

LEE COUNTY COUNCIL
REGULAR COUNCIL MEETING
OCTOBER 13, 2020
MAIN 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. Councilman Addison called into the meeting and was available by phone. Staff present were Alan Watkins, Administrator; Julie Stokes, Assistant Administrator/Clerk to Council, Mike Bedenbaugh, Tim DuBose, Danny Simon.

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 and called the meeting to order. Vice-Chairman Eckley gave the invocation and Pledge of Allegiance to the Flag. Councilman Windham recognized Mr. Addison who was joining the Council via phone.

REQUEST FOR MOTION ON ADOPTION OF RECOMMENDED AGENDA

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

REQUEST FOR MOTION TO APPROVE MINUTES FROM REGULAR MEETING OF SEPTEMBER 8, 2020

Councilman Beasley made the motion to approve the minutes from regular meeting of September 8, 2020 as written. Vice-Chairman Eckley 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. LEASE PURCHASE OF EQUIPMENT FOR EMS

Mr. Watkins said that Public Safety Committee had just met before the Council Meeting. Tim DuBose was there and reviewed information with the Committee. Mr. Watkins said this new equipment would allow EMS to perform an EKG to a patient and be able to transmit the information to the hospital prior to patient's arrival. He said that EMS currently has 3 machines and going to 6 machines. Mr. Watkins said that there would be two payments of \$11,000, of which the County has in reserve, and bond will pay off balance.

Councilman Beasley made the motion to approve the lease purchase of equipment for EMS. Councilperson Caughman seconded the motion. Chairman Windham called for the vote, and motion carried. All voted in favor.

B. PURCHASE OF EQUIPMENT FOR E911 DISPATCH

Mr. Watkins said that Tim DuBose reviewed the information with the committee. He said this software upgrade will allow dispatchers to be given the same questions to ask and it can capture information in real time. He said that the County can use the E911 money in the restricted account in the amount of \$57,000. Mr. Watkins said this restricted money can only be used for E911 upgrades and some of the money will be reimbursed by the state.

Councilperson Caughman made the motion to approve for first reading approval of ordinance. 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. LEASE PURCHASE AGREEMENT TO PURCHASE RADIOS FOR SHERIFF'S OFFICE

Mr. Watkins said that the Sheriff had done some research in the type of radios that should replace the current radios. He said that 30 radios that were originally purchased in 1995 needed to be replaced. Mr. Watkins said these radios were operated by Motorola, and as of December, 2020, these radios would no longer be supported by Motorola. He said the radios would be replaced by new models.

Mr. Watkins said that the County had funding on hand through the sale of equipment, which would make the first of three equal payments. He said the 2002 bond will pay off the balance. He said the cost of the radios would average \$3,000, and with other fees, would total approximately \$97,000.

Vice-Chairman Eckley made the motion to approve the Lease purchase agreement to purchase radios for Sheriff's Office for second reading. Councilperson Josey seconded the motion. Chairman Windham called for the vote, and motion carried. All voted in favor.

APPROVAL OF BID FOR LUCKNOW FIRE STATION

Mr. Watkins said that this project was part of the Capital Penny Sales Tax of 2012. He said the County did not have any equipment for manning the fire station at that time, but the County just bought a new Fire Engine and will buy more with the second penny sale tax.

Mr. Watkins said that personnel within the Fire Department identified the maximum number of existing structures outside of a 5 mile radius.

Mr. Watkins said the next area they are looking to construct a fire station is the Raccoon Road area. He said the second penny sales tax will address that cost.

Mike Bedenbaugh said that the Fire Department has worked six months of constant working to identify the houses for the most coverage.

Chairman Windham said that some of that area borders Kershaw County, but the County is working on a mutual aid agreement with Kershaw County but it only applies to structure fires.

Mr. Watkins said the land for the Lucknow Fire Department was purchased from Indian Land, LLC. He said that no one that he was aware of in Lee County is affiliated with this company. Mr. Watkins said the cost was \$5,000 for one acre of land, and it is road frontage on two corners.

Mr. Watkins said the bid proposal was advertised in the local paper and Hoover Builders was the only company to submit a bid. He said the bid submitted was for \$79,700. He said the building will be post frame with metal roof with 6 inch concrete pad floor. Mr. Watkins said that the construction of the building is at least 120 day out. He said the County would put in restrooms and lights.

Councilman Beasley asked if the County had any idea of how many houses fall out of the 5 mile radius area. Mike Bedenbaugh responded that there were 6 houses and said that Kershaw will pick them up and everyone will be covered.

Vice-Chairman Eckley made the motion to accept the approval for Lucknow Fire Station. Councilman Beasley seconded the motion. Chairman Windham called for the vote, and motion carried. All voted in favor.

APPROVAL OF PARD GRANT APPLICATION

Mr. Watkins said that each year the County gets PARD money. He said that the County has \$26,000 that will expire in May. He said that the County is requesting the funds to do a covered shelter at Garrett Park to serve as the Farmers Market Shelter. He said the Legislative Delegation had to sign off on this project. Mr. Watkins said that due to COVID, the deadlines were extended so the Counties would not lose funding.

Mr. Watkins said the County has requested \$38,000 in PARD funding, with a 20% match, which can be in-kind or hospitality funds. He said the County is asking to build the picnic shelter at the front part of the park. Councilman Addison said he thought this would be a good idea.

Mr. Watkins said that he was submitting the application to PARD and they would send us back a contract to sign after approval.

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

COMMITTEE REPORTS

A. HEALTH, EDUCATION AND WELFARE

Councilperson Josey said she was glad to see everyone. She said the County has lost several citizens from the virus and hoped everyone was staying safe. She said that Lee County First Steps was giving food boxes for the pandemic.

B. PLANNING, TAXES & PERSONNEL

Councilman Beasley said that his committee had no meetings. He did say that he would get with Administrator to look at budget because he had received some requests for personnel, but they would look at the budget at a later date.

Mr. Watkins said that he had spoken to Wayne Capell because the State has passed some legislation in which if a person's property has been sold, the person will be given a year to pay the taxes on it, however, the fees will continue to accrue.

C. BUILDINGS, LAND & PROPERTY

Vice-Chairman Eckley said that he nothing to report at this time.

D. PUBLIC SAFETY

Councilperson Caughman said that her committee met prior to the Council Meeting and reviewed information on the purchase for software for E-911.

E. RECREATION AND PUBLIC RELATIONS

Councilman Addison said that his committee did not have any meetings and thanked Alan for all that he has done during the pandemic to keep everyone informed.

Mr. Watkins reported that Parks and Recreation are still not doing any organized activities. He said the staff is maintain properties and doing a good job.

F. WAYS AND MEANS

Councilman Fountain said that his committee had no meetings but he did attend the Public Safety Committee prior to the meeting.

G. ADMINISTRATOR'S REPORT

Mr. Watkins reported that the COVID cases for Lee County had gone from 679 to 727 cases but the County has seen a decline in rolling 14 day numbers. He said that he attends a conference call meeting every Wednesday to monitor the COVID19 activity. He said the County buildings are open, with temperature checks and face masks required.

In regards to the election, the County applied for a grant to help with the elections process in regards to COVID and received \$19,943 to help make the election a safer process. He said this cover hazard pay, PPE, recruitment of workers and cleaning. He said that the Voter Registration has been averaging 100 voters a day, with 700 votes done through today.

Mr. Watkins said that the County has had a number of road repairs and he gave a report on the repairs done to date.

He also reported that the Stormwater Committee met and talked about identifying problem areas in regards to stormwater drainage issues in city and county. He said they plan to meet and come up with a plan to address issues. He said the state passed legislation to allow hospitality tax to be used for stormwater problems.

Mr. Watkins said the NAACP had contacted the County Council by letter in regards to removing the statue in front of the Courthouse. He said the letter asks the Council to take action to remove the statue. He said that he reached out to Michael Kozlarek and Paul Fata to inquire as to what the county's position should be. They said that the County does not have the authorization to remove the statue.

Councilman Beasley said that they Council is bound by law that it stays in place.

Mr. Watkins said there is opposition and there is support on this issue, but the law does not allow us to remove the statue.

Councilperson Josey said that the Confederacy is part of history and caused harm and killed people of color. She said she respectfully thinks the statue be removed and understands the 2/3 vote involved by Council.

Councilman Addison said that if it does represent slavery, then the statue should be removed.

Chairman Windham said that he had talked to Ms. Josey and she wanted each councilperson to have the opportunity to express their own opinion.

PUBLIC COMMENT

Mr. Odimir Stadar, a Lee County resident, reached out by email inquiring about the removal of the statue. He said that he strongly feels the statue should be taken down.

ADJOURN

Vice-Chairman Eckley made the motion to adjourn the meeting at 5:57 p.m. Councilman Beasley seconded the motion. Chairman Windham called for the vote, and motion carried.

CHAIRMAN

VICE-CHAIRMAN

CLERK TO COUNCIL

MINUTES APPROVED