

**LEE COUNTY COUNCIL  
REGULAR MEETING  
JULY 11, 2023, 9:30 A.M.  
MAIN 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. Others present were Alexis Pipkins and staff, Joseph Scarborough, Regina Nesmith, Ruby Gibbs, Carrie Gass, Mattie Mack, Andre Laws

**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**

Mr. Watkins said the agenda needed to be revised to add an item to accept a grant for the Lee County Airport.

Vice-Chairman Eckley made the motion to approve the agenda with the addition. Councilperson Josey 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 JULY 11, 2023**

Councilperson Caughman made the motion to approve the minutes from July 11, 2023 as mailed. Councilman Beasley seconded the motion. Chairman Windham called for the vote, and motion carried. All voted in favor.

**REQUEST FOR MOTION ON SECOND READING APPROVAL OF ORDINANCE**

**A. APPROVAL OF CONTRACT FOR CLOSING ON SALE OF PROPERTY TO HOGSLAT THAT AUTHORIZES THE COUNTY ADMINISTRATOR TO SIGN ON BEHALF OF THE COUNTY**

Mr. Watkins said that this was a retail business that provides equipment to livestock and poultry operators. He said they will build a facility and employ 4-5 people. He said this property is adjacent to James Industrial Park and the purchase price of the property was \$40,000. Mr. Watkins said that it was zoned for commercial activity and for constructing a business on this site.

Councilman Beasley made the motion to approve for second reading approval. Vice-Chairman Eckley seconded the motion. Chairman Windham called for the vote, and motion carried. All voted in favor.

**REQUEST FOR MOTION ON THIRD READING APPROVAL OF ORDINANCE**

**A. PROPOSED ZONING MAP AMENDMENT TO REZONE TMP 030-11-00-103 OWNED BY COUSAR MEMORIAL PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH FROM LIGHT INDUSTRIAL (LI) TO GENERAL COMMERCIAL (GC)**

Mr. Watkins said this property is currently zoned as light industrial and the church wants to put a cemetery on it and this requires for the zoning to be changed to general commercial as a permitted use. This cemetery does adjoin church property.

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

**B. ORDINANCE TO ADOPT VARIOUS INTERNATIONAL AND STANDARD CODES RELATING TO INSPECTION ACTIVITIES OF THE COUNTY OF LEE, SOUTH CAROLINA AND ENFORCEMENT OF BUILDING PROVISION IN SAID CODES**

Mr. Watkins said that under SC law, counties are required to update their building codes in order for homes and commercial buildings to be built to certain standards. He also said that insurance companies want to know these homes and buildings were built to certain standards so they will be able to obtain insurance on the properties.

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

**ALEXIS PIPKINS, EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR OF LEE COUNTY FIRST STEPS, WILL BRIEF COUNCIL ON THE LEE COUNTY FIRST STEPS PROGRAM**

Mr. Pipkins gave an overview of the Lee County First Steps program and acknowledged his board members and his staff. He said that they impact approximately 600 families per year and they have a \$1.6 million annual operating budget. He said Lee County First Steps has brought in \$8 million to Lee County since its inception.

Mr. Pipkins said their office is located at 722 West Church Street.

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

**COUNTY COUNCIL RECOGNIZES AND HONORS LIU PU FOR HER CONTRIBUTIONS TO EARLY CHILDHOOD EDUCATION**

Alexis Pipkins recognized Liu Pu, who is involved with Save the Children in China and has been working with Mr. Pipkins and Lee County First Steps. Chairman Windham thanked her for attending the meeting and wished her success in her future endeavors.

**AUTHORIZATION TO ACCEPT GRANT FOR LEE COUNTY AIRPORT**

Mr. Watkins said that the County was planning to install a wildlife perimeter fence, which is a chain link fence around the property to prevent deer, etc., from being on the runway. He said that the County had received 90% of the funding for the project construction. Mr. Watkins said that 10% of the balance, which 5% came from grants from SC Aeronautics in the amount of \$26,694 that will go towards the payment of \$500,000. Mr. Watkins said this will be 10,000 linear feet of fencing.

Mr. Watkins said this project would have local funds of \$26,000, and due to the receipt of grant funds, this would authorize the Administrator to sign and authorize receipt of those funds. Mr. Watkins said the grant can only be applied to the airport.

Vice-Chairman Eckley made the motion to approve the Council to authorize the Administrator to sign and receive the grant funds in the amount of \$26,694 for the perimeter fencing at the Lee County Airport. Councilman Addison seconded the motion. Chairman Windham called for the vote, and motion carried. All voted in favor.

**COMMITTEE REPORTS**

**A. HEALTH, EDUCATION & WELFARE**

Councilperson Josey said that it was good to have Mr. Pipkins and his staff and board members at the meeting and said they do great work. She said the gala that she attended for First Steps was so well attended and said it was good to hear from children that went through the program and how it helped them.

She also said that she was pleased to see Regina Demory from SCDHEC.

**B. PLANNING, TAXES & PERSONNEL**

Councilman Beasley said that he had no meetings. He said that his committee met during the budget and was very glad for county employees to get cost of living raises with no tax increase.

**C. BUILDINGS, LAND & PROPERTY**

Vice-Chairman Eckley said that the pre-bid meeting for the roof at EMS is scheduled for Thursday and reported that electrical should be finished at tennis court.

Vice-Chairman Eckley reported that Lee County currently has two potential prospects.

**D. PUBLIC SAFETY**

Councilperson Caughman said she had no meetings. She attended Lee County Council on Aging banquet and said it was well attended and said the seniors are busy with lots of activities here in town and Springhill. She said that Laurie Watkins is doing a great job. Councilperson Caughman said that Connie Munn spoke and gave lots of good information.

She also attended the Lizard Man Stomp and said she enjoyed it and it was good to see the County come together. She thanked George Roberts and everyone who took part in it. She said the stores on Main Street were open and did great business that day.

**E. RECREATION AND PUBLIC RELATIONS**

Councilman Addison had no report.

**F. WAYS AND MEANS**

Councilman Fountain thanked the department heads for keeping their budgets in line and was glad the new budget was approved with no tax increase.

**G. ADMINISTRATOR'S REPORT**

Mr. Watkins said the dedication for the Lucknow Fire Station had been scheduled for July 20, 2023 at 10:00 a.m.

He said that a grant had been awarded to a third-party company who is doing broadband in the County. He said that 14 people had signed up for advocate training. The goal of the training is to allow training people to educate the public about the benefits and ways to access broadband.

Mr. Watkins said that he attended the 30<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of the Cotton Museum. He said that the Cotton Museum was given a major upfit and was given a grand tour of the renovations.

**PUBLIC COMMENT**

Carrie Gass thanked Council for their support in the Salkahatchie project. She said she has been doing it for 20 years. She said they did two houses because they did not have enough volunteers to do three houses. She said that volunteers attended church and were fed by different churches. She said the volunteers had a good experience.

**ADJOURN**

The meeting was adjourned at 10:28 a.m. on a motion made by Vice-Chairman Eckley, seconded by Councilman Addison.

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CHAIRMAN

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VICE-CHAIRMAN

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CLERK TO COUNCIL

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MINUTES APPROVED