

Special-Called Pickens County Council Meeting

June 19, 2023

6:00 PM

County Council met in special-called session, in the Auditorium of the County Administration Facility, with Chairman Chris Bowers presiding. Final agendas, bearing date, time, and location of meeting were mailed to members of council and local news media on June 15, 2023.

Council Members in Attendance:

- Chris Bowers, Chairman
- Roy Costner, Vice Chairman
- Alex Saitta, Vice Chairman Pro-Tem
- Chris Lollis
- Henry Wilson
- C. Claiborne Linvill

Staff in Attendance:

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

WELCOME AND CALL TO ORDER:

Chairman Chris Bowers called the meeting of June 19, 2023 to order and welcomed those in attendance. Councilman Chris Lollis led the Invocation and the Pledge of Allegiance.

THIRD READING OF AN ORDINANCE NO. 623 TO PROVIDE FOR ADOPTION OF A BUDGET AMENDMENT CONTAINING ESTIMATES OF REVENUE AND EXPENDITURE CHANGES FOR PICKENS COUNTY FOR THE FISCAL YEAR BEGINNING JULY 1, 2022 AND ENDING JUNE 30, 2023.

Chairman Bowers asked for a motion to constitute third reading of this Ordinance.

- o Motion was made by Vice Chairman Roy Costner and seconded by Councilman Henry Wilson. Chairman Bowers asked if there was any discussion:
 - o Vice Chairman Roy Costner made a motion to amend the original motion, to add the amendment items listed below. The motion was seconded by Councilwoman Claiborne Linvill. The motion carried (4-2), with Councilman Alex Saitta and Councilman Chris Lollis opposed.

Airport	\$30,000	Roof Repair
Airport	\$9,000	HVAC replacement
Attorneys	\$40,000	Unexpected fees
Treasurer	\$5,100	Increase in postage for rate increase for mail out of tax bills
Fire Grant	\$120,150	State grant for equipment requested (radios, pagers, extrication equipment)
PSC Grant	\$163,803	Grant for filter replacement at 18 Mile Creek Middle Waste Water Treatment Plant

Council	\$50,000	Feasibility study for building at Admin Building
Planning	\$82,400	Impact Fee Study

- Chairman Bowers asked if there was any other discussion on the amended motion:
 - Councilman Alex Saitta stated some of these things during the year he voted against so he will be voting no on the final overall amendment for the current fiscal year.
 - Councilman Chris Lollis stated since he did not vote on some of these items before being on Council, he would like to be consistent and abstain from voting.
- Seeing no other discussion, the motion as amended carried (4-1), with Councilman Alex Saitta opposed, and Councilman Chris Lollis abstained.

THIRD READING OF AN ORDINANCE NO. 624 TO PROVIDE FOR THE LEVY OF TAXES IN PICKENS COUNTY FOR ORDINARY COUNTY PURPOSES FOR THE FISCAL YEAR BEGINNING JULY 1, 2023, AND ENDING JUNE 30, 2024, AND TO DIRECT EXPENDITURE THEREOF.

Chairman Bowers asked for a motion to constitute third reading of this Ordinance.

- Motion was made by Vice Chairman Roy Costner and seconded by Councilman Henry Wilson. Chairman Bowers asked if there was any discussion.

Pickens Soil & Water Conservation:

- Vice Chairman Roy Costner made a motion to increase to \$5,000 for the Soil and Water Conservation organization. Motion was seconded by Councilwoman Claiborne Linvill. Chairman Bowers asked if there was any discussion:
 - Mr. Roper stated they initially were going to request \$5,000 for additional public education but went back as a board and because of their frugal nature, they were just going to request \$2,500. He states he believe they will appreciate either amount.
- Seeing no other discussion, the motion died (3-3), with Councilman Alex Saitta, Councilwoman Claiborne Linvill and Councilman Chris Lollis opposed.
- Vice Chairman Roy Costner made a motion to fund the Soil and Water Conservation District at \$2,500 to do the public education. Motion was seconded by Councilwoman Claiborne Linvill. Seeing no discussion, the motion carried (4-2), with Councilman Alex Saitta and Councilman Chris Lollis opposed.

Tri County Technical College:

- Vice Chairman Roy Costner made a motion to increase Tri-County Technical College budget by \$61,500. Motion was seconded by Chairman Chris Bowers and carried unanimously (6-0).

School Resource Officer:

- Chairman Chris Bowers made a motion to add \$80,000 for an additional School Resource Officer, plus \$60,000 for a vehicle. Motion was seconded by Councilman Henry Wilson. Chairman Bowers asked if there was any discussion:
 - Councilman Alex Saitta asked where this SRO will be located.

- Chairman Bowers stated this officer will be mainly located at the Admin Building, unless they are needed elsewhere (ex: another SRO on sick leave, vacation, etc.)
- Hearing no other discussion, the motion carried unanimously (6-0).

Public Service Commission:

- Vice Chairman Roy Costner made a motion to reduce the Public Service Commission budget by \$1,290,000 for Liner at Roper Treatment Plant and UV Light System at the Upper Treatment, and instead, use ARPA funding. Councilman Henry Wilson seconded the motion. The motion carried unanimously (6-0).

Library:

- Chairman Chris Bowers made a motion to place a line item in the Library Budget for \$2.5 million dollars, listed as capital expenditures, and approve loaning up to \$1 million dollars for capital expenditures to the Library, out of the County's General Fund, using the same precedent and model we have done with fire districts in the past. Vice Chairman Roy Costner seconded the motion. Chairman Bowers asked if there was any discussion:
 - Council and Staff had detailed discussion that included, but was not limited to:
 - Councilman Saitta stated he opposes the motion, that the Library has unfair advantages because they are on millage.
- Chairman Chris Bowers made a motion to amend his original motion, to include County oversight in the capital improvements and expenditures. Motion as seconded by Vice Chairman Roy Costner.
 - Council and Staff had more detail discussion that included:
 - Discussion of completing the project by phases
 - Discussion of Library growth by being on millage
 - Library Board
- After more discussion, Councilman Alex Saitta made a substitute motion to spend \$2.5 million dollars of Library Funds on renovations, the general fund gives up to \$1 million dollars for those renovations and they come off millage starting July 1st. Councilman Henry Wilson seconded the motion. After discussion between Council, the motion failed (2-4), with Chairman Chris Bowers, Vice Chairman Roy Costner, Councilwoman Claiborne Linvill and Councilman Henry Wilson opposed.
- Seeing no other discussion on the amended motion, the amended motion carried (4-2), with Councilman Alex Saitta and Councilman Chris Lollis opposed.

Other Budget Discussion:

- Chairman Chris Bowers asked for any other discussion on third reading of the budget:
 - Councilman Alex Saitta stated he voted no on second reading of the budget and he will be voting no on this reading as well. He reviewed his reasoning's on why he will be voting no.
 - Vice Chairman asked for the amount revenue budgeted vs. the amount that came in this fiscal year.

- Vice Chairman Roy Costner made a motion for a tax savings of a half of a mil, and two tenths of a mil towards Economic Development Infrastructure, from the extra \$2 million dollars in 2023. Motion was seconded by Councilman Henry Wilson. Chairman Bowers asked if there was any discussion:
 - Councilman Alex Saitta made a substitute motion to roll back millage by 2.5 mills to return that windfall to the taxpayer. Councilman Chris Lollis seconded the motion. Discussion included:
 - Problem with not planning ahead (20-50 years from now)
 - Mr. Roper advised he wanted to warn Council from a staff standpoint that a vote to do something like this is a vote to bind a future council with either a reduction in services or tax increase in his opinion. He advised the County is not going to get smaller and things are not going to go down in cost. He stated there is not a tax increase this year in this budget and we are very frugal with our savings.
 - Councilwoman Claiborne Linvill expressed her frustration that we are at third reading and some council members are making motions that have not been discussed or brought up at previous budget work sessions. She stated when interest rates are high and you have an option to save, you save the money because we aren't sure what this next year can hold.
 - Questions to the Finance Director regarding if previous Councils have done this in the past
 - Seeing no other discussion between Council, Chairman Bowers called for a vote on the substitute motion at hand. The motion died (3-3), with Chairman Chris Bowers, Vice Chairman Roy Costner, and Councilwoman Claiborne Linvill opposed.
- Seeing no other discussion between Council on the original motion, the motion failed (2-4), with Chairman Chris Bowers, Councilman Alex Saitta, Councilman Chris Lollis and Councilwoman Claiborne Linvill opposed.
- Chairman Chris Bowers made a motion to take \$1.5 million from general fund to be refunded to the taxpayers as a one-time refund. The motion was seconded by Councilman Alex Saitta. Discussion included:
 - Discussion from legal counsel on if this legal
 - Discussion on cost for postage
 - Councilman Alex Saitta made a motion to roll back the millage. Councilman Alex Saitta withdrew his motion.
 - Discussion on rebate in the form of a credit
 - Chairman Chris Bowers stated there is more research needed and he withdrew his motion.

Seeing no other discussion, Chairman Chris Bowers called for a vote on Ordinance 624 as amended. The motion carried (4-2), with Councilman Alex Saitta and Councilman Chris Lollis opposed.

ADJOURN:

Hearing no further Council business, Council adjourned the meeting to move to the Committee of the Whole meeting. Motion was made by Councilman Henry Wilson, seconded by Councilwoman Claiborne Linvill and carried unanimously (6-0). Pickens County Council stood adjourned at 7:50 p.m.

Respectively Submitted:

Approved:

Meagan Nations, Clerk to Council

Chris Bowers, Chairman of County Council