

Pickens County Council Planning Retreat
October 4, 2017
6:30 PM

County Council met for a planning retreat at the Pickens County Airport, located at 240 Liberty Road in Liberty, S.C., with Chairman Roy Costner presiding. Agendas, bearing date, time, and location of meeting were mailed to Council members and local news media on September 27, 2017.

Council Members in Attendance:

Ensley Feemster
Roy Costner
Chris Bowers
Carl Hudson
Wes Hendricks
Trey Whitehurst (Absent)

Staff in Attendance:

Gerald Wilson, County Administrator
Crystal A. Alexander, Clerk to Council
Jay Pitts, Tourism Director
Ken Roper, County Attorney (Absent)

WELCOME AND CALL TO ORDER:

Chairman Roy Costner called the planning meeting to order and thanked everyone for their participation. Vice Chairman Chris Bowers led the invocation.

COUNCIL GOALS AND OBJECTIVES - ROUND TABLE DISCUSSION:

UPDATE ON EXISTING GOALS AND OBJECTIVES:

Gerald Wilson, the County Administrator, provided the following update on the goals and objectives that were discussed at the retreat in January:

- Economic Development:
Over the past nine months, the County has welcomed two new facilities, JR Automotive and era-contact USA, inside the Commerce Park. KeyMark has announced their facility expansion. The County anticipates the announcement of Project Exodus over the next couple of months.
- Jail Project:
The bids for the jail project came in and the project contract has been awarded. An eighteen month completion date is expected, taking weather into account, according to the contractor.
- Review of overall operations for efficiency and cost effectiveness / Compile needs assessment for all departments in the County:
An internal review of departments was performed, which included the next goal regarding the needs assessments.

The first action taken was a utility review on all departments, including: phone; power; water, etc. From a cost effective position, there were a few opportunities for improvement. A couple of meters that needed to be reviewed and charged to proper departments.

A review of Emergency Services was performed. The Council created an Emergency Services Advisory Board that should begin meeting over the next couple of weeks. The Board is expected

to prepare a master plan for fire by the second week of November to present to the Council. The plan will require further discussion and education for the public.

A review of fees across the departments was performed. It has been recommended to present the new fee structures for consideration in the budget.

The Animal Services Division has been restructured with assistance from the new SPCA and the Sheriff's Office. The enforcement is now handled by the Sheriff's Office and the new adoption facility is planning to open within the next two weeks. A transit van has been ordered and is expected to arrive in the next three months. An adoption trailer that will go out to various locations to adopt animals has also been ordered. There is a need of approximately \$25,000-\$35,000 for a spay/neuter program. If Council decides to allocate funds for the program, there is approximately \$400,000 available from the health insurance renewal cost savings. The plan is to review the operation sixty days after opening the new facility.

A review of the EMS department was performed. The billing process and rates were updated as part of the budget process, which should equate to approximately \$800,000 annually in new fees. There has been internal staffing changes and a shift in vehicles to become more efficient, including keeping the ambulances in their zones as much as possible.

The Building Maintenance, Vehicle Maintenance and Roads and Bridges departments have implemented a new work order system that will allow the ability to live dispatch, track work orders, track projects and complaints. The system was used a couple of weeks ago when the County was impacted by the hurricane, and this system expedited the FEMA reporting.

The Community Development department, which includes Building Codes, Stormwater, Code Enforcement and Planning, has implemented a work order system that is still in the early stages. The offices were consolidated to provide a convenient experience for the citizens. The department is in the process of implementing a real-time system that would allow e-filing of permits and track inspections. The system implementation will take approximately six months.

The Register of Deeds department has determined the need for an e-file system which will be addressed during the budget process.

The Vehicle Maintenance department is currently reviewing the County's fleet, using Munis to track the assets and streamline the fleet, possibly going to a motor-pool structure in the future. The plan is to create and implement an asset life cycle.

This project is ongoing, with good progress being made to date.

- Tri-County Technical College:
This goal has been completed without a tax increase.
- Compensation study implementation:
The compensation study was funded with a balanced budget. There may be future discussions regarding the Magistrates.
- Fire District as a whole (compensation, organization, fire fees, etc.):
The goal is for the board to review the fire districts as a whole to determine if consolidation would be more effective, provide better service to the citizens and save money. A plan should be presented to council in November. If the County moves forward with consolidation, an aggressive education campaign will be needed for the first six to eight months of the year.

- Roads-including fees that go to the municipalities:
This item is in the Committee of the Whole. It is recommended that all of the mayors and administrators, from the municipalities, attend a committee meeting to discuss a plan to address the roads. The current \$20 road fee allows for a 35-40 year paving schedule; whereas, a road should be paved on a 20 year cycle.
- Sewer (review of proposed sewer plan to include further evaluation and due diligence):
This goal has been completed with the 10 year plan being pushed to a 25 year plan.
- Partner with Clemson University relative to economic development:
The discussions between Ray Farley and Clemson are ongoing with a goal to start a STEM program at Clemson.
- Revisit joining Upstate Alliance:
This goal has been completed without a tax increase.
- Repurposing Holly Springs Elementary (County and School Board):
This goal has been completed and was funded with accommodations tax dollars.
- Board and Commission vacancies:
There has been an ongoing effort to fill vacancies on boards and commissions with much progress being made.
- Communication improvement (boards, municipalities, etc.):
There has been an ongoing effort to improve communications with the municipalities and the community, to include being present at community events.
- Sheriff's Office participation at the Clemson games:
This goal has been completed.
- Jail Fees (lodging fees for municipalities):
This goal has been completed with no negative impact to the budget or the County. The respective parties are content with the agreement. The Sheriff's Office is in the opinion that the agreement is fair and equitable.
- Budget:
It was recommended to hold a work session for the next budget cycle in mid-January.
- Tourism (direction, branding as a whole, structure for creating an overall marketing/tourism, create board that will manage the auditorium, etc.):
Mr. Wilson introduced Jay Pitts to provide an update on tourism.

Mr. Pitts stated that the Hagood Mill, Museum, Mile Creek Park and the Performing Arts Center are all established, but the goal is to promote the venues and generate revenue. He mentioned there are two new projects on the horizon. Mr. Pitts also mentioned that effort is still ongoing to fill vacancies on the 501c3 boards for the Hagood Mill and Museum.

EXECUTIVE SESSION:

- Chairman Roy Costner moved to convene into Executive Session, as defined by S.C. Code of Laws, Section 30-4-70 (a), to discuss the following items:
 - Contractual Issue – Section 30-4-70 (a) (2):
 - Land development relative to tourism – Gateway to the Appalachian Project

Personnel – Section 30-4-70 (a) (1):

- Employee recognition at Employee Meeting on Monday, October 9, 2017
- Motion was seconded by Councilman Ensley Feemster and carried (4-0), with Vice Chairman Chris Bowers taking a short recess during the vote.

PUBLIC SESSION RECONVENED:

Chairman Roy Costner called the Public Session back to order and advised there would be no action taken.

GOALS AND OBJECTIVES:

Council discussed their goals and objectives and compiled the list below, in no particular order:

1. Fire/Emergency Services Plan
 - a) Emergency Services Director to finalize proposed plan the second week in November
 - b) Countywide Fire Consolidation
 - i. Plan to be beneficial to citizens
 - ii. Cost savings assessment
 - c) Fire Fees vs. Millage
 - d) Mutual Aid System - **Complete**
 - e) ISO Rating Improvement
 - f) Cross-Training Staff
 - g) Equipment Needs Assessment (needs vs. wants)
 - h) Expedite Plan
 - i) Marketing for Community – Community Leader Meeting
2. Efficiency in Information for Citizens
3. 150th Anniversary Celebration
 - a) Mark Woods
 - b) Partner with Oconee County
 - c) Create 150th logo
 - d) Create social media page(s)
4. Sister County with District in Germany (*Sister Cities International*)
5. Rebrand County
6. Animal Adoptions
7. Possible Countywide Food Bank
8. Budget Preparation
9. Hangars at the Airport
10. Building Codes
11. Industrial Park Extension
12. Public Transportation Opportunities
13. Tourism
14. Economic Development
15. Countywide Prayer Service (November)

ADJOURN:

Hearing no further Council business, Chairman Roy Costner moved to adjourn. Motion was seconded Councilman Carl Hudson and carried unanimously. Pickens County Council stood adjourned at 8:37 p.m.

Respectively Submitted:

Approved:

Crystal A. Alexander, Clerk to Council

Roy B. Costner, III, Chairman of
Pickens County Council