Two Million Four Hundred Fifty Thousand Dollars (\$2,450,000) General Obligation Bonds Of Laurens County, South Carolina (Laurens County Fire District), For The Issuance Of Notes In Anticipation Of Such Bonds, To Prescribe The Purposes For Which The Proceeds Of Such Obligations Shall Be Expended, To Provide For the Payment Thereof, And Other Matters Relating Thereto”; **7.)** Third Reading, Ordinance #782, “To Provide For The Issuance And Sale Of Not Exceeding Two Million Four Hundred Fifty Thousand Dollars (\$2,450,000) General Obligation Bonds Of Laurens County, South Carolina (Laurens County Fire District), For The Issuance Of Notes In Anticipation Of Such Bonds, To Prescribe The Purposes For Which The Proceeds Of Such Obligations Shall Be Expended, To Provide For the Payment Thereof, And Other Matters Relating Thereto”; **8.)** Public Hearing, Laurens County Ordinance #783, which is, “An Ordinance to Amend, Repeal and Restate the Status of the Laurens County Emergency Services and Other Matters Appertaining Thereto”; **9.)** Third Reading, Laurens County Ordinance #783, which is, “An Ordinance to Amend, Repeal and Restate the Status of the Laurens County Emergency Services and Other Matters Appertaining Thereto”; **10.)** Appointment, Laurens County Disability and Special Needs; **11.)** Funding Request, Laurens County Fire Service; **12.)** Administrative Report, Ernie Segars, County Administrator; **13.)** Public Comments; **14.)** Comments from Council Members; **15.)** Adjournment;

MEETING NOTIFICATION - The County Council Members, Department Heads, requesting general public and the Press were informed of the meeting in a timely manner.

CALL TO ORDER – Chairman Wood called the meeting to order and invited all to stand for the invocation and the Pledge of Allegiance. Councilwoman Andeson provided the invocation.

APPROVAL OF AGENDA – Chairman Wood called for approval of the agenda with any additions.

Requested Agenda Items:

- 1.) Councilman Nash requested for an employee matter;
- 2.) Vice Chairman Tollison requested for an executive session for a contractual matter and an employee matter.



COUNCILMAN JONES made the MOTION to approve the agenda as presented and with the additions; COUNCILMAN NASH SECONDING; VOTE 6-0.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES – COUNCILMAN JONES made the MOTION to approve the minutes from the March 10, 2015 regular session of Council. COUNCILMAN PITTS SECONDING; VOTE 6-0.

PUBLIC HEARING, ORDINANCE #782, “TO PROVIDE FOR THE ISSUANCE AND SALE OF NOT EXCEEDING TWO MILLION FOUR HUNDRED FIFTY THOUSAND DOLLARS (\$2,450,000) GENERAL OBLIGATION BONDS OF LAURENS COUNTY, SOUTH CAROLINA (LAURENS COUNTY FIRE DISTRICT), FOR THE ISSUANCE OF NOTES IN ANTICIPATION OF SUCH BONDS, TO PRESCRIBE THE PURPOSES FOR WHICH THE PROCEEDS OF SUCH OBLIGATIONS SHALL BE EXPENED, TO PROVIDE FOR THE PAYMENT THEREOF, AND OTHER MATTERS RELATING THERETO” – Chairman Wood opened the public hearing for comments at 5:37 P.M.

Mr. James A. Coleman said, “I support Ordinance #782 and wish to thank the staff for all of the hard work presented towards the decisions by Council. If Laurens County is to continue to grow and prosper, investments towards the future need to be made”.

With no other comments to be made, Chairman Wood closed the hearing at 5:38 P.M.

THIRD READING, ORDINANCE #782, “TO PROVIDE FOR THE ISSUANCE AND SALE OF NOT EXCEEDING TWO MILLION FOUR HUNDRED FIFTY THOUSAND DOLLARS (\$2,450,000) GENERAL OBLIGATION BONDS OF LAURENS COUNTY, SOUTH CAROLINA (LAURENS COUNTY FIRE DISTRICT), FOR THE ISSUANCE OF NOTES IN ANTICIPATION OF SUCH BONDS, TO PRESCRIBE THE PURPOSES FOR WHICH THE PROCEEDS OF SUCH OBLIGATIONS SHALL BE EXPENED, TO PROVIDE FOR THE PAYMENT THEREOF, AND OTHER MATTERS RELATING THERETO” - VICE CHAIRMAN TOLLISON made the MOTION to approve Ordinance #782 upon third reading as presented with COUNCILWOMAN ANDERSON SECONDING for discussion.

Vice Chairman Tollison said, “I will be voting affirmative to this Ordinance and wish to extend appreciation to the staff for the work towards helping to make this happen”.

Councilman Nash said, “We have walked this path before and I will support”.

Councilman Jones said, “I support the renovations of the thirty one (31) stations however, I am concerned about the construction of the four (4) new stations. I have not been advised of the proposed cost factors towards staffing, equipping and maintenance of the new stations. I am concerned as to what these new stations would be adding to the existing budget for the Fire Department”.

Councilwoman Anderson stated that this has been discussed in detail numerous times and that she was in favor of the actions to be taken.

Councilman Pitts said, “I consider this as a tax increase. Reoccurring costs for this project have not even been discussed. Presently we have a subtotal of two hundred seventy five thousand dollars (\$275,000) for salaries and one million nine hundred thousand dollars (\$1,900, 000) for operations. Until we now the costs involved this is a moot discussion. We have 19.9 mills in the fire service and one (1) mill equals to about one hundred thirty four thousand dollars (\$134,000).....16.1 mills now to operate.....1.9 mills now to the reserve fund and four hundred ninety thousand dollars (\$490,000) now in contracts. And, we don’t know what the reoccurring costs are for four (4) new stations. We are going to be faced with reoccurring costs for staffing and equipping that has not been truly addressed”.



Chairman Wood said, “I have had reservations since day one. I do not understand about taking the monies from Fountain Inn to support the process. This would not be enough money to do this as well as get a good return on the money. Reminding everyone that this bond would increase a one hundred twenty thousand dollar (\$120,000) house by ten dollars (\$10.00) a year. This would help bring the current ISO ratings into a better range and is a move to help reduce insurance costs for the citizens. It is always good to see help coming when you need it”.

COUNCIL VOTED 4-2. (Council Members Jones and Pitts were in opposition).

ADDED AGENDA ITEM BY COUNCILMAN NASH – EMPLOYEE MATTER – Councilman Nash said, “On behalf of the Laurens County Council, I would like to make the nomination of a County Employee to receive the Henry Laurens Award for Meritorious Service. This employee has provided many years of valuable public service to the citizens of Laurens County as well as being instrumental and with hands on of many capital projects for Laurens County. Those projects consisted of the construction of and expansion of the Laurens County Detention Center, the renovations of Hillcrest Square as county judicial and services offices, and presently, the expansion for new Administrative Offices at Hillcrest Square. During his career with Laurens County he provided exemplary service in serving the citizens of Laurens County as the Public Works Director for twenty five years - commencing 1989 thru 2015. This person, as you may well have concluded by now, is Mr. Scott Holland, Director of the Laurens County Public Works Department. Mr. Holland is to also be commended for his leadership with the Laurens County Transportation Commission during his tenure with Laurens County employment. I congratulate Mr. Holland on his retirement from Laurens County and wish him Godspeed.”

The nomination by COUNCILMAN NASH was considered as a MOTION and was followed by a SECOND from COUNCILMAN PITTS; VOTE 6-0.

Councilman Pitts added that he thought there was no one any more deserving of the honor.

Councilwoman Anderson stated that recognition was well over due for all of his work.

Councilwoman Jones thanked Mr. Holland for his twenty five (25) years of service.

Vice Chairman Tollison thanked Mr. Holland for his years of service and noted that he was a great department head and leader.

Chairman Wood noted that whenever he called on whatever matter it was, it was taken care of.

PUBLIC HEARING - ORDINANCE #783, “AN ORDINANCE TO AMEND, REPEAL AND RESTATE THE STATUS OF THE LAURENS COUNTY EMERGENCY SERVICES AND OTHER MATTERS APPERTAINING THERETO”. Chairman Wood opened the hearing at 6:50 P.M for public comments. Having none, Chairman Wood closed the hearing at 6:51 P.M.

THIRD READING - ORDINANCE #783, “AN ORDINANCE TO AMEND, REPEAL AND RESTATE THE STATUS OF THE LAURENS COUNTY EMERGENCY SERVICES AND OTHER MATTERS APPERTAINING THERETO”. COUNCILWOMAN ANDERSON made the MOTION to approve Ordinance #783 upon second reading with VICE CHAIRMAN TOLLISON SECONDING for discussion.

Councilman Jones said, “After much due diligence, I will be supporting this Ordinance. However, I would like for Council to entertain more public / private partnerships”.

COUNCIL VOTED 6-0.



APPOINTMENT – LAURENS COUNTY DISABILITY AND SPECIAL NEEDS BOARD - Mr. Jason Tavenner, Executive Director of the Laurens County Disability and Special Needs Board requested for Council to appoint Mrs. Betty Beasley as a member of their Board. Mrs. Beasley will be replacing Jackie Williams.

COUNCILWOMAN ANDERSON made the MOTION to approve the appointment with COUNCILMAN NASH SECONDING; VOTE 6-0.

FUNDING REQUEST – LAURENS COUNTY FIRE SERVICE - Laurens County Fire Service Director Greg Lindley approached Council requesting several match reimbursements towards Rural Fire Department 2013 Assistance to Firefighters Grants (AFG).

Mr. Lindley briefed Council on the following Rural Fire Department match requests as being:

- A.) Joanna Volunteer Fire Department – Requesting five percent (5%) match of \$6,750.00
- Total grant was for \$130,000 for a new service truck
- B.) Hickory Tavern Volunteer Fire Department – Requesting five percent (5%) match of \$6,750.00
- Total grant was for \$130,000 for a new service truck

Continuing Mr. Lindley said, “The total match for the two (2) Departments would be thirteen thousand two hundred fifty dollars (\$13,250). The contingency account was budgeted twenty two thousand two hundred seventy dollars (\$22,270) during the 2014-2015 budget deliberations for purposes such as this. From this account no funds have been used to date.”

COUNCILMAN PITTS made the MOTION to approved the funding request for reimbursement to the noted Fire Departments and with funds coming from the Fire Contingency Account. COUNCILWOMAN ANDERSON SECONDING for discussion.

Chairman Wood asked Mr. Lindley how many grants had been received by the Fire Departments. Mr. Lindley replied that from 2008 to the present two million five hundred thousand dollars (\$2,500,000.00) had been received.

COUNCIL VOTED 6-0.

ADMINISTRATIVE REPORT – Administrator Segars reported the following:

- 1.) Retirement Reception for Scott Holland on Friday from 2:00 P.M. ro 3:30 P.M. at Hillcrest Square.
- 2.) Roadway intersection dedication on Saturday at 11:00 A.M. for Deputy Rice.
- 3.) Basketball Tournament Saturday, at Clinton YMCA between Laurens County Sheriff's Department and the Clinton Department of Public Safety – donations for Christmas for Kids
- 4.) Noted the memorial tribute placed at Councilman Edward McDaniels seat.
- 5.) Noted the need for a special election to fill the unexpired term of Councilman McDaniel.

PUBLIC COMMENT – Chairman Wood opened the floor for public comment at 6:00 P.M.

- 1.) .James A. Coleman thanked all for their service to the County.
- 2.) Dorothy James, resident of the Knighton Chapel Road community, approached Council about the litter problems within Laurens County and asking if Council could not support and promote littering signs along with a push for no littering with fines attached.



- 3.) Vice Chairman Tollison said, "The Chamber of Commerce has an ongoing litter clean up campaign every quarter. The Cities of Laurens and Clinton along with the Sheriff is Department implement fines for littering".

Administrator Segars noted the recent clean-up day and stated that people will latterly through trash out their car windows as you are walking along the roadside picking it up.

Having no one else wishing to address Council, Chairman Wood closed the session at 6:10 P.M.

COUNTY COUNCIL COMMENTS:

- 1.) Reflecting on Councilman McDaniel, Councilman Pitts said, "I have only known him for just a few years but, within those few years, I have come to know him as a very smart and wise man".
- 2.) Councilman Nash said, "I have served the last twelve (12) years on this Council with Edward McDaniel and know that he was a good businessman and I consider him to be a good friend. I was also glad to see Ms. Dorothy James here tonight expressing her concerns over litter in Laurens County".
- 3.) Vice Chairman Tollison thanked all that were present for the Council meeting tonight.
- 4.) Chairman Wood said, "I spoke at Councilman McDaniels service of recently and it certainly meant a lot to me to be asked to honor him. I knew of Councilman McDaniel before my County Council days and it was not until I actually worked with him on Council that I saw what he stood for and what all he had accomplished. I came to know what kind of man he truly was. We will all miss him".

EXECUTIVE SESSION –VICE CHAIRMAN TOLLISON made the MOTION for Council to move into Executive Session at 6:20 P.M. to discuss one (1) employment matter and one (1) contractual matter; COUNCILMAN NASH SECONDING; VOTE 6-0.

There was a COUNCIL CONSENSUS to reconvene in open session at 6:50 P.M.

Vice Chairman Tollison stated, "I want to suggest that Council proceed during the budget deliberations differently this year. I suggest that we remove recommendations made from the Finance Department and Staff. I would like the Council to receive the budget with their funding requests listed as provided directly from Department Heads prior to staff spending time to change the direct requests. I also feel that Council should review projected income and compare this with fixed costs and the requested budgets. I would like Council, with staff help, to then review fixed costs and return the budgets to Department Heads with requests for the Department Head to adjust with-in set parameters. The reasons I make these requests for change is to try to reduce the staff workload in Administration and Finance. I feel Mr. Segars, Mrs. Kirk nor any Council Member has the expertise to cut specific items for a department, and that the Department Head only has that working knowledge. I feel Council could better work the budget by not picking specific items that should be removed. I feel that Council should hold the Department Heads more closely to submitting and controlling budgets for their respective management areas".

Administrator Segars said, "The budget is a living document. The Staff needs to suggest to Council a viable budget document We can always go alphabetically per department. The County Council is the policy makers of the County. The staff does not change the submitted documents, only simplifies it for consideration".

Vice Chairman Tollison replied, "These seven (7) members of Council make the budgetary decisions. It is not right to tell a Department Head that they can only have seven (7) band aides and not the twelve (12) that they need. I don't agree with the philosophy of County Council micromanaging.



Councilman Pitts said, “It is unfortunate that the budgets are submitted with more than can be afforded. But they know that cuts will be made. Government budgets and work is totally different from the private sector. I just wish all would treat these funds as if they were their own. With this, I also respect the positions taken by the Administrator and Finance Director”.

Chairman Wood asked for the staff to get the budget notebooks to Council for consideration and we will entertain asking the Department Heads to make their cuts.

Administrator Segars said that the Council would get a proposed budget of expenditures and revenues and reminded all that the County Council makes the final decisions with the budget.

ADJOURNMENT – With no further action required by Council, Chairman Wood adjourned the meeting at 7:25 P.M.

Respectfully Submitted,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Betty C. Walsh". The signature is written in a cursive style.

Betty C. Walsh
Laurens County Clerk to Council