

Regular Pickens County Council Meeting

July 12, 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 July 7, 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 July 12, 2021 to order and welcomed those in attendance. Councilman Trey Whitehurst led the Invocation, and Veteran Samuel Richard Bolding led the Pledge of Alliance.

Following the Pledge of Allegiance, Council presented a Certificate in Honor to Samuel Bolding, thanking him 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. Melanie McLane: Ms. McLane addressed Council on the Code Enforcement Issues at 1781 Six Mile Highway. Her objective this evening was to continue the conversation. Ms. McLane gave detailed information on the situation, and thanked Council for their time and willingness to serve the community.
2. Lori Osborne: Ms. Osborne addressed Council on the Comprehensive Plan that is now being developed for Pickens County by an out-of-state company. She went into detailed discussion on how if this plan follows the template of other cities and counties, there will be a section entitled land use. Ms. Osborne also discussed the 646 signed petitions from Pickens County Residents asking Council to sign a resolution agreeing to hold our private property rights first and foremost when reviewing and approving the Comprehensive Plan.
3. Maggie Erickson: Ms. Erickson addressed Council on the Code Enforcement Issues at 1781 Six Mile Highway, which is adjacent to her property & Daniel High School. Ms. Erickson gave detailed information on the situation, and the progress made by Code Enforcement since they last talked during Public Forum on June 7. She thanked Council for their time and asked to have the peaceful enjoyment of our property restored, as well as to help protect property values, and to protect the community at large.

4. Johnnelle Raines: Ms. Raines addressed Council regarding a Property Rights Resolution. She stated she has turned over 646 signed petitions from Pickens County residents in favor of the property rights resolution. She also went into detail regarding the Comprehensive Plan, asking if the comprehensive plan will include language that protects our property rights from infringement. Ms. Raines also discussed the Pickens Doodle Trail.
5. Margaret Thompson: Ms. Thompson gave Council a detailed explanation of their progress at Clemson Paw Partners Clinic. She stated they are financially solid, with no debt, and in good shape. She stated she is disappointed they have only been supported by the Clemson area, and the word is just not getting out to the rest of the county. She asked staff if they could help spread the word on social media for the remainder of the county.
6. Elaine Masceri: Ms. Masceri addressed Council regarding the Animal Abuse Ordinances. She went into detailed discussion regarding her issue this evening concerns the Journal Interview in June between Capt. James & reporter Gregg Oliver.
7. Allan Quinn: Mr. Quinn addressed Council regarding Economic Development in Pickens County. He stated if Council does not take proactive action soon, we will have undesirable jobs and housing here. He also gave Council more information regarding the Freedom Rally hosted by Pickens County Republican Party, on Saturday, July 17 from 5pm-9pm.
8. Anselm Salins: Mr. Salins addressed Council regarding our Constitution. He gave Council information on his background and stated he appreciated the prayer before the meeting. He went into detail discussion regarding let us as people, not change things to somebody coming from outside, just because there's a lot of pressure.
9. Diane Hardy: Ms. Hardy addressed Council regarding raising awareness for Regional Government. She gave Council information regarding the benefits, and disadvantages.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES:

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

- June 3, 2021 Budget Work Session
- June 7, 2021 Regular-Called Council Meeting
- June 14, 2021 Special-Called Meeting
- Motion was made by Councilman Ensley Feemster, and seconded by Vice Chairman Roy Costner. Chairman Bowers asked if there was any discussion.
 - Councilman Alex Saitta amended the motion, stating he would like to add the following to the June 3rd Budget Work Session minutes, "The motion reallocated \$130,878 of the Sheriff's Office 2021-2022 Budget Request to fund two Litter Control Officers. The Sheriff's 2021-2022 Funding was \$15,761, 184 or a year over year increase of \$396, 898." Councilman Henry Wilson seconded the motion and it carried unanimously (6-0).
- Seeing no other discussion, the motion 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 36 active cases reported in Pickens County, within the last 14 days. He stated there have been three hundred four (304) deaths in Pickens County due to COVID-19. He advised a total of 19,106 confirmed cases of COVID-19 have been reported in Pickens County since March 20th, 2020.

Mr. Roper gave Council information on the DHEC Vaccine Statistics. He stated 38,706, or approximately 35.6%, of Pickens County residents have completed vaccinations.

He stated the Pickens County Vaccination Clinic has moved locations, and is now being held at the Pickens County Museum of Art and History at 307 Johnson St. in Pickens, SC. He stated the clinic is on Tuesday from and Thursdays from 9:00 a.m. – 2:00 p.m. All appointments can be made through DHEC's Vaxlocator website and walk-ins are welcome.

Pickens County Capital Improvement Plan Update

Mr. Roper gave Council more information on the Capital Improvement Plan and the status of items that have been approved by Council. He went into detailed information on a spreadsheet. He stated he will be updating Council monthly on these capital purchases and their status.

National Association of Counties (NACo) High Performance Leadership

Mr. Roper stated this Leadership program is a 12-week online program with content provided by industry leading executives. He stated the curriculum provides best practices in leadership, organizational development and change management, negotiation and collaboration, effective business communication, and how to deliver increased value from high performance county management. He stated the Class of 2021 Pickens County Employees include Katie Corbin from the Assessor's Office, Austin Dunn from Information Systems, Trad Julian from Purchasing and Jamie Reynolds from Roads & Bridges. He stated the Class of 2020 included participants from Administration, Emergency Management, Parks, Recreation & Tourism and Community Relations.

Pickens County Solid Waste Update

Mr. Roper gave a brief update on Solid Waste in Pickens County. He mentioned the Sort Facility is around 60% complete and weather permitting, the pad should be complete by Friday, July 16th. He presented pictures to Council on the sort facility.

Pick Up Pickens and Pickens County Litter Sweep

Mr. Roper gave an update on Pick Up Pickens Litter Initiative and the Pickens County Litter Sweep.

Litter Control Officer Job Positions

Mr. Roper stated staff has developed the Litter Control Officer Job Positions and the jobs are posted live on the County website.

Code Enforcement Issue on Six Mile Highway

Mr. Roper gave an update on the Code Enforcement Issue on Six Mile Highway.

Road User Fee Recent Action by Supreme Court

Mr. Roper stated he looks forward to talking to Council about the potential solutions to that issue next week at the Committee of the Whole meeting and to get a legal briefing by the attorney at that time.

Mr. Roper asked if Council had any questions for him.

Council had questions for Staff that included:

- Writing a letter to the Magistrate's Office regarding the Code Enforcement Issue on Six Mile Hwy
- Loose noise ordinance
- Clemson Paw Partner's on County Website
- Doodle Trail in Pickens County
- Library's final spending figure for fiscal year ending June 30th

COMMITTEE REPORT: No Committee Report.

COUNCIL CORRESPONDENCE:

Chairman Chris Bowers announced the following:

- The next Committee of the Whole meeting will be on Monday, July 19, 2021 at 6:00 p.m. in the Main Conference Room of the Administration Building.
- The next Council Meeting will be held on Monday, August 16, 2021 at 6:30 p.m. in Council Chambers of the Administration Building.
- An informational table is set up in the Lobby this evening with more information about current vacancies and upcoming openings on Pickens County Board and Commissions. If you are interested in serving on a board, please stop by the table or please see the Clerk to Council, Meagan Nations, for more information. The next After Hours Opportunity Fair will take place on Monday, August 16th, 2021 from 5:00 pm – 6:30 pm, which is before our next Council Meeting. Please make plans to attend, come network, and learn more about Pickens County Boards and Commissions. If you have any questions, please see the Clerk after this meeting.

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.

- Councilman Trey Whitehurst made a motion to add Property Rights Resolution to the Consent Agenda. Motion was seconded by Vice Chairman Roy Costner and carried unanimously (6-0).

Seeing no discussion, Chairman Bowers closed the floor.

CONSIDERATION OF A RESOLUTION 2021-19 RECOGNIZING AUGUST 2021 AS NATIONAL IMMUNIZATION AWARENESS MONTH.

Chairman Bowers asked for a motion to consider Resolution 2021-19.

- Motion was made by Councilman Ensley Feemster, and seconded by Chairman Chris Bowers. Chairman Bowers asked if there was any discussion.
 - Councilman Alex Saitta stated he opposes this resolution for three reasons, stating whether or not someone should be vaccinated is a decision between an individual and his/her doctor. He stated he supports recognizing outstanding citizens and notable employees, but these declarations like boat safety week or emergency medical services week improves nothing and they are just symbolic. He stated third, we have put a lot of things on the back burner and he thinks those things should be on the agenda, not resolutions like this. He stated he does not support this for those reasons.

- Councilman Whitehurst stated he thinks we do resolutions in support of a lot of actions community-wide, but this specific resolution he does have a problem with. He stated there's a lot of religious reasons and a lot of reasons why people might not want to get vaccinated and he feels promoting that is an individual choice.
 - After more discussion, Vice Chairman Roy Costner stated he had COVID and he has received the COVID vaccination, and he does not want to get sick like that again, but he feels it is a personal choice and he stated he does not know that he can support this because of the way it is written.
 - Chairman Bowers stated the resolution title itself has national immunization awareness month, and he think it is important to bring awareness over certain issues. He stated a resolution makes people aware. Chairman Bowers stated nowhere in the resolution does it say you need to go get your vaccine right now. He stated it may lead you down that path but he agrees the wording isn't the best but he thinks there is nothing wrong with having the conversation. He stated he does want to make the intent of this resolution is to purely bring awareness because immunizations aren't right for everyone for various reasons.
 - Vice Chairman Costner stated he doesn't think the government should be of any business on telling somebody whether they should get vaccinated or not, and what the majority of the people are going to hear is that is what we're saying because of the political environment that were in today.
 - Councilman Henry Wilson stated the only issue he has is where it says, "Whereas everyone should get a flu vaccine..." and the part about particular vaccines.
- After much more discussion, Councilman Henry Wilson made a motion to table this resolution. Motion was seconded by Councilman Ensley Feemster. Chairman Bowers asked if there was any discussion.
 - Councilman Trey Whitehurst stated he does not feel we need table this resolution, as he feels there is a different of opinion here. He stated it's not the political pressure, it's the role of government telling people what they have to do. He sated we are going to fight this on a national level and he does not think we need to drag it into the county and be a part of a national push. He stated either we are going to vote to approve or vote not to approve.
 - Councilman Henry Wilson stated the reason he was tabling is to give people the opportunity not to have to vote for something that is completely sensible.
 - The motion failed (2-4), with Councilman Alex Saitta, Vice Chairman Roy Costner, Chairman Chris Bowers and Councilman Trey Whitehurst opposed.
 - Councilman Henry Wilson made a motion to take out the sentence that says "Whereas, everyone should get a flu vaccine every year before the end of October...", and the sentence that says "Whereas, the coronavirus vaccine is recommended to prevent a resurgence of COVID-19..." Chairman Bowers seconded the motion. Seeing no other discussion, the motion died (3-3), with Vice Chairman Costner, Councilman Saitta and Councilman Whitehurst opposed.
 - Chairman Bowers called a vote for the original resolution on hand. The motion failed (2-4), with Councilman Alex Saitta, Councilman Trey Whitehurst, Vice Chairman Roy Costner and Councilman Henry Wilson opposed.

CONSIDERATION OF A PLAN FROM STAFF FOR FY 2022 COMPENSATION ADJUSTMENTS WITHIN EXISTING COMPENSATION PLAN UTILIZING FUNDS (1%) PREVIOUSLY ALLOCATED BY COUNCIL.

Mr. Roper stated during the budget process, Council was kind enough to recognize the cost of living and provide county employees with a 2% cost of living adjustment that can be effective as of now. He stated one idea that Council had and recommended to staff was to allocate the other 1% for staff to develop a plan on how we could use that to address inequities in our pay system. He stated the Memorandum that Council has in front of them is from the HR Director has about 90% of the cases whose people's salaries are FOIA exempt. He stated FOIA would not allow you to know what that individual makes because it is below a certain threshold so we would ask that you not get into those kind of granular details here unless you want to go back into Executive Session.

- After more discussion, Councilman Trey Whitehurst stated he would like to make a motion to move this to the Committee for further discussion. Motion was seconded by Councilman Henry Wilson and carried unanimously (6-0).

THIRD READING OF AN ORDINANCE NO. 601 AUTHORIZING THE EXECUTION AND ACCEPTANCE OF A LEASE FOR LONG SHOALS ROADSIDE PARK.

Chairman Bowers asked for a motion to constitute third reading of Ordinance 601.

- Motion was made by Councilman Ensley Feemster and seconded by Vice Chairman Roy Costner. Chairman Bowers asked if there was any discussion.
 - Councilman Henry Wilson asked a question regarding section seven of the lease.
 - Councilman Trey Whitehurst stated this is the third reading of this lease and he isn't sure we are ready to pass this.
 - Mr. Hendricks explained the several issues with the lease.
- After more discussion, Vice Chairman Costner made a motion to move third reading to the next Council Meeting. Motion was seconded by Chairman Chris Bowers. Chairman Bowers stated he would like to see the changes made and for Council to be kept up to speed on this issue. Seeing no other discussion, the motion carried unanimously (6-0).

THIRD READING OF AN ORDINANCE NO. 600 TO DEVELOP A JOINTLY OWNED AND OPERATED INDUSTRIAL/BUSINESS PARK IN CONJUNCTION WITH OCONEE COUNTY, SUCH INDUSTRIAL/BUSINESS PARK TO BE GEOGRAPHICALLY LOCATED IN OCONEE COUNTY AND ESTABLISHED PURSUANT TO SECTION 4- 1-170 OF THE CODE OF LAWS OF SOUTH CAROLINA, 1976, AS AMENDED; TO PROVIDE FOR A WRITTEN AGREEMENT WITH OCONEE COUNTY TO PROVIDE FOR THE EXPENSES OF THE PARK, THE PERCENTAGE OF REVENUE APPLICATION, AND THE DISTRIBUTION OF FEES IN LIEU OF AD VALOREM TAXATION; AND OTHER MATTERS RELATED THERETO (PROJECT RISE).

Chairman Bowers asked for a motion to constitute third reading of Ordinance 600.

- Motion was made by Vice Chairman Roy Costner, and seconded by Councilman Trey Whitehurst. Seeing no other discussion, motion carried unanimously (6-0).

CONSENT AGENDA

- 1. Property Rights Resolution – *Committee of the Whole (as added during Motion Period and New Business)*
 - o Motion was made by Vice Chairman Roy Costner, 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 Councilman Henry Wilson, seconded by Councilman Ensley Feemster and carried unanimously (6-0). Pickens County Council stood adjourned at 7:54 p.m.

Respectively Submitted:

Approved:

Meagan Nations, Clerk to Council

Chris Bowers, Chairman of County Council