

Special Called County Council Meeting

June 14, 2021

6:00 PM

County Council met in special session, with Chairman Chris Bowers presiding. Agendas, bearing date, time, and location of meeting were mailed to members of council and local news media on June 9, 2021.

Council Members in Attendance:

Chris Bowers, Chairman

Roy Costner, Vice Chairman

Trey Whitehurst, Vice Chairman Pro-Tem

Ensley Feemster

Alex Saitta

Henry Wilson

Staff in Attendance:

Ken Roper, County Administrator

Meagan Nations, Clerk to Council

Les Hendricks, Contract County Attorney

WELCOME AND CALL TO ORDER:

Chairman Chris Bowers called the meeting of June 14, 2021 to order and welcomed those in attendance. Councilman Ensley Feemster led the Invocation and Pledge of Allegiance.

THIRD READING OF AN ORDINANCE NO. 599 TO PROVIDE FOR THE LEVY OF TAXES IN PICKENS COUNTY FOR ORDINARY COUNTY PURPOSES FOR THE FISCAL YEAR BEGINNING JULY 1, 2021, AND ENDING JUNE 30, 2022, AND TO DIRECT EXPENDITURE THEREOF.

Chairman Chris Bowers asked for a motion to constitute third reading of Ordinance No. 599.

- Motion was made by Councilman Ensley Feemster, seconded by Councilman Trey Whitehurst. Chairman Chris Bowers stated we will go into discussion on any amendments Council would like to make.

Roll Recreation Funding Forward

- Councilman Alex Saitta made a motion to roll recreation funds that are not used in this budget year, to next year's budget recreation funds. Chairman Chris Bowers seconded the motion. Seeing no other discussion, motion carried unanimously (6-0).

Library

- Councilman Alex Saitta stated Council passed the motion that the Library's local commitment would be 3.4 million dollars at the previous meeting. He made a motion to make sure that the time when Council sets the millage, the rate for the Library set equal to the local commitment of 3.4 million dollars and the excessive millage of funding will be spent on road paving and patching only. So, roll anything under 5.9 mils to County Operating, earmarked for roads. Councilman Henry Wilson seconded the motion. Chairman Bowers asked if there was any discussion.
 - Council had a detailed discussion with the Finance Director, Ralph Guarino, regarding the Library's budget and the millage.
- Councilman Trey Whitehurst made a substitute motion that moving forward, regarding the budget for the Library, the millage will automatically be adjusted to meet what the local commitment is. Motion was seconded by Councilman Henry Wilson and carried unanimously (6-0).

Deputy Coroner

- Vice Chairman Roy Costner made a motion to fully fund a Deputy Coroner as a part of our budget. Motion was seconded by Chairman Chris Bowers. Chairman Bowers asked if there was any discussion.
 - Mr. Guarino stated the Coroner has savings in consulting and contractual to be able to pay for that position. Mr. Guarino and Council had discussion on the Coroners Budget.
- Seeing no other discussion, the motion carried unanimously (6-0).

Alliance Pickens

- Councilman Henry Wilson made a motion to hire an Alliance Pickens employee. Motion was seconded by Vice Chairman Roy Costner. Chairman Bowers asked if there was any discussion.
 - Mr. Roper stated we can afford to pay for this based on the increase that we anticipate coming from the state agency subdivisions, reflecting in the budget notebook.
 - Mr. Guarino stated it looks like they will be funding an increase of around \$150,000, and the total cost of the position would be an estimate of \$90,000 with salaries and benefits.
 - Council had detailed discussion on Alliance Pickens and what this position would do.
- After more discussion, Councilman Alex Saitta amended the motion, stating he would like to reallocate the \$61,000 from Upstate Alliance to road paving and patching.
 - Mr. Roper stated that amount of money comes out of the Park Expense fund so it would have to be used on parks.
- Councilman Alex Saitta amended the motion, stating he would like to reallocate the \$61,000 from Upstate Alliance to pay for the new position. He stated he would like to also end the contract with Upstate Alliance. There was no second on this motion, so it fails.
- After much more discussion between Council, the original motion carried (5-1), with Councilman Trey Whitehurst opposed.

Cost of Living Pay Discussion

- Mr. Roper stated we have some ideas on how we would like to address in terms of how to use a portion of that money, specifically speaking for our lowest paid employees, recycling attendants. Mr. Roper went into discussion on vacancies right now for recycling attendants and pay. He stated they have also looked at motor equipment operators, document specialists I, and full & part time ENTS. He stated he has completed his division head evaluations and has now mandated to the division heads that they do performance evaluations of their department heads, that we provide some money for performance evaluation at the department head level.
- Council had discussion regarding the following:
 - 2% COLA and 1% to go towards compensation plan
 - Staff should make the decision on pay increases needed
 - Council to review what staff recommends at the next Council meeting

Upstate Alliance

- Councilman Trey Whitehurst made a motion to use the \$61,000 from Upstate Alliance to reallocate the money to Alliance Pickens Budget to use towards new business. Motion was seconded by Councilman Alex Saitta. Chairman Bowers asked if there was any discussion.
 - Council and Staff had detailed budgetary discussion that included, but was not limited to:
 - Upstate Alliance Pros/Cons
 - Give Ray Farley the option to use the \$61,000 how he thinks it should be spent towards Alliance Pickens, even if it is joining Upstate Alliance for another year
- Seeing no other discussion, motion carried (4-2), with Vice Chairman Roy Costner & Councilman Ensley Feemster opposed.

Mental Health

- Councilman Alex Saitta asked what the source of money is for the \$20,000 that goes towards Mental Health.
- Mr. Guarino stated it is General Fund money.
- Councilman Alex Saitta made a motion to not fund the \$20,000 from Mental Health, put the money back in General fund, and focus on the bigger picture, which is trying to help Behavioral Health Services get off Main Street in Pickens into a bigger building. Councilman Henry Wilson seconded the motion. Chairman Bowers asked if there was any discussion.
 - Chairman Bowers shared his thoughts on Mental Health in Pickens County.
 - Council discussed the services that Anderson, Oconee, Pickens Mental Health offers.
 - Vice Chairman Roy Costner stated he feels we do not need to cut these services, as there are many people in the community who need this help.
 - Councilman Trey Whitehurst stated we are giving money to an agency who is funded by the state. He stated he would like for staff to draft a letter to send to the Governor/Delegation asking to address this and fund their own agency.
- After more discussion, Chairman Chris Bowers amended the motion, stating he would like to fund Mental Health \$20,000, and take \$20,000 out of the general fund to put towards a new building for Behavioral Health Services of Pickens County, and to send a letter to the Legislative Delegation/Governor regarding state funding.

Hagood Mill

- Councilman Alex Saitta made a motion for the County to fix the bathroom leak at Hagood Mill by paying half of the expense. Councilman Henry Wilson seconded the motion. Chairman Bowers asked if there was any discussion.
 - Council and staff had budgetary discussion that included, but was not limited to:
 - Councilman Saitta gave a brief update regarding Hagood Mill and the Foundation Board
 - Services that County staff helps with at Hagood Mill, i.e. Maintenance, etc.
 - Council would like a copy of Hagood Mill's Memorandum of Understanding
- After much more discussion, Councilman Alex Saitta made a substitute motion, stating he would like for the County to fix the bathroom leak at Hagood Mill by paying half of the expense, and he would like to move this to the Committee of the Whole for more discussion. Motion was seconded by Vice Chairman Chris Bowers and carried unanimously (6-0).
- Seeing no other budgetary discussion, the motion for third reading on Ordinance 599 carried unanimously (6-0).

ADJOURN:

Chairman Chris Bowers asked for a motion to adjourn. Motion was made by Councilman Trey Whitehurst, seconded by Councilman Henry Wilson and carried unanimously. Pickens County Council stood adjourned at 8:19 p.m.

Respectively Submitted:

Approved:

Meagan Nations, Clerk to Council

Chris Bowers, Chairman of County Council