

## **Regular Pickens County Council Meeting**

March 1, 2021

6:30 PM

County Council met in regular session, in the Auditorium of the County Administration Facility, with Chairman Chris Bowers presiding. Agendas, bearing date, time, and location of meeting were mailed to members of council and local news media on February 24, 2021.

### Council Members in Attendance:

Chris Bowers, Chairman

Roy Costner, Vice Chairman

Trey Whitehurst, Vice Chairman Pro-Tem

Alex Saitta

Ensley Feemster

Henry Wilson

### Staff in Attendance:

Ken Roper, County Administrator

Meagan Nations, Clerk to Council

Les Hendricks, Contract Attorney

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

Chairman Chris Bowers called the meeting of March 1, 2021 to order and welcomed those in attendance. Councilman Alex Saitta led the Invocation, and Veteran Ashley Johnson led the Pledge of Allegiance.

Following the Pledge of Allegiance, Council presented a Certificate in Honor to Veteran Ashley Johnson, thanking her for his service.

### **PUBLIC FORUM:**

Chairman Chris Bowers opened the Public Forum and requested the Clerk to call upon the citizens signed up to speak, and who left a voicemail through the County phone in Council Chambers.

1. Chris Williams: Mr. Williams stated we need to know our history and the history of Marxism. He recommended two books, and one is called "The Devil and Karl Marx" and the other book is called "Dark Agenda." Mr. Williams gave background information on the author, David Horowitz. Mr. Williams recited a poem, written by Karl Marx, called "The Pale Maiden." Mr. Williams quoted, "*Thus Heaven I've forfeited, I know it full well. My soul, once true to God, is chosen for Hell.*" He stated communism is alive and well today in the deep state. He stated unelected bureaucrats are the most powerful segment of our society. Mr. Williams stated this has sneaked up on us in the last hundred years and we have allowed it to happen, especially the church. He stated the Democratic Party has been hijacked by Marxist. He stated in 2000, with George Soros's open society institute and the January 6<sup>th</sup> assault on the U.S. Capitol was planned and the facts are starting to come out. After more discussion on the January 6<sup>th</sup> assault, Mr. Williams stated two recent surveys show that 84% of Democrats say that Trump supporters are the #1 problem in America. He stated that 64% of young college graduates say that the 500 rights in 200 cities in 2020 were justified.
2. Carl Hudson: Mr. Hudson stated he has thought about this issue a lot and he started to see it on TV. He stated it is Title Lock and you see these companies that are opening all over the country and it's because people's deeds and titles to their property are being stolen without their

knowledge. He stated he talked with the Pickens County Registrar of Deeds and he is aware of this. Mr. Hudson stated this is something he has talked with to his group of people that have the same position in other counties. Mr. Hudson stated you get a notification one day that you have a lien against your property, when you have never taken a lien out. He stated today, he could have gone to the Register of Deeds office and got copies of every one of your titles and deeds to your property. Mr. Hudson stated he is not sharp enough to do this, but having been a police officer, and he knows if you work for something and get something, there is always a group of people that is scheming to take it away from you. He stated they're very smart because they don't work for it. Mr. Hudson stated they use identify theft, and they duplicate the title/deed and forge a signature. He stated they have a false identity, they get the deed in their name and take a loan out on the property. He stated the first time the property owner knows about it is when you have a bank calling you. Mr. Hudson stated they may not be able to take your property, but some people have lost their property. He stated you have to spend thousands of dollars to fight it in court. Mr. Hudson stated our Register of Deeds Department can get an update on the software and they will be able to do the same thing these title lock companies do. He stated if there is any change, or attempted change in your status of your property, then they will notify you immediately. He stated this title lock service costs around \$100 a year for the average citizen. He stated Council is coming up on budget season and they can put this on the budget for the citizens in Pickens County. He thanked Council for considering this.

3. Allan Quinn: Mr. Quinn stated he is a lifelong resident of Pickens County, except for 10 years, he served in the US Army. He stated he is at the meeting to speak on lack of Economic Development in Pickens County. He gave Council detailed information from the Federal Bureau Labor of Statistics. He stated Pickens County is the only county around that does not have a supplier to BMW on Interstate 85. Mr. Quinn stated he understands it is the County Administrator and Management at Alliance Pickens's responsibility to do this job but Council needs to hold them accountable. Mr. Quinn stated at the October 2020 Council Meeting, the County Administrator stated the unemployment rate was good at 3.9%. He stated he was right, but 60% of the workers go out of the county daily for employment. After much more discussion, Mr. Quinn asked Council to demand accountability in the future and do something to help our citizens and future generations with the good opportunities they deserve. He stated if Council does not do this, then Pickens County will become a bedroom county to Greenville County. He stated a bedroom county is not good with limited opportunities and low paying jobs.
4. Johnnelle Raines: Ms. Raines stated she would like to use her three minutes to pray. She stated, *"Dear Heavenly father, you are the wonderful counselor, the mighty God, and everlasting Father. We recognize that your will is the only will we need to be trusting and calling on to happen. We know that you know everyone's heart here tonight and why they are here, and you know exactly why each of these councilmen chose to run for office. We ask that you remind them each day of the fact they have sworn an oath in front of you to protect our God-giving rights of which freedom of assembly is won. We ask that you soften their hearts to understand they should indeed never again lock anyone out of these public meetings as it is our God-giving right to peacefully assemble and be present in person when they are deliberating issues that affect us all. We also, Dear Lord, ask that you remind them of our God-giving right to private property and pursuit of happiness when they deliberate over the development of this straight out of the United Nations agenda comprehensive plan. Remind them, O Lord, that non-elected, non-governmental organizations, such as Appalachian Council, Pond, Ten at the Top, and Upstate Forever are paid people who may or may not have our citizens best interest at heart and who may be aligned with the United Nations whose goal is a great reset, a new world order. Remind them, O Lord, their true loyalty should like with what you want for your people and what we the people who elected them want them to do, and not what out of county people may want them to do to feather their*

*own nests. Father, we need this Council to assure us that they indeed will not allow any statements in this comprehensive plan that will assault our private property rights or any of our God-giving rights. Wonderful Counselor, we also ask that you remind them to read their bible daily, pray, and to refresh their knowledge of the Constitution they swore to you they would uphold, and to seek your will in all their decisions tonight and in the future. We ask all these things in your son's precious holy name. Amen."*

5. Anselm Salins: Mr. Salins thanked Council for the opportunity to share what is on his heart. He stated he and his wife moved to South Carolina about four years ago. He stated they have been blessed to live in this Country legally for about 40 years. He stated he has been to quite a few countries and what he loves about the United States is this is the best Country that we have. Mr. Salins advised that we said a prayer before we started this council meeting, and the Pledge of Allegiance. He stated he is a Christian by the grace of God and the constitution goes back. He stated we have to go back into when the Pilgrims first arrived on November 11, 1690 and dedicated this land. He stated this land was dedicated to the propagation of the gospel of Jesus Christ. He stated people who live and come here have the freedom of religion, not freedom from religion. Mr. Salins stated there is not one place in the constitution that says separation between church and state. He stated in the Pledge, we stated "One Nation Under God." He stated we should take our constitutional rights very seriously and if not, we are going to lose those rights. He stated we have voted certain people in office because we are hoping Council would represent the needs and wants. Mr. Salins stated he feels it is important that we have periodical meetings quarterly, so that we could have a better communication.
6. Sandy Arthur: Ms. Arthur stated she has a couple of questions regarding Agenda Item #9 – the resolution authorizing Appalachian Council of Governments undertaking a study. She asked how much that study will cost and what is the real purpose of it. She asked if it will involve recommendations for property grants through eminent domain, or is there any potential that large corporations, development companies will be invited in to see how we can develop Highway 11. Ms. Arthur asked if the citizens will have any say in anything that comes from this. She asked for more transparency.
7. Ross Whitley: Mr. Whitley stated for five years, he has been wanting to speak to Council about his small issue. He stated he has been calling in for about five years trying to bring awareness to the issue of through traffic on the secondary roads and in the neighborhoods between Highway 183 and Highway 123. He stated sidewalks are not common in Pickens County and he has been calling the County Sheriff and the Roads and Bridges Department trying to get speed reduced or restriction to have speed bumps put in Georgetown Subdivision. He stated different times of the day is much worse than others. Mr. Whitley advised that most people coming through are courteous and they slow down. He stated there are a lot of elderly people who walk in the neighborhood but some of the traffic is just cutting through and they are not respecting the speed. He stated as he has called in over the years, he has received a lot of reasons for no activity. He stated the last time he called in, he was told to call the state because it was state jurisdiction. He stated he knows development and growth are good things but he would like for Council to consider the value of life for the residents who live in this neighborhood.

#### **APPROVAL OF MINUTES:**

Chairman Chris Bowers called for a motion to approve the following minutes as presented:

- February 1, 2021 Regular Council Meeting
- Motion was made by Councilman Alex Saitta, seconded by Councilman Ensley Feemster and carried unanimously (6-0).

## **ADMINISTRATOR'S REPORT:**

### **COVID-19 Response Briefing**

Mr. Roper updated Council on COVID-19 cases in Pickens County. Mr. Roper stated there are currently 686 active cases reported in Pickens County, within the last 14 days. He stated there have been two hundred twenty-six (226) deaths in Pickens County due to COVID-19. He advised a total of 16,455 confirmed cases of COVID-19 have been reported in Pickens County since March 20<sup>th</sup>, 2020. Mr. Roper stated there are 21,521 cases reported in SC, within the last 14 days. The total number of confirmed cases in SC is 517,976. He stated this brings the number of confirmed deaths to 8,562.

Mr. Roper presented to Council a graph of Pickens County Active COVID-19 Cases and Deaths, from November 1<sup>st</sup> before the Thanksgiving, Christmas and New Year Holidays, to now.

### **Financial Update from Moody's Investor Service**

Mr. Roper stated the County received the update from Moody's Investor Service. He compared this report like someone going out to get a credit report – he stated a credit report is an opinion, and this is basically Moody's Investor Service opinion of Pickens County. He stated in the report, they advise the financial position of the county is very healthy and is relatively favorable when compared to the signed rating of Aa2. Mr. Roper stated the fund balance is a percent of operating revenues (63.6%) far exceeds the US average, but decreased modestly from 2016 to 2020. He stated the cash balance as a percent of operating revenues (71.8%) is far superior to the US average. He stated the report states that Pickens County has a small debt burden and is a credit strength relative to its Aa2 rating. Mr. Roper stated the one negative thing on the report is that the pension liability of the county is somewhat elevated and is a weakness in comparison to the assigned ready of Aa2. He stated we are required to carry on our books to carry the state retirement system pension liability that is our portion. He stated this reflects the unfunded nature of the state retirement system. After more discussion, Mr. Roper presented a chart of the available fund balance as a percent of operating revenues decreased from 2016 to 2020. He stated the drop in 2017 was that we paid for capital purchases out of fund balance, and built a new jail. Mr. Roper stated we have rebounded the past couple of years.

### **Employee Engagement Survey**

Mr. Roper stated the Employee Engagement Survey deadline was extended to Friday, February 26<sup>th</sup>. He stated we are currently at over 50% completion rate, which is more than the average for an online survey (between 30-40%).

### **New Website**

Mr. Roper stated the new County website went live today, after many months of planning. He stated the new County website is mobile friendly. He stated we weren't prepared tonight to give Council a tour of the website but we wanted to let Council know that it is active and want to ask the public to please visit the new website and look around because we know there will be glitches we did not see.

### **Stonewall Project Time-lapse**

Mr. Roper presented a video to Council on the Stonewall Project time-lapse.

### **Landfill Closure**

Mr. Roper stated for many months, we have been planning on the fact that our landfill was near capacity. He presented Council with some photos of the landfill. He stated starting on Friday, we started closing down the landfill in terms of actively taking C&D waste into it, and this morning we activated the C&D transfer station. He stated this was budgeted for in previous years and built on the facility.

Mr. Roper stated that is the end of his report and he would be happy to answer any questions Council may have.

Vice Chairman Costner stated that Carl Hudson (public forum speaker) mentioned the software for the Register of Deeds office. He asked if this is something staff has looked into.

Mr. Roper stated there is a cost associated with the software upgrade and we would like to make sure it actually addresses the problem that Mr. Hudson has described. Mr. Roper stated he will get that cost for Council and bring it to Council.

Vice Chairman Bowers stated the Georgetown Subdivision is something we have talked about for a while. He stated we have looked at ordinances, speed bumps, etc. and he asked what we could do.

Mr. Roper stated Council does have a speed bump ordinance in place and he took the gentleman's contact information down to contact him. He stated traffic enforcement is an issue as well.

Councilman Saitta asked if the limit on public attendance for Council meetings been lifted.

Mr. Roper stated there has never been a "hard limit", and the only meeting that was closed to the public was the Swearing-In Ceremony and Organizational Meeting. He stated every meeting that Council has had this year has had members of the public present. He stated we do try to encourage people to view and participate remotely.

Councilman Saitta asked Mr. Roper to give an update on the changes of brush and brown goods collection at the recycling centers.

Mr. Roper stated brush collection at the recycling centers is limited, and has been limited to what the attendants would roughly call wheelbarrow loads of brush, because we do not want contractors bringing in brush.

Councilman Saitta stated his suggestion would be in the Easley center, which is right next to it, would be open from 4:20 p.m. – 7:30 p.m. so we will at least have one place where citizens can actually dump brush.

Mr. Roper stated the can (big blue container) will be out there occasionally, so homeowners can bring the brush there.

Councilman Saitta asked Mr. Roper if staff is making progress pertaining the illegal dumping that's happening in our centers and people coming from outside the county.

Mr. Roper stated it is hard to measure, but based on our interaction with the customers, we feel we are making progress with the out of county people. He stated there is an ordinance on the books and the ordinance states that you cannot dump on our county facility unless you have a placard or sticker. He stated the enforcement mechanism for that would be our recycling attendants. He stated they are limited in what they can do.

After much more discussion on the recycling centers, Chairman Bowers asked if there were any other questions for Mr. Roper. Seeing none, he moved to the next item on the agenda.

## COMMITTEE REPORT:

The Committee of the Whole met in Main Conference Room, at the Pickens County Administration Facility, on Tuesday, February 16, 2021. All members of the committee were in attendance, with the exception of Councilman Trey Whitehurst, with Chairman Chris Bowers presiding. Chairman Chris Bowers led the Invocation and Pledge of Allegiance.

## WELCOME AND CALL TO ORDER:

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

## COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE:

### AN ORDINANCE No. 596 TO PROVIDE FOR THE LEASE OF THE PICKENS COUNTY PERFORMING ARTS CENTER TO JWPR HOLDINGS, LLC, A SOUTH CAROLINA LIMITED LIABILITY CORPORATION, SO AS TO PROVIDE FOR THE CONTINUED OPERATION OF THE SAID FACILITY, AND FOR MATTERS RELATED THERETO. – Log No. 165

- Chairman Chris Bowers stated he did speak with Councilman Whitehurst before the meeting and he wanted to make it clear that his biggest concerns were not necessarily about the group who has the proposal and not about the Performing Arts Center being successful. He stated Councilman Whitehurst's concern is the physical structure that is in place and the viability of that structure.
- Mr. Roper stated we had second reading at the February council meeting and Council brought this log item back to the Committee for further discussion. He stated we invited the production company to come to this meeting but Mr. Williams has a family member who is having a medical procedure done and could not make it this evening. He stated Ms. Woods, who is a PCPAC Board member, is present. He stated his perspective is he believes we will never have a good functioning board at the PAC if we don't have a good, steady and functioning presence. He stated from staff perspective, we tried the volunteer board as the main driver and it did not work. Mr. Roper asked if Council had any other questions.
- Vice Chairman Costner stated we have an issue to figure out where we are based on our ordinance with the existing board. For example, are they following the guidelines, are the bylaws in place and are the filings up to date. He stated that is separate from what they are supposed to be talking about tonight. He stated tonight we are supposed to be talking about the management company managing that facility. Vice Chairman Costner stated the other issue that seems to be a part of the conversation is that this is not the only company that qualified, it's the only company that responded. He stated he feels confident that based on what they presented, and he is in support of JWPR Holdings moving forward for third reading. He stated he feels there needs to be a separate discussion on if we are in line on ordinances with our boards and commissions.
- Councilman Henry Wilson stated he met with the Dacusville Community Center. He stated this center was purchased from the School District around 8 years ago. He stated they have a 501-C3 board that acts as the Administration. He stated they have taken a fairly distressed building and raised money from various sources, grants, etc. Councilman Wilson went into discussion on the Dacusville Community Center board. He stated they have had more shows put on there, by a volunteer group, than we have had at the PAC. He stated an earnest and strong interest of the community is why they are where they are at today. After more discussion on the Dacusville Community Center board start-up, Councilman Wilson stated the PAC has a much larger capacity to be a community anchor in the arts. He stated let's help this group out and show that we have a backbone to move forward on some things, even though we may not have all the details worked out in advance.
- Chairman Bowers stated one of the things that himself and Councilman Whitehurst talked about, regarding the structure, was the structure behind the proposals. He stated he is shocked that there was only one request out there. He stated he feels that is a separate topic. He stated he agrees with Councilman Wilson in the fact that Dacusville Community Center can do it. He stated the big difference is that the government stepped out of the way in Dacusville.
- After much more discussion, Chairman Bowers asked if there was any other discussion.
  - Seeing none, Vice Chairman Costner made a motion recommending this Log item to come out of Committee for Third Reading. Motion was seconded by Councilman Henry Wilson and carried (4-1), with Councilman Alex Saitta opposed.
- ❖ **Vice Chairman Costner made a motion recommending this Log item to come out of Committee for Third Reading. Motion was seconded by Councilman Henry Wilson and carried (4-1), with Councilman Alex Saitta opposed.**
- **Council Action on Log No. 165:** Vice Chairman Costner made a motion recommending this Log item to come out of Committee for Third Reading. Motion was seconded by Councilman Henry Wilson and carried (4-1), with Councilman Alex Saitta opposed.

### **PUBLIC HEARING AND THIRD READING IN TITLE ONLY OF AN ORDINANCE No. 596 TO PROVIDE FOR THE LEASE OF THE PICKENS COUNTY PERFORMING ARTS CENTER TO JWPR HOLDINGS, LLC, A SOUTH CAROLINA LIMITED LIABILITY CORPORATION, SO AS TO PROVIDE FOR THE CONTINUED OPERATION OF THE SAID FACILITY, AND FOR MATTERS RELATED THERETO.**

Chairman Bowers gavelled the Public Hearing for Ordinance 596 into order and called for comment. Seeing none, Chairman Bowers closed the Public Hearing.

Chairman Chris Bowers stated no second is required of this motion as it comes from a recommendation from the Committee. Chairman Chris Bowers asked if there was any discussion:

- Councilman Alex Saitta went into discussion on the 2019 Tax Return for the Foundation Board. He stated the board had \$70,165 in their bank account and now there is only \$29,119 in the account. He asked if anyone has actually looked at the records.
- Vice Chairman Costner stated the board has been doing some fundraising, but stated this is a discussion on specifically JWPR Holdings, LLC. He stated this discussion should not have anything to do with the Foundation board. He stated once the 501-C3 signed the paper with the Secretary of State, it became a separate entity from the County.
- Councilman Alex Saitta disagreed with Vice Chairman Costner. He stated the county gave this board \$68,000 in seed money, and that was taxpayer money, so we have an oversight responsibility and that's why he is questioning this. He stated the Foundation's tax return is six months overdue. He asked the Administration to look at the records to see what is going on.
- After much more discussion, Vice Chairman Costner asked Mr. Roper if we have a right, as a Council, to say to the board we would like to look into their stuff.
- Mr. Roper referred to Mr. Hendricks, stating the 501-C3 is independent board. He stated Council's ordinance passed down to being a fundraiser and is a singular entity unto itself. He stated once it was given the money, we do not control them. Mr. Hendricks stated Council does control one of the things, which was required in the by-laws, that we approve any changes made to the by-laws. He stated he has not seen the by-laws, but was able to get a copy of viewer bylaws, which they are appointing their own members.
- Councilman Whitehurst stated what the board is going into now is operations. He stated when they start getting involved in funding shows, then now we have changed from a fundraising to an operating. He stated this is not in the by-laws. He stated he has a concern with the entire process that we have gone through here. He asked if we have a temporary Memorandum of Understanding with JWPR Holdings.
- Mr. Hendricks stated yes.
- Councilman Whitehurst asked who gave authority to enter into the Memorandum of Understanding and who on Council gave that direction.
- Chairman Bowers asked what is the process for the Administrator to sign a memorandum of understanding with anyone.
- Mr. Roper stated he sees this as inherent in the day-to-day operations of the county. He stated in this situation, he had a facility with a board that was not functioning and the facility was failing. He notified Council that he was going to put this bid out for RFP. He stated in terms of the temporary arrangement, he had a facility that was not working and he needs to daily make it operate.
  - After much more discussion between Council and the Administrator, Councilman Ensley Feemster made a motion to move this back to Committee for further discussion with the Foundation Board present. Motion was seconded by Councilman Trey Whitehurst. Chairman Bowers asked if there was any discussion on this motion.
    - Vice Chairman Costner stated he would like to have a discussion in the Committee of the Whole regarding our 501-C3 Boards. He stated he feels this is a separate issue.
    - Councilman Alex Saitta went into discussion on this topic, stating he feels we should look at all of the 501-C3's that we deal with and make sure they are in good standing before we give them any money.
  - Seeing no other discussion on this motion, the motion dies (3-3), with Chairman Bowers, Vice Chairman Costner and Councilman Wilson opposed.
- Chairman Bowers asked if there was any other discussion over Ordinance 596.

- Councilman Wilson went into discussion on his thoughts for this Ordinance. He stated let's get out of the way, and let these guys run this facility. He stated a 501-C3 is individual and independent of us.
- After more discussion, Chairman Bowers called for vote on Ordinance 596. Motion carried (4-2), with Councilman Saitta and Councilman Whitehurst opposed.

**UDSO – Log No. 141**

- Mr. Roper stated he has asked Chris Brink, the Pickens County Director of Community Development, to come brief Council on the Comprehensive Planning Process and where Pickens County stands in that process. He stated Council has a copy in their agenda packet of the state law on why we have to do this.
- Mr. Chris Brink presented the following presentation to Council. Discussion included, but was not limited to:

- **Why a Comprehensive Plan?**

- Updating our understanding of the County's current conditions
- Take an opportunity to better understand what the County's residents, businesses, and leaders want to see in the future
- Create a tool to ensure that future changes are guided by the community's vision
- Coordinate plans with the cities and counties within and adjacent to Pickens County
- The last Comprehensive plan was written to plan for the period 2010-2030 (with an update in 2016).
- In South Carolina, Comprehensive Plans must be reviewed at least one every five years, and updated every ten years (South Carolina Local Government Comprehensive Planning Enabling Act of 1994)
- Pickens County population growth has outpaced expectations
  - Population estimates show Pickens has grown approximately 1,140 people per year, 2015-2018
  - The previous plan projected growth of approximately 440 people per year, 2015-2020

- **Components of One Pickens County Comprehensive Plan**

- Elements include the following topics:
  - Population
  - Economic Development
  - Natural Resources
  - Cultural Resources
  - Community Facilities
  - Housing
  - Land Use
  - Transportation
  - Priority Investment

**ONE PICKENS COUNTY  
PLANNING PROCESS**



- **Next Steps**

- Prepare draft plan elements
- Refine Future Development Map as appropriate
- Develop Investment Priority Element

- **After the Plan**

- Comprehensive Plans are not meant to be static documents or “Coffee Table” books
- Comprehensive Plans are mandated by South Carolina Law to include achievable goals and objectives with attainable timelines
- May propose ordinance changes or amendments, certain community projects, location of community facilities, other measures for protection of resources, etc.

- **Possible Recommended Objectives**

- Review of all development ordinances for consistency with the Comprehensive Plan Document
- Study of measures for the preservation and protection of the SC Highway 11 Scenic Corridor (SC Highway 11 Scenic Byway)

- Council had questions regarding the following:
  - Marketing on the Comprehensive Plan survey completed by citizens
  - Evaluating 10-year-old plan



- **No action taken by the committee.**

### **Council Action on Log No. 141: No Action Taken by the Committee.**

#### **SCENIC HIGHWAY OVERLAY – Log No. 157**

- Mr. Roper stated Chip Bentley, Appalachian Council of Government Deputy Director, is here with us to talk to Council about what they would propose to do on studying the corridor and making future recommendations to Council on what we should do about maintaining Highway 11.
- Mr. Brink gave Council an overview on adopting a scenic overlay ordinance for Highway 11. He went into detail discussion on design guidelines, signage standards, density guidelines and illumination standards. He stated Pickens County is unique in the 112 miles of the Corridor. He stated 29 miles of the Corridor are in Pickens County. Mr. Brink stated we do not have any development Ordinance in place to help maintain Highway 11.
- Mr. Bentley, Mr. Roper and Council went into detailed discussion that included, but was not limited to:
  - Looking into inventory on Highway 11
  - Cheat sheet on standards for Highway 11 // planner's toolbox
  - Presentation of photos of Highway 11 in Greenville County, Oconee County and Pickens County
  - Infrastructure problems
  - Beautification problem and maintaining beauty on Highway 11
  - Thoughts on the Planning Commission temporarily reviewing new development/construction on Highway 11
  - Looking into no restrictions, minimal restrictions, etc.
  - Staff look into developing proposal for Council
  - Thoughts on heightened review in the interim
- Seeing no other discussion, Chairman Bowers moved to the next Committee log item.
- ❖ **No Action Taken by the Committee.**

### **Council Action on Log No. 157: No Action Taken by the Committee.**

#### **COMMITTEE OF 99 – Log No. 163**

- Mr. Roper gave Council information on the South Carolina American Revolution Sestercentennial Commission. He stated in 2026, it will be the 250<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of the Nation. He stated the general assembly performed the SC American Revolution Sestercentennial Commission two years ago. He presented the budget request to Council, and stated they are asking the state to give them a budget of \$1.46 million dollars. He stated this number includes Education and Promotion, Product Development and Administration costs.
- Mr. Roper stated we were the first County to form our Committee of 99 on December 7, 2020. He stated on January 22, 2021, the South Carolina American Revolution Sestercentennial Commission adopted Pickens County resolution and approved Pickens County Committee of 99 as the first county committee formed in the state. Mr. Roper stated tonight, he wanted to talk to council about how to determine a method of appointment for members to the local Committee of 99. He stated that options include:
  - Formal application and appointment by County Council
  - Nominations from public
  - Volunteer / ad hoc
  - Council appoints chairperson, committee is volunteer / ad hoc
- He stated the next meeting of the state commission is April 23, 2021 and he would like to go ahead and have a chair person appointed to this board who can attend the meeting and report.
- Vice Chairman Costner stated we met with the Historical Society a year ago about Fort Prince George and we haven't heard any updates from them since. He stated his thought is we create a foundation board of citizens.
- After more discussion, Chairman Bowers stated someone passionate about Fort Prince George should be on the Committee.
- Councilman Wilson stated you have to find the right people for this board. He stated in politics, you expand the leadership so the more people we can give a role and some accountability, he feels it will work out better.
- Mr. Roper stated we have received several names of citizens who will be a great fit for this board, but it is up to Council to determine the method of appointment.
- After much more discussion between Council, Mr. Roper stated he could bring council a core group of 6-8 people who are interested in this committee.
- Chairman Bowers stated it sounds to him like Council would like to get a core group of people who are interested and let's see if we can get a committee started. He stated he likes the idea of having young people on this board.
- Mr. Roper stated if anyone has anyone specific who is interested, please send them to himself or Meagan.
- ❖ **No Action Taken by the Committee.**

### **Council Action on Log No. 163: No Action Taken by the Committee.**

#### **ADJOURN:**

Hearing no further Committee business, Chairman Chris Bowers called for a motion to adjourn. Motion was made by Councilman Henry Wilson, seconded by Vice Chairman Roy Costner and carried unanimously (5-0), with Councilman Alex Saitta abstained due to being absent from the room.

### **COUNCIL CORRESPONDENCE:**

Chairman Chris Bowers announced the following:

- The next Committee of the Whole meeting will be on Monday, March 15, 2021 at 6:00 p.m. in the Main Conference Room of the Administration Building.
- The next Council Meeting will be held on Monday, April 5, 2021 at 6:30 p.m. in Council Chambers of the Administration Building.
- Chairman Bowers reminded Council to be cautious with the County Emails. He stated there are a lot of phishing emails being sent out and asked Council to be cautious when opening and responding to emails.

Chairman Bowers called for other council correspondence.

Seeing no other correspondence, Chairman Bowers announced moving to Motion Period and New Business.

### **MOTION PERIOD AND NEW BUSINESS:**

Chairman Chris Bowers opened the floor for motion period and new business.

- Vice Chairman Roy Costner made a motion to add 501-C3 Boards that Pickens County currently supports to the consent agenda. Councilman Trey Whitehurst seconded the motion and carried unanimously (6-0).

Seeing no discussion, Chairman Bowers closed the floor.

### **PRESENTATION OF ANNUAL UPDATE BY THE APPALACHIAN COUNCIL OF GOVERNMENTS**

Steve Pelissier, the Executive Director of the SC Appalachian Council of Governments, presented Council with a copy of their 2020 Annual Report. He thanked Councilman Ensley Feemster and Chairman Roy Costner for their service on the Board of Directors of the Council of Governments, as well as Ms. Margaret Thompson and Mayor Fletcher Perry as a citizen member of the board.

Mr. Pelissier provided an overview of the report to include: the many services provided to Pickens County and other local governments; a review of the return on investment that equated to \$82.52 to \$1 for Pickens County in 2020 that include funding from Grants, Economic and Community Development, transportation planning, infrastructure development, resource management, senior advocacy and workforce development. Mr. Pelissier also discussed the services that are forthcoming in 2021. He thanked Council for their support to the Appalachian Council of Government.

### **CONSIDERATION OF A RESOLUTION 2021-05 AUTHORIZING THE APPALACHIAN COUNCIL OF GOVERNMENTS TO UNDERTAKE A STUDY OF CHEROKEE FOOTHILLS SCENIC HIGHWAY 11 ON BEHALF OF PICKENS COUNTY AND TO MAKE RECOMMENDATIONS FOR ITS CONTINUED AND FUTURE PRESERVATION, PROTECTION, AND USE.**

- Mr. Roper stated this came about in the marketing study and at the Council Work Session in January. He stated the idea being staff would like to look at the Highway 11 corridor and what the long-term vision is there. He stated we are trying to look at what the rules would be going forward, so we can respect the private property rights and respect the beautiful area of the county. He stated

this resolution would allow ACOG to undertake the study. He stated they have outlined a work plan where over six months, they are going to take a significant amount of public input and come back with some proposals and different ideas for Council to study. He stated ACOG has given us great consideration and they're basically going to charge expense only, estimated around \$7500. He stated this will come to Council as recommendations only.

- Councilman Whitehurst asked if staff has met with ACOG. He stated we want to protect the area, but not infringe on people's rights at the same time. He stated he would like more information on the in-depth study they are talking about.
- Mr. Roper stated at the last Committee meeting, a representative from ACOG came and that was one of the things they talked about at the meeting. He stated they want to tailor a set of recommendations that are particular to Pickens County personality. He stated Chris Brink, planning staff, has also sat down with him on this. He stated he feels the investment is minimal for the value we may get back.
- Councilman Saitta stated there are really only three choices here. He stated you can freeze things as they are, you can allow the owners to develop in any way they want, or you can do something in between. He did a hand vote with the citizens to see what they would choose to do. He stated he read the proposal and it will really come down to those three choices. Councilman Saitta stated he feels Highway 11 is so unique.
- Vice Chairman Costner stated he agrees, he would like to keep it how it is and preserve it. He stated by doing nothing, then that means there is no protection at all.
- Chairman Bowers stated having clear legal guidance from the start is valuable.

After much more discussion, Chairman Bowers asked for a motion to consider Resolution 2021-05.

- Motion was made by Councilman Ensley Feemster, and seconded by Vice Chairman Roy Costner. Seeing no discussion, motion carried (5-1), with Councilman Alex Saitta opposed.

## **2021 COUNCIL GOALS AND OBJECTIVES**

Mr. Roper provided a brief overview of the 2021 Council Goals and Objectives from the discussion from the Council Work Session on Saturday, January 30<sup>th</sup>. The discussion included, but was not limited to:

- **Review of 2020 Council Goals and Objectives**
- **2021 Council Goals and Objectives**
  - **Mission Statement**
    - Pickens County Government is dedicated to providing timely, efficient, courteous and professional services to all citizens of Pickens County. We will make decisions that promote the best interests of the greater community, and develop the resources, policies, plans and procedures to effectively address public needs. We will pursue and support those programs and projects that best uphold the priorities of Pickens County Council.
  - **Branding Statement**
    - "It was a land of smokehouses and sweet-potato patches, of fried pies and dried fruit and of lazy big bumblebees buzzing in the sun – a country of deep dark pools, of the soaring spirit, of little rooms stored with apples...an ideal country for dreamers; a brooding great country that had caught the sight of God." Those were the words of Ben Robertson describing the Pickens of the early 1900's. Since then much has changed; but thankfully, much has also stayed the same.

Pickens is a unique place. It simply feels different here. The land speaks to the people and the people respect the place. There is an energy here and this energy is drawn from the land and the deep history that it holds. It's an energy that has passed from the Native Americans who once roamed the landscape to the fiercely patriotic colonial ancestors, and beyond. This energy planted a seed of independence and true grit that has shaped the county for generations.

Decades ago, progress arrived and called people from the mountains into the towns dotted at her feet. These towns were once epicenters of trade and commerce, evidenced by the rail lines running alongside bustling town centers. For a time, the towns became quiet. But no longer. The energy has reemerged, breathing life back into main streets. Today, innovation and modernization seep from the halls of educational institutions, drawing visionaries who crave progress amid a backdrop of unmatched natural beauty. It has been said, "there is something in these hills."

- **Core Values**
  - Community
  - Service
  - Communication
  - Protection
  - Collaboration
  - Innovation
  
- **Goals for 2021:**
  1. Provide Efficient Essential Services
  2. Protect and Enhance our Unique Nature
  3. Promote a Culture of Public Service
  4. Deliver Prompt and Effective Emergency Response
  5. Strengthen our Resilient Local Economy

**FIRST READING IN TITLE ONLY OF AN ORDINANCE AMENDING ARTICLE I OF CHAPTER 34 OF THE PICKENS COUNTY CODE OF ORDINANCES SO AS TO PROVIDE REMEDIES AND PENALTIES FOR ILLEGAL LITTER AND DUMPING IN THE UNINCORPORATED AREAS OF PICKENS COUNTY, AND MATTERS RELATED THERETO.**

Chairman Bowers asked for a motion to constitute first reading in title only of this Ordinance.

- Motion was made by Councilman Henry Wilson, and seconded by Councilman Ensley Feemster. Chairman Bowers asked if there was any discussion.
  - Vice Chairman Roy Costner moved to amend the motion, stating he would like to send this to the Committee for further discussion after first reading in title only. Motion was seconded by Councilman Ensley Feemster and carried unanimously (6-0).
- Seeing no other discussion, the motion carried unanimously (6-0).

**CONSENT AGENDA**

1. 2021 Recreation Funding Requests – *Committee of the Whole*
2. 2021 Accommodations Tax Funding Requests – *Committee of the Whole*
3. Pickens County Performing Arts Center Foundation Board – *Committee of the Whole*
4. Emergency Services Update – *Committee of the Whole*
5. 501-C3 Boards that Pickens County does business with – *Committee of the Whole*

- Motion was made by Vice Chairman Roy Costner, seconded by Councilman Trey Whitehurst and carried unanimously (6-0).

**EXECUTIVE SESSION: S.C. Code of Laws, Section 30-4-70 (a):**

Chairman Chris Bowers called for a motion to convene into Executive Session as defined by S.C. Code of Laws, Section 30-4-70 (a). Chairman Bowers further stated that each issue would be discussed as the Law provides.

- Motion was made by Councilman Ensley Feemster, seconded by Vice Chairman Roy Costner and carried unanimously (6-0), to convene in executive session for the stated purposes after a five-minute recess.

Contractual Issues- Section 30-4-70 (a) (5)

- Economic Development Update

Personnel – Section 30-4-70 (a)(1)

- Pinnacle Performer Award

Boards and Commissions – Section 30-4-70 (a) (1)

- Beautification Committee

**ACTION AS NEEDED VIA EXECUTIVE SESSION ITEMS:**

Chairman Chris Bowers called the Public Session back to Order and advised the following:

Contractual Issues- Section 30-4-70 (a) (5)

- Economic Development Update – **No Action Taken**

Personnel – Section 30-4-70 (a)(1)

- Pinnacle Performer Award – **No Action Taken**

Boards and Commissions – Section 30-4-70 (a) (1)

- Beautification Committee – **Councilman Trey Whitehurst made a motion to appoint Michael Utley to the Beautification Committee in the District 2 at large seat. Motion was seconded by Councilman Ensley Feemster and carried unanimously (6-0).**

**ADJOURN:**

Hearing no further Council business, Chairman Chris Bowers called for a motion to adjourn. Motion was made by Vice Chairman Roy Costner, seconded by Councilman Ensley Feemster and carried unanimously (6-0). Pickens County Council stood adjourned at 9:17 p.m.

Respectively Submitted:

Approved:

---

Meagan Nations, Clerk to Council

---

Chris Bowers, Chairman of County Council