

## **Regular Pickens County Council Meeting**

March 5, 2018

6:30 PM

County Council met in regular session, in the Auditorium, County Administration Facility, with Chairman Roy Costner presiding. Agendas, bearing date, time, and location of meeting were mailed to members of council and local news media on February 27, 2018.

### Council Members in Attendance:

Roy Costner, Chairman

Chris Bowers, Vice Chairman

Wes Hendricks, Vice Chairman Pro-Tem

Trey Whitehurst

Ensley Feemster

Carl Hudson

### Staff in Attendance:

Gerald Wilson, County Administrator

Ken Roper, County Attorney

Crystal A. Alexander, Clerk to Council

### **WELCOME AND CALL TO ORDER:**

Chairman Roy Costner called the meeting of March 5, 2018 to order and welcomed those in attendance. Councilman Carl Hudson led the Invocation and Pledge of Allegiance.

### **PUBLIC FORUM:**

Chairman Roy Costner opened the Public Forum and requested the Clerk to call upon the citizens who signed up to speak.

1. Pari Patel: Mr. Patel appeared to request that the council consider allowing Sunday alcohol sales in Pickens County. He stated that he has been a resident and business owner in Pickens County for the last 8 years. Mr. Patel further stated that he, as well as Pickens County, is losing revenue to neighboring businesses and counties that allow alcohol sales on Sunday.
2. Johnnelle Raines: Ms. Raines appeared on behalf of the Conservatives of the Upstate, to discuss the recent trip to Germany. She questioned why there was no press release or mention of the referenced trip. Ms. Raines stated that this meeting could have been held via teleconference and virtual tours, without expense to the County. She presented the following questions: why did certain representatives go on the trip, when Alliance Pickens receives funding to attract new jobs; who brought the sister city initiative to the table; who decided who would go on the trip; why wasn't this travel expense voted on by Council; why was the District of Karlsruhe selected. After further discussion Ms. Raines stated, "Conservatives of the Upstate is against this Sister City program, and we are disgusted with the lack of transparency and the milking of the taxpayer for this trip."
3. Kathy Murphy: Ms. Murphy appeared to discuss the recent trip to Germany. She stated that she is upset with the lack of transparency when deciding to take the trip; further stating "you guys were supposed to be the most transparent council ever". Ms. Murphy questioned why the referenced trip was not brought before the council for a vote. She further questioned why there wasn't a notice and why the people didn't know about this matter until after the fact. She stated her concerns that a family member resides in the District of Karlsruhe. Ms. Murphy asked who

decided that the District of Karlsruhe would be the sister city for Pickens County. She asked for clarification if there was someone that has a family member in Karlsruhe, and was that the reason this city was selected. After further discussion, Ms. Murphy stated that her opinion is that all of the money that was spent for county council to go on a trip to a proposed sister city in Germany, without a vote, should be paid back to the taxpayers.

4. Ken Horbinski: Mr. Horbinski appeared to discuss the proposed fire tax. He stated that he is a resident of the Pumpkintown area and he's against the proposed millage versus fee as it relates to fire service. Mr. Horbinski stated his opinion, that regardless of whether a property owner resides in a \$50,000 home or a \$1 million home, that taxpayer is already paying more than their assessed taxes, which has already been set by the millage rate. After further discussion, he stated that he is against the proposed millage system because the fire department is dispatched the same, whether they are responding to that \$50,000 home or that \$1 million home. He stated that a fair share is an exact amount.
5. Steve Haynie: Mr. Haynie appeared to discuss the recent trip to Germany. He stated that there was no communication prior to the trip, with no attempt to obtain community support. He stated, "It seems like this is a done deal". Mr. Haynie stated that if a business wants to establish or relocate, they're not going to relocate because of a sister city relationship; they will relocate to where they receive the best deal and where their business needs can be met the best. He stated that Pickens County is a secondary tourism area; if someone is going to travel across the ocean, they may go to Biltmore or stay in a hotel in Greenville. Mr. Haynie stated that culturally, the Karlsruhe District and Pickens County are not the same. After much discussion, he asked the council start the process over in full transparency, if they want the people to support this initiative.
6. Alex Saitta: Mr. Saitta appeared to discuss the recent trip to Europe and the proposed millage system for fire service. He stated that the County Council should not be doing anything internationally; not international tourism, not international economic development, not international diplomacy. He stated that the County should be doing many things in, and around Pickens County, to promote tourism here. Mr. Saitta questioned the trip to Europe, when the County recently rejoined Upstate SC Alliance in addition to Alliance Pickens. He stated that in his opinion, this appeared to be more of a personal trip than a business trip. Mr. Saitta further stated his opposition to the fire millage versus the current fire fee.
7. Dan Winchester: Mr. Winchester appeared to discuss fire service in Pickens County. He stated that the fire service is one of the most important services that the county provides, along with EMS and law enforcement. Mr. Winchester stated his support of the review of possible reorganization of the fire system; he recommended that the board be much broader, consisting of citizens. He recommended meeting with all members of the fire board to obtain their full assessment of the proposed plan, to also include citizen input. He also recommended an assessment of equipment across all of the fire departments, to be categorized as "Tier I, Tier II". Mr. Winchester questioned the funding mechanism for the proposed plan; further stating the costs should be fair to everyone. He recommended that the County expand their board, as previously stated, and perform their due diligence with the fire boards prior to having the extensive meeting, referenced in a previous meeting.

#### **APPROVAL OF MINUTES:**

- Motion was made by Councilman Ensley Feemster, seconded by Councilman Carl Hudson and carried unanimously to approve the February 5, 2018 minutes as presented.

## **ADMINISTRATOR'S REPORT:**

County Administrator, Gerald Wilson, provided the following report:

Team Up and Clean Up Pickens County: Mr. Wilson announced that as a part of the Sesquicentennial celebration of Pickens County, all non-essential operations of the County will be closed on Friday, March 23<sup>rd</sup> to allow staff members to come together with the community to clean up the roadways. He clarified that Palmetto Pride will provide the safety gear and materials for this initiative. Mr. Wilson extended an invitation for the public to attend and participate in this event.

Free Mulch at County Landfill: Mr. Wilson reminded the public that free mulch is still available at the County landfill.

## **COMMITTEE REPORT: Committee of the Whole – February 26, 2018**

Chairman Roy Costner provided the following report for the Committee of the Whole meeting:

The Committee of the Whole met in the Council Auditorium on Monday, February 26, 2018 at 6:00 p.m. All members of the committee were in attendance with Chairman Roy Costner presiding.

### **WELCOME AND CALL TO ORDER:**

Chairman Roy Costner called the Committee of the Whole meeting to order and welcomed those in attendance. Councilman Trey Whitehurst led the Invocation and Pledge of Allegiance.

### **COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE:**

#### **Senior Center (Town of Central) – Log No. 87**

- Gerald Wilson advised that Pickens County currently owns the building, known as the Senior Center, located at 120 Commons Way in Central. He stated that for the past 18 months or so, Pickens County has leased the building to the Town of Central. Mr. Wilson advised that the Town of Central recently submitted an [official request](#) to the County to donate the building to them, as a joint venture with Meals on Wheels.
  - Tom Cloer, the Town of Central Assistant Administrator, discussed a request to transfer ownership of the Senior Center to the Town of Central to be used for programming activities for the community, further allowing them to seek grant funding to support the renovation of the aging facility. The Senior Center is located at 120 Commons Way in Central. Mr. Cloer stated that the Town of Central would agree to convey the property back to the County, if there is a point that the Town of Central no longer has use for the building.
  - Meta Bowers, the Executive Director of Pickens County Meals on Wheels, discussed the opportunity to offer services to the citizens of the Town of Central. She also discussed the Senior Center Permanent Improvement Program, PIP funding.
  - Cheryl Dye, the Professor of Public Health Sciences Director of CU Institute for Engaged Aging, discussed the opportunity to offer programs and services, two days a week, to those with early to mid-stage dementia.
  - After much discussion, Councilman Trey Whitehurst moved to recommend first reading of an ordinance to convey the Senior Center property, located at 120 Commons Way, to the Town of Central. Motion was seconded by Councilman Carl Hudson and carried unanimously.
- ❖ Committee recommends first reading of an ordinance to convey the Senior Center property, located at 120 Commons Way, to the Town of Central.

#### **Council Action on Log No. 87:**

- Motion carried unanimously to approve the first reading in title only of an ordinance to convey the Senior Center property, located at 120 Commons Way, to the Town of Central.

**Review of Fire Boards and Districts (countywide) – Log No. 55**

- Gerald Wilson stated that the recently formed Emergency Services Advisory Board was tasked to review Emergency Services as a whole. He advised that a possible Phase I proposal will be presented by Al Willimon of the Emergency Services Advisory Board.
- Al Willimon introduced the members of the Board in attendance: Tracy Woodruff; Kenny McPeters; Johnson Link; and Tom Turner. Mr. Willimon asked for everyone to remember Tim Cobb’s family. He stated that Mr. Cobb, the Chairman of the Board whom was instrumental in this review process, passed away last month.

Mr. Willimon presented a [Phase I plan for Pickens County Fire Service](#).

- The Committee had detailed discussion to include, but not limited to: questions regarding refinancing of the current bonds; recruitment of fire volunteers in schools; clarification on NFPA 1901; assessment of current fire equipment within the County; how the current Mutual Aid Agreement is performing; the proposed millage versus fee model; effective communication plan; questions regarding a possible phase implementation; overall plan recommendation to plan first and request funding second; confirmation that the plan is to tax all property, not just homes; questions regarding homestead exemption; requests to see a complete plan from the Emergency Services Advisory Board; concerns around turnout gear nearing end of useful life; future capital needs to include pumpers and tankers; impacts to municipalities if plan was adopted, etc.
  - Chief Billy Gibson, Chief Mike Staton, Butch Womack, Frank Reynolds, and Scott McCall addressed and/or responded to the Committee regarding this matter.
    - After much discussion, Chairman Roy Costner recommended to schedule a special called meeting with the following: Council; the Director of Emergency Services; the fire chiefs; all of the fire boards; and the Emergency Services Advisory Board. Motion was seconded by Vice Chairman Chris Bowers.
    - >During discussion, Councilman Trey Whitehurst recommended notifying the fire boards and giving them time to meet, so they can prepare prior to the referenced meeting.
      - The Committee unanimously approved.
- ❖ No action taken by Committee; however, a special called meeting will be held in the near future to include: Council; the Director of Emergency Services; the fire chiefs; all of the fire boards; and the Emergency Services Advisory Board. The fire boards will be provided enough time to meet and prepare their feedback and concerns prior to the referenced meeting.

**ADJOURN:**

Hearing no further Committee business, Chairman Roy Costner moved the adjourn. Motion was seconded by Vice Chairman Chris Bowers and carried unanimously. The Committee of the Whole stood adjourned at 7:53 p.m.

<<END OF COMMITTEE REPORT>>

**COUNCIL CORRESPONDENCE:**

Chairman Roy Costner announced the following:

- The Team Up and Clean Up event on March 23<sup>rd</sup> is important to clean up the County before people are invited to attend the upcoming Sesquicentennial celebration.
- The next Committee of the Whole meeting will be held on Monday, March 19<sup>th</sup> in the main conference room of the Administration Facility.
- Chairman Roy Costner thanked the public for their input in regards to the recent trip to Germany. He stated that while this item is not on the agenda to be discussed tonight, the item is listed on the consent agenda to be referred to the Committee of the Whole for a full discussion. Chairman Costner invited everyone to attend the referenced meeting to learn more about this opportunity for Pickens County.

**MOTION PERIOD AND NEW BUSINESS:**

Chairman Roy Costner opened the floor for any new business:

- Chairman Roy Costner moved to add a matter related to economic development to Executive Session. Motion was seconded by Vice Chairman Chris Bowers and carried unanimously.

Hearing no further items for Motion Period, Chairman Roy Costner closed the floor.

**CONSIDERATION OF A RESOLUTION RECOGNIZING ISABEL WALLACE AND HAIDEN FERREIRA FOR THEIR EFFORTS IN CREATING THE SESQUICENTENNIAL SEAL FOR PICKENS COUNTY:**

- Motion was made by Councilman Wes Hendricks and seconded by Councilman Ensley Feemster.

>During discussion, Councilman Wes Hendricks and Chairman Roy Costner commended their work on the new seal. Chairman Costner also thanked Council for their input, specifically in making sure the number of stars that represent Medal of Honor recipients are correct.

Councilman Wes Hendricks clarified that the four stars on the new seal represent the four Medal of Honor recipients in Pickens County. He stated that the four stars, and what they represent, are very special. Councilman Hendricks further stated that Pickens County has the most Medal of Honor recipients per capita than any other county in America.

- Motion carried unanimously to approve the resolution as presented.

The members of council presented Ms. Wallace and Mr. Ferreira with the Outstanding Achievement Award on behalf of Pickens County.

**CONSIDERATION OF RESOLUTION NO. 2018-03 DECLARING MARCH AS BLEEDING DISORDER AWARENESS MONTH, AND MATTERS RELATED THERETO:**

- Motion was made by Vice Chairman Chris Bowers, seconded by Councilman Ensley Feemster and carried unanimously.

**CONSIDERATION TO APPROVE THE PRELIMINARY CERTIFICATION REGARDING THE SPECIAL TAX ASSESSMENT FOR THE REHABILITATED HISTORIC PROPERTY KNOWN AS THE EASLEY COTTON MILL:**

- Motion was made by Vice Chairman Chris Bowers and seconded by Councilman Trey Whitehurst.

>During discussion, Councilman Wes Hendricks questioned if the extensive plans would be reviewed by the City of Easley Planning Commission or Pickens County Planning Commission.

- Ken Roper, the County Attorney, responded that regular permits and approval will still need to be obtained through the City of Easley Planning Commission. He clarified that the County would be responsible to ensure the historic preservation aspect is followed.

Councilman Wes Hendricks asked if questions he has regarding water runoff and entrance into intersections, etc. would be handled by the City of Easley. He asked for confirmation that county tax dollars would not be used to pay for intersections, etc.

-Mr. Roper responded that was correct. He clarified that the only role that the County has is to ensure compliance with the historical aspect.

Councilman Trey Whitehurst stated that the previous council went through this process a couple of years ago with the same property. He asked for confirmation that the intent, at that time, was to obtain a tax break to “make their numbers work properly”.

-Mr. Roper responded that he did not know the motivation; he can confirm that a previous council has been through this process and approved the preliminary certification.

Councilman Trey Whitehurst asked if this request was from the same company.

-Mr. Roper responded that this request is from a different company.

Councilman Trey Whitehurst asked for clarification on the tax break.

-Mr. Roper responded that the referenced property is currently being taxed on an assessed value of approximately \$162,000. He clarified that if the company complies with all of the rules, and they rehabilitate the empty structure and bring it to use, while maintaining the historic use; then the company qualifies to remain at that assessed value for 20 years, as defined in the state law and county ordinance.

Councilman Trey Whitehurst asked for clarification that if this certificate is approved, is the County locked in.

-Mr. Roper responded that the County would be locked in with regards to the preliminary certification; however, the County could revisit this request if the company does not follow the plan as presented.

- After much discussion, Councilman Trey Whitehurst moved to refer this item to the Committee of the Whole. Motion failed, as a second was not provided.
- Motion to approve the preliminary certification carried (5-1), with Councilman Trey Whitehurst opposed.

#### **CONSENT AGENDA:**

- a) Healthcare Coverage and Options for FY 18-19 – *Committee of the Whole*
- b) Update on Twin County Partnership with the District of Karlsruhe – *Committee of the Whole*
- c) Pumpkintown Fire Department Property Purchase – *Committee of the Whole*
- d) Discuss Past, Present and Future of Pickens County from Historical Perspective (Request from Allan Quinn) – *Committee of the Whole*
  - Motion was made by Vice Chairman Chris Bowers, seconded by Councilman Trey Whitehurst and carried unanimously to approve the consent agenda as presented.

#### **EXECUTIVE SESSION: S.C. Code of Laws, Section 30-4-70 (a):**

Chairman Roy Costner called for a motion to convene into Executive Session as defined by S.C. Code of Laws, Section 30-4-70 (a). Chairman Roy Costner further stated that each issue would be discussed as the Law provides.

- Motion was made by Vice Chairman Chris Bowers, seconded by Councilman Carl Hudson and carried unanimously to convene in executive session for the stated purposes after a five minute recess.

Contractual Issues – Section 30-4-70 (a) (2)

- MRR

Economic Development – Section 30-4-70 (a) (5)

- Economic Development (*as added in Motion Period and New Business*)

Legal Issues – Section 30-4-70 (a) (2)

- Potential Opioid Lawsuit

Boards and Commissions – Section 30-4-70 (a) (1)

- Board and Commission Vacancies (78):
  - a) Accommodations Tax (ATAX)
  - b) Appalachian Council of Gov. (ACOG)
  - c) Assessment and Appeals
  - d) Beautification Committee
  - e) Cultural Commission
  - f) Economic Development Alliance
  - g) Emergency Services Advisory Board
  - h) Fire District Board - Central
  - i) Fire District Board - Crosswell
  - j) Fire District Board - Dacusville
  - k) Fire District Board - Easley
  - l) Fire District Board - Holly Springs
  - m) Fire District Board - Liberty
  - n) Fire District Board - Pickens
  - o) Fire District Board - Pumpkintown
  - p) Fire District Board - Rocky Bottom
  - q) Fire District Board - Shady Grove
  - r) Fire District Board - Six Mile
  - s) GPATS
  - t) Pickens County Grievance Committee
  - u) Public Service Commission
  - v) Tourism Board
  - w) WORKLINK
  - x) Zoning and Appeals
  - y) \*Hagood Mill Non-Profit Corporation Board
  - z) \*Performing Arts Center Non-Profit Corporation Board
  - aa) \*Pickens County Museum Non-Profit Corporation Board

**ACTION AS NEEDED VIA EXECUTIVE SESSION ITEMS:**

Chairman Roy Costner called the Public Session back to Order and advised the following:

Contractual Issues- Section 30-4-70 (a) (2)

- **MRR – No Action**

Economic Development – Section 30-4-70 (a) (5)

- Economic Development (*as added in Motion Period and New Business*) – **No Action**

Legal Issues – Section 30-4-70 (a) (2)

- Potential Opioid Lawsuit – **Action as follows:**
  - Vice Chairman Chris Bowers moved to engage the County Attorney to advise and represent Pickens County for a potential opioid lawsuit. Motion was seconded by Councilman Ensley Feemster and carried unanimously.

Boards and Commissions – Section 30-4-70 (a) (1)

- Board and Commission Vacancies (78):

- a) Accommodations Tax (ATAX) – **No Action**
- b) Appalachian Council of Gov. (ACOG) – **No Action**
- c) Assessment and Appeals – **No Action**
- d) Beautification Committee – **No Action**
- e) Cultural Commission – **No Action**
- f) Economic Development Alliance – **Action as follows:**
  - Chairman Roy Costner moved to appoint Ensley Feemster to the Alliance Pickens Board. Motion was seconded by Councilman Trey Whitehurst and carried (5-1), with Councilman Ensley Feemster abstained.
- g) Emergency Services Advisory Board – **No Action**
- h) Fire District Board – Central – **No Action**
- i) Fire District Board – Crosswell – **No Action**
- j) Fire District Board – Dacusville – **No Action**
- k) Fire District Board – Easley – **No Action**
- l) Fire District Board – Holly Springs – **Action as follows:**
  - Councilman Wes Hendricks moved to reappoint Bobby Ray Cassell and James Alexander to the Holly Springs Fire District Board. Motion was seconded by Councilman Ensley Feemster and carried unanimously.
- m) Fire District Board – Liberty – **No Action**
- n) Fire District Board – Pickens – **No Action**
- o) Fire District Board – Pumpkintown – **No Action**
- p) Fire District Board - Rocky Bottom – **No Action**
- q) Fire District Board - Shady Grove – **No Action**
- r) Fire District Board - Six Mile – **No Action**
- s) GPATS – **Action as follows:**
  - Chairman Roy Costner moved to reappoint Carl Hudson to the GPATS Committee. Motion was seconded by Vice Chairman Chris Bowers and carried unanimously.
  - Councilman Carl Hudson moved to reappoint Roy Costner to the GPATS Committee. Motion was seconded by Vice Chairman Chris Bowers and carried (5-1), with Chairman Roy Costner abstained.
- t) Pickens County Grievance Committee – **No Action**
- u) Public Service Commission – **No Action**
- v) Tourism Board – **No Action**
- w) WORKLINK – **Action as follows:**
  - Chairman Roy Costner moved to reappoint Wes Hendricks to the Worklink Committee. Motion was seconded by Vice Chairman Chris Bowers and carried (5-1), with Councilman Wes Hendricks abstained.
- x) Zoning and Appeals – **No Action**
- y) \*Hagood Mill Non-Profit Corporation Board – **No Action**
- z) \*Performing Arts Center Non-Profit Corporation Board – **No Action**
- aa) \*Pickens County Museum Non-Profit Corporation Board – **No Action**

**ADJOURN:**

Hearing no further Council business, Chairman Roy Costner called for a motion to adjourn. Motion was made by Vice Chairman Chris Bowers, seconded by Councilman Wes Hendricks and carried unanimously. Pickens County Council stood adjourned at 8:28 p.m.

Respectively Submitted:

Approved:

---

Crystal A. Alexander, Clerk to Council

---

Roy B. Costner, III, Chairman of County Council