

COMMITTEE OF COUNCIL AS A WHOLE REPORT

Council Members:

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

Staff in Attendance:

Ken Roper, County Administrator
Meagan Nations, Clerk to Council
Les Hendricks, Contract Attorney
Lisa Bryant, Director of Human Resources
Allison Fowler, Director of Parks, Recreation and Tourism

The Committee of the Whole met in Main Conference Room, at the Pickens County Administration Facility, on Monday, May 17, 2021. All members of the committee were in attendance, with Chairman Chris Bowers presiding. Chairman Chris Bowers led the Invocation and Pledge of Allegiance.

WELCOME AND CALL TO ORDER:

Chairman Chris Bowers called the Committee of the Whole meeting to order.

COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE:

Results of Employee Survey – Log No. 173

- Mrs. Lisa Bryant, Director of Human Resources, presented the Results from the Employee Survey. She stated there was a 57% completion rate, a total of 31 questions, 367/693 employees completed the survey, and according to benchmarks, anything over 50% is considered a “good” response rate for an online employee survey. Mrs. Bryant went into discussion on factors contributing to good response rate. She stated this is only the second employee survey conducted in many years, and the last survey was conducted two years ago. She stated all employees had easy access for completion, stating the link to the survey was sent out to all employees via email, instructions sent on how to complete the survey online from any computer, anywhere and at any time, and the link to the survey was placed on Employee Self Service (ESS). Mrs. Bryant went through a few of the questions that were asked on the survey, along with the results to the questions:
 1. I am satisfied with the job related training offered to me.
 2. I feel that I have opportunities to apply my talents and expertise my job.
 3. I am inspired to meet my goals at work.
 4. I feel completely involved in my work.
 5. Employees in my department adapt quickly to difficult situations.
 6. I am compensated fairly relative to the local market.
 7. Management within my department recognizes strong job performance.
 8. My supervisor and I have a good working relationship.
 9. My co-workers and I have a good working relationship.
 10. Employees treat each other with respect.
 11. I am satisfied with the healthcare-related benefits offered to me by Pickens County.
 12. I am satisfied with the amount of paid leave I receive (vacation, sick time, holidays).
 13. I am satisfied with the workplace flexibility offered within Pickens County.
 14. I feel Pickens County provides a safe work environment.
 15. I feel like Pickens County is dedicated to diversity and inclusiveness.
 16. I am satisfied with my job security.

COMMITTEE OF COUNCIL AS A WHOLE REPORT

- Mrs. Bryant stated the positive themes that came out this survey are that around 75% of employees feel “involved in their job and inspired to meet their work goals,” over 84% say they have a good working relationship with their supervisor and over 84% also feel they have a good working relationship with their coworkers. She stated of those who completed the survey, employees feel like their talents and skill sets are being utilized, and are overall satisfied with the training opportunities available to them.
- Mrs. Bryant went into detailed discussion on the top 3 areas of needed improvement, which are:
 1. Compensation
 2. Vacation Carryover
 3. Inclement Weather Policy
- Council had detailed discussion that included, but was not limited to:
 - Vacation Policy – how it is accrued for employees
 - Vacation Bank, Sick Bank, and Holiday Bank
 - Council asked for a copy of the questions from the Survey, including the results
 - Follow-up interview for employees who leave Pickens County
 - Turnover Rate
 - Compensation
 - Benefit statement for employees at the end of the year
 - Council would like a broader discussion on PTO in future
 - Military/National Guard Employees

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

Overriding Parks and Recreation Plan – Log No. 174

- Mr. Roper stated that Allison Fowler, Director of Parks, Recreation and Tourism, is with us tonight to give Council an overview of Pickens County Parks and plans to take all of the existing parks to the next level, as well as plans to develop a few new parks into our system and claim ownership of the mountains. Ms. Fowler stated the current County Parks are Mile Creek Park, Cateechee Point, and Equoni Point. She stated the Grant Meadow Overlook and Long Shoals Recreation Area are two parks that were recommended in the Marketing Study to find some type of ownership in the mountains on Highway 11.
- Ms. Fowler presented the following:
 - All Parks - Signage
 - Ms. Fowler stated designing and implementing a comprehensive signage system is an extensive and complex project, but it is important to the success of becoming a viable tourism community. She stated the only park, as of today, that has signage is Mile Creek Park. She stated if you were to visit any of the other parks today, there is no signage to show that the County owns and manages the park.
 - Mile Creek Park
 - Existing Conditions
 - Proposed Master Plan
 - Implementation Plan, such as construct upper overflow parking area, construct new dump station, build new day use area, and update layout of current boat ramp parking area, as well as some additional projects
 - Improvements without Master Plan
 - Parks Along Twelve Mile
 - Cateechee Point
 - Madden Bridge (Equoni Point)
 - Twelve Mile Recreation Area

COMMITTEE OF COUNCIL AS A WHOLE REPORT

- Parks Along Highway 11
 - Grant Meadow Overlook
 - Long Shoals Recreation Area
 - Summary
 - Ms. Fowler stated as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic in SC, residents and tourists flocked to the outdoors, where social distancing was easier. She stated although the parks were busier than ever and revenues were up, the Pickens County parks were hit hard by overuse and litter. She stated the Pickens County Parks, Recreation and Tourism Department requests Council's consideration of a proposal using Fiscal Recovery Funds to repair, improve and enhance our county-managed parks.
 - Council had detailed discussion that included, but was not limited to:
 - "Welcome to Pickens County" wayfinding signage
 - ATAX funding
 - Duke Energy / Mile Creek Park
- ❖ **No Action Taken by the Committee.**

Ordinance 533- 1st Reading in Title Only to Amend Animal Control – Log No. 176

- Mr. Roper stated there is some concerned citizens who have confronted council at previous council meetings regarding changes requested in the Animal Control Ordinance. He stated Council has a copy of the ordinance in front of them and the two things he has heard the most regarding the ordinance are there are no specific criminal penalties within the ordinance, and to be more specific in definitions within the ordinance, such as the word abandonment.
 - Councilman Saitta stated there are really three pieces in the legal process, 1. Ordinance is written by the Council, 2. Enforcement (Sheriff's Office), 3. Solicitor/Magistrate's Office. He stated he did not write the ordinance but he feels the ordinance is very thorough. He stated he feels there is nothing missing in the ordinance, except maybe a few definitions. He went into explanation on a couple of changes he would make on the ordinance.
 - A few concerned citizens explained and discussed what they would like to see changed in the ordinance.
 - After much more discussion regarding the Ordinance, Vice Chairman Roy Costner stated he would like, as a Council, to sit down the Sheriff's Office to see what exactly is going on.
 - Chairman Bowers asked the Clerk and Administrator to schedule a meeting with the Sheriff and himself.
 - Councilman Saitta stated he will be researching the ordinance and come back to Council with suggestions on changes, regarding vicious dogs and hunting dogs.
- ❖ **No Action Taken by the Committee.**

Council Rules/Council Communication – Log No. 175

- Chairman Chris Bowers stated he asked Attorney Hendricks to look into Council Communication mainly because he was a little shook himself with the MRR legal stuff. He stated he wanted to make sure all of Council is on the same page about the appropriate way to communicate as a Council through emails, text messages, social media, etc.
- Attorney Hendricks gave a detailed discussion on exactly why the law is there. He stated the purpose of FOIA is, "vital in a democratic society that public business be performed in an open and public manner so that citizens shall be advised of the performance of public officials and of the decisions that are reached in public activity and in the formulation of public policy." He stated everything Council does shall be transparent. He stated a "public record" includes all books, papers, maps, photographs, cards, tapes, recording and other

COMMITTEE OF COUNCIL AS A WHOLE REPORT

documentary materials regardless of physical form or characteristics prepared, owned, used in the possession of, or retained by a public body. He stated that includes electronic communications, which is texting, social media, email, etc. Mr. Hendricks stated it is not illegal to communicate back and forth between one another, but it is illegal to have a meeting without notifying the public. He stated a meeting means the convening of a quorum of council members “by means of electronic equipment, to discuss or act upon a matter over which the public body has supervision, control, jurisdiction or advisory power.” He stated 4 council members, which constitute a quorum, is a meeting. Attorney Hendricks went into discussion on examples that could constitute a meeting. He suggested Council needs to come up with a policy for communication between each other.

- Council had detailed discussion that included, but was not limited to:
 - What is subject to FOIA
 - Definition of a meeting
 - Meeting characteristics
 - Communication from the Clerk to Council
 - December 30, 2016 Council Meeting

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

ADJOURN:

Hearing no further Committee business, Chairman Chris Bowers called for a motion to adjourn. Motion was made by Councilman Henry Wilson, seconded by Councilman Alex Saitta and carried unanimously (6-0). Meeting was adjourned at 8:27 p.m.