

## COMMITTEE OF COUNCIL AS A WHOLE REPORT

### **Council Members:**

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

### **Staff in Attendance:**

Gerald Wilson, County Administrator  
Meagan Bradford, Clerk to Council  
Ken Roper, County Attorney

**The Committee of the Whole met in the Main Conference Room, at the Pickens County Administration Facility, on Monday, March 18, 2019 at 6:00 p.m. All members of the committee were in attendance with the exception of Councilman Ensley Feemster; with Chairman Roy Costner presiding.**

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

Chairman Roy Costner called the Committee of the Whole meeting to order. Councilman Carl Hudson led the invocation and Pledge of Allegiance.

### **COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE:**

Chairman Roy Costner stated we will be moving around the order of the Committee of the Whole agenda this evening and start with *Log No. 100 – Employee Engagement Survey*.

### **Employee Engagement Survey – Log No. 100**

- Administrator Gerald Wilson stated that Lisa Bryant, Director of Human Resources, is with the committee tonight to discuss an overview and the results of the Employee Engagement Survey within Pickens County Employees.
- Lisa Bryant stated she would like to do an overview of the information gathered from the Employee Engagement Survey. She stated Council will be receiving more information regarding the survey at a later date, but she wanted to do a brief overview first. Mrs. Bryant presented a PowerPoint, stating they had a great response rate for the Employee Engagement Survey. She stated there were a total of 32 questions in the survey. She stated that Pickens County has 681 employees, and 396 of those employees completed the survey, which gives a completion rate of 58%. She shared a statistic with the committee, stating “According to SurveyAnyPlace, the 2018 benchmark for average response rate to an employee survey is 33%, with online and email surveys in particular being 29% and 30% respectively.” Mrs. Bryant stated that the Pickens County Employee Engagement Survey was online and promoted through email and Employee Self Service (ESS). She stated there was such a good response rate because this was the first employee survey done in a number of years in Pickens County, there was easy access for completion (link via email, Employee Self Service (ESS) website, and instructions on how to complete the survey), and there were numerous reminders sent out to all employees to complete the survey. She stated that all of the reminders sent out also included information about the survey being confidential and anonymous.
- Lisa Bryant did an overview of the questions that were asked in the Employee Engagement Survey. She stated some positive things she saw where that employees trust each other, employees trust management, employees feel secure in their job, employees feel they are fairly compensated, and are

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satisfied with their healthcare benefits. She stated that she felt this was very good results from the survey. Mrs. Bryant stated the last question on the survey gave employees a chance to provide constructive feedback to help HR make Pickens County an even better place to work. She stated the three things she saw most frequently in the feedback were:

1. Annual Increases as opposed to one-time bonuses (employees are thankful for bonus, but it doesn't advance salary or help with retirement).
  2. Vacation carryover (reinstitute unused vacation carryover from year to year).
  3. Review Inclement Weather Policy regarding use of personal time when office is closed (possibly just need to re-educate staff on policy).
- After more discussion, Mrs. Bryant stated the next steps are for Council to review results and make any recommendations. She stated that she will also report back to Council with recommendations on best practices from an HR standpoint. She stated the worse thing we could do is do an employee survey, and not get back with the employees regarding the survey. She asked council if they had any questions.
  - Councilman Trey Whitehurst stated he found it interesting that such a large percentage of employees have worked here 0-4 years. He asked Mrs. Bryant if this was typical.
  - Mrs. Bryant answered no. She stated that she figured most of the employees who are closer to retirement aren't as concerned about some of the issues that some of the newer employees are.
  - Councilman Wes Hendricks asked how many employees the county has who have been here 0-4 years and how many employees have been here over 10 years.
  - Mrs. Bryant stated she does not have that information on hand, but she will get back with council with that information.
  - After much more discussion, Administrator Gerald Wilson stated that Mrs. Bryant will give the Clerk all of the results from the survey to share with council. He asked council to please provide feedback when we meet back in a couple of months to discuss this log item.
- ❖ No action taken by Committee.

### **Review of Fire Boards and Districts (countywide) – Log No. 55**

- Al Willimon, Emergency Services Advisory Board, stated the board would like for the Committee to know what they have been working on for the past few months. He stated the board has taken the approach of looking at things from a high level, and have dived in to look at how to provide tools to better facilitate Emergency Services throughout Pickens County. He advised it is not focused 100% around Fire Services, and they have discussed EMS and Rescue in a lot of the board meetings. Mr. Willimon stated they currently are working on plans to present to the Committee at a future date on how to make Emergency Services better throughout the entire county.
- Mr. Willimon presented and discussed the PowerPoint - [Pickens County Emergency Services](#)
- The Committee had detailed discussion to include, but not limited to: budget/funding; millage fees; unsafe/outdated turnout gear/equipment at the fire stations; volunteers at the fire station; consolidation between the fire districts; Town of Central Fire Station contract; stations crossing district lines when a call comes in; how the box system works when a fire call comes in; questions regarding funding in EMS and Fire with the Finance Director; long term ESB Plan; Ordinance dissolving the fire boards; education citizens in the community about this proposed plan by having Town Hall Meetings and getting citizen input; special tax district questions; confirmation that the plan is to tax all property, not just homes; funding for new turn out gear at the fire stations; ESB Board and ESB Board sub-committees; Vineyards Fire Truck GO Bond, etc.
  - Al Willimon, Scott Smith, Ralph Guarino, and Gerald Wilson addressed and/or responded to the Committee regarding this matter.

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- After more discussion, Chairman Costner stated this is a great plan and he appreciates all the time the Emergency Services Board has put into the plan. He asked all the Fire Chiefs/Employees why this plan is a bad idea.
  - Vineyards Fire Chief Phil Black stated he supports the plan and he thinks there are questions that have to be answered that council will have to answer for themselves. He stated he is behind the board consolidation, but he wants to make sure that as Fire Chiefs, they always have a voice at the table.
  - Councilman Trey Whitehurst asked if he would like to see it structured differently.
  - Mr. Black answered no, as long as each district has fair representation and a voice.
  - Councilman Trey Whitehurst stated if the Fire Chiefs are all on board with this plan, he feels they need to go back to their districts and sell this plan to the citizens of Pickens County.
  - Councilman Carl Hudson stated he feels there has not been a lot of citizen input in this plan. He feels the public needs to know all details about this plan before going through with it. He stated this system got the way it is over a long period of time, and Council wants to get it straightened out, but it takes time.
  - Vice Chairman Chris Bowers stated he feels the Fire Chiefs cannot go out in their community to discuss with citizens until Council decides this is what they would like to do. He feels Council needs to start the process.
  - After more discussion, Al Willimon stated the Emergency Services Board is at a dead end road and they have done all they have been asked to do. He stated that is where the Board is at. He stated tax payers have to fund the fire service somehow, and all they are asking are for enough funds to get by. He stated this is Council's plan, and until all of Council buy in, they cannot market a plan to the public.
    - After much more discussion, Vice Chairman Chris Bowers made a motion to accept proposal submitted by the Emergency Services Board, instructing staff to implement the proposal and made a recommendation to remove this item from the log. Motion was seconded by Chairman Roy Costner and carried unanimously (5-0).
- ❖ Committee recommends removing item No. 55 from the log.

Chairman Roy Costner stated the committee will be taking a 5 minute recess before moving forward with the next item on the agenda.

### **Recreation Funding Requests – Log No. 88**

- Chairman Roy Costner stated the Recreation Funding Advisory Board is still working on recommendations and staff has not received any recommendations yet. The board has their final meeting on Tuesday, April 2<sup>nd</sup>. He stated this item was on the agenda this evening to discuss what the funding is to be used for. Chairman Costner stated he spoke with a member on the recreation board regarding the applications and found it somewhat disturbing as he feels that funding is not being used the way that council would like for them to use it.
- Councilman Trey Whitehurst feels the board is doing a great job keeping everything in line.
- Chairman Roy Costner stated when this council first came on board; one of the things they looked hard into was the recreation funding and wanted to put guidelines in place. He stated he would like for council to consider thinking about recreation as a whole. He stated after meeting with the school district last week, he learned that the school district had to make some fast changes because the Liberty District recreation football did not happen. He stated because Liberty did not have recreation football, 80 students left the Liberty recreation district to go play in another district. He stated because they started playing with students in another Pickens County district, they transferred to that recreation's school district. He stated recreation and their part on this may effect where students are going to school. He would like for Council to explore opportunities for recreation.
- Seeing no other discussion, Chairman Costner moved forward to the next log item on the agenda.

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- ❖ No action taken from Committee.

### **Memorandum of Understanding – Log No. 119**

- Chairman Costner asked Attorney Ken Roper to please give Council an overview.
  - Ken Roper gave a brief overview on the proposed contracts given to Council. He stated he has met with the Administrator a few times in the past month to discuss and Mr. Wilson wanted him to put together a group of proposed contracts to give to council. He stated these would be growing, working documents and is a place to start discussion on these topics. He advised to Council that since these are proposed contracts/agreements, he recommends going into Executive Session to discuss these in particular. He would like council to consider their expectations, and put it in writing in these contracts.
  - Administrator Wilson stated some of the MOU's have fees to charge back to the municipalities. He asked council to keep in mind the longer we wait to do this; the harder it will be for them to implement it in their budget process.
- After more discussion, Vice Chairman Chris Bowers made a motion to convene into Executive Session as defined by S.C. Code of Laws, Section 30-4-70 (a), to discuss the proposed contracts. Motion was seconded by Councilman Wes Hendricks and carried unanimously (5-0).

Chairman Costner called the Committee of the Whole meeting back to Order and stated there is no action to take on anything discussed in executive session.

- ❖ No action taken by committee.

### **ADJOURN:**

Hearing no further Committee business, Chairman Roy Costner called for a motion to adjourn. Motion was made by Vice Chairman Chris Bowers, seconded by Councilman Trey Whitehurst and carried unanimously (5-0). The Committee of the Whole stood adjourned at 8:59 p.m.