

MINUTES

**LAURENS COUNTY COUNCIL
SEPTEMBER 8, 2009
LAURENS COUNTY HISTORIC COURTHOUSE
COUNTY COUNCIL CHAMBERS**

ATTENDANCE: **COUNCIL MEMBERS PRESENT-** County Council Chairman, Jim Coleman and County Council Vice Chair Diane Anderson; Council Members Edward McDaniel, Ted Nash, Keith Tollison, and David Tribble.

COUNCIL MEMBERS ABSENT – Councilman Joe Wood (personal matters)

COUNTY STAFF: Laurens County Administrator, Ernest Segars; Laurens County Clerk to Council Betty Walsh and Sandy Cruickshanks, Laurens County Attorney.

PRESS: Corey Ingle, *The Laurens County Advertiser*; Bristow Marchant, *The Clinton Chronicle* and Stan Stone, GoLaurens.Com.

SCHEDULED MEETING AGENDA ITEMS - ① Approval of Agenda, September 8, 2009; ② Approval of Minutes from August 25, 2009 regular session ③ Public Hearing - Laurens County Ordinance #691 – FY 2009-2010 - Fire Service Budgets for General Fund for FY 2009-2010; a.) Third Reading Approval – Laurens County Ordinance #691 - Fire Service Budgets for General Fund for FY 2009-2010; ④ Supplemental funding request from the Laurens County Museum for floor repairs at the Museum; ⑤ Approval of a Resolution in honor of three (3) recipients of the Henry Laurens Award; ⑥ Proposed expansion / improvements of the Johnson Detention Center; a.) Proposed Architectural Plan; b.) Funding Options; ⑦ Executive Session – One (1) Legal Briefing; One (1) Contractual Matter.

MEETING NOTIFICATION - The County Council Members and the Press were informed of the meeting in a timely manner.

CALL TO ORDER – Chairman Coleman called the September 8, 2009 meeting of Laurens County Council to order at 5:38 P.M. in the Council Chambers of the Historic Courthouse located on the Public Square in Laurens. The meeting was delayed due to Council Members and staff still conducting a County Council Committee meeting that began at 4:00 P.M.

Chairman Coleman invited all to stand for the delivering of the invocation by Councilman Tollison, everyone continued to stand for the Pledge of Allegiance.

Chairman Coleman noted that Councilman Wood would not be with us tonight due to the forthcoming arrival of his first grandchild.

Chairman Coleman asked for all to remember the family of Mr. Ludie Watkins, who recently passed away.

APPROVAL – AGENDA – SEPTEMBER 8, 2009 – COUNCILMAN TRIBBLE made the MOTION to approve the agenda with any additions; COUNCILMAN NASH SECONDING; VOTE 6-0.

APPROVAL – MINUTES – AUGUST 25, 2009 - COUNCILMAN TRIBBLE made the MOTION to approve the Minutes of the August 25, 2009 meeting of Council; SECONDED by VICE CHAIR ANDERSON; COUNCIL VOTED 6-0 to approve the minutes.

PUBLIC HEARING – ORDINANCE #691 – FISCAL YEAR 2009-2010 – FIRE SUPPRESSION SERVICE BUDGETS – Chairman Coleman opened the Public Hearing at 5:40 P.M. for public comments. Having no one wishing to address Ordinance #691, Chairman Coleman closed the Public Hearing at 5:41 P.M.

THIRD READING – ORDINANCE #691 FISCAL YEAR 2009-2010 – FIRE SUPPRESSION SERVICE BUDGETS
- VICE CHAIR ANDERSON made the MOTION to approve Ordinance #691 upon third and final reading. COUNCIL TOLLISON SECONDDING: VOTE 6-0.

Administrator Segars noted that the total for the Fire General Fund Budget for FY 2009-2010 is \$2,313,250 and that the total for the Fire Coordinator's Budget is \$431,000.

SUPPLEMENTAL FUNDING REQUEST – LAURENS COUNTY MUSEUM – Chairman Coleman reviewed the earlier request from a previous meeting where Council had approved an amount up to \$12,500 for certain repairs at the Museum. The major issue at that time was to seal / waterproof the north side of the museum. At Council's suggestion, the Museum Committee received an additional bid and the work was completed at a price of \$3,750.00. Now, additional monies are needed for floor repairs. Due to this being an unbudgeted project Council will need to approve the funding. Following with the pricing of the lowest bid, the funds requested would be \$4,850.

Councilman Tollison stated that Council does not need to set a precedent and that he felt this was not the best way to address this.

COUNCILMAN TRIBBLE made the MOTION to approve the requested funds to be applied towards the reconstruction of the floor at the Laurens County Museum. VICE CHAIR ANDERSON SECONDDING; VOTE 5-1 (Councilman Tollison was in objection).

RESOLUTION(S) APPROVAL – HENRY LAURENS AWARD – VICE CHAIR ANDERSON made the MOTION to approve the Henry Laurens Award Resolutions honoring Eugene Stoddard, Willie Paden and Hattie Suber. COUNCILMAN NASH SECONDDING - VOTE 6-0.

PROPOSED EXPANSION / IMPROVEMENTS – LAURENS COUNTY DETENTION CENTER – Addressing Council, Administrator Segars said, "At the last meeting Council received a lot of information on the proposed expansion from Mr. Ashley and a briefing from Bonding Attorney Theo DuBose as to funding. Since then, I have had discussions via email and telephone with Bond Attorney Theodore DuBose concerning various options as funding sources for the \$6.3 million construction costs. As briefed at the last meeting Mr. DuBose, stated that the most traditional way of funding projects like this was general obligation bonds and that a "Capital Project Sales Tax – 2009" could also be an option It would require creating a six (6) member commission to formulate a ballot questionnaire on various capital projects. The capital project list would need to be prioritized and then submitted to public by referendum before a one percent sales tax can be implemented."

Councilman Tribble stated, "The interest rates are low now....construction costs are down and I am in favor of the construction at the jail".

Councilman Nash stated that he would like to see the Sheriff's Department and the Detention Center pulled together at one location and not spread out.

Councilman Tollison said, "I agree with Councilman Nash on locating law enforcement into one location. And, I foresee us needing to expand again in another fifteen years. I see it as start the process now or do it later. What exactly is the bond cap for the County presently?" Chairman Coleman replied \$10.5 million. Administrator Segars replied that it could be up considerably in another year.

Chairman Coleman stated, " I hear that there is a Council consensus to move forward with this project. I would like to assign the County Council Committee on Criminal Justice the task of reviewing the options at hand and to come back to the full Council with a recommendation."

REPORT - COUNTY COUNCIL COMMITTEE ON PARKS, RECREATION AND TOURISM AND NATURAL RESOURCES

– Committee Chairman Nash said, “The Committee met prior to this session of Council with Library Board Chairman Dr. John Womack and Library Director Ms. Ann Szypulski to discuss their position with the construction of a new Library in the Clinton Community. We come to Council now to recommend a commitment of up to two million dollars to start the funding for the proposed Clinton Library. The Committee concluded that the location was not accessible to the general public and needs more access to computers for the community.”

Administrator Segars said, “The Committee is requesting a commitment of up to two million dollars as a baseline fund for the project and for the Library Board to research grants, foundations and public donations that could be used with the construction.”

Administrator Segars questioned the County Attorney if the proposed detention center bonding could include the construction for the Library? Attorney Cruickshanks replied, “If you have the capacity, you can go up to the capacity. The interest would not start to accrue until you sell the bonds. It could be included with the bonding and held until needed. Council needs to keep in mind too that if the Library Board does not meet with the other funds it could prove to be confusing. The next several years would be tight with construction costs and bonding.” Administrator Segars told Council that another possible fund to tap could be the county fund balance.

Councilman Tribble stated that there will be other participants in this project that have not been tapped officially. Councilman McDaniel stated, “I will be non-committal at this point due to many questions needing to be asked and addressed. The County has been in the red for many years and the people of Laurens County got us out. I believe that it would not take very much to get us back in that condition. One of the last things I want to do is to build on to the jail. But, they say the state is telling us to do this. It just keeps mushrooming. We need to look at the needs and what the benefits would be. I am not prepared to voice an opinion at this time.”

Vice Chair Anderson said, “I will vote for this as I see it as an asset to the City of Clinton and that the Library Board is wanting a commitment from the County to then move out to other sources. Therefore I pledge my support.”

Chairman Coleman replied, “I see this as a recommendation from the County Council Committee to support but not to obligate at this time. And, to allow a process to allow for planning and called for a motion.”

Councilman Tribble stated that this would take three readings and a public hearing to proceed and with this recommendation coming from a Committee it does not need a motion at this time.

COUNCILMAN TOLLISON made the MOTION to table the County Council Committee recommendation. VICE CHAIR ANDERSON SECONDING; VOTE 5-0-1 (Councilman McDaniel abstained).

Councilman McDaniel asked who owns the previous location of the Library? Administrator Segars replied that the City of Clinton was the owner.

VICE CHAIR ANDERSON made the MOTION for the Laurens County Council to support the proposed project for a new branch library in the City of Clinton with no actual funding obligation at this time. COUNCILMAN TOLLISON SECONDING: VOTE 6-0.

PUBLIC COMMENTS – Chairman Coleman opened the floor for public comments at 6:25 P.M. Having none, Chairman Coleman closed the session at 6:26 P.M.

COUNTY COUNCIL COMMENTS: Chairman Coleman opened to floor for Council comments. Having none, Chairman Coleman closed the session.

EXECUTIVE SESSION – VICE CHAIR ANDERSON made the MOTION to move into Executive Session at 6:28 to discuss one (1) Legal Briefing and one (1) Contractual Matter. COUNCILMAN NASH SECONDING; VOTE 6-0.

- a.) Contractual Matter - Chairman Coleman reported that no action was taken on the contractual matter.
- b.) Legal Briefing – Chairman Coleman reported that the staff was instructed to proceed with the development of certain policies as it relates to computer use of unauthorized photographs and county computer internet.

ADJOURNMENT – There was a COUNCIL CONSENSUS to adjourn the meeting at 6:45 P.M.

Respectfully Submitted,



Betty C. Walsh
Clerk to Council