

LEE COUNTY COUNCIL  
REGULAR COUNCIL MEETING  
JANUARY 12, 2021, 9:30 A.M.  
MAIN COURT ROOM – SECOND FLOOR OF THE COURTHOUSE

Prior to the Council Meeting, a swearing in ceremony took place to swear in the newly elected Councilmembers. Ron Fountain, Jackie Josey and Travis Windham were sworn in by Judge Shirley Davidson.

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Members present were Travis Windham, Chairman; Gordon Eckley, Vice-Chairman; Charles A. Beasley, member; Jackie Josey, member; Ron Fountain, member. Staff present were Alan Watkins, Administrator; Julie Stokes, Assistant Administrator; Wayne Capell, Cecil Stevens, Shirley Dixon, Randy Dixon, Johnny Myers, Jennie Darity, Gee Whetsel.

**FOIA**

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

**ELECTION OF CHAIRMAN AND VICE-CHAIRMAN**

Vice-Chairman Eckley nominated Travis Windham as Chairman. Councilman Beasley seconded the nomination. There were no other nominations for Chairman. The Council voted in favor of naming Travis Windham as Chairman. Chairman Windham thanked the Council for their confidence.

Councilman Beasley nominated Gordon Eckley as Vice-Chairman. Councilperson Josey seconded the nomination. There were no other nominations. Councilman Beasley voted for nominations to come to a close. Councilman Fountain seconded. The Council voted in favor to elect Gordon Eckley as Vice-Chairman. Vice-Chairman Eckley thanked the Council for their confidence in him.

**OPEN MEETING AND INVOCATION AND PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE TO THE FLAG**

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

### **REQUEST FOR MOTION ON RECOMMENDED AGENDA**

Chairman Windham said there was an addition to the agenda that would 6A concerning a grant resolution to accept a grant award from Department of Commerce for a spec building.

Councilman Beasley made the motion to approve the agenda with the revision. 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 MINUTES FROM REGULAR MEETING OF DECEMBER 8, 2020**

Councilperson Josey made the motion to approve the minutes from December 8, 2020 as mailed. Vice-Chairman Eckley seconded the motion. Chairman Windham called for the vote, and motion carried. All voted in favor.

### **PRESENTATION OF PLAQUES FOR RETIRING EMPLOYEES**

Chairman Windham presented Jennie Darity, Shirley Dixon and Johnny Myers with plaques for their years of service.

### **SHEHEEN, HANCOCK & GODWIN WILL PRESENT THE AUDIT FY20**

Marc Wood was available by phone to present the Audit FY20. He presented the audit and highlighted some areas of interest. He said the fund balance stood at \$10,608,167. He said that the total revenue was \$15,885,475, which included operating, interest income and capital lease proceeds. The total operating expenditures was \$14,631,582. The excess amount of revenues over expenses was \$1,253,893.

Mr. Wood thanked Connie Brown and Wayne Capell and their staffs for all of the assistance in compiling information for the audit.

Mr. Wood did say that the County did receive an unqualified opinion, which is the highest opinion that a County can receive. He said the County was in good financial standing. Mr. Wood said that he looked forward to working with the County for another year.

### **RESOLUTION TO ACCEPT GRANT AWARD FOR SPEC BUILDING**

Mr. Watkins said The Link has been working on a grant to construct a spec building. The grant being accepted today is for \$2.25 million. Mr. Watkins said this would be for a 50,000 square foot building but would just for the walls and roof for the basic shell of an industrial plant. He

said the cost of the building would be \$2.7 million. He said The Link had secured \$500,000 from SC Power Team and \$50,000 from Black River Electric Coop.

Mr. Watkins said this resolution would authorize him to sign the necessary documents for the grant award of \$2.25 million. He said the construction would begin early fall.

Vice-Chairman Eckley made the motion to approve the resolution to accept grant award for spec building. Councilman Fountain seconded the motion. Chairman Windham called for the vote, and motion carried. All voted in favor.

Vice-Chairman Eckley said that 99% of industrial prospects will not even look at a county if they do not have a spec building. He said that he wanted to commend Jay Schwedler and The Link for securing funds.

Vice-Chairman Eckley said that the county had received over a million dollars doing site ready pads. He said that it was good that a 50,000 square foot pad is ready to go.

Vice-Chairman Eckley said that joining The Link was the best thing we ever did and Lee County has a great working relationship with Sumter County. He also thanked Black River for their help in this project.

Vice-Chairman Eckley said that last year, the County received \$1 million to do sidewalks and lighting project on Highway 15.

#### **APPROVAL TO EXTEND THE EMERGENCY ORDINANCE 5-20 COVID-19 STATE OF EMERGENCY**

Mr. Watkins said that this Emergency Ordinance was put into place in March, 2020 and is good for 60 days at a time. This ordinance authorizes the Administrator with Chairman to make necessary changes in a timely manner. As of November 18, there were 793 cases and as of January 11, there were 1,231 cases, which is a 55% increase in 9 weeks. The number of cases continues to increase.

Councilperson Josey made the motion to approve to extend the Emergency Ordinance 5-20 Covid-19 State of Emergency. Councilman Fountain 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 due to COVID, she asks that the County continue to be safe and take advantage of testing and vaccines.

B. PLANNING, TAXES & PERSONNEL

Councilman Beasley said this committee did not have any meetings. He said that his committee would need to meet in the upcoming months regarding personnel shortage. He said we can't seem to fill positions for public works. He said that we need personnel and funds and with all the rain that we have had, hiring more people would help with the road situations.

C. BUILDINGS, LAND & PROPERTY

Vice-Chairman Eckley that his committee did meet in regards to working on an easement agreement with Hogslat on Highway 341.

Vice-Chairman Eckley said that the Link Board is fortunate to have the staff that serves us and also Jay has a great working relationship with Department of Commerce. He said that other counties are looking to see how Lee County is getting funds and success.

D. PUBLIC SAFETY

Councilperson Caughman not here.

E. RECREATION AND PUBLIC RELATIONS

Councilman Addison not here

F. WAYS AND MEANS

No meetings

Chairman Windham mentioned that Mr. Watkins needed to make a list of the positive things that took place in 2020.

G. ADMINISTRATOR'S REPORT

Mr. Watkins said that there are testing sites for COVID-19 open daily: CareSouth 8:30-1:00 DHEC – pre-register 8:30 – 3:00 p.m. ; Chappell Park – Tuesday 10-3 saliva based. Mr. Watkins said that he is encouraging everyone to be tested.

Mr. Watkins said that vaccines will be available in the 1A group, which is front line Health care workers through doctors offices. He also said that vaccines will be offered through DHEC for Fire and Law Enforcement. He said some of EMS have already received their vaccines.

He said that anyone 70 and older are now eligible for the vaccine. The hotline number is 855-472-3422 which will help you identify location close to you.

Mr. Watkins said the County submitted expenses to the Cares Act for March – November and has received \$47,593.13 to date after submitting reports.

**PUBLIC COMMENT**

Kareem Wilson, of The Item, introduced himself and wanted clarification on some things discussed in the meeting.

**ADJOURN**

The meeting was adjourned at 10:18 a.m. on a motion made by Councilman Beasley, seconded by Councilman Fountain.

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CHAIRMAN

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VICE-CHAIRMAN

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CLERK TO COUNCIL

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MINUTES APPROVED