

## 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 Monday, February 10, 2020 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. Councilman Trey Whitehurst led the invocation and Pledge of Allegiance.

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

Chairman Roy Costner stated they will be going out of order on the agenda if it is okay with Council. He stated they will start out with Log No. 142 – Discussion on Old Jail.

### **Discussion on Old Jail – Log No. 142**

- Mr. Roper stated just to be clear on the discussion of the old jail; we are talking about the old stockade, not the Law Enforcement Center. Mr. Roper showed Council an aerial view of Old Prison Camp Road in Pickens, where the old stockade was located and housed prisoners before the new detention center opened. Mr. Roper showed Council the old stockade from the aerial view, also pointing out the Animal Shelter, Roads and Bridges Department Building, and Public Works Department Building. He stated the facility is in the same condition it was when the Sheriff's Office turned it back over to us. He stated on the aerial picture presented, there is also a church building beside the old stockade. Mr. Roper advised it is on this evenings agenda to discuss potential uses for that vacant facility. He stated that staff does not have a plan at the moment.
- Councilman Whitehurst stated that Rev. Joe Moss is at the meeting tonight, and he is on Central City Council. He stated he has been the pastor that has been running the program at the stockade for the last 5-10 years. He stated he came to Mr. Roper with an idea and has talked to him about issues we run into when people get out of jail. He stated a lot of them have no family to go home too and when they walk out of the jail, they have no choices. He stated we do not want to get into trying to reeducate, but Rev. Moss had some thoughts and ideas. He stated when people get out of jail; the goal is for them to not come back. He stated he thought his idea was a good idea and he would like for him to present his ideas to Council to start a discussion.
- Reverend Moss thanked Council for having him this evening. He stated he would like to create a transition and transformation center. He stated this facility would offer transitional housing, such as shelter, food and independence with accountability and responsibility. He stated if we had this facility, we could allow them to come to a six month program to help the community. He stated there would be one on one & group coaching, such as social interaction training, access to work keys training and certification, access to GED services, resume writing technical assistance, and job interview coaching.
- Councilman Carl Hudson asked Reverend Moss if he will be doing this in addition to his prison ministry he is already doing in the detention center.
- Reverend Moss stated yes.
- Councilman Hudson stated he has the infrastructure of the people who are already in place, he is just asking for a physical building.
- Rev. Moss stated that is correct. He stated they put this in place around two years ago.
- Councilman Whitehurst asked Rev. Moss what is his vision for the program, and what will happen to them over a six month period.
- Rev. Moss stated they will help them find a job, help them get an education (GED or Associates/Bachelor's Degree),

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and help them put forth their best effort.

- Councilman Ensley Feemster stated two years ago, a couple of them helped an inmate who could get out of jail as long as he had a place to stay and a job. He stated someone provided a job for him and he paid his first month of rent. He stated everything fell through because they did not keep up with what the guy was doing. He asked Rev. Moss once they go through the training, is there any thought about what will be done after.
- Reverend Moss stated there will be a follow up on each inmate, who is required to hold responsibility and accountability. He stated we will not cut them off once the six month period is over with. He stated a lot of people go through home of the heart who is not even affiliated with drugs, so they are really taking a bed for someone who isn't even on drugs who really needs a place to stay.
- Councilman Wes Hendricks asked Reverend Moss who is target audience is; state inmates or those who are out on bond awaiting trial.
- Reverend Moss stated those who have served their time, such as state inmates.
- Councilman Wes Hendricks stated he teaches school and he knows a lot of the kids he deals with ends up incarcerated at some point in time. He stated he knows it is very difficult for a kid to get a GED in six months. He asked Reverend Moss if he has studied available programs or talked with the school district.
- Reverend Moss stated they have a Doctorate Superintendent in Anderson who has a program that he can put in place. He stated they have different people in different areas that can help a lot.
- Chairman Costner asked if this is a program he has developed or is it one that he is immolating from somewhere else.
- Reverend Moss stated they developed this program from scratch.
- Councilman Whitehurst stated part of this program will be the people working as well. He stated the stockade used to have a farm. He stated it is not like being in jail.
- After more discussion, Sheriff Clark stated he would like to support Reverend Moss's program. He stated we are ramping behavioral health and it is going to work good, but when the doors open and these inmates get out of jail, that is when he needs Reverend Moss. He stated we are starting them in the jail and focusing on Behavioral and Mental Health, and on our kiosk system, we have education programs and they may be 90% ready for the GED when they go to Reverend Moss. He stated he feels this will be great for everyone if it can be worked out.
- Vice Chairman Chris Bowers stated one thing they learned about from the initiatives of the re-introduction programs is that Tri-County Tech is working with truck drivers and there are federal programs out there. He stated he had a question, asking when we turned this over to the Sheriff; part of the reason for the moth ball building was our sewer plant was going to need an upgrade if we continue to use the building.
- Mr. Roper stated there is some concern there and they will be looking into this, but it is a different issue to have a sewer plant that is supporting 75 inmates vs. a small program. He stated they continue to use this area for office space. He stated these things will have to be determined. He stated Reverend Moss and he have talked about this issue and he has watched in the old jail and new jail people come out after they have seen the judge, and they will walk out and start walking down the highway. Mr. Roper stated we will have to set some standards the program will have to meet in order for us to lease the building to a private entity.
- Councilman Whitehurst asked the Sheriff how many people get out of jail, and wind up getting back into jail.
- Sheriff Clark stated they changed software's, and this is something they are looking into. He stated he will get this information back to Council.
- Councilman Whitehurst asked how much it cost to put someone in jail for one year.
- Sheriff Clark stated per day, he would guess around \$53 per inmate. He stated this is not including the mortgage on the jail; this is day to day operations.
- Vice Chairman Chris Bowers stated the national average to house an inmate for one year is over \$15,000 a year.
- Chairman Costner stated he would like for staff to explore what this program would look like and bring back more information for Council.
- Mr. Roper stated he thinks the next step is to start figuring out who we are going to contract with, what their rules will be, standards, etc. He stated we will make sure they are insured appropriately for this and look into utilities/maintenance/etc.
- Councilman Whitehurst asked if we could get Ray Farley to look into businesses in the area who are hiring. He stated we have resources because we have connections with all businesses in Pickens County.
- Mr. Roper stated he feels we need to reach out to the Work Link board because they just got a grant for similar types of situations. He stated we are in the beginning stages of talking about this and he sees Reverend Moss's vision but he just wants to make sure all of Council is seeing the same vision.
- After more discussion, Councilman Whitehurst stated he would like for staff to reach out to these different groups with Rev. Moss and he feels we are going to be developing a new concept. He stated he likes the idea with the schools, technical colleges, etc. He stated there may be people here who could help with the GED or technical training, etc. He stated it is a unified effort of a lot of different groups.

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

#### **Clemson Paw Partners – Log No. 143**

- Mr. Roper stated we have representatives from Clemson Paw Partners here this evening. He stated Clemson Paw Partners has been a non-profit organization for two years now and was even saving animals before becoming a non-profit. He stated they are looking at taking the next step. He presented several news articles where people are talking about problems with spay and neuter. He stated we have an animal shelter that turns over a great number of animals trying to find homes. Mr. Roper stated we have hundreds of animals go through the animal shelter per month and there is no way we will be able to adopt and rescue out of this problem until we make some kind of low cost spay/neuter available. Mr. Roper presented a map, showing the drive from Pickens County Animal Shelter to Anderson County P.A.W.S. He stated this is the drive we have to make to get our animals spayed or neutered. He stated they are placed in a van and driven one hour one way to get fixed. He stated the Anderson County P.A.W.S. is happy to take our business but they recognize this is not a sustainable plan long term. He stated it takes a great deal of human resources, gas, logistics, etc. He stated there is also the cost of the actual vetting done. He presented the current year budget for medical services and supplies at the animal shelter. He stated this is not every dollar going to Anderson County P.A.W.S, he stated some of this is medical supplies in our facility. Mr. Roper stated we have spent around \$70,000 this fiscal year just in medical expenses. He stated a good percentage of this is what we pay to Anderson County P.A.W.S. Mr. Roper advised that last fiscal year, we spent around \$75,000 at Anderson County P.A.W.S. and we are on track to spend more this year. He stated Clemson Paw Partners has stepped up and said they wanted to look into a low cost spay and neuter clinic. Mr. Roper stated he has been looking into facilities to where we could have this clinic and he thinks the old Central Magistrate building is the best facility to have this. He presented pictures, and stated he met down there last week with Dr. Sanders, who is the director of Anderson County P.A.W.S., just to take her through the building to see if it was suitable. Mr. Roper stated she used words such as “WOW”, and “ideal” when we walked through the building. Mr. Roper presented more pictures to Council of inside the building. He stated this location is centrally located within the County and it is close to where Clemson Paw Partners is already doing their work. Mr. Roper stated they are looking into the possibility of Ms. Thompson doing a lease of the building, in agreement with the County. He stated it would cut our travel time, gas, manpower time, etc.
- Ms. Thompson stated they really want a building and they cannot pay a stiff mortgage or lease every month. She stated they want to be self-identifying and not an organization that becomes dependent on the County. She stated they are proposing to fundraise and furnish the equipment. Ms. Thompson stated there will need to be some structure changes on the inside and that is what they would like from the County. She stated they have architects in Clemson and from a business standpoint; she is going to take any freebies she can get. Ms. Thompson stated before they talk about getting a vet, is fundraise and get the place equipped so people can have a visual. She stated they have a great relationship with Clemson Animal Hospital and they are willing to help out. She stated to save the county some money by not hiring their own doctor right away, let us see how this works with a veterinarian from Clemson Animal to come in. Ms. Thompson stated they can do between 15-20 spay and neuters a day. She stated she does not want to be dependent on the county; all she needs is a building. She stated she will be sharing all finances with the county. Ms. Thompson stated that she believes Clemson Paw Partners and the county should partner, but she does not think we should get too far ahead of ourselves until we get this placed equipped and get a layout of the building.
- Chairman Costner asked Ms. Thompson if she is looking to do a public-private partnership with the County or use of the building.
- Ms. Thompson stated she is just looking for the building right now. She stated they have some money reserved that people have given them for something like this. She stated she does not want something halfway done; she wants it done nicely.
- After more discussion, Councilman Wes Hendricks stated he likes that Ms. Thompson is doing this independently and is reaching out to resources so we do not put a strain on the taxpayers.
- Ms. Thompson stated that is their goal and before we go hiring a doctor, let’s take baby steps. She stated

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there is no doubt in her mind that we will eventually outgrow the place.

- Vice Chairman Chris Bowers asked if this was a freestanding building or is there a building attached.
- Mr. Roper stated the back of this building is the Pickens County EMS Station.
- Vice Chairman Bowers stated he is assuming we are not talking about totally structurally overhauling this building as much as a couple of things here and there, and utilizing the court room.
- Ms. Thompson stated from looking at the pictures, it would be an excellent surgical and recovery room.
- Vice Chairman Bowers stated he agrees with Ms. Thompson, if they are successful they will definitely outgrow this building. He stated with it being a county building, he wants to make sure we do not do anything that will inhibit anything in the future. He asked if there will be overnight stays at this clinic.
- Ms. Thompson stated not currently, but they have run into some things recently that might require an overnight. She stated they would like to have an enhanced security system and they will pay for that.
- Vice Chairman Bowers stated there is asphalt all around the building and asked if there was any outdoor grass space if need be.
- Mr. Roper stated not really. He stated there is some potty area but not near the library.
- After more discussion, Ms. Thompson stated they will be relying more on volunteers more than anything and they know at some point, we are going to have to pay a vet & a vet tech.
- Councilman Whitehurst asked if she had a plan for the outdoor animals. He stated it is a concern because there is a lot going on there with the EMS Station and Library.
- Ms. Thompson stated yes, Jennifer will be taking care of that. She stated she does not want to put too much finances in just yet, when we have people who are willing to help us do this.
- Councilman Whitehurst stated let's look at the next step, stating this does well and we look at the step of hiring a vet. He stated how would this partnership work, and how will it affect the vets in the area that you are going to now.
- Mr. Roper stated he feels the next step is they are up and running in the building, doing what they do now, but they are able to expand because they have the building. He stated he feels it will be 2-3 years before a vet is hired.
- Councilman Whitehurst asked how much a vet will cost the county.
- Mr. Roper stated it will be around \$140,000.
- Councilman Hendricks asked what the chances are of the vet recouping fees through surgery from the public.
- Mr. Roper stated that is what you hope to happen.
- Ms. Thompson stated she does not feel the need to hire a vet at the moment since they have vets willing to help out.
- Chairman Costner stated she just wants to use the building and she is going to help with the equipment.
- Ms. Thompson stated even though they are occupying the building, if council asked if they wanted to see her numbers, she does not have a problem with that.
- Councilman Whitehurst asked if we pay the same rate to Clemson Animal Hospital as we do Anderson County P.A.W.S.
- Ms. Thompson stated she does not think so. She stated we will pay less than what we pay Anderson. She stated we are allowing people to come off the streets.
- Mr. Roper stated it will cost us less and give us an avenue to grow out of the system we have now. He stated Clemson Paw Partners has been a huge partner with the Animal Shelter and they have a track record with us. He stated they are asking for this facility that we are currently not using. He stated the recommend action for this evening is to recommend first reading in title only at the next council meeting.
- After more discussion, Councilman Whitehurst asked if we will be doing the dollar lease, and will we do the liability insurance.
- Mr. Roper stated yes to the lease, and no, they will have to carry their own insurance. He stated we would do basic maintenance since Pickens County EMS.
- Vice Chairman Bowers ended the conversation stating when he took his dog to the Greenville Humane Society to get fixed; there was a two week waiting list. He stated he guarantees this will be successful.
- Chairman Costner made a motion to take this out of committee for first reading in title only at the March 2<sup>nd</sup> Council meeting. Motion was seconded by Vice Chairman Chris Bowers & carried unanimously (6-0).

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- ❖ **Chairman Costner made a motion to take this out of committee for first reading in title only at the March 2nd Council meeting. Motion was seconded by Vice Chairman Chris Bowers & carried unanimously (6-0).**

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

- Meagan Bradford, Clerk to Council, stated where we left off last meeting on this discussion was council asked her to reach out to Greenville Clerk of Council with a few questions. She stated that Greenville's procedures include sending a list of vacant seats to Council weeks in advance to appointing. She stated they only have the application available during the designated application period. Ms. Bradford stated that Greenville County Council finds support for citizens at local churches, community groups and municipal meetings. She stated that social media, newspapers ads, and other online resources help find citizens willing to serve on a board or commission. She stated that the Greenville Clerk advised they use their policy as a framework, and makes changes as needed. Ms. Bradford stated that Ms. Varney, Mr. Ropers Executive Assistant, has been working on a Boards and Commissions Book for Pickens County that includes descriptions of boards, FOIA Laws, Pickens County Boards and Commissions Policy, Responsibilities, etc.
  - After some discussion, Ms. Bradford stated she sat down with Mr. Roper and this is their plan they recommend to council for transitioning:
    - March – August: Prioritize appointment only where a quorum is an issue.
    - September 1-30: Application period opens
    - October – November: Council reviews applications and interviews candidates
    - December Council Meeting: Appointments made
    - January 1<sup>st</sup>, 2021: New terms begin
  - Mr. Roper stated when someone is appointed to a board or commission, they serve for indefinite term. He stated the Resolution specifically says they continue to serve at Council's pleasure until reappointment. He stated there may be some people whose term has expired and they carry on serving until the next application period or reappointment. He stated this is in our favor that they carry on.
  - Councilman Whitehurst stated so we will be making appointments once a year.
  - Mr. Roper stated yes, that is correct unless there is an emergency situation.
  - Councilman Hendricks asked how long Greenville County has been doing it this way, and have we heard any feedback from Greenville County Council on how this works for them.
  - Ms. Bradford stated their policy was updated in 2017.
  - Mr. Roper stated Greenville County staff loves the way this works and we are assuming Council enjoys it this way since they do not have to meet monthly to appoint board members. He stated after appointments are made, they receive a binder that includes all information they will need to know and give the training up front.
  - Councilman Whitehurst stated he feels this is more formal and adds value to Boards and Commissions. He stated if we make it important, then citizens will feel that it is more important.
  - After more discussion, Councilman Whitehurst made a motion to move forward with the proposal from staff on Board and Commission Procedure. Motion was seconded by Vice Chairman Chris Bowers and carried unanimously (6-0).
- ❖ **Councilman Whitehurst made a motion to move forward with the proposal from staff on Board and Commission Procedure. Motion was seconded by Vice Chairman Chris Bowers and carried unanimously (6-0).**

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### 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
  - 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 Council may have new questions they would like for him to research further.
- Chairman Costner stated the Municipal Association had their meeting where they discussed being partners with them if we do anything because they have to pay for roads too.
- Mr. Roper stated the he received feedback from three of the cities, as well as the Municipal Association itself and they have asked him to come to their next meeting and talk about this process. He stated he has received positive feedback and they are overwhelming positive and excited about the process. Mr. Roper stated they see the value in the penny sales tax avenue. Mr. Roper stated they are a step forward, and Council is still discussing on the best way to move forward.
- Councilman Whitehurst stated he would like look into the report on the condition of our roads. He stated we paid for a study and he would like to know a breakdown of our road conditions on what the cost is to pave our roads. He stated some roads will cost more to pay than other roads, and some roads are in need of being paved than other roads. He stated if you let a road go past a certain point, then the cost goes way up. Councilman Whitehurst stated we need to figure out the funding and also the accurate score of the roads. He stated if 10% of our roads are at a real dire need, then doing a sales tax a year from now may be more expensive to fix that road now than it is to fix it now. He stated we may need to look into taking something out of a surplus or reserves. He stated he wants to know the real score. Councilman Whitehurst stated he wants to know what our critical roads are. Then, he would like to make them into four categories and put a number to what it cost to fix it.

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- Mr. Roper stated we have all of this data, and we do need to get it to Council and the public to digest.
- Councilman Whitehurst stated he would like to know the number to fix all the roads, and what the number is for the critical road.
- Councilman Hendricks stated he asked the Clerk to forward an email from a citizen about the gas tax stuff. He asked if Counties could raise gas tax.
- Mr. Roper stated no, this has been confusing for some citizens. He stated the gas tax is a state tax that is placed on every gallon of gas. He stated they are ramping it up trying to address roads. Mr. Roper stated most of that money is going to state highways, and a small percent comes back to the organizations that are confusingly called the county transportation committees. He stated the county transportation committees are state committees and are mandated by their rules to dedicate a portion of it to state paving. He stated they will spend it on local county roads but that are state highways, such as Highway 93. He stated we do not have control over that money.
- Councilman Hendricks stated Councilman Whitehurst asked about the county having an asphalt plan. He asked if there has been any research on this.
- Mr. Roper stated yes, we have started looking at this and we do not have any specific data for Council this evening. He stated our Public Works Director has some experience with this same conversation and he has started pulling some data from Oconee County when they considered it and had the same issue.
- Chairman Costner stated he thinks the asphalt plan is a different idea, but he believes if the government gets into the production of manufacturing, it almost sounds like we are getting into business to compete with other businesses. He stated he feels we will open ourselves up with lawsuits. Chairman Costner stated he thinks we need to do a better job with negotiating with some of the entities that already exist in Pickens County. He stated if we are going to get into the production of manufacturing, then this is like socialism and he does not agree with this.
- Vice Chairman Chris Bower stated he understands Chairman Costner point, but he does not think it hurts to look into doing this.
- Councilman Whitehurst stated he has concerns with this idea. His concern is the expansion of government and outside the role of government. He stated he has struggled with this over the past week as he thinks more about it. He stated he is trying to figure out the most cost effective way. He gave an example, stating we have our own maintenance department who takes care of county owned buildings. He gave another example, stating we do our own payroll services. Councilman Whitehurst stated his struggle is with all governments, we grow and his fear is as government grows, we create jobs with people who have job titles and they do not know what they are supposed to do in their job. He stated they get hired because they knew somebody. He stated as a private sector, as the demand goes up and supply stays the same, the price will increase. He stated what happens is you're paying a higher dollar every time because it demands a higher dollar.
- Chairman Costner stated another problem is the longer we wait to fix the roads, the worst condition they become and it becomes more expensive.
- After more discussion, Mr. Roper stated our Roads and Bridges maintenance crews are stressed right now with doing shoulder work, pot holes, municipal special projects, etc. He stated if we looked at doing asphalt and paving ourselves, we are talking about growing the Roads and Bridges Department.
- Vice Chairman Bowers stated we started building our own bridges a couple of years ago. He stated at the time, the problem was it was not cost affective and we couldn't get anyone to do the work because they were so far out. He stated if you look at the landfill project, it went up in budget because the economy was doing well. He stated the capital it will cost the staff, it may actually cost you more money to run our own asphalt plan.
- After more discussion, Councilman Whitehurst stated if we did not do this route, then we need to look into bringing someone on board who is an expert in this field to manage these projects. He stated let's say we move forward with the penny sales tax, and then we need to bring in an expert to focus specifically on the roads for the \$16 million dollars we would bring in a year.
- Vice Chairman Chris Bowers stated when you see these asphalt companies out paving state roads, you always have the DOT crew managing the project. He stated he is not a paver, but he is an expert making sure it is done correctly. He asked if we have looked to see if the 65+ roads that were closed due to flooding where on

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the list. He stated he is curious to see how many of those roads are in worse condition now due to flooding/rain.

- Mr. Roper stated we have not looked at this.
- Chairman Costner stated SCDOT Deputy Secretary for Engineering, Leland Colvin, came up during the flooding and followed up with a call specifically about some of the state roads where they can see there is a problem and they will start working on them right away. He stated he was impressed with that response and the desire to try to help. He stated we declared the state of emergency so it could set us up based on future opportunities to get funding. He stated there is still a lot out there that they have to figure out. Chairman Costner stated the day after he did a podcast; there was a terrible wreck on Highway 183 where a young man was airlifted to the hospital. He stated this highway is a dangerous road and these are things that we have to put at the forefront of what we are talking about. He stated it is not so much paving a road so it is safe, but it also fixing the roads where it is safe for people to travel. Chairman Costner stated as we continue to look into this, we are going to be under a time constraint based on some the options. He stated if we go the route of the capital penny, then you still have to put together a committee who has to meet and come back with a plan that we may not even want to follow through with. He stated there is a timeline that we have to set in place if we want to explore that avenue.
- Councilman Whitehurst asked what the latest timeframe would be if we decide to make this work.
- Mr. Roper stated based on what Pope Flynn folks were saying that commission would need to be appointed by March-April. He stated Council would appoint the three members from the County.
- Chairman Costner stated there is a Municipal Association Meeting coming up at the end of the month where they would like to have a conversation on this topic and he encouraged Council to attend.
- Councilman Trey Whitehurst asked if there were any other funding sources. He stated we have no choice at a half cent and we are looking at \$16 million a year, which is a lot of money to even try to get that much paving done in a year.
- Mr. Roper stated the commission will come back with a list of projects. He stated they may come back with things beyond the scope of paving.
- Councilman Whitehurst stated we have a \$20 road fee now. He stated this tax does not affect unprepared foods, such as grocery store food. He stated he would like to look at what the impact is on the average person on how much tax they will end up paying. He stated if you take away the \$20 road fee, how much this 1% will affect the average income in Pickens County. He stated the people will be voting on this if they know what the impact is and then you can make more of a rational decision if it makes sense or not. He stated having these numbers will better help them understand if this makes logical sense or not.
- Councilman Hendricks stated he feels this needs to be out there as well, what the alternative is to a penny sales tax if that is not the solution. He stated a \$20 road user fee per car is not enough.
- Chairman Costner stated he thinks the people who are driving on the roads should also be paying for the roads. He stated there is a ton of students at Clemson University who use our roads every day and live in different counties/states/countries.
- Councilman Carl Hudson stated if we decide to go down this road, he does not think it should be for anything other than roads. He stated he feels we do not need to have a capital penny sales tax for roads and something else. It should specifically be only for roads. He stated if we go away from this, the public won't support this because the public has been lied to on several occasions. He stated he hears a lot about the referendum on the school several years ago that did not go right. Councilman Hudson stated this has to be focused and he would not be opposed to putting every road in Pickens County on this list and say roads only.
- Chairman Costner stated the school referendum made him mad as well. He stated we are going to find ourselves in a position where we don't have a choice to pave the roads so we have to have a plan b. He stated if the citizens vote against this, then we can't do it, but we still have to have another way to pay to pave the roads.
- Councilman Whitehurst stated the public needs to understand our roads are paved through that \$20 road user fee. He stated it is not paid out of property taxes, and is not a part of our budget. He stated it is a quarter million dollars a mile to pave. He stated right now, we can pave around 6 miles a year from the money they gather from citizens with the \$20 road user fee. He stated we have 648 miles of road in the County. He stated



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if this does not pass, the only thing we are going to be able to do is we are going to have to dip into reserves and raise the road user fee.

- Chairman Costner stated the road user fee was put into place in 2001. He stated the cost of everything has gone up over the past 19 years.
- Councilman Feemster stated we cannot do the \$100 road user fee because citizens will not be prepared at first. He stated it would gradually have to increase.
- After more discussion, Chairman Costner asked if the mileage was raised by one mil, which would equate to \$552,000, what this equates to the average tax payer. He stated he does NOT want to do this, he is just asking for clarification.
- Mr. Roper stated he will get this data and let Council know.
- Chairman Costner stated he hates the road user fee because we could tack on \$100, and raise it up to the equivalent of how many mils. He stated he does not like fees because it is a tax and a way to cheat the millage system.
- After more discussion, Councilman Whitehurst stated the one problem with the sales tax is it is not sustainable unless you redo it every eight years. He asked if there was a way to create funding, where the user pays for the funding, where it does not wipe citizens out. He stated a lot of the people using the roads are not paying the road user fee since they live elsewhere.
- Vice Chairman Bowers stated if our ultimate goal is to capture the people using the roads, how we would do this. He stated if we go the route of the penny, it is not really sustainable unless in the seven year period, you prove that you are doing what you are supposed to be doing and the people will see the value of their penny. He stated the penny is sustainable as long as you truly have a plan.
- Councilman Carl Hudson asked what if we go down this road, and it is voted down. He stated there needs to be a real discussion because if it is voted down, it will be voted down because people in Pickens County do not think we need the money. He stated if it is voted down, there needs to be a real discussion on where the taxpayers think we need to cut.
- Councilman Whitehurst stated if voted down, the question is do we raise the road user fee or go back to millage.
- Chairman Costner stated we have been fortunate to have a high revenue stream come through because of how much our county is growing.
- After much more discussion, Councilman Whitehurst asked staff to get the numbers on our cost, and the impact of the 1% sales tax on the average household with different level incomes. He stated this will be good for council so we have an idea and can educate the public with what the impact is.
- Mr. Roper stated as we gather this data, he thinks its best we put this out to the public since it will be on the record anyways.
- Councilman Hudson stated this will not be our information; this is the same information we would get that is being put out to citizens.
- Mr. Roper stated another point he would like to bring up is the county wants this penny sales tax to purely be only for roads, but the municipalities have an equal voice and they may want it to go towards special projects also.
- Councilman Hudson stated he thinks it is important to know that if the municipalities come up with anything other than roads, he is not voting for it. He stated us as Council will not vote for it if it contains buildings, landscaping, etc. because we have to have trust in the people.
- Vice Chairman Bowers stated when we make the list of projects and vote on this, and it is a 3-3 tie, what exactly happens.
- Mr. Roper stated it will not go on the list if it is a 3-3 tie.
- Councilman Whitehurst stated he would like all the information he can get before making a decision, and once the decision is made, it seems things will go quickly.
- Mr. Roper stated Council wants to be transparent, and fully informed.
- Chairman Costner closed, stating he would like for council to have an update at the March 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 Carl Hudson and carried unanimously (6-0).