

**LEE COUNTY COUNCIL
PUBLIC HEARING
MAY 12, 2020
LEE COUNTY COURT HOUSE**

“Due to the Corona-COVID19 crisis, the public was not allowed to attend this meeting. The meeting was conducted by phone and was also broadcast live on Face Book: Lee FD Pio and Lee Fire Rescue.”

Roll call of Councilmembers present: Travis Windham, Chairman; Gordon Eckley, Vice-Chairman; David Addison, Charles Beasley, Jackie Josey, Johnette Caughman, Ron Fountain.

MOTION TO OPEN PUBLIC HEARING

The public hearing was opened by 9:30 a.m. on a motion made by Councilman Beasley, seconded by Vice-Chairman Eckley. Chairman Windham called for the vote, and motion carried. All voted in favor.

A. REVISION OF THE MULTI-COUNTY PARK AGREEMENT WITH DARLINGTON COUNTY

Mr. Watkins said that a public hearing notice had run in the paper within 15 days of this meeting. He said that it stated that anyone could email the Clerk with comments regarding this public hearing but no one contacted us.

Mr. Watkins said that this agreement was part of an economic development incentive in Darlington County in which they had purchased additional property for an economic project. There are additional tax credits for the county that the project is located in and they get 99% of the FILO and the partnering county gets 1% of the FILO. There is no cost to the county.

Chairman Windham said that the percentages are determined by the state and no expense to the county.

There were no comments.

MOTION TO CLOSE THE PUBLIC HEARING

The public hearing was closed at 9:36 a.m. on a motion made by Councilperson Josey, seconded by Councilperson Caughman. Chairman Windham called for the vote, and motion carried. All voted in favor.

MOTION TO OPEN PUBLIC HEARING

The public hearing was opened at 9:37 a.m. on a motion made by Councilman Beasley, seconded by Vice-Chairman Eckley.

Chris McKinney, Jake Whitmire, Dr. Jeff Parkey, Arlene Samuel also joined the public hearing.

A. FIVE YEAR UPDATE OF COMPREHENSIVE PLAN

Mr. Watkins said that Arlene Samuel had worked with the COG in updating this comprehensive plan.

Dr. Jeff Parkey gave an overview of the Comprehensive Plan and its origination and stated that it identifies current conditions and economic future growth and goals to be pursued as a source of information.

He said that the County should be aware of strategic funding, public safety and public awareness, and continue to work on future land use and community based land use planning.

Chairman Windham said that the County did not have any public comments into this matter but said that the Planning Commission met all requirements. He thanked Santee Lynches COG for their assistance.

MOTION TO CLOSE THE PUBLIC HEARING

The public hearing was closed at 9:45 a.m. on a motion made by Councilman Beasley, seconded by Councilperson Josey. Chairman Windham called for the vote, and motion carried. All voted in favor.

REGULAR COUNCIL MEETING

Also present at the meeting were Alan Watkins, Administrator; Julie Stokes, Assistant Administrator/Clerk to Council, Paul Fata, Dwayne Huggins, Brandon Holloman

FOIA

Pursuant to the Freedom of Information Act, all individuals requesting notifications were so notified.

OPEN MEETING AND INVOCATION

Chairman Windham welcomed everyone and thanked everybody who was watching on facebook. Vice-Chairman Eckley gave the invocation.

REQUEST FOR MOTION TO APPROVE RECOMMENDED AGENDA

Mr. Watkins said there was an addition to the agenda and said it would be 6B. Resolution for Administrator to accept a grant related to CARES Act.

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Councilperson Caughman made the motion to approve the agenda with the revision. 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 COUNCIL MEETING OF APRIL 14, 2020

Councilperson Josey made the motion to approve the minutes from regular council meeting of April 14, 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. LEE COUNTY BUDGET FY 20-21

Mr. Watkins said that due to the Corona Virus, there is a lot of financial impacts and economic uncertainty in the county and state and the County felt that it would be better not to go through a full budget process right now. He said that Council is prepared to carry on with the current budget levels with both expenses and revenues. Mr. Watkins said that \$13,713,064 would carry forward into the new budget year and when circumstances allow, Council will meet and determine if we need to amend this budget.

Mr. Watkins said the State is carrying over next year also. Mr. Watkins said that the budget FY 20/21 will be \$13,713,064.

Councilman Beasley made the motion to approve the Lee County Budget FY 20/21 for first reading approval in the amount of Councilman Fountain seconded the motion. Chairman Windham called for the vote, and motion carried. All voted in favor.

B. LEE COUNTY SCHOOL BUDGET FY 20-21

Mr. Watkins said the county's portion of school budget, or local local funding, is primarily tax millage for the schools. He said the County is proposing carrying forward the current funding level of 145.3 mills, which is the only portion of the school's budget that council has discretion over.

Chairman Windham said that Mr. Watkins has been in contact with Dr. Andrews and Sanya Moses.

Councilperson Josey made a motion to approve the Lee County School Budget FY 20-21 for first reading in the amount of 145.3 mills. Councilperson Caughman 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. REVISION OF THE MULTI-COUNTY PARK AGREEMENT WITH DARLINGTON COUNTY

Councilman Beasley made the motion to approve the Revision of the Multi-County Park Agreement with Darlington County for second reading. Vice-Chairman Eckley seconded the motion. Chairman Windham called for the vote, and motion carried. All voted in favor.

B. FIVE YEAR UPDATE OF THE LEE COUNTY COMPREHENSIVE PLAN

Councilperson Josey made the motion to approve the five year update of the Lee County Comprehensive Plan for second reading. Vice-Chairman Eckley seconded the motion. Chairman Windham called for the vote, and motion carried. All voted in favor.

RESOLUTION IDENTIFYING THE CAPITAL PROJECTS AS PART OF A PROGRAM OF GENERAL OBLIGATION BORROWING ; AND OTHER RELATED MATTERS

Mr. Watkins said that the County passed an ordinance in 2016 that allowed a series of projects. He said the County was issuing a bond at the current level of millage with no tax included associated with it. The expenditures would include sheriff's car, building maintenance, EMS equipment, trash compactors, public works vehicles, Parks and Rec, computers, HVAC replacement.

He said the total would be \$1 million paid for with taxes already in place. He said the bond would be paid off in two years and then another one would be issued. Mr. Watkins said he spoke with Ways and Means and said this was an ongoing process.

Councilman Beasley made the motion to approve the Resolution regarding the general obligation bond. Vice-Chairman Eckley seconded the motion. Chairman Windham called for the vote, and motion carried. All voted in favor.

RESOLUTION FOR THE ADMINISTRATOR TO ACCEPT A GRANT RELATED TO THE CARES ACT

Mr. Watkins said that the County was awarded grant funds through FAA. The grant was for \$1000 to use towards operational costs at airport. He said he needed Council's authorization for him to sign.

Councilman Fountain made the motion to approve the Resolution for the Administrator to accept a grant related to CARES Act. Councilperson Caughman seconded the motion. Chairman Windham called for the vote, and motion carried. All voted in favor.

AMENDMENT OF EMERGENCY ORDINANCE NO 5-20 COVID-19, STATE OF EMERGENCY TO EXTEND FOR 60 DAYS, EFFECTIVE MAY 18, 2020

Mr. Watkins said that Council enacted Emergency Ordinance to allow the County Administrator to take certain steps to protect our employees. He said this also entailed closing buildings and restricting budgets. He said this Emergency Ordinance is set to expire on May 18 and needs to

be extended for another 60 days. Mr. Watkins said that he is reviewing the current level operation of the county.

Councilman Beasley made the motion to approve the Amendment of Emergency Ordinance 5-20 COVID-19, State of Emergency to extend for 60 days. Councilman Addison seconded the motion. Chairman Windham called for the vote, and motion carried. All voted in favor.

ADMINISTRATOR'S REPORT

Mr. Watkins said that the County had 115 confirmed cases of COVID19, with 44 cases in the last 5 days, with 9 deaths. He said that this is monitored daily.

Mr. Watkins said that at the current level of operation, the County buildings remain closed but the offices are still working. He said that citizens are encouraged to conduct business on phone, email or mail. He said that the County is still receiving tax payments by phone, drop box or online.

He said the Parks and Rec facilities are closed, with no organized sports and the playgrounds are closed.

He said that right now CARESouth is offering drive up testing Monday through Friday from 9:00 – 3:30 p.m. at no charge. Mr. Watkins also said that the County is offering drive up testing at Chappell Park on May 15 from 10:00 – 4:00 at no charge.

Mr. Watkins said the County is still promoting the Census. He said the County is at 45.9% rate, with the rate for the state at 53%.

Chairman Beasley said that he wanted to make sure that everyone knew that if you pay your taxes by credit card, the County is waiving the 1.5% user fee.

Chairman Windham said that once restrictions are lifted, we will still need to social distance.

He also said that public comments can be sent to Julie Stokes.

ADJOURN

The meeting was adjourned at 10:13 a.m. on a motion made by Councilman Beasley, seconded by Vice-Chairman Eckley.

CHAIRMAN

VICE-CHAIRMAN

CLERK TO COUNCIL

MINUTES APPROVED