

## **Regular Pickens County Council Meeting**

January 19, 2021

6:30 PM

County Council met in regular session, in the Auditorium of the County Administration Facility, with Chairman Chris Bowers presiding. Agendas, bearing date, time, and location of meeting were mailed to members of council and local news media on January 13, 2021.

### Council Members in Attendance:

Chris Bowers, Chairman  
Roy Costner, Vice Chairman  
Trey Whitehurst, Vice Chairman Pro-Tem  
Alex Saitta  
Ensley Feemster  
Henry Wilson

### Staff in Attendance:

Ken Roper, County Administrator  
Meagan Nations, Clerk to Council  
Les Hendricks, Contract Attorney

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

Chairman Chris Bowers called the meeting of January 19, 2021 to order and welcomed those in attendance. Councilman Ensley Feemster led the Invocation and the Pledge of Allegiance.

Following the Pledge of Allegiance, Council presented a Certificate in Honor to Veteran Ensley Feemster, thanking him for his service.

### **PUBLIC FORUM:**

Chairman Chris Bowers opened the Public Forum and requested the Clerk to call upon the citizens signed up to speak, and who left a voicemail through the County phone in Council Chambers.

The Clerk advised Council that there were no public speakers signed up this evening.

Chairman Bowers asked the Clerk to please advise on how the public can send in public forum comments, during these unprecedented times.

The Clerk stated the public has multiple ways to send in public forum comments:

1. Council and staff encourage citizens to call 864-898-5242 and leave a voicemail. All voicemails will be shared with each member of Council and played out loud during the meeting.
2. Citizens can mail in a public forum letter to the Clerk to Council. The mailing address is 222 McDaniel Avenue, B-1 Pickens, SC 29671.
3. Citizens can bring by a public forum letter to the Administration Building, and drop off in Administration. The address to the Administration Building is 222 McDaniel Avenue Pickens, SC 29671.

### **APPROVAL OF MINUTES:**

Chairman Chris Bowers called for a motion to approve the following minutes as presented:

Minutes for January 19, 2021 Pickens County Council Meeting

- December 7, 2020 Regular Council Meeting
- December 14, 2020 Special-Called Meeting (Alliance Pickens)
- December 14, 2020 Special-Called Meeting
- January 4, 2021 Organizational Meeting

- Motion was made by Councilman Ensley Feemster, and seconded by Vice Chairman Roy Costner. Motion carried (5-1), with Councilman Trey Whitehurst abstaining, due to being absent from the December 14<sup>th</sup> Special-Called meeting at Alliance Pickens.

**ADMINISTRATOR’S REPORT:**

**COVID-19 Response Briefing**

Mr. Roper updated Council on COVID-19 cases in Pickens County. Mr. Roper stated there are currently 2,220 active cases reported in Pickens County, within the last 14 days. He stated there have been ninety-one hundred eighty-six (186) deaths in Pickens County due to COVID-19. He advised a total of 13,541 confirmed cases of COVID-19 have been reported in Pickens County since March 20<sup>th</sup>, 2020. Mr. Roper stated there are 61,922 cases reported in SC, within the last 14 days. The total number of confirmed cases in SC is 394,318. He stated this brings the number of confirmed deaths to 6,259.

Mr. Roper presented to Council a graph of Pickens County COVID-19 Cases and Deaths, since 3/19/2020. He presented the following stats:

1. 1 in 10 Pickens County residents has had COVID-19 since the pandemic began.
2. 1 in 58 residents are actively experiencing COVID-19
3. 1 in 68 residents have died due to COVID-19.

Mr. Roper presented to Council the SCDHEC County Level Data Dashboard, which provided information on number of tests completed in Pickens County, number of COVID-19 cases in Pickens County, hospitalizations due to COVID-19 in Pickens County, deaths due to COVID-19 in Pickens County, a chart of COVID-19 cases per day and state recovery estimate percentage.

**Temporary Information Pod (TIP)**

Mr. Roper stated that Pickens County has continue to offer full service to the citizens under a modified Kickstart Phase 2. He stated for 3 weeks, we offered Pickens County citizens the benefit of conducting business from the convenience of their vehicle through our Temporary Information Pod.

Pickens County estimated 3,000 cars being assisted at the TIP, decreasing the number of citizens who entered the building and protecting them and our staff from additional possible exposure during the weeks following the Christmas/New Year holidays when cases of COVID-19 increased. He stated staff is still encouraging citizens to use our online resources and call to conduct business whenever possible as our County COVID-19 numbers remain high.

**Branding and Marketing Study**

Mr. Roper stated Council established having a well, thought out marketing plan during the Council Goals and Objectives Work Session. He stated Council invested money into this plan. He stated one of the recommendations was that we look at our signage. He stated Staff got rid of the eleven difference styles of signs. Mr. Roper presented Council with the new branded, color coordinated, specific signs that have replaced the older styles at Mile Creek Park. He stated these signs were used with existing budget funds.

Mr. Roper stated the first recommendation on the marketing study was that we do a condition assessment on our points for Tourism. He stated that our PRT Director, Allison Fowler, reached out to Clemson

University Parks, Recreation and Tourism Management and we have two different groups of students who will be working (at no charge to the County) to perform these assessments. He stated it will be their class projects.

Mr. Roper PRT Staff has engaged the Clemson University PRTM Department, specifically the GIS course professor, the Community Tourism Development professor, and the Sociology department chair to assist in the creation of a geospatial focused rubric that will locate and assess existing recreation and tourism resources in Pickens County. He stated PRTM students will design the rubrics on an easily assessable app platform and then use the rubrics to infill data as their spring semester project.

### **Pickens County Broadband**

Mr. Roper presented a map of Pickens County Broadband and a chart with more information on households with internet speeds below 10 Mbps. He stated these are the eight areas in Pickens County, that is designated by the state, with relatively high concentration of people and relatively low access to broadband internet.

### **Remembering Michael Hayes, Risk Manager of Pickens County**

Mr. Roper recognized Michael Hayes, who served as Risk Manager for Pickens County for many years.

Mr. Roper asked if Council had any questions for him.

Councilman Saitta asked a few questions regarding the Recycling Center. He asked about the costs per recycled items, and about where to get the recycling center stickers.

Mr. Roper stated you can get the recycling center stickers at the main recycling center or the Administration office window. He stated you just have to show them your driver's license to confirm you live in Pickens County.

**COMMITTEE REPORT:** None

### **COUNCIL CORRESPONDENCE:**

Chairman Chris Bowers announced the following:

- The next Committee of the Whole meeting will be on Monday, January 25, 2021 at 6:00 p.m. in the Main Conference Room of the Administration Building.
- Council will hold a Council Work Session on Saturday, January 30, 2021 at 10:00 a.m. The meeting will be held in the Main Conference Room of the Administration Facility.
- The next Council Meeting will be held on Monday, February 1<sup>st</sup>, 2021 at 6:30 p.m. in Council Chambers of the Administration Building.

Chairman Bowers called for other council correspondence.

Seeing no other correspondence, Chairman Bowers announced moving to Motion Period and New Business.

### **MOTION PERIOD AND NEW BUSINESS:**

Chairman Chris Bowers opened the floor for motion period.

Councilman Trey Whitehurst asked if we have job descriptions for every position in the County to post online.

Mr. Roper stated yes, we do and today we were looking at the Risk Management job description because we want to update those qualifications. He stated we are readdressing it to make sure it is something the county needs. Mr. Roper stated he will bring the copies of the description to the retreat for Council to review.

Seeing no other discussion, Chairman Bowers closed the floor.

### **CONSIDERATION OF A RESOLUTION 2021-01 RECOGNIZING JANUARY 2021 AS NATIONAL BLOOD DONOR MONTH**

Chairman Bowers asked for a motion to consider Resolution 2021-01.

- Motion was made by Councilman Ensley Feemster, and seconded by Chairman Bowers. Seeing no discussion, Chairman Bowers read the resolution as followed:

#### **A RESOLUTION RECOGNIZING JANUARY 2021 AS NATIONAL BLOOD DONOR MONTH**

WHEREAS, annually the month of January is recognized as National Blood Donor Month, occurring during the winter when blood donations typically are canceled due to inclement weather or illness of the donors and emphasizing the need for year-round donations; and

WHEREAS, this winter in particular, the COVID-19 pandemic has created both a great need for donations and a great challenge for receiving donations; and

WHEREAS, in the U.S., someone needs blood every 2 seconds, and one donation can potentially save three lives; and

WHEREAS, a “genuine concern for his fellowman has always distinguished the American citizen,” as stated in the original Presidential Proclamation of National Blood Donor Month in 1970, and a genuine concern for our neighbors remains a distinguishing characteristic of Pickens County citizens; and

WHEREAS, County Council wishes to recognize the generosity of the many Pickens County citizens who have given the gift of life through blood donations, as well as encourage more people to join them in contributing to the vital supply of blood needed in times of crisis;

NOW THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that Pickens County Council does hereby designate January 2021 as National Blood Donor Month and encourages all citizens to consider giving the gift of life by becoming a blood donor.

- Motion carried unanimously (6-0).

### **APPROVAL OF BUDGET CALENDAR FOR 2021-2022 BUDGET CYCLE**

Chairman Bowers stated this document is a finance calendar of events that lays out the expectation of how things should go during the Budget Cycle. Chairman Bowers asked for a motion to accept this calendar as presented.

- Motion was made by Vice Chairman Costner and seconded by Councilman Ensley Feemster. Chairman Bowers asked if there was any discussion.

Councilman Saitta stated the budget really has two routes if you look at it. He stated within the administration, you have the departments who get the request to build their budgets, then send it to Finance, who sends it to Administration, who pushes it to Council. He stated there is also a top-down approach as well. Councilman Saitta stated the people have ideas, who relay it to Councilmen, who put it in a list to push down to Administration. He stated it is really like a “budget sandwich” that occurs. He stated we all run for office, and all listen to the public. He stated we have this retreat every year where we discuss the

priorities and relay them to the Administration. Councilman Saitta stated he would like to add a line to the calendar, which would be on January 30<sup>th</sup>, and do a County Council Budget Workshop.

- Councilman Saitta made a motion to amend the original motion, stating he would like to add a County Council Budget Workshop to the calendar on January 30<sup>th</sup>. Councilman Wilson seconded the motion. Chairman Bowers asked if there was any discussion.
  - Vice Chairman Costner stated the Council Workshop on January 30<sup>th</sup> is not just budget based. He stated we do talk about the budget, but we also talk about our priorities for the future. He stated he does not want to be misleading that is all we will talk about in the next Workshop. Vice Chairman Costner stated this is a plan, just like a budget is a plan. He stated in the last four years he has been on Council, we have made additions and deletions on the budget. He stated in April, we have Council Budget Work Sessions to talk specifically about the budget only.
  - Mr. Roper stated the document in front of council is new in one way – it doesn't end in June. He stated it goes through the entire year. Mr. Roper stated it complicates that we go right back into Capital in the fall, so we just don't forget to get to that.
- Seeing no other discussion, the amended motion carried unanimously (6-0).
- Chairman Bowers asked for all those in favor to signify by raising their hands to adopt the financial calendar as amended. Motion carried unanimously (6-0).

#### **CONSIDERATION OF A RECREATION FUND REQUEST FOR DISTRICT 4**

Vice Chairman Roy Costner stated he had the information on this a couple of months ago, but waited to bring to Council until the new council members were sworn-in. He stated the City of Liberty have a rather extensive project they are working on, which is \$94,000 for the entire project. He stated it has to do with the Recreation Center and the problems with storm water/run-off. He stated he has also had several constituents call him regarding an ADA compliant playground. Vice Chairman Costner stated the playground will be at the Pickens County Airport. He stated this will be the only playground in the county with swings that are ADA complaint. He stated the cost of this is \$60,000.

- Vice Chairman Costner made a motion to allocate \$40,000 of District 4 Recreation Funds to the City of Liberty, and \$60,000 of the funds to the Pickens County Airport for the ADA compliant playground. He would like to also carry \$3,000 over to next year's funds. Motion was seconded by Councilman Saitta. Chairman Bowers asked if there was any discussion.
  - Councilman Whitehurst asked if this went through the Recreation Committee.
  - Chairman Costner stated the City of Liberty request went through the committee, but there was no recommendation out of the Committee. He stated the Airport playground request is something he had talked about for a while, and after the last expansion of the airport, it just seemed perfect to take those funds to use for an ADA complaint playground.
  - Councilman Whitehurst stated we set up a policy through this council to use the Recreation Funding Committee to make sure requests go through them, to bring back recommendations to Council.
  - After more discussion between Council,
- Councilman Henry Wilson amended the motion, stating he would like to table this motion until further information is provided. He stated if this agenda item is on the next council meeting agenda, he would like more information in the agenda packet. Councilman Trey Whitehurst seconded the motion. Chairman Chris Bowers asked if there was any discussion.
- Councilman Trey Whitehurst amended the amended motion, stating he would like to table this motion until further information is provided on the City of Liberty request, but he would like for

the Pickens County Airport request to go through the Recreation Committee. Vice Chairman Roy Costner seconded the amended motion.

- Seeing no other discussion, motions carried unanimously (6-0).

## **BOARD AND COMMISSIONS CHAIR APPOINTMENTS**

Chairman Bowers stated he would like for the following Council members to serve on these Boards or Commissions:

### ***Appalachian Council of Government***

*Councilman Ensley Feemster*

*Vice Chairman Roy Costner*

### ***Economic Development Alliance Pickens***

*Chairman Chris Bowers*

*Councilman Ensley Feemster*

### ***GPATS***

*Councilman Alex Saitta*

*Councilman Henry Wilson*

### ***WORKLINK***

*Councilman Trey Whitehurst*

## **FIRST READING IN TITLE ONLY OF AN ORDINANCE TO PROVIDE FOR THE LEASE OF THE PICKENS COUNTY PERFORMING ARTS CENTER TO JWPR HOLDINGS, LLC, A SOUTH CAROLINA LIMITED LIABILITY CORPORATION, SO AS TO PROVIDE FOR THE CONTINUED OPERATION OF THE SAID FACILITY, AND FOR MATTERS RELATED THERETO.**

Mr. Roper stated one of Council's goals was to have conservative budget principles. He stated as staff has thought about this goal, our parks department recognizing that without a huge investment in people and money, we weren't set up as a conservative budget government to run an entertainment venue. He stated we worried about that because taxpayers have invested money in that facility and we wanted to make sure that we were maximizing it. He stated we discussed over the summer the concept for putting it out for request of proposals. He stated we received several inquiries, but only one met the request for proposals. Mr. Roper stated this is all subject to Council wanting to go this route, and he told the company we would come up with a temporary understanding where they can start working there. He stated the formal lease will be for Council to consider.

Chairman Bowers asked for a motion to consider first reading in title only of this Ordinance.

- Motion was made by Councilman Trey Whitehurst, and seconded by Vice Chairman Roy Costner. Chairman Bowers asked if there was any discussion:
  - After some discussion between Council, Councilman Trey Whitehurst made a motion to amend his original motion, stating after first reading takes place tonight, he would like to commit this Ordinance to the Committee of the Whole for further discussion. Motion was carried by Vice Chairman Roy Costner and the amended motion carried unanimously (6-0).

- Seeing no other discussion, motion carried unanimously (6-0).

**SECOND READING OF AN ORDINANCE NO. 595 AUTHORIZING THE EXECUTION AND DELIVERY OF A FEE-IN-LIEU-OF-TAX AND INCENTIVE AGREEMENT BY AND BETWEEN PICKENS COUNTY, SOUTH CAROLINA AND BLUE RIDGE ELECTRIC COOPERATIVE, INC., ACTING FOR ITSELF, ONE OR MORE SUBSIDIARIES, AFFILIATES, SUCCESSORS, ASSIGNS, LESSORS OR OTHER PROJECT SPONSORS, PURSUANT TO WHICH THE COUNTY SHALL COVENANT TO ACCEPT CERTAIN NEGOTIATED PAYMENTS IN LIEU OF AD VALOREM TAXES WITH RESPECT TO CERTAIN FACILITIES IN THE COUNTY; AND OTHER MATTERS RELATING THERETO.**

Chairman Bowers asked for a motion to constitute second reading of Ordinance 595.

- Motion was made by Vice Chairman Roy Costner, and seconded by Councilman Ensley Feemster. Chairman Bowers asked if there was any discussion:
  - Councilman Wilson stated this seems like the type of approach that County Government should be taking. He stated the opportunity to partner with an organization that has a long-standing, well understood track record for success in delivering services, modeled after programs in that state that serve areas that are so rural. He stated it just seems like an ideal approach from the government partnership. He stated he would like more details before third reading passes on cost, etc. but to incentivize it and recognize that it is a utility level benefit to the people in Pickens County, it seems like a no-brainer to him that they should move to approve this.
  - Councilman Saitta stated he feels FILOT Agreements are a good tool in Economic Development. He stated most people have heard about them, but they don't know what they are. Councilman Saitta asked what the terms are in this agreement. He asked for staff to please send a list of the companies in Pickens County with FILOT agreements.
  - Mr. Roper gave an overview of the FILOT agreement to Council.
  - Seeing no other discussion, motion carried unanimously (6-0).

**CONSIDERATION OF A RESOLUTION 2021-02 IDENTIFYING A PROJECT TO SATISFY THE REQUIREMENTS OF TITLE 12, CHAPTER 44 OF THE SOUTH CAROLINA CODE, SO AS TO ALLOW INVESTMENT EXPENDITURES INCURRED BY BLUE RIDGE ELECTRIC COOPERATIVE, INC., ACTING FOR ITSELF, ONE OR MORE SUBSIDIARIES, AFFILIATES, SUCCESSORS, ASSIGNS, LESSORS OR OTHER PROJECT SPONSORS, TO QUALIFY AS EXPENDITURES ELIGIBLE FOR A FEE-IN-LIEU OF AD VALOREM TAXES ARRANGEMENT WITH PICKENS COUNTY, SOUTH CAROLINA AND OTHER MATTERS RELATED THERETO.**

Chairman Bowers asked for a motion to consider Resolution 2021-02.

- Motion was made by Councilman Ensley Feemster, seconded by Councilman Trey Whitehurst and carried unanimously (6-0).

**CONSENT AGENDA**

- ❖ Shred Truck Options
- ❖ Administrator’s Contract (to be discussed at Retreat/Workshop)
  - Motion was made by Vice Chairman Roy Costner, seconded by Councilman Ensley Feemster and approved unanimously (6-0), to approve the Consent Agenda.

**ADJOURN:**

Hearing no further Council business, Chairman Chris Bowers called for a motion to adjourn. Motion was made by Vice Chairman Roy Costner, seconded by Councilman Ensley Feemster and carried unanimously (6-0). Pickens County Council stood adjourned at 7:54 p.m.

Respectively Submitted:

Approved:

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Meagan Nations, Clerk to Council

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Chris Bowers, Chairman of County Council