

JANUARY 13, 2015
LAURENS COUNTY COUNCIL
HISTORIC COURTHOUSE – PUBLIC SQUARE
COUNTY COUNCIL CHAMBERS

ATTENDANCE: **COUNCIL MEMBERS PRESENT-** County Council Members: Diane Anderson, Stewart Jones, Ted Nash, David Pitts, Keith Tollison and Joe Wood.

COUNCIL MEMBERS ABSENT - Vice Chairman Edward McDaniel (illness).

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

DEPARTMENT HEADS PRESENT: Laurens County Human Resources Manager, Debi Parker; Laurens County Finance Director, Lisa Kirk; Laurens County E-911 / Communications Director, Joey Avery; Laurens County Vehicle Maintenance Superintendent, Billy Wilson; Laurens County Emergency Medical Services Director, Chad Burrell; Laurens County Sheriff, Ricky Chastain; Laurens County Fire Director, Gregg Lindley and Captain Tyson, Detention Center Administrator.

PRESS: Vic McDonald, *The Clinton Chronicle*; Iva Cadmus, *WLBG Radio*; Daniel Taylor, *GoLaurens.com* and Corey Engle, *The Laurens County Advertiser*.

SCHEDULED MEETING AGENDA ITEMS - **1.)** Call to Order – Vice Chairman McDaniel; **2.)** Invocation – Councilman Pitts; **3.)** Pledge of Allegiance; **4.)** Approval of Agenda, January 13, 2015; **5.)** Approval of Minutes – December 9, 2014; **6.)** Public Hearing, Ordinance #780“An Ordinance to Create the Laurens County Fire District in Laurens County, South Carolina, To Approve the Annual Levy and Collection of Ad Valorem Taxes for the Operation and Maintenance Thereof, To Authorize the Imposition of Rates and Charges Therein, To Approve the Issuance of General Obligation Bonds on Behalf of the District, to Repeal Certain Prior Ordinances of Laurens County Council and Thereby Abolish the Four Taxing Districts Created Thereby, and Other Matters Relating Thereto”; **A.)** Third Reading, Ordinance #780; **7.)** Appointment to the Laurens County Assessment and Appeals Board **8.)** Administrative Report, Ernie Segars, County Administrator; **9.)** Public Comments; **10.)** Comments from Council Members; **11.)** Adjournment.

MEETING NOTIFICATION - The County Council Members, Department Heads and the Press were informed of the budget session meeting in a timely manner.

CALL TO ORDER – Administrator Segars explained that with the hospitalization and absence of Vice Chairman McDaniel and in order to conduct the election of officers, he would officially call the meeting to order for the January 13, 2015 session of Laurens County Council.

ELECTION OF COUNTY COUNCIL OFFICERS - 2015 – Before proceeding with the scheduled meeting, the election of officers - Chairman and Vice Chairman - was conducted by County Attorney Sandy Cruickshanks.

Attorney Cruickshanks stated that both positions would be considered elected positions among their peers with four (4) votes from the attending Council and that the terms would be for two (2) years. Attorney Cruickshanks then asked for nominations for the position of Chairman.

A.) **CHAIRMAN** - Attorney Cruickshanks opened the floor for nominations for the position of Chairman.

Councilman Nash made the nomination of Councilman Wood as Chairman. Councilman Jones seconding the nomination.

With no further nominations being made, Attorney Cruickshanks asked for a vote from Council to close the nominations and to approve the noted nominee. COUNCILMAN PITTS made the MOTION to close the nominations and to approve the nomination of Councilman Wood as Chairman with COUNCILMAN TOLLISON SECONDDING. COUNCIL VOTED 5-0-1 (Councilwoman Anderson abstained).

- B.) VICE CHAIR – Attorney Cruickshanks opened the floor for nominations for the position of Vice Chairman.

Councilman Jones made the nomination of Councilman Tollison as Vice Chairman. Councilman Nash seconding the nomination.

With no further nominations being made, Attorney Cruickshanks asked for a vote from Council to close the nominations and to approve the noted nominee. COUNCILMAN PITTS made the MOTION to close the nominations and to approve the nomination of Councilman Tollison as Vice Chairman with COUNCILMAN JONES SECONDDING. COUNCIL VOTED 5-0-1(Councilwoman Anderson abstained).

Chairman Wood now presiding over the meeting (5:37 P.M.) thanked Council for their trust in electing him as Chairman. Chairman Wood said, “This Council is just before facing a lot of challenges with budgets and the continuation of business. You will find that failure is not in my vocabulary. This Council was elected to provide a variety of services for the citizens of Laurens County and it will continue under my Chairmanship and not skip a beat” .

Continuing, Chairman Wood, recognized Stewart Jones as a new Council Member from Council District four (4). Councilman Stewart thanked Chairman Wood for the recognition and stated that he is looking forward to helping make this a better community.

Chairman Wood invited all to stand for the Pledge of Allegiance followed by the invocation provided by Councilman Pitts.

APPROVAL OF AGENDA – Chairman Wood called for approval of and any additions to the agenda.

COUNCILMAN TOLLISON made the MOTION to approve the agenda as presented; COUNCILMAN PITTS SECONDDING; VOTE 6-0.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES – COUNCILMAN PITTS made the MOTION to approve the minutes from the December 9, 2014 regular session of Council. VICE CHAIRMAN TOLLISON SECONDDING; VOTE 6-0.

CHAIRMAN WOOD REFERENCING ORDINANCE #780 - Before opening the public hearing, Chairman Wood reviewed the establishment of the Laurens County Fire Service so as to bring everyone up to date with the process to the current events before Council now.

PUBLIC HEARING – ORDINANCE #780 – “AN ORDINANCE TO CREATE THE LAURENS COUNTY FIRE DISTRICT IN LAURENS COUNTY, SOUTH CAROLINA, TO APPROVE THE ANNUAL LEVY AND COLLECTION OF AD VALOREM TAXES FOR THE OPERATION AND MAINTENANCE THEREOF, TO AUTHORIZE THE IMPOSITION OF RATES AND CHARGES THEREIN, TO APPROVE THE ISSUANCE OF GENERAL OBLIGATION BONDS ON BEHALF OF THE DISTRICT, TO REPEAL CERTAIN PRIOR ORDINANCES OF LAURENS COUNTY

COUNCIL AND THEREBY ABOLISH THE FOUR TAXING DISTRICTS CREATED THEREBY, AND OTHER MATTERS RELATING THERETO”. –Chairman Wood opened the public hearing at 5:46 P.M. Having no one wishing to address Council, Chairman Wood closed the public hearing at 5:47 P.M.

- A.) **THIRD READING – ORDINANCE #780 – “AN ORDINANCE TO CREATE THE LAURENS COUNTY FIRE DISTRICT IN LAURENS COUNTY, SOUTH CAROLINA, TO APPROVE THE ANNUAL LEVY AND COLLECTION OF AD VALOREM TAXES FOR THE OPERATION AND MAINTENANCE THEREOF, TO AUTHORIZE THE IMPOSITION OF RATES AND CHARGES THEREIN, TO APPROVE THE ISSUANCE OF GENERAL OBLIGATION BONDS ON BEHALF OF THE DISTRICT, TO REPEAL CERTAIN PRIOR ORDINANCES OF LAURENS COUNTY COUNCIL AND THEREBY ABOLISH THE FOUR TAXING DISTRICTS CREATED THEREBY, AND OTHER MATTERS RELATING THERETO**”. – COUNCILMAN JONES made the MOTION to approve the Ordinance as presented with VICE CHAIRMAN TOLLISON SECONDING; VOTE 6-0.

CHAIRMAN WOOD REQUEST / COMMENTS – Chairman Wood requested for the staff to coordinate a work session involving the Fire Service before the next meeting of Council: 1.) Fire Service Director Gregg Lindley to provide an outline for the fire service for the first year; 2.) County Attorney Sandy Cruickshanks to discuss the ownership of the buildings; 3.) Asked Council Members to bring all of the previous literature provided to them; 4.) Asked for all of Administrative Staff to be in attendance and for all to come prepared to stay.

Administrator Segars asked for opinions as to holding the meeting on a Saturday or during the week? Councilman Pitts stated that he personally preferred a meeting of this nature to be held before or after a scheduled Council meeting.

There was a COUNCIL CONSENSUS to hold the meeting on the 27th of January during the regular Council meeting.

APPOINTMENT – LAURENS COUNTY ASSESSMENT AND APPEALS BOARD – VICE CHAIRMAN TOLLISON made the MOTION to approve the appointment of Mrs. Melinda Gray to the Board and replacing Mr. Marvin Cartee. COUNCILMAN PITTS SECONDING; VOTE 6-0.

ADMINISTRATIVE REPORT – Administrator Segars reviewed the roster of upcoming events as follows: 1.) Chamber of Commerce Banquet January 15th at 6:00 P.M.; 2.) NAACP Banquet, January 17th at 6:00 P.M. at Laurel Hill Baptist Church; 3.) SCAC=Midyear Conference February 4th in Columbia; 4.) Spotlight on Agriculture March 12th at 5:00 at the First Presbyterian Church in Clinton.

Administrator Segars requested Public Works Director Scott Holland to provide an update on the progress at Hillcrest. Mr. Holland stated that all of the exterior and interior walls on the first floor have been put in place; the exterior walls of the second floor is the next procedure; a target date of September as move-in date is projected.

CHAIRMAN WOOD REQUESTING UPDATE / COMMENTS INVOLVING AN INDUSTRY IN CLINTON – Referring to Ordinances #774 and #776 which involves CCL in Clinton, Chairman Wood asked for an update from Mr. Moss. County Attorney Cruickshanks replied that there was a delay with part of the thirty million dollar project with three or four million to be delayed. The part delayed will be inside the City limits of Clinton. The construction, improvements and expansion within the County are already underway.

CHAIRMAN WOOD REQUEST FROM FINANCE DIRECTOR – Chairman Wood said, “With the budget process coming up very soon, I would like to have a financial report from the Finance Director from 2004, a graph on revenues and expenditures”.

PUBLIC COMMENT – Chairman Wood opened the floor for public comment at 6:07 P.M. Having no one wishing to address Council, Chairman Coleman closed the session at 6:08 P.M.

COUNTY COUNCIL COMMENTS:

A.) Councilman Pitts congratulated Council Members Wood and Tollison for their elected positions.

B.) Councilman Jones posed the question to Council Members if there were any objections to him video recording the meetings of Council during a given session and sharing it online for the general public on YouTube. Councilman Jones stated that he felt it his civic duty and that this was a part of his campaign promises.

Councilwoman Anderson questioned if there were any funds required that were not allocated? Councilman Jones replied that it would not, that he would provide his own camera and would upload it to the web himself.

There were no announced objections to his request and Chairman Wood gave permission to do so.

C.) Councilman Tollison stated that he had several things he wished to say and address with Council. Those were:

- 1.) For the Public Works Director to provide Council with a schedule on the building process for the Hillcrest Administrative Building.
- 2.) Requested for the meeting regarding the fire bond, a written explanation from the Bond Attorney and, acknowledgment that the County Attorney has reviewed.
- 3.) Councilman Tollison thanked those in attendance of the meeting, especially the County Department Heads.
- 4.) Councilman Tollison thanked the Council for their vote of confidence in electing him as Vice Chairman for County Council.
- 5.) Councilman Tollison informed Council that he had recently visited Councilman McDaniel and that he is still visibly weak and for all to remember him in their prayers.

D.) Chairman Wood said, “After seeing local news reports about fires, I would like to ask Mr. Lindley to promote fire protection within Laurens County. What has brought this to mind is the recent fire at my brothers’ home. I would like to thank the various fire departments and emergency personnel that responded”.

ADJOURNMENT – With no further action required by Council, Chairman Coleman adjourned the meeting at 6:20 P.M.

Respectfully Submitted,



Betty C. Walsh
Laurens County Clerk to Council