

LEE COUNTY COUNCIL
PUBLIC HEARING
MARCH 8, 2022, 9:30 A.M.
FAMILY COURT ROOM – SECOND FLOOR OF THE COURTHOUSE

Members present were Travis Windham, Chairman; Gordon Eckley, Vice-Chairman; Charles A. Beasley, member; Alexander Boyd, member; Jackie Josey, member; Johnette Caughman, member. Staff present were Alan Watkins, Administrator; Julie Stokes, Assistant Administrator/Clerk to Council. Others present were Margaret Copeland, Carrie Gass, Brandon Holloman, Tim DuBose, Ruby Gibbes, James Vinnie, Amanda McAlhany, Mary Kenyon Joes, Regina Nesmith Demary, Gee Whetsel.

FOIA

Pursuant to the Freedom of Information Act, all individuals requesting notifications were so notified.

PUBLIC HEARING

A. PROPOSED RURAL DEVELOPMENT PROJECT CONSISTING GENERALLY OF NEEDED EQUIPMENT FOR FIRE DEPARTMENT

The public hearing was opened at 9:31 a.m. on a motion made by Councilman Beasley, seconded by Vice-Chairman Eckley. Chairman Windham called for the vote, and motion carried. All voted in favor.

Mr. Watkins said that a public hearing was held last month for EMS and Public Works to acquire some additional equipment and said that this public hearing was for Fire Department was applying for a grant to purchase some additional equipment. He said the grant was through USDA and would cover 75% of the cost of equipment with a maximum of \$50,000 per grant of funding and this could be done through multiple grant applications.

Brandon Holloman represented the Fire Department and said that the current fire equipment was about 18-20 years old and needed to be replaced. He said the grant was for \$150,000 total and would be done in two grant applications.

There were no public comments from the audience. Councilman Beasley said that it was a good thing to be able to put funds together to enhance the fire department. He thanked Administration and Fire Department for putting together grant and maximizing taxpayer dollars.

Mr. Watkins commended Tim and staff for starting with the grants and said that Matt Makela has taken lead with USDA and he thanked Tim and Matt for their hard work in putting this grant together. He said that Mike and Brandon are always looking for grants and thanked them for their hard work.

Chairman Windham said that more funds have been available to purchase equipment and for training and we have been able to save people thousands of dollars in home insurance.

The public hearing was closed at 9:40 a.m. on a motion made by Councilperson Josey, seconded by Councilperson Caughman. Chairman Windham called for the vote, and motion carried. All voted in favor.

**REGULAR COUNCIL MEETING
MARCH 8, 2022
FAMILY COURT ROOM, SECOND FLOOR OF THE COURTHOUSE**

OPEN MEETING, INVOCATION AND PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE TO THE FLAG

Chairman Windham welcomed everyone and Vice-Chairman Eckley gave the invocation and led the Pledge of Allegiance to the Flag.

REQUEST FOR MOTION ON ADOPTION OF RECOMMENDED AGENDA

Councilman Beasley made the motion to approve the agenda as mailed. Councilman Boyd seconded the motion. Chairman Windham called for the vote, and motion carried. All voted in favor.

REQUEST FOR MOTION ON ADOPTION OF MINUTES FROM REGULAR MEETING OF FEBRUARY 8, 2022

Councilperson Josey made the motion to approve the minutes from regular meeting of February 8, 2022. Vice-Chairman Eckley seconded the motion. Chairman Windham called for the vote, and motion carried. All voted in favor.

REQUEST FOR MOTION ON ADOPTION OF SECOND READING APPROVAL OF ORDINANCE

- A. AN ORDINANCE AUTHORIZING PURSUANT TO TITLE 12, CHAPTER 44 OF THE CODE OF LAWS OF SOUTH CAROLINA 1976, AS AMENDED, THE EXECUTION AND DELIVERY OF FEE-IN-LIEU OF AD VALOREM TAXES AGREEMENT BY AND BETWEEN THE COUNTY AND A COMPANY, IDENTIFIED FOR THE TIME BEING AS PROJECT WAVE, TO PROVIDE FOR FEE-IN-LIEU OF AD VALOREM TAXES INCENTIVES AND SPECIAL SOURCE REVENUE CREDITS; TO MODIFY A JOINT COUNTY INDUSTRIAL AND BUSINESS PARK OF LEE AND SUMTER COUNTIES AS TO ENLARGE THE PARK; AND OTHER RELATED MATTERS

Mr. Watkins said that this was the economic development FILO for Project Wave, which is a solar development. He said this was a 2 mega watt solar farm along Highways 341 and Highway 401, owned by Thomas Gosski and was a \$2.8 million solar investment. He said that it was going to generate approximately \$7,000 taxes a year. He said that language regarding vegetation is in place and the handout is attached. He said that in reference to decommissioning, the company has to secure a bond for the cost of salvaging equipment and removing it.

Vice-Chairman Eckley made the motion to approve for second reading. Councilman Beasley seconded. Chairman Windham called for the vote, and motion carried. All voted in favor.

AMANDA MCALHANY, PROGRAM COORDINATOR WITH SC DHEC, ALONG WITH MARY KENYON JONES AND REGINA NESMITH-DIMERY WILL BE PRESENT TO DISCUSS THE ORAL HEALTH EVENT COMING UP IN LEE COUNTY

Ms. McAlhane thanked Jackie Josey for inviting them to present about oral health education. She said there was a high percentage of children with dental problems in Lee County. She thanked Councilpersons Caughman and Josey for their concern in this area.

Chairman Windham asked how they are getting the word out about the event in Lynchburg. She said that flyers are going out with students in elementary schools. Ms. Dimary will be going to childcare centers and churches and distributing flyers and doing a media alert.

Chairman Windham asked about the fluoride problem in Lee County and asked if the water system could be updated to provide fluoride in it. Councilman Boyd said that they need to contact the City. He said that if it is brought to Gregg's attention, he will see that it's addressed.

Margaret Copeland asked if there are any checks on the equipment that provides the water. DHEC representatives said that it's not required and Ms. Copeland said that it needs to be required.

Chairman Windham thanked Councilpersons Josey and Caughman and DHEC for their interest and awareness of dental health in Lee County.

Regina Dimary thanked Council for working with her on past projects and this current project.

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Councilperson Josey said she was invited to the round table discussion and learned that Lee County is negative on oral health.

Regina Dimary said that she did out to the schools and educate the children about dental health.

Councilperson Caughman said that she plans to get out and promote dental health in the County.

PROCLAMATION FOR THE ORAL HEALTH IN CHILDREN OF LEE COUNTY

Vice-Chairman Eckley read the Proclamation for the promotion of oral health in Lee County and made it in the form of a motion. Councilperson Josey seconded the motion. Chairman Windham called for the vote, and motion carried. All voted in favor.

UPDATE TO COUNCIL ON NEW COMMUNITY EVENT

Margaret Copeland was present to brief Council on the Lizard Man Stomp.

COMMITTEE REPORTS

A. HEALTH, EDUCATION & WELFARE

Councilperson Josey thanked the ladies from DHEC for their presentation.

B. PLANNING, TAXES & PERSONNEL

No meetings

C. BUILDINGS, LAND & PROPERTY

Vice-Chairman Eckley said that there is a prebid meeting for perimeter fence at the airport.

He also reported from an economic development standpoint, there is a lot of activity for the spec building and several prospects have looked at it. He said that forming The Link was the best thing that ever happened to Lee County.

D. PUBLIC SAFETY

Councilperson Caughman had no meetings.

Tim DuBose thanked the Council for approving the grant application and said it will be submitted today. He also said the new ambulance will be delivered this month.

E. RECREATION AND PUBLIC RELATIONS

Councilman Boyd thanked Mr. Watkins for working with recreation projects.

F. WAYS AND MEANS

Councilman Fountain not here. Mr. Watkins said his committee will start setting up Ways and Means meetings for FY 23 in a couple of weeks.

G. ADMINISTRATOR'S REPORT

Mr. Watkins said that the County has seen a dramatic drop in COVID cases. He said that Lee County had 500 active cases in January, and as of March 7, 2022, Lee County had 21 active cases. He said that you can still get vaccinated. He said the County had been under a court ordered mandate for masks in the courthouse. Mr. Watkins said that masks are no longer required unless ordered by a judge in a judicial hearing.

He said that he attended Rural Economic Summit in Rock Hill and said there was a lot of positive talk with APRA in the way of funding water, sewer and broadband projects. He commented that FTC is working on a plan that will provide broadband to 85% of its customers.

He said that there is a prebid meeting regarding the old railroad depot. He said that demolition bids are due March 21 and these buildings will be taken down in 60-90 days. Mr. Watkins said the County and City are working with architect and working on plans for lighting and parking.

Chairman Windham asked about the side walk on the interstate and said that DOT is putting out for bid. He said the sidewalk will start at Harry and Harry Too and lighting on and off the ramp. He said the money is in place for this project and will be paid with accommodation and hospitality taxes.

PUBLIC COMMENT

Celestine Boone – she lives on 81 Mailbox Lane in Lynchburg. She said that water is not draining because of beavers having it blocked. Councilperson Josey said that she and the Administrator are aware of this problem. Mr. Watkins said he had spoken to her and also met with DOT on this matter. They said they could not do anything with the ditch until they can get the water to start flowing again. Mr. Watkins said the County was trying to get this matter resolved.

Eleanor Solomon – lives on 42 Flower Lane, next to Mailbox Lane and said her road needs to be scraped and they have the same beaver problem.

Vice-Chairman Eckley said that there is a bad virus that is going around.

Carrie Gass – asked that Dr. Mary McLeod Bethune Park be added to the Lizard Man Stomp flyer.

She said that Salkhatchie program is coming to Lee County the week of June 26-July 2 and applications can be picked up at Bethlehem United Methodist Church.

Shirley Dixon asked how do you access phone extensions in the courthouse. Mr. Watkins told her the process.

ADJOURN

The meeting was adjourned at 10:34 a.m. on a motion made by Councilman Beasley, seconded by Vice-Chairman Eckley.

CHAIRMAN

VICE-CHAIRMAN

CLERK TO COUNCIL

MINUTES APPROVED