

**LEE COUNTY COUNCIL
REGULAR MEETING
OCTOBER 11, 2022
FAMILY COURT ROOM – SECOND FLOOR OF THE COURTHOUSE**

Members present were Travis Windham, Chairman; Gordon Eckley, Vice-Chairman; Charles A. Beasley, member; Alexander Boyd, member; Jackie Josey, member; Johnette Caughman, member. Councilman Ron Fountain was absent. Staff present were Alan Watkins, Administrator; Julie Stokes, Assistant Administrator/Clerk to Council; Lee Richardson, Chase Iseman, Tim DuBose, Matt Makela, Michael Davis. Others present were Nicki Toomes, Keel Addison, Celestine Boone, Shirley and Randy Dixon, Carrie Gass, 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 opened the meeting and welcomed everyone. Vice-Chairman Eckley gave the invocation.

REQUEST FOR MOTION ON ADOPTION OF RECOMMENDED AGENDA

Chairman Windham said there was a deletion to the agenda and deferred to Mr. Watkins. Mr. Watkins said that Item 6 Inducement Resolution for Fee-in-Lieu Agreement for Project Grapefruit should be deleted from the agenda because they were still working on some language changes and it was not ready for approval.

Mr. Watkins also said that Nicki Toomes, from USDA, was on the agenda to make a presentation and she was going to be late due to car trouble, but she was in route from Walterboro. Chairman Windham said that they would continue with the agenda until she got there.

Councilman Beasley made the motion to approve the agenda with the change. 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 MINUTES OF SEPTEMBER 13, 2022

Councilman Boyd made the motion to approve the minutes of September 13, 2022 as written. Councilperson Caughman seconded the motion. Chairman Windham called for the vote, and motion carried. All voted in favor.

COUNTY COUNCIL AUTHORIZATION OF COUNTY ADMINISTRATOR TO ACCEPT USDA GRANT AWARDS

Ms. Nicki Toomes, of USDA in Walterboro, was present and said the County had been awarded \$ 1,598,600 for EMS, Sheriff's Office, Fire Department, Public Works and Public Safety. She presented the grants that were awarded and said she was glad to work with Lee County and hoped to work with them again.

Mr. Watkins said that Matt Makela had taken on this responsibility of coordinating these grants and working with Ms. Toomes. He said that the matching funds for these grants came from capital sales tax and ARPA funds.

Mr. Watkins thanked Matt Makela, Tim DuBose, Brandon Holloman, Mike Bedenbaugh, and Jason Prater and Sheriff Simon for their work in acquiring these grants.

Chairman Windham thanked Matt Makela and Tim DuBose for their hard work in acquiring these USDA grants.

Councilperson Caughman made the motion to approve the authorization of County Administrator to accept USDA grant awards. Councilperson Josey 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. AUTHORIZING, PURSUANT TO TITLE 12, CHAPTER 44, AND TITLE 4, CHAPTER 1 AND TITLE 12, CHAPTER 6 OF THE CODE OF LAWS OF SOUTH CAROLINA 1976, AS AMENDED, THE EXECUTION AND DELIVERY OF A FEE-IN -LIEU OF AD VALOREM TAXES AND SPECIAL SOURCE CREDIT AGREEMENT BY AND BETWEEN LEE COUNTY, SOUTH CAROLINA, AND PROJECT GRAPEFRUIT AND PROJECT GRAPEFRUIT LANDLORD, ACTING FOR THEMSELVES, ONE OR MORE CURRENT OR FUTURE AFFILIATES AND OTHER PROJECT COMPANIES, (COLLECTIVELY, "COMPANY"), PROVIDING FOR (1) THE ASSIGNMENT OF ONE MORE EXISTING FEES-IN -LIEU OF AD VALOREM TAXES AGREEMENTS OR OTHER SIMILAR AGREEMENTS AND/OR ARRANGEMENTS; (2) A FEE-IN-LIEU OF AD VALOREM TAXES INCENTIVES; (3)**

CERTAIN SPECIAL SOURCE CREDITS TO BE APPLIED AGAINST FEES IN LIEU OF AD VALOREM TAXES; (4) MODIFYING A JOINT COUNTY INDUSTRIAL AND BUSINESS PARK BETWEEN LEE AND SUMTER COUNTIES SO AS TO ENLARGE THE PARK TO INCLUDE PROPERTY OF THE COMPANY; (5) CONSENT AND APPROVAL OF FIRE SPRINKLER TAX CREDIT; AND (6) OTHER RELATED MATTERS.

Mr. Watkins said this is a FILO for Project Grapefruit, an industrial prospect we have been working with in bringing them to Lee County. There will be tax incentives for this industrial prospect, which will be finalized over November and December.

Vice Chairman Eckley made the motion to approve the FILO for Project Grapefruit for first reading. Councilperson Josey seconded the motion. Chairman Windham called for the vote, and motion carried. All voted in favor.

B. ZONING TEXT AMENDMENT TO ZONING ORDINANCE, ARTICLE VI, SECTION 6-16 TABLE OF PERMITTED USES, SECTION 2-21-3 "PRIVATE GOLF COURSE SERVICES" AS A NEW USE TO BE PERMITTED OUTRIGHT IN A RURAL DISTRICT AND AMENDMENT TO INCLUDE SECTION 2-21-3 "GOLF COURSE IN THE "AMUSEMENT AND RECREATION SERVICES" SECTION

Mr. Watkins said this amendment would be adding some permitted uses to the zoning county wide. He said this was for a golf course in a rural district and this amendment would allow construction of golf courses in a rural district.

He did say there would be a public hearing and the person applying for this zoning text amendment would have to go before the Board of Zoning Appeals before they could go forward with any plans.

Councilman Beasley made the motion to approve the Zoning Text Amendment regarding Private Golf Course being allowed as a permitted use in a rural district. Councilperson Caughman seconded the motion. Chairman Windham called for the vote, and motion carried. All voted in favor.

RESOLUTION TO ACCEPT PROPERTY FROM LEE COUNTY FRIENDS OF THE LIBRARY

Mr. Watkins said this is regarding the annex that is located on Nettles Street, which was set up under the Friends of the Library. He said the Friends of the Library was a non-profit, which allowed the library to use it for different functions. Mr. Watkins said this group has since disbanded and was donating this property to the County.

He said that Council will accept this property and the County will own it.

Lee Richardson, Director of the Library, said she and the Library Board supports this decision.

Councilperson Josey made the motion to approve the resolution to accept the property from Lee County Friends of the Library. Vice-Chairman Eckley seconded the motion. Chairman Windham called for the vote, and motion carried. All voted in favor.

RESOLUTION TO APPROVE MEMORANDUM OF AGREEMENT BETWEEN J & S AERIAL AND LEE COUNTY GOVERNMENT

Mr. Watkins said this was an agreement between J & S Aerial and Lee County and said this was a crop-dusting business that serves many farmers based out of Red Hill Road. He said they would use the airport for loading and reloading his airplane for crop dusting. Mr. Watkins said that the County wanted to establish a formal agreement. Mr. Watkins said the County gives him better price on fuel because of the volume of fuel that he uses.

Councilman Beasley said that may help us receive grants because this creates more activity at the airport.

Councilman Beasley made the motion to approve the Resolution to approve Memorandum of Agreement between J & S Aerial and Lee County. Vice-Chairman Eckley seconded the motion. Chairman Windham called for the vote, and motion carried. All voted in favor.

RESOLUTION TO APPROVE A MEMORANDUM OF UNDERSTANDING TO UPGRADE THE SHOOTING RANGE FOR LAW ENFORCEMENT OFFICERS

Mr. Watkins said that he and Sheriff Simon, Police Chief Dellinger, and Gregg McCutchen have discussed upgrading the shooting range for their officers. He said the current shooting range is behind the Wastewater Treatment plant and they plan to upgrade the facility by paving the area with an investment of \$12,500. Mr. Watkins said this would make it safer for the officers. He also said this was a 10-year agreement with both parties.

Councilperson Josey made the motion to approve the Resolution to approve the Memorandum of Understanding to upgrade the shooting range for law enforcement officers. Councilman Boyd seconded the motion. Chairman Windham called for the vote, and motion carried. All voted in favor.

RESOLUTION ON THE RENEWAL OF CONTRACT WITH THIRD PARTY FOR BILLING SERVICES FOR FIRE DEPARTMENT

Mr. Watkins said this a third-party billing agency that will be working with the Fire Department. He said they would file claims in commercial vehicles. He said that approximately \$10,000 in collections have gone to the County over the past year.

Councilperson Caughman made the motion to approve the Resolution on the renewal of the contract with third party billing services for the Fire Department. Vice-Chairman Eckley seconded the motion. Chairman Windham called for the vote, and motion carried. All voted in favor.

Chairman Windham recognized Shirley Dixon as upcoming Treasurer in July and Keel Addison that will be sworn in in January.

COMMITTEE REPORTS

A. HEALTH, EDUCATION & WELFARE

Councilperson Josey said that she and Mr. Watkins attended a check presentation in which the school accepted a check for \$42 million from the Department of Education for the new school. She said that Representative Wheeler and Senator Malloy, along with Chairman Windham and Councilman Boyd were in attendance. Councilperson Josey said that the building of a new school would have had to be done at some point, and normally, it's the local taxpayers having to fund it. She said that this funding is coming from the state, some is federal dollars, which has lessened the tax liability on taxpayers.

B. PLANNING, TAXES & PERSONNEL

Councilman Beasley deferred to Mr. Watkins, and Mr. Watkins said that the Committee would be meeting on health insurance premiums since they are going up on employees and employer side. He said the committee would be looking at ways to offset increases.

C. BUILDINGS, LAND & PROPERTY

Vice-Chairman Eckley said that work is continuing at EMS building.

He said that Lee County lost one prospect that had been previously mentioned. He said they went to Virginia but said he hoped to be announcing another one soon.

D. PUBLIC SAFETY

Councilperson Caughman said she had no meeting.

Tim DuBose said he was excited about the renovations at EMS. He said that COVID calls had decreased and he encouraged everyone to take a flu shot.

He also reported that November 5, Carolina Pines was sponsoring the Pee Dee EMS Symposium and said new information would be presented on new programs.

Councilperson Caughman thanked Matt Makela for taking initiative and responsibility to do the grant applications to help the county.

Chase Iseman said he was present for the Sheriff because he could not be present. He thanked the Council for upgrading the shooting range.

E. RECREATION AND PUBLIC RELATIONS

Councilman Boyd said that new playground equipment had come in and was in the process of being installed.

F. WAYS AND MEANS

Councilman Fountain not here.

G. ADMINISTRATOR'S REPORT

Mr. Watkins thanked everyone for their part in Hurricane Ian storm preparation. He said that a lot of things go into storm preparation and many people are involved. He said that the County had power outages and some downed trees and was very thankful it was not worse.

Mr. Watkins said that Parks and Recreation took a group of youth to the Panthers Game. He said the Panthers donated the tickets and he thanked the Recreation staff for giving the youth this experience.

PUBLIC COMMENT

Roy Dixon – He said “he was listening in the meeting and said it was good compliments, but at the same time, they don’t write grants, which is a priority.” He said “we don’t want to forget about people. We need to help older generation.” He said “there is nothing in place to help burnout victims. Have we thought about putting something in place?”

Gun Range – He asked what kind of contact does the County have with the state. He said that Department of Corrections has a big gun range and the County could use their facility.

Mr. Watkins responded to the first question and said that would be working on private property and the County cannot do that.

Mr. Watkins said that he did not know if we could use the DOC facility.

Carrie Gass wanted an update on the dentist. Mr. Watkins said that a dentist has been secured and the dentist is moving forward. He said that the office has been purchased. He said, however, the county is not directly involved in this project.

Shirley Dixon wanted to make everyone aware that CareSouth is opening a food share pantry in Dr. Hunt’s old office.

Celestine Boone wanted to thank Mr. Watkins and Council for everything they have done on their property on Mailbox Lane. She asked if they could have the road rocked. Mr. Watkins said they were working on a rotation and are in the process of touching roads up.

Ronnie Rhodes was present and said he hoped to do some summer camps next year.

ADJOURN

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

CHAIRMAN

VICE-CHAIRMAN

CLERK TO COUNCIL

MINUTES APPROVED

