

LEE COUNTY COUNCIL
PUBLIC HEARING
JUNE 8, 2021
MAIN COURT ROOM – SECOND FLOOR OF THE COURTHOUSE

Members present were Travis Windham, Chairman; Gordon Eckley, Vice-Chairman; Charles A. Beasley, member; Jackie Josey, member. Councilperson Caughman called in to the meeting via phone and Councilman Fountain had another obligation. Staff present were Alan Watkins, Administrator; Julie Stokes, Assistant Administrator/Clerk to Council; Danny Simon; Tim DuBose, Kay Elmore, Teresa Brown, Cheryl Watkins, Caroline Truesdale, Jessica Young, and Loretta Asher. Others present were Laurie Watkins, Shareka Anderson, Sylvia Scott, Queenie Boyd, Bernard McDaniel, Echo Belvin, Kareem Wilson.

FOIA

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

**PUBLIC HEARING
JUNE 8, 2021
MAIN COURT ROOM – SECOND FLOOR OF THE COURTHOUSE**

PUBLIC HEARING

A. LEE COUNTY BUDGET FY 22

The public hearing was opened at 5:30 p.m. on a motion made by Councilman Beasley, seconded by Vice-Chairman Eckley.

Mr. Watkins said the first reading of the budget had a deficit of \$313,000 and the Ways and Means Committee has met a couple of times to develop a balanced budget. He thanked them for their time in meeting to achieve this balanced budget.

Mr. Watkins said the expenditures and revenue being presented today are at \$13,920,584 with no tax increase and no additional fees.

Mr. Watkins said that last year's budget was rolled over due to COVID. He said this year's budget did include a 1.5% cost of living increase for employees. He also noted that in reference to other salaries there were some increases in the areas of public safety. He said that other counties' salaries are continuing to go up and Lee County is losing people to other counties due

to salary. Mr. Watkins said that E-911 is receiving 5%; EMS is receiving 3-5%; Sheriff's Office is receiving 3.5-4.5% and Fire increases were included in the realignment of the pay scale based on the new positions created last year. He said currently, the Sheriff's Office has six openings, but hopefully with these salary increases, we would be able to retain the people we have and be able to fill the current positions.

Mr. Watkins also said there had been increases in Employer Health Insurance Premiums, Worker's Comp, Pensions, and Contributions. He also said there had been reduction in expenses in Recreation Department in removal of full time position and increasing part time positions; Office of Voter Registration removed a full-time and created part-time; Probate Office returned to one full time and one part time position and there was a reduction in jail expenses.

Mr. Watkins also reviewed some of the revenues for FY 22 budget, which included increase in Local Government Fund of \$61,000; increase in Public Safety Fees; increase in Accommodation Tax; increase in Landfill tipping fees.

Mr. Watkins said the draft of the budget includes everything as of now and would be available to anyone who would like to see a copy of it.

Mr. Watkins also said there have been several 501(c)3 groups who have inquired about COVID money. He said the County will be receiving a disbursement of COVID money and he is still learning what the County can do with the money. He said this money was not included in the additional revenue in the budget.

Chairman Windham thanked the Ways and Means Committee for their hard work and time.

There were no public comments from the audience.

The public hearing was closed at 5:46 p.m. on a motion made by Vice-Chairman Eckley, seconded by Councilperson Josey. Chairman Windham called for the vote, and motion carried. All voted in favor.

B. LEE COUNTY SCHOOL BUDGET FY 22

The public hearing was opened at 5:47 p.m. on a motion made by Councilperson Josey, seconded by Vice-Chairman Eckley.

Chairman Windham recognized school board members that were in attendance, along with Shareka Anderson.

Mr. Watkins said the Council's responsibility is only local revenue, which is property tax millage, vehicle taxes. He said the property tax millage is 145.3 mills.

Bernard McDaniel said that he was honored to present the budget to the Council. He said the school had their second reading and public hearing last Thursday.

He said the school was having some challenges on hiring teachers. He thanked Shareka Anderson for her hard work on the budget and said what she reported was based on the latest information they have available.

Mr. McDaniel said the school did not fill some vacancies to COVID.

Ms. Anderson said the school's budget balanced at \$16,416,703, which included a 2% increase for teachers. She said the school did not request a millage change and was approved for 145.3 millage.

Chairman Windham thanked Bernard McDaniel and his staff for working together. He asked Mr. Watkins what these numbers were equivalent to. Mr. Watkins said the 145.3 mills would equate to approximately 3.3 million of millage dollars.

Kareem Wilson asked what cutbacks were made. Mr. McDaniel said the school did not have to make cutbacks.

There were no other comments.

The public hearing was closed at 5:57 p.m. on a motion made by Vice-Chairman Eckley, seconded by Councilman Beasley.

LEE COUNTY COUNCIL
REGULAR MEETING
JUNE 8, 2021

OPEN MEETING, INVOCATION AND PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE TO THE FLAG

Chairman Windham called the meeting to order and Vice-Chairman Eckley gave the invocation and led the Pledge of Allegiance to the flag.

REQUEST FOR MOTION ON ADOPTION OF RECOMMENDED AGENDA

Councilperson Josey made the motion to approve the agenda as mailed. Councilman Beasley 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 MAY 11, 2021

Vice-Chairman Eckley made the motion to approve the minutes from the regular meeting of May 11, 2021 as written. Councilman Beasley seconded the motion. Chairman Windham called for the vote, and motion carried. All voted in favor.

PRESENTATION OF RETIREMENT PLAQUE TO KAY ELMORE

Chairman Windham recognized Kay Elmore and thanked her for year of service and presented her with a retirement plaque. Teresa Brown, the Clerk to Court, and her staff was also present.

REQUEST FOR MOTION ON ADOPTION OF FIRST READING APPROVAL OF ORDINANCE

A. ZONING TEXT AMENDMENT TO THE LEE COUNTY ZONING ORDINANCE, ARTICLE VI, SECTION 6-16 TABLE OF PERMITTED USES, SECTION 6-16.4 "AGRICULTURAL, FORESTRY & FISHING" AS A NEW USE TO BE PERMITTED IN THE RURAL DISTRICT (RU) AS A SPECIAL EXCEPTION "E" AND AMEND ARTICLE 7 SUPPLEMENTARY DISTRICT REGULATION BY ADDING A NEW SECTION, SECTION 7-37 WILDLIFE REHABILITATION/EDUCATION CENTER" WITH ITS GUIDELINES

Mr. Watkins said this request was sent down from Planning Commission and said the Council would have a public hearing before second reading. He said the person requested this action and the Planning Commission is making recommendation to Council.

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

B. ORDINANCE TO MAKE PERMANENT THE PREVIOUSLY ADOPTED EMERGENCY ORDINANCE ALLOWING FOR ELECTRONIC OR HYBRID MEETINGS, AND OTHER MATTERS RELATED HERETO

Mr. Watkins said the Council has been using phones to join meetings. He said we had this under emergency ordinance and we allowed this in Council procedures.

Vice-Chairman made the motion to approve for first reading. Councilperson Josey 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. LEE COUNTY BUDGET FY 22

Mr. Watkins said that the expenses and revenue that are being proposed is \$13,930,584, which is a balanced budget, with no tax increase and no additional fees.

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

B. LEE COUNTY SCHOOL BUDGET FY 22

Mr. Watkins said the school budget was being proposed at 145.3 mills, with no additional increase being requested.

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

C. WRECKER ROTATION ORDINANCE

Mr. Watkins said that this request came from Planning, Taxes & Personnel Committee. He said that currently, if someone is in need of a wrecker, they call 911 and they send a wrecker. He said that Highway Patrol and Lee County will be separated and the Sheriff will be responsible for making the list and maintaining the list.

Sheriff Simon said that in addition to the lists, he will maintain a copy of the application and will do inspection and monitor storage fees and rates.

Chairman Windham said that it will be better now that Sheriff Simon will have more control.

Mr. Watkins said that records will be kept on file at the Sheriff's Office and a copy will be kept at the 911 Dispatch Center.

AUTHORIZATION OF COUNCIL TO ACCEPT QUOTES TO PURCHASE EQUIPMENT FOR VARIOUS OFFICES AND DEPARTMENTS

Mr. Watkins met with Planning, Taxes & Personnel Committee regarding this matter and they discussed using funds from 2012 and 2018 Capital Penny Sales Tax Pay Go and Bond Funding. The various pieces of equipment listed were two ambulances, roll off truck, and vehicles for Sheriff's Office.

Vice-Chairman Eckley made the motion to approve the authorization to purchase various equipment for offices and departments. Councilman Beasley seconded the motion. Chairman Windham called for the vote, and motion carried. All voted in favor.

RESOLUTION APPROVING THE ISSUANCE OF THE CAPITAL PENNY SALES TAX BOND

Mr. Watkins said that the County bonded up to \$5.5 million for projects up front. He said that he met with the bond attorney and Mr. Watkins said the County had collected \$1.1 – 1.2 million in proceeds over the last year.

The County plans to approve \$2.1 million in fire equipment, purchase vehicles for Sheriff's Office, purchase two more ambulances, and build a new fire station in St. Charles. The County also plans to install new playground equipment for parks in Bishopville and Lynchburg, install two basketball courts in the Springhill area, upgrade Bishopville High Gym and upgrade EMS headquarters. Mr. Watkins said that a new roll truck was being ordered now.

Mr. Watkins said we are scheduling a Planning, Taxes & Personnel Committee within the next two weeks.

Councilman Beasley made the motion to approve the resolution for the issuance of the capital penny sales tax. Vice-Chairman Eckley seconded the motion. Chairman Windham called for the vote, and motion carried. All voted in favor.

REAPPOINTMENTS OF WOODWARD LIBRARY OF ARCHIVES AND RESEARCH BOARD:

- (A) DOT SMITH, FOUR YEAR TERM
- (B) ANNA CHANDLER, FOUR YEAR TERM
- (C) BERNETTA WILMORE, FOUR YEAR TERM
- (D) CECIL STEVENS, NON-VOTING TWO YEAR TERM

Mr. Watkins said that all of these people have been contacted and agree to serve another four year term.

Councilman Beasley made the motion to approve the reappointments of Woodward Library of Archives and Research Board. Chairman Windham called for the vote, and motion carried. All voted in favor.

NEW APPOINTMENTS TO WOODWARD LIBRARY OF ARCHIVES AND RESEARCH BOARD

- A. CAROL SCOTT, TWO YEAR TERM**
- B. CHERYL COLE, TWO YEAR TERM**

Mr. Watkins said these new appointments have been contacted and agreed to serve a two year term.

Councilperson Josey made the motion to approve the new appointments to Woodward Library of Archives and Research Board. Councilman Beasley seconded the motion. Chairman Windham called for the vote, and motion carried. All voted in favor.

COMMITTEE REPORTS

- A. HEALTH, EDUCATION AND WELFARE

Councilperson Josey had no report.

- B. PLANNING, TAXES & PERSONNEL

Councilman Beasley said that his committee did meet, but Mr. Watkins covered it.

- C. BUILDINGS, LAND & PROPERTY

Vice-Chairman Eckley said the Farmers Market Building on Church Street was complete.

- D. PUBLIC SAFETY

Councilperson Caughman had no report.

- E. RECREATION AND PUBLIC RELATIONS

Mr. Watkins said they had just finished up baseball and had one group of all-stars. He said that he would like to commend the staff because they were doing a great job.

Page 7, Lee County Council Minutes, June 8, 2021

He said the County had received a PARD grant in the amount of \$53,600 for picnic shelter and the County had to match \$20,000.

He also said that Mr. Addison's family had collected \$1200 for when Mr. Addison passed away and the County was placing two benches in Garrett Park in dedication to Mr. Addison.

F. WAYS AND MEANS

Councilman Fountain had no report.

G. ADMINISTRATOR'S REPORT

Mr. Watkins said that our current COVID count is down to 5 active cases. He said that he encourages everyone to receive the COVID vaccine. He said that CARESOUTH is giving them every day and they are free. He said that if you are homebound, DHEC will send someone to your home and give you the vaccine.

He said that Recreation Department and Cedar Creek Baptist Church are planning to do a fundraiser for Bernie Watts on June 11 to help with medical bills.

Mr. Watkins said there was a special election for Councilman Addison's position on June 22. He said that Alexander Boyd was the democratic nominee and he ran unopposed.

PUBLIC COMMENT

Bernard McDaniel shared some of the activities that are going on in the school district. He said that graduation is planned for Saturday morning.

Ruby Gibbs thanked County for the picnic shed and said that Farmers Market opens Thursday and said that vouchers are coming later. She also said that she is starting a Community Garden at Lee Central with some students.

Ms. Gibbs Invited Council to Council on Aging Lunch from 10-2 on June 17 with the Board of Directors. She also said that the center is opening back up and seniors are coming back.

EXECUTIVE SESSION

A. COUNCIL WILL ENTER EXECUTIVE SESSION ON AN ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT MATTER

The Council entered Executive Session at 6:48 p.m. on a motion made by Vice-Chairman Eckley, seconded by Councilman Beasley. The Council came out of Executive Session at 7:12 p.m. on a motion made by Vice-Chairman Eckley, seconded by Councilperson Josey.

Chairman Windham stated that no votes were taken.

ADJOURN

The meeting was adjourned at 7:13 p.m. on a motion made by Vice-Chairman Eckley, seconded by Councilperson Josey.

CHAIRMAN

VICE-CHAIRMAN

CLERK TO COUNCIL

MINUTES APPROVED