

Regular Pickens County Council Meeting

March 1, 2022

6:30 PM

County Council met in regular session, in the Auditorium of the County Administration Facility, with Chairman Chris Bowers presiding. Final agendas, bearing date, time, and location of meeting were mailed to members of council and local news media on February 28, 2022.

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
- Les Hendricks, Contract Attorney
- Meagan Nations, Clerk to Council

WELCOME AND CALL TO ORDER:

Chairman Chris Bowers called the meeting of March 1st, 2022 to order and welcomed those in attendance. Councilman Alex Saitta led the Invocation and Pledge of Allegiance.

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. Jerry Knox: Mr. Knox addressed Council that he is concerned about the standards of bringing garbage into Pickens County.
2. Bryan Ghiswhite: Mr. Ghiswhite addressed Council that he, along with his neighbors and Pickens County taxpayers on Paradise Cove Rd. area, are concerned regarding a Female Drug Rehab House on his residential street.
3. Deborah Hudson: Ms. Hudson addressed with Council regarding the Comprehensive Plan.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES:

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

- o February 7, 2022 Regular-Called Council Meeting
- o February 22, 2022 Special-Called Council Meeting
- o Motion was made by Councilman Ensley Feemster, and seconded by Councilman Henry Wilson. Seeing no other discussion, the motion carried unanimously (6-0).

ADMINISTRATOR'S REPORT:

COVID-19 Response Briefing

Mr. Roper presented Council with a photo of the yellow jonquils, which bloom around this time each year. He stated last year, they planted one bulb for each person who had passed away in Pickens County. He stated they noticed the jonquils had bloomed again, which reminded us here of those folks in Pickens County.

Pickens County Radio Study

Mr. Roper stated that Tusa Consulting Services will be in Pickens County on Tuesday, March 8 & Wednesday, March 9 to begin work on the radio system study.

Fixing County Roads

Mr. Roper gave an update to Council on the following:

- PCTC 2021 Reclamation and Rehabilitation
- Guardrail Upgrade Project
- PCTC 2022 Preservation Project
- 2022 Pickens County Roadway Rehabilitation Project
- Information on Funds from PCTC and RMF

Pickens County Airport Update

Mr. Roper stated in conjunction with the State Aeronautics Contractor, the Airport Director (today) oversaw the removal of problematic trees on the approach to Runway 23. He stated we have soft opened the new playground at the Airport and the Scoop Ice Cream Shop is opening a satellite location next to the playground. He stated a more formal grand opening will take place once the ice cream shop is open and running.

Highway 11 Corridor Study

Mr. Roper stated a stakeholder meeting will take place on Thursday, March 10 from 5-6:30 p.m. at the Holly Springs Center.

Grant Meadow Overlook & Table Rock Historical Marker Unveiling

Mr. Roper asked Council to save the date for the Grant Meadow Overlook & Table Rock Historical Marker Unveiling on Friday, March 18 at 11:00 a.m.

Council asked Mr. Roper questions that included, but was not limited to:

- Drug Rehab Facility (*public forum input*)
- PCI for Roads
- Litter Control Officers and litter citations
- Status of prison project

COMMITTEE REPORT:

The Committee of the Whole met in Main Conference Room, at the Pickens County Administration Facility, on Tuesday, February 22, 2022. All members of the committee were in attendance with Chairman Chris Bowers presiding. Councilman Trey Whitehurst 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:

County Radio System – Log No. 80

Unified Dispatch Plan from Staff – Log No. 182

- Mr. Roper stated that one of Council's priorities in the American Rescue Funding Act is to update the County Radio System. A request for proposal was published to engage a firm to study the county's current radio system and provide recommendation for needed improvements to provide reliable radio coverage throughout the county. Mr. Roper stated three proposals was received from three different vendors. He stated the Communications Committee (representing all emergency services) disciplines reviewed all three proposals and graded based on past projects, customer references, pricing, completion time frame and technical data. Tusa Consulting Services of Liberty, MO has been preliminarily awarded the bid for the study at a cost of \$40,410. Mr. Roper stated the contract is being reviewed by the County attorney and once completed, it will be signed and work will begin within a month, with a 60-day projected completion.
 - Mr. Roper also gave Council an update regarding a Unified Dispatch plan. He gave a cost overview of the infrastructure costs (renovation/move) in phase 1 and phase 2.
 - After some discussion between Council, Chairman Bowers asked that staff keep Council updated on this process.
- ❖ **No Action Taken by the Committee.**

Council Action on Log No. 80 & 182 – No Action Taken by the Committee

Discussion on an Ordinance for a Referendum regarding Sunday Alcohol Sales in Pickens County

– Log No. 181

- Chairman Chris Bowers stated he has received numerous phone calls over the years on this topic. He stated Pickens, Easley and Clemson have passed Sunday alcohol sales in municipalities. He stated in order for it to pass, it has to go on a referendum for a General Election on an even year.
 - Some Councilmembers had limited discussion that included:
 - Putting on a referendum gives the citizens of Pickens County the power to make that decision
- ❖ **Vice Chairman Roy Costner made a motion to move from Committee to Council meeting for First Reading in Title Only of this Ordinance. Motion was seconded by Councilman Ensley Feemster and carried (5-1), with Councilman Alex Saitta opposed.**

Council Action on Log No. 181 – Vice Chairman Roy Costner made a motion to move from Committee to Council meeting for First Reading in Title Only of this Ordinance. Motion was seconded by Councilman Ensley Feemster and carried (5-1), with Councilman Alex Saitta opposed.

Chairman Bowers stated no second is required as this comes from a recommendation from the Committee.

Councilman Alex Saitta asked when this referendum would take place.

Chairman Bowers stated this referendum would be placed on the ballot in November 2022 if passed by Council.

Seeing no other discussion, this motion carried (5-1), with Councilman Alex Saitta opposed.

Discussion on an Ordinance to Combine Construction Board of Appeals and Zoning Board of Appeals

– Log No. 195

- Attorney Les Hendricks gave Council a detailed update on combining the Construction Board of Appeals

and Zoning Board of Appeals. Council seeks to make county operations and government more efficient and to make volunteer boards more streamlined by reducing unnecessary boards. Council seeks legal guidance on whether the duties of these two boards can be combined and if so, how that will occur. Mr. Hendricks gave Council detailed information in a packet regarding Board of Appeals South Carolina Code, Ordinances, and Purpose. He stated Council has the option to combine the two boards, eliminate either or both boards, or otherwise act as it chooses in regard to the boards. He stated eliminating both boards would not be in the best interest of the County, that the boards serve as another level of examination prior to a upset citizen

- Council and Staff had detailed discussion that included, but was not limited to:
 - Board of Appeals seek Council on decisions involving construction
 - Discussion on both Zoning Board of Appeals and Construction Board of Appeals
- ❖ **Councilman Alex Saitta made a motion to move out of Committee for third reading. Motion was seconded by Councilman Ensley Feemster and carried unanimously (6-0).**

Council Action on Log No. 195 – Councilman Alex Saitta made a motion to move out of Committee for third reading. Motion was seconded by Councilman Ensley Feemster and carried unanimously (6-0).

Chairman Bowers stated no second is required as this comes from a recommendation from the Committee. Seeing no other discussion, motion carried unanimously (6-0).

Council Redistricting – Log No. 194

- Administrator Roper and Council had detailed discussion regarding the previous two drafts option maps, a third new proposal map and a fourth new proposal map, regarding Council redistricting in Pickens County.
 - Questions regarding precincts in Pickens County
 - Different opinions and reasons from Council for redistricting
 - Clemson Area Discussion
- ❖ **Councilman Trey Whitehurst made a motion to move proposal #2 out of Committee for second reading. Motion was seconded by Councilman Ensley Feemster and carried unanimously (6-0).**

Council Action on Log No. 194 – Councilman Trey Whitehurst made a motion to move proposal #2 out of Committee for second reading. Motion was seconded by Councilman Ensley Feemster and carried unanimously (6-0).

Chairman Bowers stated a special-called meeting took place immediately following this Committee meeting and second reading passed at the special-called meeting.

ADJOURN:

Hearing no further Committee 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). Meeting was adjourned at 7:17 p.m.

COUNCIL CORRESPONDENCE:

Chairman Chris Bowers announced the following:

- The Committee of the Whole will be held on Monday, March 21, 2022 at 6:00 PM in the Main Conference Room of the Administration Building.
- The next Council Meeting will be held on Monday, April 4, 2022 at 6:30 p.m. in Council Chambers of the Administration Building.

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.

Seeing no discussion, Chairman Bowers closed the floor.

2021 PRESENTATION OF PICKENS COUNTY PINNACLE PERFORMER AWARD

Mr. Roper gave a short presentation on the Pinnacle Performers Program. He recognized Michael Whitlock and Harold Young, of Building Maintenance, as the Pickens County Pinnacle Performers of the Year 2021.

UPDATE ON ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

Mr. Roper gave a brief annual update on Economic Development for Council. Mr. Roper went into discussion that included, but was not limited to:

- Unemployment Rates (*Source: Bureau of Labor Statistics; local area unemployment statistics Dec. 2021*)
 - Pickens County = 2.9%
 - Greenville County = 2.8%
 - Oconee County = 3.0%
 - Anderson County = 3.0%

- Per Capita Hourly Wage (*Source: Bureau of Economic Analysis*)
 - Pickens County = \$20
 - Greenville County = \$25
 - Oconee County = \$22
 - Anderson County = \$20

- Gross Domestic Product (*Source: Bureau of Economic Analysis*)
(*GDP is thousands of chained (2012) dollars*)
 - Pickens County: GDP \$3,558,134; Rank in State: 15)
 - Greenville County = GDP \$28,647,312; Rank in State: 1)
 - Oconee County = GDP \$3,405,936; Rank in State: 17)
 - Anderson County = GDP \$6,438,961; Rank in State: 10)

- Pickens County Workforce
 - Pickens County Workforce: 37,667
 - Pickens County Residents: 16,397
 - Non-Residents: 21,270
 - Where Pickens County Workers Live:
 - Greenville County 15%
 - Anderson County 15%
 - Oconee County 9%
 - Spartanburg County 3%
 - Other 14%
 - Pickens County 44%

- Where Pickens County Residents Work:
 - Greenville County 33%
 - Anderson County 10%
 - Oconee County 5%
 - Spartanburg 4%
 - Other 15%
 - Pickens County 33%
- Existing Buildings Filled/Under Contract = 1,830,985 Total Square Feet
- Information on Pickens County Commerce Park
- Estimated Property Tax Generation in Commerce Park
 - Pre Development: \$297 property tax revenue to Pickens County per year
 - Now: \$1.1 million property tax revenue to Pickens County per year
- Scholar Technician Program Information
- Small Business Liaison Manager Position Information
- Helping Pickens County Residents & Pickens County Employers

THIRD READING OF AN ORDINANCE APPLYING REDISTRICTING CRITERIA FOR PICKENS COUNTY COUNCIL DISTRICTS BASED UPON THE 2020 U.S. CENSUS.

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

- Motion was made by Councilman Ensley Feemster and seconded by Councilman Henry Wilson. Chairman Bowers asked if there was any discussion:
 - Councilman Alex Saitta asked the Administrator to review the four precincts that are being moved and where they are going.
 - Mr. Roper stated:
 - Calhoun precinct is moving from District 1 to District 2
 - Norris & Praters Creek precincts are moving from District 2 to District 4
 - Skeleton precinct is moving to District 3
- Seeing no other discussion, the motion carried unanimously (6-0).

Councilman Henry Wilson called a point of order, asking if Council has a policy about having citizens having outbursts that interrupt a council meeting.

Chairman Bowers stated he will follow up with Mr. Quinn regarding this outburst.

PUBLIC HEARING AND THIRD READING OF AN ORDINANCE DECLARING A TEMPORARY DEVELOPMENT AND CONSTRUCTION PAUSE (MORATORIUM) FOR SIX MONTHS IN THE ISSUANCE OF DEVELOPMENT AND CONSTRUCTION PERMITS FOR CERTAIN RESIDENTIAL AND NON-RESIDENTIAL STRUCTURES AND DEVELOPMENTS ALONG THE SC HIGHWAY 11 SCENIC BYWAY WHILE PLANS ARE CONDUCTED AND APPLICABLE STANDARDS ARE DEVELOPED AND UPDATED RELATIVE TO THE SC HIGHWAY 11 SCENIC BYWAY IN PICKENS COUNTY, SOUTH CAROLINA.

Chairman Bowers opened the public hearing for comments regarding this Ordinance.

Seeing none, Chairman Bowers declared the public hearing closed.

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

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

PUBLIC HEARING AND THIRD READING OF AN ORDINANCE 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 RUBY SLIPPER).

Chairman Bowers opened the public hearing for comments regarding this Ordinance. Seeing none, Chairman Bowers declared the public hearing closed.

Councilman Alex Saitta gave his detailed recommendation on why he proposed this ordinance and why he will be voting for it this evening.

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

- Motion was made by Councilman Alex Saitta, seconded by Councilman Ensley Feemster and carried unanimously (6-0).

CONSENT AGENDA:

- 2022 RECREATION FUNDING REQUESTS – *Committee of the Whole*
- 2022 ACCOMMODATIONS TAX FUNDING REQUESTS – *Committee of the Whole*
- Motion was made by Councilman Ensley Feemster, seconded by Councilman Henry Wilson and approved unanimously (6-0), to approve the Consent Agenda as presented.

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.

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

- Review Applications

Contractual – Section 30-4-70 (a) (2)

- Update on DHEC/County Landfill Matter

Legal Update – Section 30-4-70 (a) (2)

- MRR

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

ACTION AS NEEDED VIA EXECUTIVE SESSION ITEMS:

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

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

- Review Applications - **Councilman Ensley Feemster made a motion to reappoint Zachary Hinton to District 6 seat on Zoning Board of Appeals, appoint Thomas Graves to Easley Central Water, and reappoint Chris Spoden to District 5 seat on Recreation Funding Advisory Board. Motion was seconded by Councilman Henry Wilson and carried unanimously (6-0).**

Contractual – Section 30-4-70 (a) (2)

- **Update on DHEC/County Landfill Matter - Mr. Roper stated members of Council asked him to put in the record that we were notified of a violation at our landfill where we’ve been disposing of yard debris, stump logs, etc. for more than a decade. He stated everyone involved believed we were in permit limits when we were doing that but DHEC notified us we were not. He stated we went through the process with DHEC and they’ve given us a consent order, in which he will sign, where they are assessing us a \$3500 Administrative Fee and they’re requiring us to get an engineer’s report to show that the stump hole is stable and we will be able to cover/close it. He stated it is a good lesson learned and he appreciates Council supporting this matter.**

Legal Update – Section 30-4-70 (a) (2)

- **MRR – No action taken.**

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 8:27 p.m.

Respectively Submitted:

Approved:

Meagan Nations, Clerk to Council

Chris Bowers, Chairman of County Council