

LEE COUNTY COUNCIL
PUBLIC HEARING
MAY 9, 2023
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; Paul Fata; Lee Richardson; Others present were Brian Rauschenbach, Mike McKibbon, Shirley Dixon, Suzette Robinson, Naomi Price, Gloria Lewis, Meoceania Lewis Wells, George Roberts, Shareka Anderson, Queenie Boyd, Nathaniel Best, Andre Laws, Nathaniel Brunson, Regitt James.

FOIA

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

PUBLIC HEARING

- A. AN ORDINANCE (1) AUTHORIZING THE EXECUTION AND DELIVERY OF AN AMENDMENT TO THE FEE AGREEMENT, DATED AS OF FEBRUARY 28, 2017, BY AND BETWEEN LEE COUNTY, SOUTH CAROLINA AND SOUTH ATLANTIC CANNERS, INC. TO PROVIDE FOR AN EXTENSION OF THE INVESTMENT PERIOD AND A MODIFICATION OF THE INFRASTRUCTURE CREDIT; (2) PROVIDING FOR OTHER RELATED MATTERS.

The public hearing was opened at 9:30 a.m. on a motion made by Councilperson Josey, seconded by Vice-Chairman Eckley.

Mr. Watkins said that this public hearing was in reference to a FILO expansion of South Atlantic Cannery. He said the original agreement was done in February, 2017 and this ordinance would be amending the fee to add an additional investment and jobs to the agreement. The 2017 agreement added nine jobs with a \$14 million investment and the amendment will add 15 jobs with a \$28.75 investment for a total of \$42.75 million investment and 24 jobs.

Brian Rauschenbach thanked Council for their support and said the Link had been working with SAC since 2017. Mike McKibbon, a plant engineer, said he has been with SAC for eight years and said that this plant in Bishopville is the best plant in the country. He said that the addition investment will include \$28.75 million with 15 jobs and they are going to spend \$400,000 on the railroad spur and do infrastructure work with new equipment and upgrades.

Chairman Windham thanked SAC for what they have meant to the community. He said that most of the growth here in Lee County comes from existing industries, which is opportunity for more jobs and an increase in our tax base.

Public Comment –

Gloria Lewis asked if it was 14 or 15 jobs. Mr. Watkins said this was in addition of 15 jobs, but the total investment is \$42.75 million with a total of 24 jobs .

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Meoceania Lewis Wells – asked if Coke was going to open Cousar Street back up. Mr. Watkins said that the road is open for use to the public and the County is in further discussion on this matter.

The public hearing was closed at 9:39 a.m. on a motion made by Councilperson Caughman, seconded by Councilperson Josey.

Chairman Windham commented that Councilmen Fountain and Beasley were not present due to conflicts.

LEE COUNTY COUNCIL
REGULAR MEETING
MAY 9, 2023
FAMILY COURT ROOM -SECOND FLOOR OF THE COURTHOUSE

OPEN MEETING, INVOCATION AND PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE TO THE FLAG

Chairman Windham welcomed everyone 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. Councilperson Caughman 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 APRIL 11, 2023

Vice-Chairman Eckley made the motion to approve the minutes from regular meeting of April 11, 2023 as mailed. Councilperson Josey seconded the motion.

REQUEST FOR MOTION ON ADOPTION OF FIRST READING APPROVAL OF ORDINANCE

A. LEE COUNTY BUDGET FY 24

Mr. Watkins said the Ways and Means Committee met with outside agencies, and all of the requests totaled \$15,230,306.76, which is an increase of \$577,123 from last year. The revenue is \$14,897,890.15, so there is currently a deficit of \$322,416. He said the public hearing for the budget is scheduled for June 13 at 5:30. Mr. Watkins said the County has to have a balanced budget by June 30, 2023. He said there were mandated health increases of \$190,000 and outside agency requests of \$200,000. Mr. Watkins said that the Ways and Means was proposing a 3% cost of living increase and was looking to possibly give more to lower end salaries. Mr. Watkins commented that the County would have to have a tax increase to fund the budget right now.

Vice-Chairman Eckley made the motion to approve Lee County Budget FY 24 for first reading. Councilperson Josey seconded the motion. Chairman Windham called for the vote, and motion carried. All voted in favor.

B. LEE COUNTY SCHOOL BUDGET FY 24

Mr. Watkins said the County typically uses last year's millage rate for first reading of the school budget. He said that the only thing that the County controls is the local funding portion or the ad valorem tax. He said the tax millage is currently 146.6 mills and said this will be a starting point for this year. Mr. Watkins said the school will be making a presentation at our public hearing.

Bernard McDaniel was present and said they were having their public hearing on Thursday, May 11 and stated that no figures have been solidified in Columbia at this point. He said they would like to do an increase for teacher's salaries and also wanted to do a 3% cost of living for employees.

Shareka Anderson said that she was working on the 3% cost of living adjustments and said the first reading for their budget was \$19 million.

Chairman Windham thanked the school board and recognized Queenie Boyd, Regitt James, Nathaniel Brunson. Queenie Boyd thanked Council for their support.

Mr. Watkins said the County will start with 146.6 mills that was approved in last year's budget.

Councilperson Josey made the motion to approve the Lee County School Budget FY 24 for first reading. 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 SECOND READING APPROVAL OF ORDINANCE

- A. AN ORDINANCE(1) AUTHORIZING THE EXECUTION AND DELIVERY OF AN AMENDMENT TO THE FEE AGREEMENT, DATED AS OF FEBRUARY 28, 2017, BY AND BETWEEN LEE COUNTY, SOUTH CAROLINA, AND SOUTH ATLANTIC CANNERS, INC. TO PROVIDE FOR AN EXTENSION OF THE INVESTMENT PERIOD AND A MODIFICATION OF THE INFRASTRUCTURE CREDIT; (2) PROVIDING FOR OTHER RELATED MATTERS.

Chairman Windham said that the Council had just the public hearing on this matter. Mr. Watkins said the SAC was amending the FILO agreement for 2017 to extend the investment to \$42.75 million with 15 new jobs.

Councilperson Caughman 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.

GEORGE ROBERTS, WITH FRIENDS OF THE LIZARD MAN, WILL BRIEF COUNCIL ON UPCOMING PLANS

Mr. Roberts was present and briefed Council on the upcoming Lizard Man Stomp parade that is scheduled for June 24. He also told the story of the history of the Lizard Man.

AUTHORIZATION TO ACCEPT TWO FAA GRANTS: (1) FAA FY 23 AIP GRANT AGREEMENT 3-45-0010-016-2023 FOR WILDLIFE FENCING PROJECT - \$252,988 (2) FY 23 AIRPORT INFRASTRUCTURE GRANT 3-45-0010-017-2023 FOR WILDLIFE FENCING PROJECT - \$223,000

Mr. Watkins said this was authorizing the County to accept 2 FAA grants in which the county would pay 5%. He said the wildlife perimeter fence will be installed to prevent wildlife, i.e. deer or animals, from

coming onto the runway. He said this was for two grants for a total of \$475,988 that would be paid towards the project. Mr. Watkins said this would authorize him to sign on the county's behalf.

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Vice-Chairman Eckley made the motion to approve the authorization to accept two FAA Grants for wildlife fencing project in the amount of \$475,988. Councilperson Josey seconded the motion. Chairman Windham called for the vote, and motion carried. All voted in favor.

AWARD OF BID FOR INSTALLATION OF PERIMETER FENCING AT LEE COUNTY AIRPORT

Mr. Watkins said the ad for this had been placed on SCIBO and the bid was awarded to Maner Builders Supply of Charleston in the amount of \$424,700.

Councilperson Josey made the motion to award the bid for the installation of perimeter fencing at Lee County Airport in the amount of \$424,700 to Maner Builders Supply of Charleston. Vice-Chairman Eckley seconded the motion. Chairman Windham called for the vote, and motion carried. All voted in favor.

APPROVAL OF MEMORANDUM OF UNDERSTANDING REGARDING LOCATING A YMCA IN THE COUNTY

Mr. Watkins said the YMCA was interested in locating a YMCA in downtown Bishopville. He said that Representative Wheeler has worked on funding this project and to aid in its success, the county is willing to commit \$225,000 over a five- year period, with installments of \$75,000 in the first year, \$50,000 in the second and third years and \$25,000 in fourth and fifth years. Quarterly payments will be made.

Mr. Watkins said the quality of life is important in a community and said that having a YMCA would improve the health of the community and be an economic stimulus for the county.

The memorandum of agreement is with Lee County, City of Bishopville, and Greater Bishopville. Chairman Windham thanked the City and Greater Bishopville for partnering with us on this project. He said that it was not 100% approved yet but was very hopeful that this project would come to fruition. He said this was a great partnership with the City and our local delegation.

Vice-Chairman Eckley made the motion to approve the memorandum of agreement regarding locating a YMCA in the county. Councilman Addison seconded the motion. Chairman Windham called for the vote, and motion carried. All voted in favor.

REAPPOINTMENT OF ELIJAH DINKINS TO THE LEE COUNTY DISABILITIES AND SPECIAL NEEDS BOARD FOR A FOUR-YEAR TERM

Councilperson Josey made the motion to reappoint Elijah Dinkins to the Lee County Disabilities Special Needs Board for a four-year term. Councilperson Caughman seconded the motion. Chairman Windham called for the vote, and motion carried. All voted in favor.

COMMITTEE REPORTS

A. HEALTH, EDUCATION & WELFARE

Councilperson Josey attended an event at the State Capitol on 4/19 with the Board of Education and the School Superintendent and Councilman Addison were also in attendance. She also met with Representative Wheeler and Senator Malloy during the event.

Councilperson Josey also met with SC Health and Education Committee and stated that Lee County is in the bottom of health in the state. She attended a First Steps Gala on May 3, and Chairman Windham also attended and presented a proclamation on behalf of the County. She said there were 400 guests in attendance and Orlando Hudson was the guest speaker.

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Councilperson Josey also mentioned that Alexis Pipkins obtained a grant to distribute food boxes to the needy in the community.

She also reported that she attended the Magnolia Festival in Lynchburg and it was well attended. She recognized Andre Laws and he said that it was very successful. He said this was the first festival since Covid. He also said that Larry Logan had recently lost his wife and encouraged everyone to pray for him and his family.

Councilperson Josey also said that the Town of Lynchburg had been given a piece of property and this would be an extension to Clifton Jefferson Park.

Chairman Windham also commented that the First Steps Gala was very impressive and said this program will have a great impact on the community.

B. PLANNING, TAXES & PERSONNEL

Councilman not present.

C. BUILDINGS, LAND & PROPERTY

Vice-Chairman Eckley said that, as Chairman of the Link, he wanted to commend Brian Rauschenbach for the great job he does with the economic development of existing industries and for the Link and the overall job they do. He thanked SAC for their investment. Vice-Chairman Eckley also said that two other industries will hopefully start up in August with 50 new jobs.

D. PUBLIC SAFETY

Councilperson Caughman said she had no meetings.

E. RECREATION & PUBLIC RELATIONS

Councilman Addison said that he had no meetings. He did say that he had some calls from parents with concerns, but he encouraged them to look at the parks to see all of the improvements that had been made.

F. WAYS AND MEANS

Councilman Fountain not here. Mr. Watkins said that the Ways and Means will meet two or three more times and will present a balanced budget at the public hearing.

G. ADMINISTRATOR'S REPORT

Mr. Watkins said that the light installation has started and will hopefully be complete in 60-90 days.

He said that he toured the Vocational Rehabilitation facility in Camden on April 14 and was very impressed. He said they have jobs on site and they go out in the community to assist people with jobs.

Mr. Watkins said that he attended a 250 Committee meeting on May 3 and said this project was in the initial stage. He said that committee is recognizing the upcoming anniversary of the Revolutionary War and was working on some activities for the community.

He said that he participated in a survey on broadband and how funds will be distributed for broadband coverage. He said the goal is 30,000 surveys for South Carolina.

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Chairman Windham commented that he has gotten many questions about why the sidewalks were being installed along Highway 15. He said that the sidewalks were put installed in order for the County to get the lighting. Mr. Watkins said the next phase is to have lighting on and off the Ext. 116 ramp. Chairman Windham said this was dealing with federal funding.

Chairman Windham thanked the City for all of the improvements they have made to the City of Bishopville. Vice-Chairman Eckley said that you have to go through the process to see results.

PUBLIC COMMENT

Lee Richardson – she said the Library will be open during Lizard Man Stomp. She also mentioned that the Library would be offering a Summer Reading Program on June 5.

Bernard McDaniel - said that the school had been dealing with threats over the weekend. He commended Sheriff Simon the great work of the Lee County Sheriff's Department. Mr. McDaniel said they did have school on Monday but had a heavy law enforcement presence.

Nathaniel Best – He said they do have a Lynchburg Development Board in Lynchburg.

Lisa Anity – She said that she provided \$5000-6000 for medical care of the animals of the Animal Shelter because no medical was done during that time. She said many animals would have died. She asked if some recognition could be given to volunteers and said they should be thanked.

Meoceania Lewis Wells – she asked if the new jobs from these industries were going to be filled with Lee County people or outside the county.

Brian Rauschenbach responded that people can go to Coke's website, and the jobs are posted there now and it is based on qualifications.

Lee Richardson – said that Coffee and Conversations for June will feature Will Wheeler and August will be Bernard McDaniel.

Ronnie Rhodes – said that he will be offering Summer Camps within schools.

EXECUTIVE SESSION

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

Council entered Executive Session at 10:43 a.m. on a motion made by Vice-Chairman Eckley, seconded by Councilperson Josey.

Council came out of Executive Session at 11:13 a.m. on a motion made by Vice-Chairman Eckley, seconded by Councilperson Josey. No votes were taken and discussion on an Economic Development matter took place.

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ADJOURN

The meeting was adjourned at 11:14 a.m. on a motion made by Vice-Chairman Eckley, seconded by Councilperson Josey.

CHAIRMAN

VICE-CHAIRMAN

MINUTES APPROVED

CLERK TO COUNCIL