

LEE COUNTY COUNCIL
REGULAR MEETING
APRIL 9, 2024, 9:30 A.M.
MAIN COURT ROOM – SECOND FLOOR OF THE COURTHOUSE

Members present were 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, County Administrator; Julie Stokes, Assistant Administrator/Clerk to Council; Teresa Brown, Lee Richardson; Kaulonda Lewis. Others present were Wendy Parnell, Jeffrey Graham, Ruby Gibbs, Andre Laws, Mattie Mack.

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

Councilman Addison gave the invocation and led the Pledge of Allegiance to the Flag. Vice-Chairman Eckley welcomed everyone to the meeting and said that Chairman Windham was absent due a medical procedure.

REQUEST FOR MOTION ON ADOPTION OF RECOMMENDED AGENDA

Councilperson Josey made the motion to approve the agenda as mailed. Councilman Beasley seconded the motion. Vice-Chairman Eckley called for the vote, and motion carried. All voted in favor.

REQUEST FOR MOTION ON ADOPTION OF MINUTES FROM THE REGULAR MEETING OF MARCH 12, 2024

Councilman Beasley made the motion to approve the minutes from regular meeting of March 12, 2024. Councilperson Caughman seconded the motion. Vice-Chairman Eckley called for the vote, and motion carried. All voted in favor.

REQUEST FOR MOTION ON ADOPTION OF THIRD READING APPROVAL OF ORDINANCE

- A. AN AMENDED AND RESTATED ORDINANCE TO CREATE A JOINT MULTI-COUNTY BUSINESS PARK WITH KERSHAW COUNTY, THIS MULTI-COUNTY BUSINESS PARK TO BE COMPRISED OF PROPERTY LOCATED IN KERSHAW COUNTY AND LEE COUNTY AND ESTABLISHED PURSUANT TO SOUTH CAROLINA CODE OF LAWS OF 1976, 4-1-170 ET SEQUITUR, AS AMENDED; TO PROVIDE FOR AN AMENDED WRITTEN AGREEMENT WITH KERSHAW COUNTY PROVIDING FOR

THE EXPENSES OF THE PARK, THE PERCENTAGE OF REVENUE APPLICATION, AND THE DISTRIBUTION OF FEES IN LIEU OF AD VALOREM TAXES TO THE COUNTIES AND RELEVANT TAXING ENTITIES; AND, TO PROVIDE THAT JOBS TAX CREDITS ALLOWED BY LAW TO PROVIDE FOR INDUSTRIES LOCATING IN SAID PARK, AND TO PERMIT A USER FEE IN LIEU OF AD VALOREM TAXATION.

Mr. Watkins said this is a solar project in Kershaw County and located in a multi-county park. He said the County has had two readings and a public hearing. Mr. Watkins said that projects that develop in either county will get tax incentives as part of the multi-county park agreement and said Kershaw will receive 99% and Lee County will receive 1%. He said that there is no cost to Lee County to be a part of the multi-county park agreement.

Councilman Fountain made the motion to approve the ordinance for third and final reading. Councilperson Josey seconded the motion. Vice-Chairman Eckley called for the vote, and motion carried. All voted in favor.

WENDY PARNELL, DIRECTOR OF LEE COUNTY DISABILITIES AND SPECIAL NEEDS, WILL UPDATE COUNCIL ON AUTISM AWARENESS MONTH

Ms. Parnell said that she had been with Lee County Disabilities and Special Needs for 26 years and gave a brief overview of the services they offer. She said they serve Lee, Darlington Sumter, Florence, and Kershaw counties. She said they have homes located throughout the county and currently have 107 employees that serve 78 consumers.

She said that April 30 is the Autism Walk at 9:30 from Chappell Drive to Rowland Drive. She also said that November 9 is the 50th Anniversary Lee County Disabilities Foundation Gala at 7:00.

Vice-Chairman Eckley thanked her for coming and said he appreciated the services they offer to the special needs in the community.

RESOLUTION TO APPROVE APRIL AS FAIR HOUSING MONTH

Vice-Chairman Eckley read the Resolution. Councilperson Josey made the motion to approve April as Fair Housing Month and Councilman Addison seconded the motion. Vice-Chairman Eckley called for the vote, and motion carried. All voted in favor.

APPROVAL TO APPOINT CORRIE TINDAL TO THE LEE COUNTY LIBRARY BOARD TO FILL AN AT-LARGE VACANCY

Vice-Chairman Eckley said that the Council had received a request from the Library Board to approve that Corrie Tindal be appointed to the Library Board for an at-large vacancy. Lee Richardson said that Ms. Tindal comes highly recommended and will do a great job.

Councilperson Caughman made the motion to approve the appointment of Corrie Tindal to the Lee County Library Board to fill an at-large vacancy. Councilperson Josey seconded the motion. Vice-Chairman Eckley called for the vote, and motion carried. All voted in favor.

COMMITTEE REPORTS

A. HEALTH, EDUCATION & WELFARE

Councilperson Josey said that she attended the 2nd Annual Gala for First Steps and said that it was well attended with approximately 250 people in attendance.

She recognized Mayor Andre Laws to give an update. Mayor Laws said that there was a meeting scheduled for tonight to discuss the water and sewer problems in Lynchburg. He said this was the second meeting that they were having with US Water Alliance, along with several other agencies to determine what resources were available to address the water and sewer needs in Lynchburg.

Mayor Laws also said the Magnolia Festival was scheduled for the first weekend in May, starting with a parade and other activities scheduled for the weekend. He said the grand marshal would be Dr. Jennifer Evans Scott, and there would also be gospel music on Magnolia Street on Sunday.

B. PLANNING, TAXES & PERSONNEL

Councilman Beasley said that he had no meetings. He said they would start work on the new budget soon.

C. BUILDINGS, LAND & PROPERTY

Vice-Chairman Eckley said the County is still working on active prospects. He said there will be a ribbon cutting at EFP soon and said they currently have 23 employees. He said they should receive a certificate of occupancy after today's inspection. Vice-Chairman Eckley said that they plan to employ up to 53 employees in the next couple of months. He said these are higher end good paying jobs and the goal is to expand their operations.

D. PUBLIC SAFETY

Councilperson McCutchen said that her committee did not have any meetings.

E. RECREATION AND PUBLIC RELATIONS

Councilman Addison said his committee did not have any meetings.

Mr. Watkins added that baseball and softball games have started, and they have 17 teams of baseball and softball teams. He said they have games on Monday, Tuesday and Thursday each week and there are normally several hundred at Chappell Park during peak times.

He said renovations are almost complete at old Bishopville High School.

F. WAYS AND MEANS

Councilman Fountain said that his committee did not have any meetings. He said they would be starting the new budget process soon.

Page 4, Lee County Council Minutes, April 9, 2024

Vice-Chairman Eckley said that Chairman Windham had a health procedure and was recovering.

PUBLIC COMMENT

Eddie Durant, of Price Lane, said that he appreciated the County scraping the road. He said that with the rain that we have had, it needed to be scraped again. He asked if they were planning to do anything but scraping, as in rocking the road.

Mr. Watkins said that the County is aware of his concerns and will review those concerns.

Lee Richardson said that Derek Smith would have a book signing at the library on April 25 from 4-6 p.m. She also commented that Law Talks were coming up and said the library has pickle balls sets available to use.

Wendy Parnell thanked the Council for their donation for the SpringHill Community Center. She also reminded everyone of the May Fest scheduled for May 18.

Gerald Wright, of Woodlawn Circle, said the speed limit on that street is 35 mph and that many cars are on that street driving too fast. He said the speed limit needs to be dropped down.

Ruby Gibbs invited everyone to Mary McLeod Bethune Park Walk on May 18 starting at 7:30. She also mentioned that they want to replace some historical markers and need Council support. She thanked the Council for everything they do for Mary McLeod Bethune Park.

ADMINISTRATOR'S REPORT

Mr. Watkins said the Lee County Chamber had a luncheon for local businesses on May 14 in which over 100 people attended and several awards were given. He thanked the Chamber for the great job they do for our community.

Mr. Watkins reported that the County is scheduled to clean the outside of the courthouse and sidewalks. He said that the County is utilizing a lift to repair the flagpole, also.

He said that the County is well into the budget process and has collected budgets from the department heads. He said the Ways and Means Committee has meetings scheduled for the end of this month to meet with outside agencies.

He said the first reading of the budget will be in May, the second reading and public hearing will be in June, and the third reading will be in June.

EXECUTIVE SESSION

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

Council entered Executive Session on a motion made by Councilman Beasley, seconded by Councilperson Josey.

Council came out of Executive Session at 10:36 a.m. on a motion made by Councilperson Josey, seconded by Councilman Addison. No votes were taken and an economic development matter was discussed. Vice-Chairman Eckley called for the vote, and motion carried. All voted in favor.

ADJOURN

The meeting was adjourned at 10:37 a.m. on a motion made by Councilman Beasley, seconded by Councilman Fountain.

CHAIRMAN

VICE-CHAIRMAN

CLERK TO COUNCIL

MINUTES APPROVED