



**Laurens County Council
Regular Meeting
Meeting Minutes
January 24, 2017**

The Laurens County Council held their regularly scheduled meeting at 5:30 pm at the County Council Chambers in the Historic Courthouse. Chairman Joe Wood presided, Councilman Pitts and Councilwoman Anderson were absent.

Items 1-3, Call to Order: Chairman Wood called the meeting to order at 5:30 P.M. and invited all to stand for the Pledge of Allegiance and prayer. Councilman Nash provided the invocation.

Item 4 Agenda Approval: Councilman McDaniel made a motion to approve the agenda with Councilman Nash providing a second and the motion passed 5-0.

Item 5 Approval of Minutes: Councilman McDaniel made a motion to approve the January 10, 2017 regular meeting minutes with Vice Chairman Tollison providing a second and the motion passed 5-0.

Item 6 Reports to Council:

6a: County Administrator: CA Caime thanked Greg Lindley, Sandy Cruickshanks, and the Fire Departments for their cooperation in signing over the remaining 3 stations for our capital improvement projects. He also explained that the monthly financial reports have additional information from the same period last year to provide benchmarks for our current year finances. CA Caime also explained the report to Council from Sam Parsons is a mid year report from our Clemson PSA Masters Degree City and Regional Planning and that this report will culminate in April or May with a final report. He explained the primary purpose is to show the benefits of strategic planning, the need to have a full time staff planner, and the wealth of data that is available to Laurens County to help us foster the positive future we desire.

6b. Sam Parsons Clemson PSA Student Presentation: Mr. Parsons gave a detailed presentation showing the various tools available to Laurens County to create the environment we desire for our future. He provided a volume of research that he performed on the demographics and market potential for Laurens County. CA Caime explained that Laurens County has done little planning and as a result we are not directing our future but reacting to the conditions that we encounter and that is time for Laurens County to start creating the future we desire.

6c. FY16 Audit Presentation: Mauldin and Jenkins gave a detailed explanation of the FY16 Audit. The stated that the audit was a clean audit

6d. Lisa Kirk FY 17 M6 Report: Lisa Kirk reported the results of the FY17M6 finances.

6e. Dominion Carolina Gas Transmission Company: Keith Windle Dominion Gas Company gave a presentation about the proposed gas transmission line through eastern Laurens County. He stated that this project will pay approximately \$500,000 annually to Laurens County in property taxes.

Chairman Wood stated that the property where the pipeline will go will still belong to the property owner who will pay taxes on the property where the pipeline ROW is. Mr. Windall explained that Dominion pays for the value of the pipeline under the ground and any above ground improvements.

Vice Chairman Tollison asked if this gas supply would be available for Laurens County for economic development also to which Mr. Windall explained that it would be available.

CA Caime asked if the value of the assets are depreciated and Mr. Windall replied that the asset is depreciated but that the value will remain constant due to continuous improvements.

Councilman Jones stated his concerns about landowners being forced to give property through eminent domain and stated his opposition to government granting the right to take private property.

Council Nash stated there will be advantages to having this pipeline in Laurens County.

Chairman Woods asked if the NG was for export and Mr. Windall explained that 100% of the NG in this pipeline is for South Carolina and none is for export.

Councilman McDaniel inquired about the Dominion foundation grant program where grants and volunteer labor was available for Laurens County.

Chairman Woods agreed that the County does not want the Citizens bullied by the company into giving up their property.

Councilman McDaniel questioned if eminent domain was going to be used. Mr. Windall explained that the Federal Government does allow this to be a potential option for the project.

Item 7 Old Business

Item 7a: Approval of Energy Efficiency RFQ: PW Director Russian explained that the County intends to issue an RFQ for the selection of a company to provide an energy efficiency study with the final recommendation to come back to County Council for approval. This company could also provide the improvements needed to replace aging HVAC units that the County will soon be forced to replace. The proposed energy savings could finance the replacement costs for these units.

Councilman Jones stated that this will help us be proactive rather than reactive and made a motion to approve the RFQ for solicitation. Councilman McDaniel provided a second to the motion and the motion passed 5-0.

Item 7b: Second Reading Ordinance 827 Codifying County Ordinances: Vice Chairman Tollison made a motion to approve this ordinance in second reading second provided by Councilman McDaniel and the motion passed 5-0.

Item 7c: Proposed Resolution on Dominion Pipeline Eminent Domain: Chairman Woods explained that the resolution came from an outside source opposed to this project and that this should be rewritten to come from the County voicing our shared opposition to eminent domain for this project. He further clarified that County Council has no legal authority over eminent domain for this project.

Councilman Jones explained that the resolution came from someone in Laurens County. He agreed we have limited authority over eminent domain for this project but expressed his opinion that we have an obligation to support our residents that are fighting eminent domain.

No action was taken on this matter at this time.

Item 7d: Planning Commission Appointment: Councilman McDaniel made a motion to appoint Oscar Tribble as his appointee to the Planning Commission. Councilman Jones provided a second to the motion and the motion was approved 5-0.

Item 8a: Fire Department Cost Recovery: Fire Chief Greg Lindley explained that the County Fire Department would like to start a cost recovery program where motor vehicle accidents insurance carriers are billed for the costs of providing fire service to MVA calls. This would not be charged to the automobile owner but rather to their insurance company. The County would use a vendor for this service and that vendor would keep 25% of the collections.

Councilman Jones made a motion to approve this request. Councilman McDaniel provided a second to the motion and the motion passed 5-0.

Item 8b: ZF Easement Resolution: County Attorney Cruickshanks explained that this easement would provide redundant fiber optic for ZF. Councilman Jones made a motion to approve this easement. Councilman McDaniel provided a second to the motion and the motion passed 5-0.

Item 9 Public Comment

Ersine Jacks, Phil Roark, Emily Bailey, Robbie Bell, and David Ramage each explained that Dominion Pipeline is trying to force them to sell easements on their property for the pipeline project and that they are opposed to this.

Michael Corly and Shelly Robbins commented on the Dominion pipeline project.

Keith Windle with Dominion Gas stated that after hearing the public comment from the land owners, the company needs to do a better job in communicating. He apologized for the disruption and lack of communication.

Vice Chairman Tollison stated that the County does not oppose development and improvements of infrastructure but that there is a concern with requiring eminent domain to take property. He made a motion that the County Attorney and County Staff draft a letter to our State Representatives that we oppose eminent domain for this project. Motion was seconded by Councilman Jones and passed 5-0.

Item 10 County Council Comments

Councilman McDaniel thanked everyone for participating in the meeting and stated that County Council will do what we can to help the citizens.

Councilman Nash stated how he does not want our Citizens to be forced to give up property through eminent domain for the pipeline project.

Councilman Jones expressed his desire to work to protect property owners from eminent domain on the pipeline project and that we should file a motion with FERC. He also thanked the new Sheriff for his work on providing improved law enforcement. He reported that the safe routes to schools projects has had some progress on implementing improvements.

Chairman Woods commented that County Council is only responsible for 25% of the property tax bill in Laurens County. He stated that if there is opposition to the School District 55 proposal for new schools that the County Council is not the responsible for that issue.

Item 11 Executive Session- Legal Briefing and Employment Matter

Vice Chairman Tollison made a motion to enter into ES to discuss one employment matter and one legal briefing. Motion seconded by Councilman McDaniel and passed 5-0.

Upon reentering the regular meeting, Chairman Woods explained that no action will be taken on 1 employment matter and 1 legal briefing.

ADJOURNMENT – With no further action required by Council, Chairman Wood adjourned the

Meeting.

Jon Caime
Laurens County Administrator