

Regular Pickens County Council Meeting

April 4, 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 March 30, 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 April 4, 2022 to order and welcomed those in attendance. Vice Chairman Roy Costner led the Invocation, and Veteran Raymond Etheridge led the Pledge of Allegiance.

Following the Pledge of Allegiance, Council presented a Certificate in Honor to Veteran Etheridge, 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.

1. Donna Clayton: Ms. Clayton addressed Council regarding an Emergency Medical Service situation that recently happened to her.
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. Ken Rogers: Mr. Rogers addressed Council regarding the Zoning Board of Appeals. He stated he is interested in serving on the board and looks forward to meeting Council.
4. Margaret Thompson: Ms. Thompson gave Council an updated regarding Clemson Paw Partners.
5. Jessica Merrill: Ms. Merrill addressed Council regarding the Old Stockade Jail project.

6. Amber Lange: Ms. Lange addressed Council regarding the Anderson Alumnae Chapter of Delta Sigma Theta Sorority.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES:

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

- March 7, 2022 Regular-Called Council Meeting
 - March 21, 2022 Special-Called Council Meeting
- Motion was made by Councilman Ensley Feemster, and seconded by Vice Chairman Roy Costner. Seeing no other discussion, the motion carried unanimously (6-0).

ADMINISTRATOR’S REPORT:

Airport Playground Grand Opening

Mr. Roper stated the new Airport Handicap Accessible Playground Grand Opening will be on Tuesday, April 12 at 2:00 p.m. He stated this will be the opening for the Scoop Ice Cream Shop as well, which is right beside the playground.

Pickens Proud Press Conference

Mr. Roper stated there will be a press conference on Wednesday, April 20 at 10:00 a.m. for the Pickens Proud Litter Initiative Announcement.

Carolina Recycling Association 2022 Award

Mr. Roper recognized Steve Raines, Solid Waste Department, for receiving the Carolina Recycling Association 2022 Award.

C&D/Brown Goods Update

Mr. Roper gave an update regarding C&D/Brown Goods update.

“Hometown Hero” USAF Thunderbirds

Mr. Roper stated the Collaboration Manager, Jessica Varney, is honored as a “Hometown Hero” by Shaw Air Force Base and she was selected for the hometown hero flight in a F-16 with the USAF Thunderbirds. Jessica is a team lead for Pickens County Crisis Intercept Mapping for Suicide Prevention who focuses on service members, veterans and their families.

TUSA Radio Study

Mr. Roper stated Council’s number one priority for ARPA funds was looking at our radio dispatch problems in this county. Mr. Roper went ahead and put out a bid on a consultant to handle that and through some internal mechanisms with our purchasing, we discovered that we’d never actually got Council’s vote on that. He asked Council if they would be willing to put on the agenda for tonight so he can execute that contract.

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

- EMS incident (*public forum input*)
- Drug Rehab House (*public forum input*)

COMMITTEE REPORT:

The Committee of the Whole met in Main Conference Room, at the Pickens County Administration Facility, on Monday, March 21, 2022. All members of the committee were in attendance with Chairman Chris Bowers presiding. Councilman Alex Saitta 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:

DISCUSSION OF OLD JAIL – Log No. 142

- Mr. Roper updated Council on the letter he sent to Rev. Moss regarding the possibility of a program he is interested in starting at the Old Stockade Jail for Pickens County inmates.
- Council, Staff and Rev. Moss had detailed discussion that included, but was not limited to:
 - Costs of Construction and Repairs
 - Sheriff Office Programs or Grants to help fund the program
 - Partnership between Pickens County and the program
 - Other counties with similar types of programs
 - Logistics of how the program will be ran
 - Other locations for the program other than the stockade
 - County wants to help with location, but cannot run the program
- ❖ **Chairman Chris Bowers made a motion to allocate funding, totaling \$98,000 towards this project at the Old Stockade. Councilman Trey Whitehurst seconded the motion. The motion carried (5-1), with Councilman Alex Saitta opposed.**
- **Council Action on Log No. 142:** Chairman Chris Bowers made a motion to allocate funding, totaling \$98,000 towards this project at the Old Stockade. Councilman Trey Whitehurst seconded the motion. The motion carried (5-1), with Councilman Alex Saitta opposed.

Chairman Bowers stated no second is required since this comes as a recommendation from the Committee. He asked Council if there is any discussion.

- Councilman Alex Saitta discussed why he voted no to allocating funding for this project.
- Chairman Bowers stated the \$98,000 is to bring the stockade building up to standards. He stated there are a lot of questions that still have to be answered before Council votes on this program.
- After much more discussion from Council regarding the funding of this project and the program, Chairman Bowers asked if there was any other discussion. Seeing none, the motion carried (5-1), with Councilman Alex Saitta opposed.

2030 COMPREHENSIVE PLAN REFERRAL BY COUNCIL TO THE PICKENS COUNTY PLANNING COMMISSION FOR FURTHER PUBLIC INPUT AND RECOMMENDATIONS – Log No. 192

- Mr. Roper stated that Council has a written report of the Draft Report Comprehensive Plan. Council had staff had detailed discussion that included, but was not limited to:
 - Presented Council with the Resolution from the Planning Commission recommending Adoption of the 2022 One Pickens County Comprehensive Plan by the Pickens County Council
 - Overview of the Draft Report Comprehensive Plan February 2022 Version
 - Report Document Changes for the February 18, 2022 Version of Comp. Plan
 - Legal requirement in state law that a county has a comprehensive plan, and that it is updated every 5 years
 - Council would like to review the Comprehensive Plan before voting

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

- **Council Action on Log No. 192:** No Action Taken by the Committee.

DISCUSSION OF AN ORDINANCE NO. 572 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 – Log No. 123

- Council and Staff had detailed discussion that included, but was not limited to:
 - ARPA Funding towards Litter Pick-Up
 - Announcement of Pickens Proud Program on April 20
 - Explanation of the Pickens Proud Program
 - Education on Litter
 - Beautification Committee

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

- **Council Action on Log No. 123:** No Action Taken by the Committee.

BUDGET WORK SESSION – Log No. 172

- Administrator Roper and Council had detailed discussion regarding the Budget that included, but was not limited to:
 - Inmate Labor to pick up litter
 - MAU Workforce Solutions – paying around \$400,000
 - Rising cost of fuel
 - Rising price of materials
 - Supply chain issues
 - Property
 - Liability – Workers Comp
 - Health Insurance
 - 4% COLA and 1% Equity and Merit Raises
 - Library Discussion
 - Setoff Debt and Gear Program
 - EMS
 - Fire Fees

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

- **Council Action on Log No. 172:** 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 Vice Chairman Roy Costner, seconded by Councilman Ensley Feemster and carried unanimously (6-0). Meeting was adjourned at 8:18 p.m.

COUNCIL CORRESPONDENCE:

Chairman Chris Bowers announced the following:

- Non-Essential County Offices will be closed on Friday, April 15th in observance of the Good Friday Holiday.
- The Committee of the Whole will be held on Monday, April 18, 2022 at 6:00 PM in the Main Conference Room of the Administration Building.
- The next Council Meeting will be held on Monday, May 2, 2022 at 6:30 p.m. in Council Chambers of the Administration Building.
- The Airport Playground Grand Opening will take place on Tuesday, April 12 at 2:00 p.m. at the Pickens County Airport.
- On April 20, at 10:00 a.m., the Pickens Proud Press Conference will take place at 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.

Vice Chairman Roy Costner made a motion to add “Renaming of Law Enforcement Center” to the Consent Agenda on this evening’s agenda. Motion was seconded by Councilman Ensley Feemster and carried unanimously (6-0).

Vice Chairman Roy Costner made a motion to add “Regulatory Discussion on Property Use, Specific to Shelters” to the Consent Agenda on this evening’s agenda. Councilman Alex Saitta seconded the motion.

- Councilman Henry Wilson amended the motion, stating he would like for it to be for general property. Councilman Ensley Feemster seconded the motion and carried unanimously (6-0).

Seeing no other discussion, Chairman Bowers called for a vote on the original motion as amended, which carried unanimously (6-0).

Vice Chairman Roy Costner made a motion to add a Contractual Discussion to Executive Session regarding Economic Development. Motion was seconded by Councilman Ensley Feemster and carried unanimously (6-0).

Councilman Trey Whitehurst made a motion to add “Radio System and Dispatch” to this evenings agenda. Motion was seconded by Vice Chairman Roy Costner 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 2021 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 citizen members of the board.

Mr. Pelissier provided an overview of the report and also discussed the services that are forthcoming in 2021. He thanked Council for their support to the Appalachian Council of Government.

FIRST READING IN TITLE ONLY OF AN ORDINANCE TO PROVIDE FOR ADOPTION OF A BUDGET AMENDMENT CONTAINING ESTIMATES OF REVENUE AND EXPENDITURE CHANGES FOR PICKENS COUNTY FOR THE FISCAL YEAR BEGINNING JULY 1, 2021 AND ENDING JUNE 30, 2022.

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

- 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 asked for a list of the budget amendments for this ordinance.
 - Mr. Roper stated revenues and expenses are still on-going, and he will have a list together in month or so.
 - Councilman Alex Saitta explained why he will be voting no on first reading of this Ordinance.
 - Councilman Trey Whitehurst went into discussion on how Council has already voted on all of these budget amendments throughout the past year, that this is the ordinance to make sure the books balance out at the end of the fiscal year.
- The motion carried (5-1), with Councilman Alex Saitta opposed.

FIRST READING IN TITLE ONLY OF AN ORDINANCE TO PROVIDE FOR THE LEVY OF TAXES IN PICKENS COUNTY FOR ORDINARY COUNTY PURPOSES FOR THE FISCAL YEAR BEGINNING JULY 1, 2022, AND ENDING JUNE 30, 2023, AND TO DIRECT EXPENDITURE THEREOF.

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

- Motion was made by Councilman Ensley Feemster and seconded by Councilman Henry Wilson. Chairman Bowers asked if there was any discussion.
 - Mr. Roper read a Memorandum to Council, stating:

“This Budget (along with this transmittal letter) is provided to you in compliance with Section 4-9-640 of the South Carolina Code of Laws, which provides: The county administrator shall prepare the proposed operating and capital budgets and submit them to the council at such time as the council determines. At the time of submitting the proposed budget, the county administrator shall submit to the council a statement describing the important features of the proposed budgets including all sources of anticipated revenue of the county government and the amount of tax revenue required to meet the financial requirements of the county.

Previous action of Council set April 4, 2022 as the date for First Reading (of a required three readings) by County Council of an Ordinance enacting the Budget. Traditionally this First Reading is in title only, with second and third readings following at later dates, along with as many budget work sessions as Council deems, in its sole discretion, to be needed.

When staff began the Budget formation process, we were informed and guided by County Council’s stated Goals. These goals are 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. All County departments were instructed to submit their various budget requests on or before January 31, 2022. This year, County finance officials and I met with division heads and officials to review their requests, asking for justification and/or explanation on a budget-line-by budget-line basis. These meetings were integral in challenging budget assumptions, answering questions, and insuring that zero-based budgeting principles were maintained.

The Budget we then developed contemplated the other Goals of Council, and insofar as budgetary constraints allowed, planned for the implementation of those stated goals. Attached to this transmittal memorandum is a proposed budget.

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Note that 6 additional staff positions have been added in the general fund budget, out of more than 40 requested positions from departments for additional county employees.

The proposed Budget also discontinues the Fire Fee schedule and replaces it with a millage-based tax. This will necessitate that Council consider and adopt a companion ordinance specific to the creation of a countywide fire district. I recommend first reading in title only of such an ordinance in your regular May meeting. This change addresses the need for equitable fire fee services throughout the county, a process started with the Council's 2020 Goal to advance unified emergency services. It further supports the directive of the SC Supreme Court to move away from fees in place of taxes, as the Council did with the Road User Fee in 2021.

Based on the results of the constitutionally-mandated decennial census, Pickens County has now passed the population threshold that requires the creation of a Master in Equity position as well as a secretarial position in support of that judicial office. Accordingly, those two positions are also included in the Budget.

We have continued execution of our 5-year capital plan, including a dedication of specific millage (to the extent available) to partially offset the expenses of this year's needed capital purchases. The balance of capital expenses will be drawn from proceeds from the sale of capital assets, with a plan for subsequent budget years to continue the inclusion of a growing portion of dedicated millage going to capital purchases instead of monies currently in the bank.

This Budget specifies that all of the proceeds from the Road Maintenance Fund be allocated to work on our county road system, and funds in the Road Reserve Fund are specified for long-term projects as needed to improve longstanding county road conditions. It also provides for the continued operation of our parks and tourism efforts, as well as our economic development initiatives.

I am confident that staff's proposed FY 2023 Budget balances the needs of our county as we recover from the two-year Covid19 pandemic with the long-term wellbeing of the county government and its citizens. Accordingly, we have endeavored to make this Budget transparent and easily understood, reflecting our current year's budget with only minimum changes.

I would like to thank Ralph Guarino and Jodi Laws of our Finance Department for their dedication and professionalism during our budget process. I also want to commend the various department heads and elected officials for their cooperative attitudes and openness to dialogue as we developed the Budget."

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

FIRST READING IN TITLE ONLY OF AN ORDINANCE AUTHORIZING THE ADVANCE OF FUNDS FROM THE GENERAL FUND OF PICKENS COUNTY TO THE PICKENS COUNTY AIRPORT ENTERPRISE FUND, PROVIDING FOR THE REPAYMENT OF SAID GENERAL FUNDS BY REVENUES AND/OR GRANT FUNDING FROM OTHER SOURCES, AND MATTERS RELATED THERETO.

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

- Motion was made by Vice Chairman Roy Costner, seconded by Councilman Henry Wilson. Chairman Bowers asked if there was any discussion:
 - Councilman Trey Whitehurst made a motion to amend the original motion, stating after first reading, he would like to send this ordinance to the Committee of the Whole. Vice Chairman Roy Costner seconded the motion and the motion carried unanimously (6-0).
- Seeing no other discussion, the motion carried unanimously (6-0).

FIRST READING IN TITLE ONLY 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 QUESO).

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

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

PUBLIC HEARING AND SECOND READING OF AN ORDINANCE FOR A REFERENDUM REGARDING SUNDAY ALCOHOL SALES IN PICKENS COUNTY.

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 second reading of this Ordinance.

- Motion was made by Councilman Ensley Feemster, seconded by Councilman Trey Whitehurst. Chairman Bowers asked if there was any discussion.
- Councilman Henry Wilson made a motion to reopen public hearing for this ordinance to let Mr. Stokes speak. Motion was seconded by Councilman Alex Saitta and carried unanimously (6-0).

Doug Stokes: Mr. Stokes stated he prefers for the county to not have Sunday alcohol sales.

Seeing no other speakers, the Chairman declared the public hearing closed.

- Councilman Alex Saitta had some questions for the attorney regarding the language in the Ordinance. He gave a detailed discussion on why he will be voting no for this ordinance.
 - Vice Chairman Roy Costner gave detailed information on why he is voting the way he is voting this evening on this ordinance. He stated he will be voting against it on the referendum but will vote yes on this Ordinance to let the Pickens County citizens have a voice.
 - Councilman Henry Wilson stated he is not going to stand in the way of citizen's ability to go to the ballot box and have a voice about different decisions, particularly decisions like this one.
- Seeing no other discussion, the motion carried (5-1), with Councilman Alex Saitta opposed.

RADIO SYSTEM STUDY AND DISPATCH *(as added during Motion Period and New Business)*

Mr. Roper stated he is looking for Council's vote to direct him to continue with that process with the consultant on the Radio System study and to pay the bills. He stated he would estimate the grand total of the consulting work would be \$60,000 to come from ARPA funds.

- Chairman Chris Bowers made a motion to instruct Mr. Roper to continue with consulting and allocated \$60,000 from ARPA funding for this project. Vice Chairman Roy Costner seconded and the motion carried unanimously (6-0).

CONSENT AGENDA:

- CONSIDERATION OF A RESOLUTION NO. 2022-05 RECOGNIZING APRIL 10 – APRIL 16, 2022 AS NATIONAL TELECOMMUNICATORS WEEK.
- CONSIDERATION OF A RESOLUTION NO. 2022-06 DESIGNATING APRIL 2022 AS FAIR HOUSING AWARENESS MONTH IN PICKENS COUNTY.
- CONSIDERATION OF A RESOLUTION NO. 2022-07 RECOGNIZING THE SAMARITAN HEALTH CLINIC FOR 30 YEARS OF SERVICE TO PICKENS COUNTY CITIZENS.
- Renaming of Law Enforcement Center (*as added during Motion Period and New Business*) – Committee of the Whole
- Regulatory Discussion on General Property Use (*as added during Motion Period and New Business*) – 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

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

- Textile Mill Rehabilitations

Contractual – Section 30-4-70 (a) (2)

- Economic Development (*as added during Motion Period and New Business*)

- Motion was made by Councilman Ensley Feemster, seconded by Councilman Henry Wilson 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 Alex Saitta made a motion to appoint the following citizens to the following Board or Commissions. The motion was seconded by Councilman Ensley Feemster and carried unanimously (6-0).
 - Colleen Schumer to the Beautification Committee in the At-Large Seat
 - Fred Baldwin to the Easley Central Water Board
 - Luke Campbell to the Zoning Board of Appeals in the District 2 Seat
 - Danny Garrett to the Zoning Board of Appeals in the At-Large Seat
 - Ken Rogers to the Zoning Board of Appeals in the District 4 Seat

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

- Textile Mill Rehabilitations – **No Action Taken**

Contractual – Section 30-4-70 (a) (2)

- Economic Development (*as added during Motion Period and New Business*) – **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 Trey Whitehurst 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