

LEE COUNTY COUNCIL  
REGULAR MEETING  
JANUARY 09, 2024  
FAMILY COURT ROOM – SECOND FLOOR OF THE COURTHOUSE

Members present were Travis Windham, Chairman; Gordon Eckley, Vice-Chairman; Keel Addison, member; Charles A. Beasley, member; Jackie Josey, member; Johnette Caughman, member; Ron Fountain, member. Staff present were Alan Watkins, Administrator; Julie Stokes, Assistant Administrator/Clerk to Council; Michael Davis, Connie Brown, Shirley Dixon. Others present were Marc Wood, Mary and Eddie Durant.

FOIA

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

OPEN MEETING, INVOCATION AND PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE TO THE FLAG

Chairman Windham opened the meeting and welcomed everyone. 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 written. Councilperson Josey 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 DECEMBER 12, 2023

Vice-Chairman Eckley made the motion to approve the minutes of December 12, 2023 as mailed. Councilperson Caughman seconded the motion. Chairman Windham called for the vote, and motion carried. All voted in favor.

SHEHEEN, HANCOCK & GODWIN WILL PRESENT THE LEE COUNTY AUDIT FY 23

Marc Wood presented the Lee County Audit FY 23 and said the County had an unmodified opinion, which is the highest opinion that a county can receive.

He said the fund balance as of 6/30/23 was \$18,076,053. He said the total revenue was \$23,672,679 and the expenditures were \$24,852,759 and the net change in the fund balance was \$1,126,062.

He thanked Connie Brown and her staff for their help with the audit. Connie said that Marc Wood and his staff are a pleasure to work with and their firm does a great job.

Shirley Dixon said that it has been a challenging year, but it was getting better.

Chairman Windham said the County has done a great job in spending grant funds and thanked Marc Wood for coming and presenting the audit.

REQUEST FOR MOTION ON ADOPTION OF THIRD READING APPROVAL OF ORDINANCE

A. LEASE AGREEMENT WITH DUKE ENERGY FOR INSTALLATION OF LIGHTING FOR THE ON AND OFF RAMPS AT EXIT 116

Mr. Watkins said this has taken a little longer than expected because we were waiting to get updated figures. He said the County had to get an encroachment permit, which took some time and added to the number of poles. He said that Duke Energy now requires breakaway poles, which mean that if a vehicle has an accident, the pole would offer protection to the passenger. He said there will be 39 light poles with 41 fixtures at \$48.93 per month. He said the funding to cover these expenses would come from hospitality taxes and accommodations tax revenue.

Mr. Watkins said the County could not get grants for the on and off ramp lighting. He also said that cameras would also be installed.

He said that he was aware of two potential projects, or retail/commercial businesses that are considering locating at these interchanges.

Vice-Chairman Eckley made the motion to approve the Lease Agreement with Duke Energy for installation of lighting for the on and off ramps at Exit 116. Councilman Addison seconded the motion. Chairman Windham called for the vote, and motion carried. All voted in favor.

## COMMITTEE REPORTS

### A. HEALTH, EDUCATION & WELFARE

Councilperson Josey said that the MLK Breakfast would be held on Monday, January 15 at Lee Central.

She also stated that George Gipson, a former Magistrate Judge, passed away from a bad car accident on Christmas Day. He also served on the Black River Board.

### B. PLANNING, TAXES & PERSONNEL

Councilman Beasley said that he had no meetings. He said that the lighting was one of the projects his committee had met on and was completed.

Mr. Watkins said that the County will be updating the Comprehensive Plan and will be starting the process of public input.

### C. BUILDINGS, LAND & PROPERTY

Vice-Chairman Eckley said that the Link was working with a couple of prospects.

He said that EMS is wrapping up everything and the ribbon cutting should be in a few weeks.

He said that the Fire Station in the St. Charles community is coming along, and the concrete has been poured and project is progressing.

Mr. Watkins said that the floor at Bishopville High School is being finished this week and basketball will take place next week.

He also said that roofing contractors were looking at overview of Sheriff's office and Bishopville High School.

### D. PUBLIC SAFETY

Councilperson Caughman had to leave early.

Mr. Watkins said that E911 has been having staffing issues but said Tim Dubose was working through it.

E. RECREATION & PUBLIC RELATIONS

Councilman Addison did not have report. He did say that the ribbon cutting at the tennis courts was successful. He said that Mr. Watkins, Will Wheeler, Senator Malloy, Queenie Boyd, and several members of both councils attended.

Mr. Watkins said that basketball games start next week, and baseball registration is open.

Mr. Watkins said that Council on Aging has moved to Chappell Park Gym while their building is being renovated.

Chairman Windham asked Mr. Watkins if windscreens would be installed at the tennis courts and Mr. Watkins said they are getting prices.

F. WAYS AND MEANS

Councilman Fountain said the County got a good audit and said the County was doing a good job managing its finances.

Mr. Fountain did comment that Mr. George Gipson was very thought of and his funeral was held at the Exhibition Center in Sumter and was very well attended.

PUBLIC COMMENT

Eddie Durant, of Price Lane, was present to discuss having his road looked at to address the pot holes.

Mr. Watkins said that he spoke to Jason Prater, and he said that DOT does not do aprons to driveways anymore. He said that Price Lane was on the list for scraping and said that big trucks come in and out of there and do damage to the road.

ADMINISTRATOR'S REPORT

Mr. Watkins said that cameras were being installed in a number of facilities and intersections to monitor activity in the county.

ADJOURN

The meeting was adjourned at 10:24 a.m. on a motion made by Vice-Chairman Eckley, seconded by Councilman Addison.

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CHAIRMAN

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VICE-CHAIRMAN

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CLERK TO COUNCIL

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MINUTES APPROVED

