

**LEE COUNTY COUNCIL
REGULAR MEETING
APRIL 12, 2022
MAIN COURT ROOM – SECOND FLOOR OF THE COURTHOUSE**

Members present were Travis Windham, Chairman; Gordon Eckley, Vice-Chairman; Alexander Boyd, 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; Paul Fata. Others present were Carrie Gass, Shirley and Roy Dixon, Ruby Gibbs, Mary Wells, Andre Laws, Jenna McGuirt, Erika Williams and the students of the Emerging Leaders Program, Gee Whetsel.

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

REQUEST FOR MOTION ON ADOPTION OF RECOMMENDED AGENDA

Mr. Watkins said that the agenda needed to be revised to include an Executive Session to update Council on the lawsuit with FTC.

Councilperson Caughman 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 MARCH 8, 2022

Councilman Beasley made the motion to approve the minutes from regular meeting of March 8, 2022 as mailed. Councilperson Josey seconded the motion. Chairman Windham called for the vote, and motion carried. All voted in favor.

ERIKA WILLIAMS, OF THE LINK, WILL INTRODUCE THE EMERGING LEADERS OF LEE COUNTY

Ms. Williams introduced the students in the Emerging Leaders Program. The students were from Thomas Sumter Academy and Lee Central. She made a few comments on the program itself and thanked the Council for their support.

Chairman Windham thanked Ms. Williams and the students for coming to the meeting and for their willingness to participate in this program.

REQUEST FOR MOTION ON THIRD 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 the County had a public hearing and this was a FILO of taxes to support a solar project. He said this solar farm would be located at the intersection of Highway 341 and 401 and would be a 2 mega watt farm and would be a \$2.8 million investment. Mr. Watkins said this site would generate approximately \$7,000 in taxes a year and the company would pay this for 30 years.

Mr. Watkins said the agreement does address vegetation and maintenance for site and states that if the conditions are not met in a timely manner, as addressed in this agreement, then a fine would be imposed. It also stated that failure to pay the fine or address concerns could result in termination of the FILO.

Councilperson Josey made the motion to approve the Ordinance for third and final reading. Councilperson Caughman seconded the motion. Chairman Windham called for the vote, and motion carried. All voted in favor.

RESOLUTION APPROVING THE EXTENSION OF THE INVESTMENT PERIOD FOR A FEE-IN-LIEU OF TAXES FOR SOUTH ATLANTIC CANNERS

Mr. Watkins said that in 2017, the Council authorized a FILO to SAC for a \$14 million investment and the creation of 9 jobs. He said this FILO will expire in December, 2022. He said they did meet the minimum and exceeded that to \$15million investment with 15 jobs.

Mr. Watkins said that SAC is asking to extend this FILO to December, 2024. They are doing an expansion of \$4.5 million with the creation of 15 jobs. He said that once they do this expansion, SAC will have invested \$20 million with 35 jobs. He said this extension would basically be lengthening the window of time. However, the original tax incentives for this FILO agreement will not change as a result of this extension of the investment window by approving this Resolution.

Vice-Chairman Eckley made the motion to approve this Resolution. Councilman Boyd seconded the motion. Chairman Windham called for the vote, and motion carried. All voted in favor.

APPOINTMENT OF KATHY JACKSON TO THE LEE COUNTY DISABILITIES AND SPECIAL NEEDS BOARD

Councilman Beasley made the motion to approve the appointment of Kathy Jackson to the Lee County Disabilities and Special Needs Board. Vice-Chairman Eckley seconded the motion. Chairman Windham called for the vote, and motion carried. All voted in favor.

PROCLAMATION FOR THE NATIONAL DAY OF PRAYER

Vice-Chairman Eckley read the Proclamation and made the motion to approve the Proclamation for the National Day of Prayer. Councilperson Josey seconded the motion. Chairman Windham called for the vote, and motion carried. All voted in favor.

PROCLAMATION FOR APRIL AS FAIR HOUSING MONTH

Chairman Windham read the Proclamation. Councilperson Caughman made the motion to approve the Proclamation for April to be Fair Housing Month. Councilperson Josey 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 said that Oral Health events for March 12 and April 9 had good participation. She said that five people got COVID vaccinations. She said the next Oral Health event is scheduled for May 7 at Spring Hill. She said that Lee County is behind on data and is behind on oral health. She said they have vans available to have dental exams. She gave a shout out to Recreation Department and said that Angela Simon did a great job helping them.

B. PLANNING, TAXES & PERSONNEL

Councilman Beasley said they had no meetings. He said that committee would be looking at taxes and personnel and finance and said that they would be talking to Mr. Watkins about some issues in reference to employees, cost of living and taxes.

C. BUILDINGS, LAND & PROPERTY

Vice-Chairman Eckley said that as Chairman of The Link, he wanted to commend Erika for going into the schools and educating our youth. He also commended the students for their participation in the program.

He said that there was a lot of activity at the I-20 Park. He said that people were looking at the spec building and the site ready pads and also people were looking at existing buildings.

D. PUBLIC SAFETY

Councilperson Caughman had no meetings.

E. RECREATION AND PUBLIC RELATIONS

Councilman Boyd said that his committee met with Mr. Watkins about purchasing equipment for the parks.

F. WAYS AND MEANS

Councilman Fountain said that he had no meetings. He said that it is time for department heads to turn in their budgets and start budget meetings.

G. ADMINISTRATOR'S REPORT

Mr. Watkins said that COVID has dropped tremendously. He said that in January, 2022, there were 500 active cases. This past Tuesday, there were three active cases in Lee County. He said he had no plan to institute new measures but encouraged vaccinations. He said that vaccines are still offered at Bishopville Drug, Care South and DHEC.

He said the County is participating with the City in a grant involving the RR depot, which will be overseen by the City. He said that demolition has already started in the buildings across the street.

Mr. Watkins said the sale of the building to Martech took place last week.

Mr. Watkins also said that in January of last year, HogSlat, a retail business that deals in agricultural equipment for hog farms and poultry farms, wanted to relocate in Lee County from Hartsville. The County already authorized 1.55 acres to them. He said this would be 4-6 jobs and would be closing in 2-3 weeks.

Mr. Watkins also said that the public hearing for the proposed SCDOT truck route would be at Lee Central High School on April 19.

He said the budget process has started and the meeting with outside agencies would probably take place around the end of the month. He said the first reading would be in May, and second reading and public hearing would be in June, and third reading would be in June. He said the County has seen a substantial health insurance increases but we feel like it will be a temporary increase.

PUBLIC COMMENT

Roy Dixon – said that when he looked online at the minutes, he did not see his list of questions with answers. Mr. Watkins said that he would look into this.

Mary Wells – said that she lives at 70 Mailbox Lane, Lynchburg and said she continues to have flooding issues due to beavers.

EXECUTIVE SESSION

A. COUNCIL WILL ENTER EXECUTIVE SESSION ON A LEGAL MATTER

Council entered Executive Session at 10:12 a.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.

Council came out of Executive Session at 10:34 a.m. on a motion made by Councilman Beasley, seconded by Councilperson Caughman. No votes were taken.

ADJOURN

The meeting was adjourned at 10:35 a.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.

CHAIRMAN

VICE-CHAIRMAN

CLERK TO COUNCIL

MINUTES APPROVED