

COMMITTEE OF COUNCIL AS A WHOLE REPORT

Council Members:

Chris Bowers, Vice Chairman
Wes Hendricks, Vice Chairman Pro-Tem
Carl Hudson
Trey Whitehurst
Ensley Feemster
Roy Costner, Chairman (absent)

Staff in Attendance:

Ken Roper, Acting County Administrator
Meagan Bradford, Clerk to Council

The Committee of the Whole met in the Main Conference Room, at the Pickens County Administration Facility, on Monday, August 19th 2019 at 6:00 PM. All members of the committee were in attendance, with the exception of Chairman Roy Costner, with Vice Chairman Chris Bowers presiding.

WELCOME AND CALL TO ORDER:

Vice Chairman Chris Bowers called the Committee of the Whole meeting to order. Councilman Trey Whitehurst led the invocation and Pledge of Allegiance.

COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE:

Vice Chairman Chris Bowers stated we will begin with *Log No. 131* – Boards and Commissions Communication.

Boards and Commissions Communication – Log No. 131

- Vice Chairman Chris Bowers stated Council works very diligently to try and fill up our County Boards. He stated one of the things he wanted to discuss this evening is to figure out a way to better communicate with the Pickens County board members. He stated he wanted to keep them engaged because these boards are very important. Vice Chairman Bowers stated lately, we have had issues where boards cannot meet due to not having a quorum. He advised if we find a board member who no longer wants to serve, he would like to find out immediately rather than when the term is up for reappointment. He stated he wanted to find a way to keep the citizens more engaged with their board commitments so we can keep the board's slots active and full.
- Acting Administrator Ken Roper stated with the previous council and clerk to council's, we have not done a good job keeping attendance on staff's side of this. He stated one idea he had was to start using our Human Resources department. He stated the boards and commissions are human resources that we have and he would like to use them to help communicate with these members as well. He stated one way we can communicate better is the staff person assigned to that board or commission could update the HR department on the attendance for the meetings. Mr. Roper stated if the HR Dept. keeps up with the board members in a better way that we do now, it will be more helpful. He stated this is one idea he had on being more formal on how we approach our board. Mr. Roper advised the Clerk does have responsibility on these boards and commissions, and he is satisfied the Clerk is doing her responsibilities needed. He stated it is something more systemic needing to be addressed. Mr. Roper stated we have the HR Dept. to help her, and County Council keep the Boards and Commissions running more smoothly.
- Vice Chairman stated in no way does he want to belittle a resident wishing to serve on a board or

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commissions. He stated we do owe it to the residents that we are able to meet, and keep a quorum present at the meetings.

- Councilman Trey Whitehurst asked if we ever did training for boards and commissions.
- Mr. Roper stated yes, this Council came up with a “New Member Boards and Commissions Training” and we just did a training session earlier this year. He stated this evening, if Council chooses to appoint a good bit of new members; he stated we will look into doing another one coming up this fall. He stated we do a general overview of the rules, how county government works, etc. but we probably need to expand what we do by including Roberts Rules, etc.
- Councilman Trey Whitehurst asked if most of the boards and commissions meet here at the Administration Building.
- Mr. Roper stated now that the fire districts do not have their formal individual meetings, most meetings are happening at the Administration building.
- Councilman Trey Whitehurst asked if staff is present during the meetings.
- Mr. Roper advised most county boards have a staff person that is assigned to them.
- Councilman Trey Whitehurst stated that staff member should have the most knowledge on if the meetings and minutes are done correctly, and to check on the attendance. Councilman Whitehurst asked if the staff members knew how the boards should be run.
- Mr. Roper stated to varying degrees, they do. He stated for example, the Planning Commission, Mr. Chris Brink does a great job on keeping up his training. Mr. Roper stated Council is appointment members to these boards who are community leaders. He stated we want to treat them with respect, but if we are having an attendance issue, would Council consider staff going ahead and sending out a letter stating they’ve missed meetings.
- Vice Chairman Chris Bowers stated he feels it is appropriate since Council only meets 2 times a month. He stated staff does not have the authority to remove someone from board or commission that is Council’s role. He stated he personally does not have an issue with Staff sending a letter regarding attendance.
- Councilman Trey Whitehurst asked if staff could reach out to Council before sending the letter, in case there is a relationship there. He stated this way; it will give Council an opportunity to reach out if needed.
- After much more discussion, Mr. Roper stated staff will look into more options based on the feedback given and provide something in writing to Council as a follow up on this conversation.

❖ ***No Action Taken by the Committee.***

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

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

- **Pending Board Applications**
- Vice Chairman Chris Bowers asked for a motion to enter into Executive Session for pending Board and Commission Applications.
 - Motion was made by Councilman Carl Hudson, seconded by Councilman Ensley Feemster and carried unanimously (5-0).

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ACTION AS NEEDED VIA EXECUTIVE SESSION ITEMS:

- Vice Chairman Chris Bowers called the Public Session back to Order and advised the following:
 - Vice Chairman Chris Bowers asked for a motion to recommend the following citizens to serve on these Boards or Commissions:
 - a) Alcohol and Drug/Behavioral Health – ***Moved to appoint Brian James, Douglas Clamp and Mary Hammond to the Alcohol and Drug/Behavioral Health Board.***
 - b) Beautification Committee – ***Moved to appoint Charles Gill to the Beautification Committee.***
 - c) Construction Board of Appeals – ***Moved to appoint Jeff Galloway and Justin Brooks to the Construction Board of Appeals.***
 - d) Easley Central Water – ***Moved to appoint Larry Hudson and James Wilson to the Easley-Central Water Board.***
 - e) Library Board of Directors – ***Moved to appoint Kristen Lawson and Rebekah Hemphill to the Library Board of Directors.***
 - f) Public Service Commission – ***Moved to appoint James Hunter to the Public Service Commission.***
 - g) Recreation Funding Advisory Board – ***Moved to appoint Joseph Hooper to the Recreation Funding Advisory Board.***
 - h) Water Authority – ***Moved to appoint Tom Ponder to the Water Authority Board.***
 - i) *Pickens County Museum Non-Profit Corporation Board – ***Moved to appoint Erin Cronin-Webb and Jeannie Gilstrap to the Museum Board.***
 - Motion was made by Councilman Wes Hendricks, seconded by Councilman Carl Hudson and carried unanimously (5-0).

Speed Bump Ordinance – Log No. 117

- Mr. Roper stated Council passed the Speed Bump Ordinance in title only a couple of months ago. He stated this was set standards for speed bump installation. He stated we find that when people request speed bumps, it's very important to members in that neighborhood. Mr. Roper advised we are attempting to do in this ordinance is take politics out of the location of the speed bump. He stated it is going to meet a standard or it will not meet the standard. He advised the Pickens County Engineer has developed some standards of when we would place speed bumps in service in a community. He stated it is based on a couple of things, one being the configuration of the road. Mr. Roper stated it requires a specific buy-in of property owners on the road, being at least 75%. He stated it also cannot be something that has been considered for a speed bump in the past two years. He stated once the ordinance has been applied, and a traffic study has been done, we do not do another study again for two years. Mr. Roper stated a lot of the requirements are technical and based on the Engineer's experience. Mr. Roper stated the idea Council would have to do is to recommend second reading and to work out any questions anyone has.
- Councilman Wes Hendricks asked if a group of neighbors want the speed bump on their road, but in reality it's not a good idea, what is done to keep something that is not a good idea from happening.
- Mr. Roper stated if 75% of the property owners apply for the speed bump, according to the ordinance then Pickens County will do a traffic study to see if it is needed. To determine whether this is needed, 85th percentile speed must exceed 15 mph over the posted speed limit. Mr. Roper stated the engineer does a statistical analysis to determine if people are really speeding.
- After more discussion, Councilman Trey Whitehurst asked if we could move forward with a second reading and bring the County Engineer to the meeting to answer questions. Councilman Whitehurst stated he would like to ask the Engineer some questions since this is new to Pickens County.
- Mr. Roper stated he does not see any problem at all with this and he feels it will be good to get this feedback from the Engineer.
- Vice Chairman Chris Bowers asked if Mr. Roper could give the history on where with ordinance came from.
- Mr. Roper stated the engineer could probably speak more in a technical savvy way, but what happens is

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we get these request and they become political issues. He stated they start hounding council members on needing a speed bump on their road. Mr. Roper stated we believe as a staff that we need a standard in writing that Council is comfortable with.

- Vice Chairman Chris Bowers asked if there was currently a standard or ordinance in place.
- Mr. Roper stated there is currently not an ordinance or standard in place.

- Councilman Whitehurst made a motion to move this Log Item out of Committee for a second reading, and bring back to the Committee to have discussion with staff. Motion was seconded by Councilman Carl Hudson. Vice Chairman Chris Bowers asked if there was any other discussion:
 - Councilman Wes Hendricks asked if we should have the Engineer answer questions to give more clarity, and have the public's input before doing second reading. He stated Council needs to have a better understanding of this ordinance before the public meeting. He stated the public hearing should happen at second reading.
- Councilman Wes Hendricks moved to amend the recommendation, stating he would like to do the public hearing at the second reading. Motion was seconded by Councilman Carl Hudson. Motion carried unanimously (5-0).
- Seeing no other discussion, motion carried unanimously (6-0).

- ❖ **Councilman Trey Whitehurst made a motion to move Log Item #117 out of the Committee for a second reading, and bring back to the Committee to have discussion with staff. Motion was seconded by Councilman Carl Hudson and carried unanimously (5-0). Councilman Wes Hendricks moved to amend the recommendation by Councilman Whitehurst, to have the public hearing with the second reading. Motion was seconded by Councilman Carl Hudson and carried unanimously (5-0).**

Fort Prince George – Log No. 109

- Mr. Roper asked this be placed on the agenda is that there is evidence going back for years where Council has talked about Fort Prince George. He stated in his opinion, he thinks Fort Prince George is one of the largest historical and cultural ideas that we have in this county. He stated he needs direction from Council. Mr. Roper stated it is in the Committee, and it is on the list of goals for the coming year. He stated what he would like to do is to take this seriously and gather information on where this should be located, how much this would cost, etc. He stated he is hesitant to do this because he does not have clear direction on what Council would like for him to do. Mr. Roper advised this would be an important cultural undertaking for this county and he wants to make sure before gathering data that this Council is interested in this program for the future.
- Councilman Trey Whitehurst asked if Mr. Roper has the minutes from the last meeting when Fort Prince George was discussed.
- Vice Chairman Chris Bowers stated he knows there was conversation on identifying property and he believes Chairman Costner was involved in this with Mr. Wilson.
- Mr. Roper stated there is potential for Duke Energy property, and staff will be coming up with other options as well. Mr. Roper stated the original site is underwater.
- Councilman Trey Whitehurst stated his question would be funding for the project, because it will be millions.
- After more discussion, Vice Chairman stated he remembers after discussing Fort Prince George a couple of months ago, that staff was to start figuring out more information.
- Mr. Roper stated he is willing to do this but just wanted to make sure it is a priority.
- Councilman Wes Hendricks stated he thinks it is a great idea especially this being the one missing fort in the fort series.
- After more discussion, Councilman Carl Hudson stated there is a foundation that there goal is to get this done. He stated Council discussed the role of facilitating the foundation to do this. He stated he is willing to look at it, but after recent events, he is not into public-private partnerships.
- Vice Chairman Chris Bowers stated we have a role to facilitate and help with finding a location for the

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Historical Society. He stated he feels the conversation needs to be reinvented.

- Councilman Ensley Feemster stated he sees the tourism prospective of this and he feels we need to do what we can to encourage the other people to get together to get this done with enough resources.
- Seeing no other discussion, Vice Chairman Chris Bowers moved to the next log item.

❖ **No Action taken by the Committee.**

ATAX Recommendations – Log No. 126

- Mr. Roper stated he spoke with the person who reached out to Councilman Whitehurst from the Clemson Chamber of Commerce about putting on an “ATAX training” session for us to participate in, as well as our ATAX committee and applicants. He stated he has a meeting coming up with them in the next week to discuss planning this session. He stated we look forward to publicizing this event to help us all go through the ATAX process in a more organized fashion.
- Mr. Roper also mentioned that Council needs to designate the ATAX 30% money. He stated there is ATAX money in the amount of \$50,542.42. Mr. Roper advised the 30% money is money that needs to be distributed to a tourism creating entity, like a Chamber of Commerce or in the past; we have sent it to our 501-C3 boards. Mr. Roper stated he is not expecting Council to make this decision tonight.
- Councilman Trey Whitehurst asked Mr. Roper if staff could look into seeing what Mile Creek needs.
- Mr. Roper stated he has seen some discussion where Mile Creek could be in line for this. He stated there has been discussion on further needs for Mile Creek, especially around the dock area.
- Vice Chairman Chris Bowers mentioned one of the discussions was seats at the new Performing Arts Center.
- Mr. Roper stated that money for the PAC was allocated separately.
- Vice Chairman Chris Bowers stated in the past couple of years, the 30% money has gone to Mile Creek, PCPAC, and Hagood Mill.
- Councilman Trey Whitehurst asked if Council could divide the money any way they would like. He also asked what the time frame is on when they have to spend the money.
- Mr. Roper stated yes, Council may spend the money however they like. He stated the \$50,542.42 is supposed to be spent in FY 2019, so it should have been designated prior to June 30. Mr. Roper stated the reporting requirement is not until October 1st. Mr. Roper stated we spend it or lose it. He stated this is Pickens County’s money so we need to figure out a way to spend it.

❖ **No Action taken by the Committee.**

Employee Retention – Log No. 127

- Mr. Roper stated the reason he wanted to put this on the log item is to look at things we can do to make sure we recruit and retain the best employees possible. He stated the most specific thing he would like to discuss this evening is salary. Mr. Roper advised many Council members may remember back in 2016 we did a salary compensation study. He stated the economy was very different at the time we did the compensation study than it is today and they have seen different stresses in different departments. Mr. Roper stated he would like to recommend for us to do a compensation study, but to do it within our Human Resources department. He stated our current HR Director was asked to participate in another county’s compensation study to provide data and as a reciprocal agreement; she got the commitment that they would give us back the final data. Mr. Roper stated they would like to compare that data to the 2016 study data. He stated Ms. Bryant is confident that her experience in this area and she will be able to use those two points to give us a good projection on where we may be in good shape and bad shape. He stated another option to doing an in house study is to put it out for bid and look into doing an outside study. He stated he does not think at this time we need to go

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with that option, because staff seems to be confident that we can give Council a good product in a few months.

- Councilman Trey Whitehurst stated the government is unusual in the way it operates. He asked if employees have ever had cut in pay.
- Mr. Roper stated yes, there has been some employees who have received a pay cut but not as a department.
- Councilman Whitehurst stated unlike the private sector when the economy goes down, the employees don't get pay cuts. He stated there is a value he sees in being a government employee. He stated we gave our employees at 2% raise this year. He stated every time the economy goes up, there is people who want to change jobs, but when the economy goes down, everyone wants a job within the government. Councilman Whitehurst stated when we just keep increasing salaries; we are putting more tax burden on the public side. After more discussion, he stated it will never reflect the market place because it never gets cut.
- Vice Chairman Chris Bowers stated he agrees, it is not all about money and throwing money at a problem does not fix the problem. He stated he does think we need to be competitive in the market if we want good employees. He stated he believes society as a whole is not what it used to be. Vice Chairman Bowers stated he feels you don't have to be the top paying county, but feels we do need to be somewhere in the same ball park. He stated it will not cost us a dime to get this data and he is not ready to pay an outside company to come in.
- Councilman Wes Hendricks stated he feels we need to complete one to be competitive.
- Mr. Roper stated the other way he wanted to present this to Council is the staff's recommendations agree with what Council is saying. He stated staff would like to look at data from a neighboring county and update the 2016 study just to make sure we are staying in line.
- After more discussion, Councilman Carl Hudson stated he believes we have some spots in the county, not only at the sheriff's office, that is critical. He stated if we cannot hire at the current rate/salary, we are going to have to pay more. He stated if we cannot get detention officers at the current rate, and the Sheriff cannot solve it, then if we are going to have to be competitive.
- Vice Chairman Chris Bowers stated we have to remember it is not just the Sheriff's office we are talking about; it is across the County board. He stated having the data does put pressure on you, but he does not want to be ten years behind. He stated in 2016, Pickens County was the first to do any kind of study and everyone was chasing to catch up.
- Councilman Whitehurst stated he looks at the person in charge of that department to know the market is for people hiring. He stated this is the department heads job to know what the market place is for their particular positions.
- Mr. Roper stated he agrees with Councilman Whitehurst and that is exactly what he is proposing to do with the HR Department Head. He stated he wants to trust the expert to know the market in the area.
- After more discussion, Councilman Wes Hendricks asked when Council would receive the results.
- Mr. Roper stated they are waiting on the neighboring county to finish their data and results, which is supposed to happen this fall. He stated we will be looking into discussing closer to the next budget cycle before getting the report.
- Councilman Wes Hendricks asked if there was a way to compare two specific neighboring counties.
- After more discussion, Mr. Roper stated we only know of the one, but we can reach out to another if Council would like. Mr. Roper stated the county whom we are getting their results from is Greenville County. He advised we would compare salaries from 2016 to now. He stated there are factors that would be considered, such as cost of living, etc.
- After more discussion, Vice Chairman Chris Bowers stated he does not believe getting this data is a bad thing.

❖ **No Action taken by the Committee.**

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CONSIDERATION OF REMOVAL OF ITEMS FROM LOG

- Vice Chairman Chris Bowers asked for a motion to remove the following log items from the Committee of the Whole Log:
 - ❖ Log No. 77 – *Lake Level Concerns*
 - ❖ Log No. 81 – *Proposed Discretionary Building Codes*
 - ❖ Log No. 89 – *Animal Welfare Ordinance*
 - ❖ Log No. 97 – *Review of Employee Handbook*
 - ❖ Log No. 107 – *Library System*
 - ❖ Log No. 108 – *Hagood Mill Bylaws*
 - ❖ Log No. 110 – *Council Work Session*
 - ❖ Log No. 114 – *Election Update*
 - ❖ Log No. 120 – *FY 2020 Budget*
 - ❖ Log No. 121 – *Reassessment Process*
 - ❖ Log No. 122 – *Semi trucks/Brakes*
 - ❖ Log No. 126 – *ATAX Recommendations*

- Motion was made by Councilman Ensley Feemster, seconded by Councilman Carl Hudson and carried unanimously (5-0).

ADJOURN:

Hearing no further Committee business, Vice Chairman Chris Bowers called for a motion to adjourn. Motion was made by Councilman Wes Hendricks, seconded by Councilman Carl Hudson and carried unanimously (5-0).