

COMMITTEE OF COUNCIL AS A WHOLE REPORT

Council Members:

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
Lisa Bryant, Interim Clerk to Council
Mike Hayes, Risk Manager
Scott Smith, Emergency Services Director
Ralph Guarino, Finance Director
Jay Pitts, Tourism Director

Guests in Attendance:

Al Willimon, Emergency Services Board
Sam Brockington, Florence County Unified Fire District
Tom Cloer III, Town of Central Assistant Administrator

The Committee of the Whole met in the Main Conference Room, at the Pickens County Administration Facility, on Monday, August 13, 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, immediately following the Special Called Council meeting.

COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE:

Chairman Roy Costner stated the first item for discussion is Log No. 55, Review of Fire Board and Districts (countywide)

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

- Gerald Wilson introduced Al Willimon, Chairman of the Emergency Services Board.
Mr. Willimon stated that the handout he has provided is a recommendation from the Emergency Services Board. He stated that they have looked at Emergency Services as a whole, to include services beyond fire; in an attempt to increase coverage of EMS as well as Rescue in the county. All districts would stay intact and keep their ISO rating with a unified funding and management structure. This plan would put Pickens County in a better position to receive federal grant funding and improve ISO ratings in some areas of the county. No fire district would see a decrease of services. Every fire district would receive a benefit.
- Al Willimon introduced Sam Brockington, the Florence County Fire Coordinator. Florence County has had a unified fire district for several years. The county

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faced many of the dilemmas similar to other counties in the state; special purpose districts, some with no fire protection and widely varied millages. Some fire departments were very well equipped while others didn't meet state or federal standards. Florence County first hired an outside firm to perform a study at a price of 90,000 dollars. Mr. Brockington has provided a copy of the study to Pickens County. Florence County's initial goal was to obtain physical control. The fire districts had not been submitting annual budgets, nor producing audits, nor following any set financial procedures. Some fire districts did not have adequate funding, while two districts had never required OSHA physicals. Some other goals of Florence County were that taxpayers pay the same tax countywide, that all property has a fire station within five road traveled miles, and that the county complied with all federal laws. Mr. Brockington stated that the seven different fire districts were abolished and one taxing district was created based on funding needs. Two Advisory Committees were formed. During much more discussion, Mr. Brockington presented a Power Point demonstrating the Florence County Fire Protection Plan. Electronic copies of his power point will be provided to council.

- The Emergency Services Board recommends that council expand the ES Board from 7 people to 12 people; dissolve the local fire boards; and start the process of moving forward with a plan for a unified fire district.
- ❖ Chairman Roy Costner recommends that this action be moved to the next Committee of the Whole meeting for further discussion.

Implementation for New Federal Guidelines for Purchasing Relative to Grants – Log No. 94

- Ralph Guarino presented documentation and stated that the US Government implemented new guidelines for federal grants. Pickens County must meet these regulations in order to receive federal grants in the future.
- ❖ Motion was made by Vice Chairman Chris Bowers to send Log No. 94 to Council for approval as presented. Motion was seconded by Ensley Feemster and carried unanimously.

150th Year Celebration Timeline & Events – Log No. 96

- Jay Pitts handed out a projected budget for the Sesquicentennial events. Chairman Roy Costner inquired as to whether sponsorships have been sought. A lengthy discussion regarding the events and funding for the events followed. Gerald Wilson suggested scaling back, starting off small and building the events year by the year. Mr. Pitts agreed that some of the events could be removed or scaled back and then see what events are successful. Councilman Ensley Feemster offered to donate several items that could be used during the celebrations. Councilman Trey Whitehurst joined the discussion stating that Council's purpose should be about protecting the public (as presented earlier in the meeting in regards to fire and EMS), not to entertain. Councilman Trey Whitehurst stated that while the 150th anniversary of Pickens County should be celebrated, the county should not get into the festival business; that the goal should be to bring in tourists from outside of the county to generate tax dollars with accommodations taxes. Vice Chairman Chris Bowers voiced his agreement that the county should celebrate the 150th anniversary but not at the expense of the taxpayers; that corporate sponsorships and creative thinking need to be incorporated.

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After much more discussion, it was suggested that Council decide on a set amount of money to be spent on the events and then Jay Pitts seek sponsorships to cover any additional costs.

- ❖ Chairman Roy Costner called for a motion to send the recommendation of 62,000 dollars for the budget for the 150th celebration to full Council for a vote. Councilman Ensley Feemster made the motion. Vice Chairman Chris Bowers seconded, and the motion carried unanimously.

ADJOURN:

Hearing no further Committee business, Chairman Roy Costner called for a motion to adjourn. Motion was made by Councilman Wes Hendricks, seconded by Councilman Trey Whitehurst and carried unanimously. The Committee of the Whole stood adjourned at 8:38p.m.