

## COMMITTEE OF COUNCIL AS A WHOLE REPORT

### **Council Members:**

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

### **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 Tuesday, January 21, 2019 at 6:00 PM. All members of the committee were in attendance, with Chairman Roy Costner presiding.**

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

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

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

Chairman Roy Costner stated we will begin with Executive Session to discuss the pending board applications.

### **Boards and Commissions Discussion – Log No. 130**

- Ms. Meagan Bradford, Clerk to Council, started the discussion stating Vice Chairman Bowers had asked her to look into how other counties run their boards and commissions. She stated she reached out to the Greenville Clerk to Council and met with her beginning of November. Ms. Bradford stated Greenville County only does appointments twice a year. They have a spring cycle, and a fall cycle. She stated the Spring Cycle accepts applications from January 1-31<sup>st</sup>, and those terms begin on June 1<sup>st</sup>. The Fall Cycle accepts applications from July 1-31<sup>st</sup>, and those terms begin on December 1<sup>st</sup>. She stated that the Greenville Clerk updates Council on all applications received during the month they are open. Ms. Bradford also presented Council with Greenville County's website under Boards and Commissions. She stated on their website, they have each board listed, as well as a description and the roster for each board. She stated this is one of the things she has requested be on the new Pickens County website.
- Vice Chairman Chris Bowers stated he asked for this to be on the Consent Agenda so it could be discussed during Committee of the Whole. He stated one of the things we have looked into is how do we handle board members who are no longer active and whose responsibility is it to handle those individuals. He stated he wants to make sure we are keeping agenda and minutes on file, all board members rosters, attendance, etc. He stated we have a structure in place but there is no continuation for this structure. Vice Chairman Bowers stated we always meet in executive session every month during Council Meetings to discuss Boards and Commissions. He stated it feels like a constant revolving door that you never can keep up. He stated that the Clerk met with Greenville Clerk to discuss how they ran their boards and commissions, and he thinks Council should think about meeting 2 or 4 times a year during executive session to discuss. Vice Chairman Bowers stated this conversation sparked when we are trying to figure out how we handle those individuals who are not showing up to meetings, etc. He stated the Clerk also stated that every board member who is appointed goes through an orientation and receives a notebook filled with expectations of time, service, FOIA laws, etc.
- Chairman Costner asked if Greenville has run into any problems in the past only having two appointment dates per year.
- Ms. Bradford stated not that she is aware. She stated if you look on page 6 of their policy, they have a section that talks about Emergency Application Process for the boards that need members ASAP to have a quorum. She stated they open a window for 10 days to receive applications, and at the next Council

## COMMITTEE OF COUNCIL AS A WHOLE REPORT

Meeting following those ten days, it will be on the agenda to appoint someone to that board.

- Vice Chairman Chris Bowers stated he feels some of their process seem to be streamline and more efficient. He stated the idea is to make sure people know what board they are serving on and the expectations expected. He stated we have put people on boards and commissions who either show up once or do not show up at all.
- Chairman Costner asked if we have a policy in place to train these board members on all the information they need.
- Mr. Roper stated the new board members in the past receive a copy of the Resolution passed regarding Boards and Commission, and also, depending on the board, they receive other things from staff. Mr. Roper stated this degree of formality will serve us well in the long run.
- Councilman Whitehurst asked Mr. Roper if he put together a training program for the new members in the past.
- Mr. Roper stated he does a bi-annual training that new members are required to go to. He stated a system like this will be more predictable and make us more proactive.
- Councilman Whitehurst stated we do spend a lot of time each meeting to discuss boards and commissions applications in executive session. He asked the Clerk if she asked Greenville if there was anything they could do differently, what would they do.
- The Clerk stated that she will email her to see if there is anything they would do differently. She stated that the Clerk in Greenville has someone who works under her, and that lady is in charge of making sure she's received all the agendas and minutes for every meeting, keeps up with all attendance, etc. She stated she feels that Kendyl, the receptionist for Administration, could help her with this.
- Mr. Roper stated some boards are better than others on sending those agendas and minutes in. He stated it is up to Meagan to continue to pester these boards to send them in.
- After more discussion, Vice Chairman Chris Bowers stated he likes the way Greenville County's website is under Boards and Commissions. He stated you can click on a board or commission and see the description, the roster and the dates their term expires.
- Chairman Costner asked how far along we are on our website before it goes live.
- Mr. Roper stated the Clerk has asked over the past few months on helping get more defined descriptions on these boards.
- Chairman Costner stated he has had a lot of people ask what boards they can serve on and it is hard to defer to the vacancy list they receive each month at council meetings.
- After more discussion, Councilman Whitehurst stated he would like to look at the new policy before moving forward.
- Councilman Hendricks asked if the expiration dates would still have staggered expiration dates so not everyone comes off the board at one time.
- Mr. Roper stated yes. He stated he feels we should bring more information before Council makes a decision.
- After more discussion, Vice Chairman Bowers stated he likes the structure behind Greenville's policy and he feels it will make things a lot easier.
- Chairman Costner stated if we had the opportunity on where we know on the date we will meet all applicants before filling positions, which would be very helpful.
- Councilman Whitehurst stated this would be showing interest on the applicant's part as well, where they will have to branch out and come meet us in an interview process.
- The Clerk stated that for example, applications would be due for upcoming expirations January 1-31, so that would give Council a couple of months to meet the applicants, call them, etc.
- Councilman Whitehurst stated we will need to do some good marketing to get this out to people so they understand this.
- Councilman Wes Hendricks asked if there are any other weaknesses noticed that has not been mentioned. He asked the clerk if there are any other things in her role that would make this go smoother and better.
- The Clerk stated she likes the thought of the receptionist help get the agenda and minutes from every board or commission meeting. She stated she would also like to ask the Greenville Clerk is there anything

## COMMITTEE OF COUNCIL AS A WHOLE REPORT

they would do differently and bring it back to Council.

- Vice Chairman Bowers stated he is all about structure, and this will be more structured for our staff to help them be better at their jobs. He stated you can't necessarily hold a volunteer board member accountable like you can a staff member. He stated he feels it will help them.
- After more discussion between Council, Chairman Costner asked that this Log Item be added to the February Committee of the Whole agenda. He asked staff to create a template for Council to start off of.

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

#### **Census Discussion – Log No. 138**

- Mr. Roper stated this is a Census Year and he discussed this a little during the Administrators Report at the last council meeting. He stated Staff has been hard at work since last November when the Census staff contacted them. He stated a lot of people do not realize this, but Census is required by the Constitution and we have to do Census every 10 years. Mr. Roper stated it is not talking about citizenship, voting rights, etc. but instead, talking about what person happens in what area on April 1<sup>st</sup> of this year. He stated it does not matter your economic classification, all that matters is there a person in that dwelling on April 1<sup>st</sup>. He stated the Pickens County GIS Department submitted over 10,000 residential addresses this past year to the Census Cartographers, so they could update their address file. He stated this will help ensure that all citizens of Pickens County will be contacted by the Census. He stated the issues for government is making sure that all citizens are counted, because if you undercount, you are losing funding for highways, social programs, etc. He stated our own local government fund, the way this is going to be calculated in future years will be based on percentage growth. Mr. Roper stated as Pickens County is clearly growing, we are not growing as fast as Greenville, Charleston, etc. He stated we could lose too much in the local government fund if we do not count every citizen.
- After more discussion, Mr. Roper stated he was told by the Census Representative that he needed to appoint someone to head up the "Complete Count Committee." He stated he appointed Jimmy Threatt, GIS Director, is the head of the Complete County Committee and everyday he is coming up with new ideas on how we can find people who weren't counted last time, who will be counted this time. Mr. Roper stated he speaks Census.
- Chairman Costner asked why people do not want to be counted.
- Mr. Roper stated there is a certain amount of misunderstanding. He stated there are myths about people using the Census as a scam to try to gather people who are private. He stated they need to understand is that it is illegal for the Census department to share your information with anyone for 75 years. He stated after 75 years, this information becomes public. He stated the 1945 Census is about to be unveiled.
- After more discussion, Mr. Roper stated as their part in this, they are also trying to find Census Workers. They pay is \$15 an hour and they provide you with the training, and equipment you need. Mr. Roper stated if you live in a gated community, or even a mobile home park, they would love to have you do the Census in your community. He stated the issue we have is the under reported census tracks in the last census. He stated you will notice that Central and Clemson are two of the most unreported in Pickens County. He stated Central and Clemson have students from Clemson University and Southern Wesleyan. Mr. Roper stated he has talked to some of the members on the Complete Count Committee from Central and they are very adamant that they want to count all the student housing because it impacts their funding for road projects. Mr. Roper stated they have provided the Gleaning House with 500 flyers to be distributed in food boxes. He stated this should help with people who are hard to count. Mr. Roper stated they have also put palm cards at the front desk of Human Resources, they have put Census Signs up at each of the county recycling centers to reach citizens, and they are planning to publicize the flyers on social media. Mr. Roper stated they have a census information display at the Administration Building to catch taxpayer's attention, which includes a looping video and a poster that focuses on the importance of the Census. Mr. Roper stated we need to remind citizens that Census will be trying to get in touch with them over the next few weeks via mail, social media, cell phone, etc.

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

## COMMITTEE OF COUNCIL AS A WHOLE REPORT

### **Mental Health – Log No. 134**

- Mr. Roper stated Council Members and citizens have pointed out in Council Meetings that Pickens County is a highly ranked in the state in suicide rate. He stated he did not have any good policy proposals to bring to Council so he formed an adhoc committee to get together to discuss. Mr. Roper advised in the last couple of months, they have had meetings that included staff from Behavioral Health Services in Pickens County, SC Department of Mental Health, Coroner, Human Resources, Sheriff, Fire Employees, EMS and Ms. Varney acted as a Secretary. He stated they discussed some of the areas where they thought they could develop policies to bring to Council. He stated they are still in the process of this but the minutes from these meetings are including in the agenda packet. Mr. Roper stated one of the things they are working on is how we train our first responders to recognize people who may be having suicidal thoughts. He stated what we could do to follow up after our first responders have found that information. Mr. Roper stated they have a Lunch and Learn Suicide Prevention scheduled in the next few weeks at the Pickens County Administration Facility. He stated the guests who will be presenting are: Zorrina Harmon, SC Firefighters' Association; Chelsea Neal, Med, LPC, with Behavioral Health Services of Pickens County; and Dennis Gillan, Mental Health Advocate.
- Councilman Whitehurst asked how many suicides happened in 2019 in Pickens County.
- Mr. Roper stated he does not have that data in front of him.
- Councilman Whitehurst stated he would be interested in seeing specifically where they are. He stated he knows when he was at Clemson, there were professors and students. He stated Council needs to know if it's a problem more in that area, because we do not have a lot of authority in that area. He stated are these kids going to Clemson, or regular constituents.
- Vice Chairman Bowers stated this is coming from him, but from what he has seen personally, location, age, social economic status, etc. has literally been across the board. He stated he has not seen a targeted community more than another. He stated he has seen kids, to as old as 80 year olds. He stated the Coroner would have that information.
- Mr. Roper stated the Coroner, Kandy Kelley, has been very active in these adhoc committee meetings. He stated they need to come up with a better plan for first responders. He stated he looks at it as a two part problem; the first part is what's good for the community, and the second part is our 700+ county employees. He stated we need to be worried on how they are handling this.
- Chairman Costner stated not too long ago, he put on an event called "The Awakening." He stated this event happened once a month on a Wednesday, and at one of the events, they did a suicide awareness program. He stated there were probably 30-40 kids who would come. Chairman Costner stated when they had the suicide awareness event, we thought we were targeting the kids but the room was filled with adults. He asked what if we worked to create awareness events, not only where it deals with first responders, but the public to where people can come to find these things out. Chairman Costner stated his family has been touched by this and everyone knows someone who has made that choice. He stated they think it is a solution, but it winds up being permanent. He stated he wonders if the County could do things like this with other churches in the area.
- Vice Chairman Bowers stated he is sure things go on like this already, but it is not publicized like it should be. He stated he thinks when this mental health conversation got started; it was brought to Council's attention that we are #1 in the state. He stated this is not something to be proud of. Vice Chairman Bowers stated the key is it is going to take a village and plugging in funding.
- Mr. Roper stated the COPE Program is targeted at narcotic administrations and opioids. He stated in the adhoc committee meetings, they were thinking about could we find a way to make that apply to suicides as well. Mr. Roper stated we do not know if this will work, but it is an idea.
- Vice Chairman Bowers stated if you identify the reason for the opioid overdose, it wasn't because people took too many pain pills because they were in pain. If it was an intentional overdose, it is actually starting that on a smaller scale. He stated as the COPE Program grows, you will be able to measure this.

## COMMITTEE OF COUNCIL AS A WHOLE REPORT

- Councilman Ensley Feemster stated he believes the more we get this out, there will be more of those folks joining together. He stated this way; we will be able to cover the situation better.
- Councilman Carl Hudson stated from the law enforcement perspective, they go on a lot of calls that EMS does not go on. He stated he can think back on all the suicides that he worked, and he can't remember a specific group. Councilman Hudson stated in all the years he worked, he can't remember a specific group.
- Councilman Whitehurst asked Vice Chairman Bowers if he has seen any correlation between the opioids and the suicides. He stated not overdose, but people who may be dealing with this that state they cannot solve it.
- Vice Chairman Bowers stated demographics, gender and age plays into what the plan is and how you are going to do it. He stated the male is not going to be as worried about a violent situation, as where a female may be more likely to overdose. He stated he thinks your plan and method changes with age and demographics. He stated what you are able to get your hands on now, is a lot different than what you were able to get your hands on ten years ago. He stated the coroner has these statistics.
- Chairman Costner stated there are signs that are true no matter what the demographic is, but it is being able to recognize it and knowing who to talk to. He stated to him, it is as much as an education to the public in how we do this.
- Vice Chairman Bowers stated the COPE Program is already set up, and even the grant that covers the COPE Program only covers certain things. He stated as this program grows, we don't have enough now to look at the data and statistics to see if we could have done an intervention because it is new. He stated this is already in place at least for the opioid portion who are trying to end their life. HE stated it is a component for the whole. Vice Chairman Bowers stated the other portion of this is the follow up. He stated prevention is key, but even then, you have to have the resources available. He stated the mental health program in the state of South Carolina has seen cuts over the years. He stated he thinks we have to strengthen the mental health in our community. He stated it was staggering to him when he saw the chart that had Pickens #1, Oconee #2, and Anderson #3 in the State. He stated he wanted to make this clear that he is not knocking the mental health program in our county, but we all fall under the AOP (Anderson, Oconee, and Pickens Mental Health). He stated it was also staggering to him the growth of suicides in our county when Sheriff Stone took office, and when Sheriff Stone retired. He stated it makes him question does the model of the AOP work for a large area, and are they able to do what they need to do? He stated he has reached out to members of our Delegation because the last thing he wants to do is for people to think he has negativity toward the Delegation. He stated he wants to try and help them get more help and resources.
- After more discussion, Councilman Whitehurst stated if we are in the top three, then who is in the bottom three and what are they doing. He stated he would like for staff to get in touch with the bottom three to see what they are doing.
- Vice Chairman Bowers stated there is nothing official planned with the delegation as of right now, but they are looking at other areas who have a set up like ours, and areas that are doing well. He stated this is something he is very passionate about and they are looking at this before going any further.

### ❖ **No action taken by the Committee.**

#### **Discussion of County Road User Fee and Alternatives – Log No. 139**

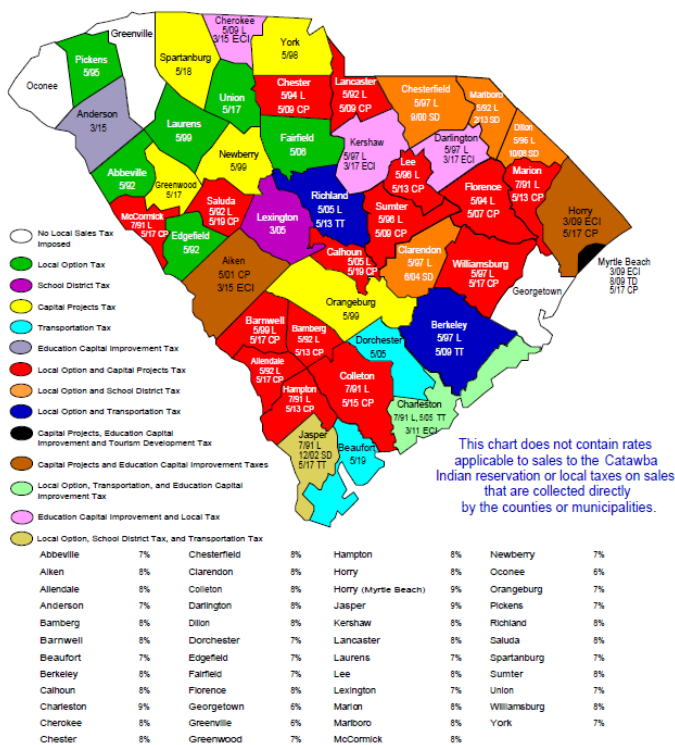
- Mr. Roper stated Council and staff discussed these six options at the council meeting on January 6, 2020:
  - Option 1 – Do nothing; continue at same pace
    - Pave 6 miles per year for a 75+ year life cycle

## COMMITTEE OF COUNCIL AS A WHOLE REPORT

- Option 2 – Increase User Fee
    - \$20 road user fee generates \$2,200,000 per year for 658 miles of County roads; County retains 75% or \$1,650,000 for roads, bridges and litter crew. 20 year life cycle would cost \$8,225,000 per year. Increase the road user fee to \$100.00 per vehicle.
  - Option 3 – Raise Property Taxes
    - Under Act 388, the County would be limited to raising taxes by population and CPI growth. First year would increase millage by 5.0 by using rollback allowance and generate about \$2,810,000. The following years would generate an additional \$843,000 per year.
  - Option 4 – Implement Capital Project Sales Tax
    - Add a 1% sales tax for capital improvement type projects. The County currently collects about \$10,000,000 per year. This amount does not include the amount of sales tax for cities. Revenue generated by the cities will be determined by the State.
  - Option 5 – Issue GO Bonds
    - Current debt capacity is \$16,000,000. Issue GO Bonds every two years to generate the \$8,225,000 needed to replace roads each year. Increase debt service millage by 29 mils. No CAP debt service millage under ACT 388.
  - Option 6 – General Fund Balance
    - June 30, 2019 unassigned fund balance is \$24 million. This would be a one-time infusion of funds that would cover 3 years' worth of paving. It would reduce investment income for operations to zero. County would have to issue debt to fund operations until taxes come in from taxpayers in December each year. *\*These are approximate numbers\**
- 
- Mr. Roper stated the Roads and Bridges Director, Michael Clark, will be happy to answer any questions Council may have. He stated the County Transportation Committee is gas tax money that comes back to the county. He stated we do not control this, but the committee makes that decision on their own. He stated for 14.11 miles, he comes up with \$192,250 per mile. He stated that Michael Clark feels our estimate of \$250,000 per mile is a good basis to go with.
  - Councilman Whitehurst stated he was wondering why the 30% buffer was added.
  - Mr. Roper stated not all roads are the same, and they felt they needed a little inflation. Mr. Roper advised he wrote to the South Carolina Revenue and Fiscal Affairs Office to see what a penny capital sales tax would generate in Pickens County. He stated the way the penny capital sales tax would work is for just capital purchases but in the County and the cities. He stated the committee, separate from the council, would determine how the money is spent. He stated the committee would be made up of equal representation of county and city members. He stated the Department of Fiscal Affairs has estimated a penny sales tax would bring in a little over \$16 million dollars in Fiscal Year 2021-2022. Mr. Roper stated the penny sales tax would more than address that need, but the city would also have capital projects that they would want to take advantage of. He stated the way the process would work, if Council decided to go down this road, is that Council would appoint the commission. He stated the commission would develop a list of projects and the commission would have inputs on what capital items they recommend. He stated once the list is complete, then it has to go in front of the voters. He stated there is a referendum required. He stated it would be in the November 2020 Election, and it would start the penny in May of the following year. Mr. Roper stated he is prepared for the next council meeting to have someone provide more legal advice if Council would like to move forward.
  - Mr. Roper presented a map of the State of South Carolina Local Tax Designation by County, Effective May 1, 2019, Collected by the SC Department of Revenue. Please see map below:

COMMITTEE OF COUNCIL AS A WHOLE REPORT

State of South Carolina  
Local Tax Designation by  
County Effective May 1, 2019  
Collected by the SC Department of Revenue



**Special Notice**

Effective April 30, 2019, Georgetown County Capital Projects Tax is expiring.  
Effective May 1, 2019, Beaufort County will impose a 1% Transportation Tax, Saluda County will impose a 1% Capital Projects Tax, and Calhoun County will impose a 1% Capital Projects Tax.

ST-500 (Rev. 4/10/19) 5182

- Councilman Ensley Feemster stated he would like to see the people know what the tax is. He stated sometimes when you have the penny sales tax, unless its specified to roads, some of it can be used for other things. He stated he cannot see the road user fee jumping from \$20 a year to \$100 a year. He suggested we could increment the road user fee by \$10 each year until we get enough paving done to have it on a short cycle.
- Vice Chairman Chris Bowers stated as a business owner who owns fleet vehicles, going from a \$20 road user fee to \$100 doesn't make him happy. He stated he spoke with someone who lives in a different county that stated they would rather pay their road user fee a penny at a time, instead of writing a check for a lump. He stated that one thing a penny does, that a road user fee doesn't do, is all the students that live in Central-Clemson area that live in other counties use our roads and it is not costing them a dime to so. He stated he likes the idea of a penny tax because it does identify that it will be used for roads only, if that's what the commission decides and it is on everyone that uses it.
- Chairman Costner stated he likes the idea of the penny sales tax, but he also likes the idea of elongating the road user fee completely.
- Councilman Carl Hudson stated he likes the idea of the referendum because the people who will be paying for it has the opportunity to decide how they would like to go about this.
- Mr. Roper stated a capital project sales tax is only good for 7 years. He stated after 7 years, the voters will get to weigh in again at another referendum.
- Councilman Wes Hendricks asked what would be the amount of money needed to get caught up on the roads.
- Mr. Roper stated it is around \$8.3 million a year and it will change over time. He stated that is the target at what it would cost.

## COMMITTEE OF COUNCIL AS A WHOLE REPORT

- Vice Chairman Bowers stated after seven years, if you get everything caught up and on track, it is possible you could cut it to half a penny.
- Mr. Roper stated the next time it comes up for renewal, the price tag would go down for that portion and the voters/commission could look at a different look of capital projects.
- Councilman Hendricks asked if we do the penny sales tax on the roads, would it prevent us from doing a sales tax on something else.
- Mr. Roper stated yes, because how you are going to spend it has to be on the referendum.
- After more discussion, Chairman Costner asked once we appoint the people on the commission, and they come to us with a plan we don't like, do we have to put it on the referendum.
- Councilman Carl Hudson stated he thinks it needs to be made clear to the people that go on this commission that the number one priority is to get the roads paved.
- Councilman Trey Whitehurst stated he would like to know the impact on the average person in Pickens County with a 1% increase on sales tax. He stated this is a regressive tax. He stated we are buttoned up between two counties who have a 6% sales tax. He stated when we bump to 8% that will have an effect on businesses in this county.
- Mr. Roper stated he will get this information for Council.
- After more discussion, Councilman Whitehurst stated the thing that concerns him about sales tax is it is not a long term fix. He stated if we are going to go to the voters with a plan, then he thinks we need to have a plan past the 7 years as well. Councilman Whitehurst stated he asked some citizens from his District to come speak regarding this topic.
- Vice Chairman Bowers stated if you look at areas in the state where this has worked; and it has proved it has worked with the citizens, residents, and counties trust it because they see it working, then they continue to up them every seven years because it is working. He stated if we do this right, be honest about it and people see that it is working then he feels this is a long term plan. Vice Chairman Bowers stated you always have to have an option 2.
- After more discussion, Councilman Whitehurst asked if we could do half of a penny, instead of the whole penny.
- Mr. Roper stated he does not know the answer to this question but at the next council meeting, Pope Flynn will be presenting and they will have the answer then.
- Chairman Costner asked what time constraints we are under if we want to move forward with this option.
- Mr. Roper stated the resolution that appoints the commission would have to be in the next couple of months, and after the commission develops the list of priorities, Council will need time to have three readings for an ordinance before August. He stated it is a narrow window but it is possible.
- Councilman Whitehurst asked who is on the commission.
- Mr. Roper stated the commission is appointed by Council, and the municipal appointees are developed by formula. He stated it will work out to where the biggest city gets a person; the next biggest city gets a person, etc.
- After more discussion, Mr. Roper stated under the agreement we have with the road user fee, it tells the municipalities that the roads in their city limits are their responsibilities. He stated the roads that are not in the city limits are the county's responsibility. He stated this is a huge step forward for everyone, but part of the contract says that every January, we have to sit down with the cities to count the miles. He stated he would like to talk with the cities about circumstances that we did not anticipate. Mr. Roper presented Council with a couple of maps with roads that begin in the city, and end in the city, but some parts of the roads are in the county. He stated he has meetings on January 28<sup>th</sup> with some cities and he intends to talk to these cities about this. He stated they will be going through these examples to see if there are ways they could agree on ways to analyze it.
- Seeing no other discussion, Mr. Roper stated Pope Flynn will be coming to give Council an update at the February Council meeting.

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



COMMITTEE OF COUNCIL AS A WHOLE REPORT

**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 (6-0).