

LEE COUNTY COUNCIL
REGULAR MEETING
MAY 10, 2022
MAIN COURT ROOM – SECOND FLOOR OF THE COURTHOUSE

Members present were Travis Windham, 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; Teresa Brown, Lisa Baker, Michael Davis, Tim DuBose. Others present were Shareka Anderson, Bernard McDaniel, Roy Dixon, Carrie Gass, Dot Smith.

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. Councilman Beasley gave the invocation and led the Pledge of Allegiance to the Flag.

REQUEST FOR MOTION ON ADOPTION OF RECOMMENDED AGENDA

Chairman Windham said that the agenda should be amended to include an Executive Session on a contractual matter.

Councilman Beasley made the motion to approve the agenda with the revision. Councilman Boyd 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 12, 2022

Councilperson Josey made the motion to approve the minutes from the regular meeting of April 12, 2022 as written. Councilperson Caughman seconded the motion. Chairman Windham called for the vote, and motion carried. All voted in favor.

REQUEST FOR MOTION ON FIRST READING APPROVAL OF ORDINANCE

A. LEE COUNTY BUDGET FY 23

Mr. Watkins said the work has been started on the FY23 budget and the committee has received budget requests from outside agencies and departments. He said the budget figure that the Council will be looking at this morning will include requests from those sources, and the initial expenditures is \$15,129,854.00. The initial revenue projection is \$14,648,683, which leaves a deficit of \$481,171.

Mr. Watkins said that now the process is to begin to balance the budget. He said the Council has to had to take into account the big increase in mandated expenditures such as health care for the employer portion, which had an increase of approximately 18% and pension employer contribution, with a 1% increase. The County has also seen an increase in property insurance of 5.6% from last year and seen an increase of \$20,000 in fuel costs.

Mr. Watkins said, as a side note, the County is budgeting \$1.2 million for healthcare, which is \$211,000 more than last year. He said that load factor, which are local claims, have to do with our increase. He also said that that the employer share of the pension was \$50,000 more than last year.

Mr. Watkins said that the County had some fuel increases built in but have exceeded that amount. He also said that Ways and Means Committee was working on cost of living raises for employees.

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

B. LEE COUNTY SCHOOL BUDGET FY 23

Mr. Watkins said that portion of the school budget that the county is responsible for is the local revenue portion, including ad valorem taxes. He said the school gets a portion of vehicle taxes and FILO agreements. He said the current school millage rate is 143.3 mills.

Mr. Bernard McDaniel said the school district has experienced increases over this past year. He said the school has not asked for increase in last three or four years but they will need to ask this year.

Mr. Watkins said that for today's reading, the millage rate is 143.3 mills, with a revenue of \$3,599,271.69.

Councilperson Josey made the motion to approve for first reading. Councilman Boyd seconded the motion. Chairman Windham called for the vote, and motion carried. All voted in favor.

DOT SMITH WILL GIVE AN UPDATE ON THE LEE COUNTY ARCHIVES

Mrs. Smith said she was representing the Lee County Archives, located in the Woodward Library of Archives and Research. She said that Ronnie Williams originally set up the Archives. She said the Archives only accepts paper documents and said they have indexed over 6,000 documents thus far. She reviewed the data categories that are in the indexing system at the Archives and told everyone that they would be glad to accept any kind of historical information that related to those categories.

She said they would be having an Open House from 5-7 today and thanked the Council for their support.

Chairman Windham thanked her for coming and sharing with the Council.

JENNA MCGUIRT WILL GIVE AN UPDATE ON THE LEE COUNTY CHAMBER

Ms. McGuirt updated Council on the activities that are taking place at the Chamber. She said that due to Covid, they are just now getting back to hosting activities. She said that they are doing the pumpkin patch again this year. She also said that she has had a supporting role on the Board of Emerging Leaders since 2019 and was also working on a Youth to Business Mentoring Program that would be ready by the fall.

Ms. McGuirt said that they are currently working on the façade grant program for downtown businesses on Main Street. This program would match up to 50% of the costs associated with any repair costs. She said this funding was provided by Duke Energy.

Ms. McGuirt also said that she works part time for the Archives and said that they are always busy indexing material and doing research. She commented that Mrs. Dot Smith was very active in the Archives and had been very instrumental in the establishment of the Archives.

Mr. Watkins commended Mrs. Dot Smith on her work as a volunteer and said the Archives was fortunate to have her on the board.

Chairman Windham thanked Ms. McGuirt for coming and sharing with the Council.

COMMITTEE REPORTS

A. HEALTH, EDUCATION AND WELFARE

Councilperson Josey said that since April, she has been involved in the dental oral health events that have been in Lee County. She said that DHEC initiated these events when they found that dental screenings were low in the children of Lee County. She said that events were held in Lynchburg, Bishopville, and Spring Hill. She also thanked Councilperson Caughman for her involvement in the events. Councilperson Josey also commented that they averaged about 7 COVID vaccines that were given at each site. She thanked the school system for getting the flyers out to the children. She also thanked Ms. Carrie Gass for getting the word out and thanked the Recreation Department for their help in hosting the event.

B. PLANNING, TAXES & PERSONNEL

Councilman Beasley said that his committee had no meetings. He said that he is a part of Ways and Means and said they met to discuss one time money that was pledged to EMS, E-911, A/C units and Fire Department. He said he commended Mr. Watkins for coming up with ideas and plans to utilize these funds.

C. BUILDINGS, LAND & PROPERTY

Vice-Chairman Eckley not present.

Mr. Watkins aid that County is working on economic development project with a potential industry.

He said that there were several ongoing building projects, one of which is EMS and the upgrading of their facilities. He said that also the Recreation Committee is getting some plans to order playground equipment to upgrade the parks.

D. PUBLIC SAFETY

Councilperson Caughman said she had no meetings.

Tim DuBose was present to give a report. He said that EMS took ownership of an ambulance that was purchased in May, 2021 and it will be inspected by DHEC next week.

He also said that Lee County was awarded a grant through Rural Health. Mr. DuBose also said that EMS would have five new certified paramedics coming up soon through paramedic program.

Mr. DuBose thanked Council for their support.

E. RECREATION AND PUBLIC RELATIONS

Councilman Boyd said that he was still working with Mr. Watkins on upgrading playground equipment.

F. WAYS AND MEANS

Councilman Fountain said Mr. Watkins gave good information about the upcoming budget and his committee would continue to work to get the budget balanced.

G. ADMINISTRATOR'S REPORT

Mr. Watkins said that the County was seeing an uptick in COVID cases. He said that vaccines are still available at Care South, Bishopville Drug, and CVS.

He also said that the Grand Opening for the Lee County Archives would be today from 5-7. He said that the budget has to be balanced by the end of June.

PUBLIC COMMENT

Roy Dixon said that Lee County is the only county that does not have programs to fix up houses for the elderly. He said the Council needs to come up with a plan to fix up homes for the elderly.

He said that he used to pay boat taxes every three years. He said now he has pay boat taxes every year. He asked if the revenue from boat taxes goes to the school.

Mr. Watkins said the taxes get prorated. He said the reason is the state law made it that boat taxes are paid every year.

Carrie Gass said that Salkahatchie program will be in lee County the week of June 23-July 2. She said that they have been doing this for 20 years. She said the workers will not be going inside homes this year due to COVID, just outside.

Chairman Windham reminded everyone about the Walk-A-Thon sponsored by the NCNW on May 21 at 8:00 at the Mary McLeod Bethune Park.

EXECUTIVE SESSION

A. COUNCIL WILL ENTER EXECUTIVE SESSION ON A CONTRACTUAL MATTER WITH FARMERS TELEPHONE

The Lee County Council entered Executive Session at 10:29 on a motion made by Councilman Fountain, seconded by Councilman Beasley. Chairman Windham called for the vote, and motion carried. All voted in favor.

The Lee County Council came out of Executive Session at 10:52 a.m. on a motion made by Councilman Beasley, seconded by Councilperson Caughman. Chairman Windham called for the vote, and motion carried. All voted in favor.

Chairman Windham said no votes were taken.

ADJOURN

The meeting was adjourned at 10:53 a.m. on a motion made by Councilman Beasley, seconded by Councilman Boyd. Chairman Windham called for the vote, and motion carried. All voted in favor.

CHAIRMAN

VICE-CHAIRMAN

CLERK TO COUNCIL

MINUTES APPROVED

