

LEE COUNTY COUNCIL
REGULAR MEETING
MAY 11, 2021
FAMILY COURT ROOM – SECOND FLOOR OF THE COURTHOUSE

Members present were Travis Windham, Chairman; Gordon Eckley, Vice-Chairman; 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. Others present were Shareka Anderson; Kareem Wilson, Carrie Gass, Bernard McDaniel.

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

REQUEST FOR MOTION ON ADOPTION OF RECOMMENDED AGENDA

Councilman Beasley made the motion to approve the agenda as mailed. 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 APRIL 13, 2021 AND CALLED MEETING OF APRIL 29, 2021

Councilperson Caughman made the motion to approve the minutes from regular meeting of April 13, 2021 and called meeting minutes of April 29, 2021. Councilman Beasley seconded the motion. Chairman Windham called for the vote, and motion carried. All voted in favor.

REQUEST FOR MOTION ON ADOPTION OF FIRST READING APPROVAL OF ORDINANCE

A. LEE COUNTY BUDGET FY 22

Mr. Watkins said the Ways and Means Committee had met with outside agencies and department heads to discuss budget requests.

He said that at this time the total revenue was \$13,769,699 and total expenditures were \$14,082,424, which gives a shortfall of \$313,000.

Mr. Watkins said that there were some mandatory expenses that are going to impact the budget, which are employer health insurance premiums, employer pension contributions, and increase in load factor for Worker's Compensation, all of which equal to \$110,000. He said the budget did include a 1.5% increase for cost of living raise for employees.

Councilperson Josey made the motion to approve the Lee County Budget FY 22 for first reading. Councilman Fountain seconded the motion. Chairman Windham called for the vote, and motion carried. All voted in favor.

B. LEE COUNTY SCHOOL BUDGET FY 22

Mr. Watkins said that the local revenue portion that the county has discretion over is 145.3 mills.

Mr. Bernard McDaniel said that the school is just looking at current budget. He said that in preparing that the school was looking at way to cut back on expenditures and oversight on those balances.

Shareka Anderson said that the school could finalize expenditures and have a balanced budget by the public hearing.

Mr. Watkins said that the County approves millage not specific dollars.

Councilperson Josey made the motion to approve the Lee County School Budget FY 22 for first reading. Councilperson Caughman seconded the motion. Chairman Windham called for the vote, and motion carried. All voted in favor.

C. WRECKER ROTATION ORDINANCE

Mr. Watkins said that the Planning, Taxes & Personnel Committee met on Friday to discuss this matter. He said that Sheriff Simon would be present at the second reading.

He said that currently, the wrecker services are on 911 rotation. He said they call 911 and they go by rotation if someone doesn't have a preference. He said that Highway Patrol goes by certain standards in order for someone to be on the wrecker rotation list. Those standards include insurance, fencing, vehicle security. He said the Sheriff wants to add another step. Mr.

Watkins said that the Sheriff would conduct reviews of wrecker services instead of Highway Patrol.

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He said the Sheriff wants to monitor those services a little closer on a local level. This Ordinance would allow the Sheriff to have the final decision to approve a wrecker service if they are allowed.

Councilman Fountain recognized Mr. Sturkie and said that he has worked hard to be in compliance to get on the rotation. Mr. Sturkie was present to hear about the change to the current ordinance.

Councilman Beasley made the motion to approve 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 THIRD READING APPROVAL OF ORDINANCE

A. PROJECT BISHOPVILLE 2030- ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT COMPREHENSIVE PLAN ADDENDUM

Mr. Watkins said that we have had two readings and a public hearing. He said this was brought to the county by the COG. He said this was an addendum to the Comprehensive Plan. He said that it basically gave more detail on how the County is going to enhance economic development in the County. Mr. Watkins said that hopefully all of this is going to stimulate growth and give a more specific analysis of economic growth.

COMMITTEE REPORTS

A. HEALTH, EDUCATION & WELFARE

Councilperson Josey encouraged everyone to stay safe, be tested and get the vaccine.

B. PLANNING, TAXES & PERSONNEL

Councilman Beasley said that his committee met on the wrecker rotation changes and discussed the capital penny sales tax. Councilman Beasley deferred to Mr. Watkins about the specific information on the capital penny sales tax. Mr. Watkins said that once the bond has been paid, there will be an excess of \$1 million left. He said that the remaining paygo items, numbers 17-21 on the original list, would be the purchase of fire truck and ambulances.

Mr. Watkins said the 2012 penny expired on 4/30/21 and the new penny picked up on May 1, 2021. He said that items 1-12 would be directed at Fire, EMS, Sheriff, several recreational projects, upgrades to EMS headquarters, new roll off truck.

Councilman Beasley said that he attended a ribbon cutting for Mary McLeod Bethune Park. He said they had done some remodeling of bathrooms, walkway and a kitchen remodel. He said it was well attended.

C. BUILDINGS, LAND & PROPERTY

Vice-Chairman Eckley said that the Farmer's Market shed on East Church Street was almost complete. He said the spec building in the I-20 park should be done by September. He said that steel prices have tripled in the past six months but hopefully our prices would be locked in.

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D. PUBLIC SAFETY

Councilperson Caughman said that her committee did not meet.

E. RECREATION AND PUBLIC RELATIONS

Mr. Watkins said that baseball is winding down. He said they were starting to schedule rentals, but they are limiting the number of people they authorize to be in rental.

F. WAYS AND MEANS

Councilman Fountain spoke of Bettie Toney's death and said that he had served with her in various capacities and thought so much of her and said she would be greatly missed in the community.

He also said that his committee continued to work on the budget.

G. ADMINISTRATOR'S REPORT

Mr. Watkins said the County enacted an Emergency Ordinance in March when COVID started and today will signify the end date. He said the County was not extending it at this time. He said this Ordinance adjusted operations, pretty much on a regular schedule. He said the County was still limiting the number of people in the Courthouse at a time.

Mr. Watkins said that if circumstances warrant, the Ordinance can be put back in place.

He said that the County was in discussion with Care South to work with them in an outreach program in which the mobile van would be available for vaccines in the community. He thanked DHEC and Care South for all of their efforts in providing testing and vaccines.

Mr. Watkins said that SCDOT had done a trash pickup a few weeks ago and Public Works did one and picked up TVs, and many tires on Golfcart Road and Jeff Davis Road. Mr. Watkins said that several county employees volunteered to pick up trash on Browntown Road on April 23. He said that collectively, 65 bags of trash were collected. He also said that cameras were recently purchased in an effort to locate and prosecute those people who continue to litter.

PUBLIC COMMENT

Carrie Gass said that she missed being at the meetings and was glad to be back. She asked the Administrator about the census, and he responded that census numbers had not yet been released. She also mentioned that there is a drainage problem in the Harlem Blue Pond section. Mr. Watkins responded that he was working with the City and had formed a Committee to address drainage problems, and they were currently looking at that area.

Ms. Gass also said there is a housing problem in our county. She said there are people living in houses that are not livable. She said that Salkahatchie did not come last year and would not be coming this year. She asked the County to do whatever they could to address this problem.

She also announced that COVID testing would be done at Mechanicsville United Methodist Church on June 19, 2021.

Ms. Gass also thanked Councilman Fountain for mentioning the passing of Bettie Toney. She said Ms. Toney would be highly missed.

Councilperson Caughman said that she served with Bettie Toney on the Cassatt Water Board and said that Bettie Toney was so dedicated and did a great job in everything she did.

Chairman Windham said that we lost Councilman Addison, and former Mayor Alexander Boyd won the primary and July will be his first meeting. He said that the Administrator would bring him up to speed.

Councilperson Josey worked with Cassatt Water on a water project and said she will definitely miss Bettie Toney.

ADJOURN

The Council Meeting was adjourned at 10:12 on a motion made by Vice-Chairman, seconded by Councilman Beasley.

CHAIRMAN

VICE-CHAIRMAN

CLERK TO COUNCIL

MINUTES APPROVED