

LEE COUNTY COUNCIL
REGULAR MEETING
NOVEMBER 9, 2021, 9:30 A.M.
FAMILY COURT ROOM – SECOND FLOOR OF THE COURTHOUSE

Members present were Travis Windham, Chairman; Gordon Eckley, Vice-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, Tim DuBose.

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 and led the Pledge of Allegiance to the flag.

REQUEST FOR MOTION ON ADOPTION OF RECOMMENDED AGENDA

Chairman Windham said that he needed to amend the agenda with an addition of 4A. He said that Travis Laws, with Mental Health in Lee County, was present to update Council on the opening of Lee County Mental Health in their new location.

Councilman Beasley made the motion to approve the agenda with the addition. 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 OCTOBER 8, 2021

Councilman Beasley made the motion to approve the minutes 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 FIRST READING APPROVAL OF ORDINANCE

A. AMEND SCHOOL DISTRICT FY 22 BUDGET

Mr. Watkins said that in setting millage for this year's budget, we used the incorrect number in error, which was the one for FY 20. He said that since the county went through reassessment and because the value of a mill went up, you have to reduce the number of mills. Mr. Watkins said the mills was set at a rate of 145.3 mills and it should have been 143.3 mills; however, more money was collected with the 143.3. He said that the lower millage created more money, but it does not reduce the amount of money.

Chairman Windham said there would be a public hearing at the next meeting in December. Vice-Chairman Eckley said the money the school requested is the same and would probably be more money than originally thought.

Chairman Windham said the County allocates mills or money to the school, but the county does not have any authority about how it is spent.

Vice-Chairman Eckley 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.

TRAVIS LAWS, OF LEE COUNTY MENTAL HEALTH, ADDRESSES COUNCIL ON THE OPENING OF THE NEW LOCATION IN BISHOPVILLE

Mr. Laws introduced himself and said that he was a Lee County native and said he was excited to be in their location on 134 Church Street. He said that the number of cases have increased and said that he has plans of having a mobile unit that will go out in the rural communities for people with transportation problems and cannot get in to see a doctor.

Chairman Windham thanked him for coming and said that the county was aware of the importance of their presence in the county.

Councilperson Josey thanked him for coming and said that hopefully the word will get out and people will get the help they need.

REQUEST FOR THIRD READING APPROVAL OF ORDINANCE

A. AMENDMENT TO MULTI-COUNTY PARK AGREEMENT WITH KERSHAW COUNTY

Mr. Watkins said that there are tax incentives from the state when two counties join in a multi county park agreement. He said that if an industry locates in the park, that business gets additional tax incentives and the host county get the tax base. He said the partnering county gets 1% of the FILO. He said that it is no cost to us.

Mr. Watkins said this particular industry is Prestage Farms, located at Exit 101.

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

REVEREND WILLIE WILSON WILL UPDATE COUNCIL ON EFFORTS TO ENCOURAGE RESIDENTS TO BE VACCINATED AGAINST COVID 19

Reverend Wilson said that he had been asked to be a partner with DHEC and SC Department of Education in working with residents to be vaccinated against COVID19. He said that awareness and interest are growing, and agencies have been giving initiatives to get vaccine. He asked for contribution and a place to host the events

Chairman Windham said that he had met with Mr. Wilson about educating folks about the vaccine.

Mr. Watkins said that the County has offered our facilities for clinics and told Mr. Wilson they could use their facilities as well.

Chairman Windham thanked Reverend Wilson for coming.

COUNCIL WILL APPROVE DAVID BRANHAM AS APPOINTMENT FOR LEE COUNTY BOARD OF ZONING APPEALS TO FULFILL AN UNEXPIRED TERM WHICH WILL EXPIRE IN DECEMBER, 2022.

Chairman Windham recognized Mr. Branham in the meeting and thanked him for his service on this board.

Mr. Branham said that he appreciated the vote of confidence and said that he will do his best to fulfill this role on Lee County Board of Zoning Appeals.

Councilman Beasley made the motion to approve David Branham as appointment for Lee County Board of Zoning Appeals.

COMMITTEE REPORTS

A. HEALTH, EDUCATION AND WELFARE

Councilperson Josey said that Travis Laws was part of her report. She said she continued to encourage safety and practice social distancing and get tested and continue to wear masks.

B. PLANNING, TAXES & PERSONNEL

Councilman Beasley said that he had no meetings.

C. BUILDINGS, LAND & PROPERTY

Vice-Chairman Eckley said that The Link hosted a luncheon in Lee County on October 27, and he said that they had great participation and it was a very informative meeting. Eckley said that he was very proud of the progress Lee County had made.

D. PUBLIC SAFETY

Councilperson Caughman said she had no meetings. Tim DuBose was present and gave a report to Council. He said that E911 had rolled out a new dispatch system a few months ago. He said that it is designed for the dispatch operators to ask more questions to the person calling in. He said that he is currently has one open position in 911.

He also said that the County has a community paramedic program in which two have completed training, and two that are almost done, with three that will be starting soon. He said this program is funded by grants. He said that all of this started with COVID and by next year, the County will have seven certified paramedics.

Mr. DuBose also said that the County was rolling out a new telehealth medicine, partnering with Caroline Pines and MUSC. He said that EMS was getting the software from MUSC in Charleston. He also commented that Lee County is the only rural county in the state doing this. He said that EMS will be able to do telehealth medicine at no cost to the County from grants through the SC Office of Rural Health. Mr. DuBose said that all ambulances will have cameras, speakers and computers.

Chairman Windham said that this could definitely save more lives. Councilperson Caughman said that Lee County is very lucky to have the EMS program that we have and it has come so far in the last ten years.

E. RECREATION AND PUBLIC RELATIONS

Councilman Boyd said that he met with Alan on an issue at the park, and Mr. Watkins took action to try and resolve it. He said that Mr. Watkins spoke to one of the employees and steps have been taken to correct the problem.

F. WAYS AND MEANS

Councilman Fountain said he had no meetings.

G. ADMINISTRATOR'S REPORT

Mr. Watkins said that that the County has seen a decline in the COVID cases in the last month, with the number of cases being 77 last month, and 42 cases this month. He said that vaccines are available at a number of places through mobile units and the booster is available at CareSouth and CVS is offering the Pfizer Booster.

Mr. Watkins said that a public hearing was scheduled for November 17 at 5:30 for Redistricting that deals with benchmark data derived from census data. He said that he hoped to have the redistricting process completed by February 15.

He also said that a new phone system is being installed in the Magistrate and Sheriff's offices. He said this is an internet based system with Farmers Telephone.

Mr. Watkins said that also reported that there was a dedication of the Farmers Market and dedication of two benches and a plaque to Mr. Addison. He said that it was very well attended.

PUBLIC COMMENT

Carrie Gass commended the County on recognizing Mr. Addison and said it was a marvelous idea.

EXECUTIVE SESSION

A. COUNCIL WILL ENTER EXECUTIVE SESSION ON THE FOLLOWING MATTERS:

- 1. LEGAL MATTER**
- 2. PROPERTY MATTER**

Council entered Executive Session at 10:31 a.m. on a Legal matter and a property matter on a motion made by Vice-Chairman Eckley, seconded by Councilman Boyd. Chairman Windham called for the vote, and motion carried. All voted in favor.

Council came out of Executive Session at 10:11 a.m. on a motion made by Vice-Chairman Eckley, seconded by Councilperson Josey. Chairman Windham called for the vote, and motion carried. All voted in favor. No votes were taken.

ADJOURN

The meeting was adjourned at 11:00 a.m. on a motion made by Vice-Chairman Eckley, seconded by Councilperson Josey.

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CHAIRMAN	VICE-CHAIRMAN
_____	_____
CLERK TO COUNCIL	MINUTES APPROVED