

DATE: 5/4/21 FILE NO: DATE509
TO: Cherokee County Council
SUBJECT: Minutes of PH & Regular Meeting of 5/3/21

There was a Public Hearing & Regular Meeting of County Council Monday, 5/3/21, 5 PM in Council Chambers. Chairman Tim Spencer presided with Quay Little leading in prayer. All council members were present along with Administrator Steve Bratton, Attorney Joe Mathis, Master Clerk Doris Pearson & IT Director Dustin Phillips. The news media was informed by agenda and it was posted in accordance with the SCFOIA. No news media was present. There were 19 visitors. The meeting is also available online at www.cherokeecountysc.gov.

Councilman David Smith made the motion to adopt the agenda for the Public Hearing & Regular Meeting of 5/3/21 as received and posted in accordance with the SCFOIA. Tracy McDaniel seconded and council voted in favor.

Councilman Lyman Dawkins made the motion to approve the minutes of the Regular Meeting of 4/19/21 as received. Quay Little seconded and council voted in favor.

Councilman Tracy McDaniel made the motion to approve the claims for Cherokee County in the amount of \$377,919.10. Lyman Dawkins seconded and council voted in favor.

Administrator Steve Bratton on behalf of County Council read & presented a proclamation to Sheriff Mueller proclaiming National Peace Officers Memorial Week, 5/9-15/21.

Administrator Steve Bratton on behalf of County Council read & presented a proclamation to Jen Reese proclaiming National Emergency Medical Services Week, 5/16-22/21.

Administrator Steve Bratton on behalf of County Council read & presented a proclamation to Roger Williams & Ms. Miller proclaiming May, 2021, as Mental Health Month.

Chairman Tim Spencer opened the public hearing for Ordinance No. 2021-05 providing for the issuance & sale of not exceeding eleven million dollars (\$11,000,000) aggregate principal amount of General Obligation Improvement Bonds of Cherokee County, SC and other matters related thereto. No one was present to speak and the public hearing was closed.

Treasurer Ryan Thomas informed council that he was going to purchase a lock box system for his office. The PO Box will be located in Atlanta, Ga. It will free up our office of having to open a lot of mail. Once the mail is opened the check will be debited into our account immediately. There will be a small fee but it will be paid by the other entities we are collecting taxes for. It will not be a fee for taxpayers. There are other entities in Cherokee Co. using this system. Our Governor is about to pass a bill that will increase our mail work load about 4 times of what we are doing now so this system will help us out tremendously. We are the only county in our state that does not use at least one feature of the lock box. We plan on implementing this by 7/1/21.

Administrator Bratton recognized Cole Harris & Kevin Thorton with KCI to update council on the paving assessment program. They assessed every county road on the map and color coded them with blue meaning the road is in good condition and red is bad. These roads were measured in half segments are you have 1,186 segments. Cole stated the overall grade for the roads is in the 70 range which is better than what we thought. SCDOT will issue additional monies to fix the frontage roads along the I-85 corridor that is under construction. This is a good tool for you to go forward and get your roads all in the blue code.

Councilman Quay Little made the motion to accept Thorn Creek Subdivision Phase II into the county road system. Mike Fowlkes seconded and council voted in favor.

Councilman Lyman Dawkins made the motion to go into Executive Session at 5:47 PM pursuant to two matters: 1) Section 30-4-70-(a)(1) discussion of a personnel matter in Administration; and 2) Section 30-4-70(a)(2) discussion of negotiations incident to a proposed contractual matter regarding the county property. David Smith seconded and council voted in favor.

Councilman Quay Little made the motion to come out of Executive Session at 6:59 PM and enter back into the Regular Meeting. David Smith seconded and council voted in favor. Attorney Mathis stated that no vote or action was taken during Executive Session.

Councilman Quay Little made the motion to allow Administrator Bratton to enter into an Inter-Government Agreement for the installation of sewer lines to service a portion of the Upstate Corporate Park between Cherokee Co. & Gaffney Board of Public Works. Mike Fowlkes seconded and council voted in favor.

Councilman Lyman Dawkins made the motion to adopt the 3rd Reading of Ordinance No. 2021-05 providing for the issuance and sale of not exceeding eleven million dollars (\$11,000,000) aggregate principal amount of General Obligation Improvement Bonds of Cherokee Co., SC and other matters relating thereto. Mike Fowlkes seconded and council voted in favor.

Councilman Mike Fowlkes made the motion to adopt the 2nd Reading of Ordinance No. 2021-06 authorizing the development of a Jointly Owned & Operated Industrial/Business Park in conjunction with Spartanburg Co., such Industrial/Business Park to be geographically located in Cherokee Co. & established pursuant to Section 4-1-170 of the Code of Laws of SC, 1976, as amended; to provide for a Written Agreement with Spartanburg County to provide for the expenses of the Park; the percentage of revenue application; the distribution of Fee in Lieu of Ad Valorem Taxation; and other matters related thereto. Tracy McDaniel seconded and council voted in favor.

Councilman Tracy McDaniel made the motion to adopt the 2nd Reading of Ordinance No. 2021-07 authorizing 1) the execution & delivery of a Fee in Lieu of Tax & Incentive Agreement by & between Cherokee Co., SC (the "County") and a company known to the county as Project Thunder, acting for itself, one or more affiliates, and/or other project sponsors (collectively, the "Company"), pursuant to

which the county shall covenant to accept Certain Negotiated Fees In Lieu of Ad Valorem Taxes with respect to the establishment and/or expansion of certain facilities in the county (the “Project”); 2) the benefits of a Multi-County Industrial or Business Park, to be made available to the company and the Project; 3) certain Special Source Revenue Credits in connection with the Project; and 4) other matters relating thereto. Mike Fowlkes seconded and council voted in favor.

Councilman Mike Fowlkes made the motion to adopt the 2nd Reading of Ordinance No. 2021-08 Proposed Sale of County Property. Quay Little seconded and council voted in favor.

Administrator Steve Bratton reported that make up day for the Community Clean Up Day will be held this Sat., 5/8/15. Sierra Walker is getting supplies to those who will be participating. This past Sat., 5/1/21, Wanda Blackwell organized a clean-up day in her community on Gaston Shoals Road, Dist. 6. They collected 1,760 lbs. of trash plus 88 vehicle tires. Council applauded them for their service.

Administrator Bratton introduced the FY 2021/22 County Budget Update. Johnny Leazer & I have been working for weeks on this budget. We’re hoping to get our census numbers in by Tuesday, 5/4/21 which will give us more information on what we need. We heard in Columbia, they are fully funding the local government fund and we have that built into this budget. This budget has all the county requests on a line-item basis and the personnel requests that were submitted. Currently on the **general fund side**, the budget is out of balance by \$553,338. Johnnie & I are still working on this. I put in as a recommendation for a \$0.75/hour cost of living increase for all county employees for a total of \$568,000. The budget includes the longevity pay program as it was approved last year. There is a 2.6% employer health insurance premium increase and a 1.5% load factor based on claims totaling \$36,000. Tort insurance increase of \$46,000. The state resumed adding 1% annually to the employer portion of SCRS and PORS retirement contributions which cost \$122,000. There is only one new position included in the budget for the Building Inspection Dept. due to the tremendous workload growth projections in our county; that cost is \$45,140. I increased the VFD’s appropriation upon their request from \$46,500 to \$50,000/yr. totaling \$77,000. Also, the City Fire Dept. will receive the full funding of \$50,000 as well. Fuel cost are estimated at \$82,000. This year coming up is a reassessment year for the Tax Assessor’s Office and we will need to upgrade their QS1 system package for \$22,790. This is a non-recurring figure. Register of Deeds has some very old deed books in her office that need to be restored and the cost for that is \$7,500. We increased R&B road maintenance by \$60,000 and pipe maintenance by \$15,000. We received a request from the SCC/CCC to help with the funding of the Whelchel Road Project for \$100,000 in this budget. Quay Little asked Steve to ask the School District to help with the funding of the Whelchel Road Project. **Tab 7 – Capital Budget:** IT – we have to update every so often with switches, viper packets, laptops and projectors and are must do items that are needed for our security, etc. Administration – 11 vehicle lease payments; upgrade with a new software package for our HR Dept. is a total cost upfront of \$83,430. There annual maintenance fee is \$30,000 to \$40,000. Sheriff request for 10 Ford SUV patrol vehicles and I budgeted 7 for \$382,900. Once we give him 7 new ones; he has to take out of his fleet 7 old ones. Detention Center generator is shot & to replace it will cost \$40,000. We put in for a new water control system at a cost of \$72,042. We budgeted \$50,000 and the Sheriff will

pay from his special funds the remainder of \$22,042. Solid Waste – two trash trucks were requested and I funded for 1 at \$180,000; 1500 roll out carts for \$80,000. Landfill – yearly payment on the compactor will be \$204,818.92; we financed it for 3 years; hopefully we will have it on our grounds very soon. Landfill – condensate tanks at the landfill have a crack and we have a company coming in to go down in the tanks and seal them for a cost of \$45,000. Soil & Water Conservation - \$7500. Thicketty Creek Project - \$12,000. Chairman Spencer asked are we going to give our police officers more money; to me \$0.75/hr. is not enough money. Steve reminded council that last year we gave a \$2,000 increase for certified officers. Mike Fowlkes asked Steve to get him numbers for OT after 80 hrs. instead of 86 hrs. Steve referred to the Fair Labor Standards Act regarding compensation for OT. Steve stated that we also looked at \$1.00/hr. for salary increase and that for a 40-hr. work week employee would be \$2,080/yr.; for an officer employee is it \$1,950/yr. and that total cost is over \$700,000/yr. Quay asked Steve to give him the figures for an officer who worked his regular shift with a \$0.75/hr. raise? Steve replied \$40,807 for their 86-hr. shift they work now. Quay asked is that comparable to Greenville County? Steve replied, I will have to research that. Mike Fowlkes stated that we need to look at our law enforcement officer's salaries at least every other year to make sure we are up to par with the surrounding counties. Steve replied we have the same situation in many of our specialized departments. We have 300 employees and if we raise them \$1.00/hr. x \$2,080 = \$600,000 + fringe. This year in what is being proposed if you give \$0.75/hr. but if you proposed to give a 3% or 4% cost of living raise and if that employee is making only \$15/hr., they are only getting 60 cents; so, at 75 cents you are doing more. Now, for those making over a certain amount, you are doing less. Steve replied we are getting federal money that the counties can use but I don't know what stipulations and I would not recommend giving it toward salaries because it is a non-recurring money and you would be deficit spending. If you want to give a bonus with that money for a one-time deal but remember we don't have specifics yet on what we can do with that money. In this budget, I am not addressing several needs that the county has because we can't address everything in one budget. We've been very conservative with our revenues because there are still a lot of unanswered questions there. I did increase building permits some; court fines & fees are down roughly 50% because of COVID; highway patrol is not writing as many tickets on our interstate because they have no where to pull people over. Lyman Dawkins asked Steve to get the exact numbers for a \$1.00/hr. raise vs the \$0.75/hr. raise. Quay Little asked are we willing to raise the public's taxes to pay salaries? Steve replied the only option you have instead of raising taxes is to spend out of the fund balance which is deficit spending and next year you will start the budget in a hole. Mike Fowlkes asked Steve are you proposing a milage increase? Steve replied I did not propose one at this time, I just informed you that the budget is out of balance some \$553,338 and to give a \$1.00/hr. raise it would be \$769,000. I will always under budget before I over budget. Growth is here but a lot of it is residential. We have a lot to offer and some of that is our low cost of living compared to other counties and that is why so many people want to come here but the cost of our services like picking up trash cans will increase, etc. Everything we do, needs to be centered around economic development. We are planning on having the 1st Reading of the 21/22 FYB on Monday, 5/17/21. We have three meetings schedule in June if we need to delay one. Quay Little asked how many new

employees were requested? Steve replied 3 not including the Sheriff Dept. Most supervisors are asking for a raise for their employees. The total personnel request we received was over \$787,000 which doesn't include the \$0.75/hr. raise. Steve showed the actual milage rate calculation that we are allowed to use according to Act 388 and we are guessing on the 2.21% raise and if that is the case, we will get 2 mills. We are allowed 4.9 mills capped by law, that is all we can increase and that would generate \$868,000; which means next year what you can will be capped at would remain the same, approximately 2 mills. We hope that fee-in-lieu and other items will continue to increase. We budgeted up \$400,000 roughly in our FILOT revenues this coming year because economic developments that you approved about 4 to 5 years ago that are now starting to pay off. Quay Little asked Steve to give him an estimated of the 1 cent property tax relief? Do you see that going up or down? Steve replied we did not change it last year and I have not proposed to change it this year. We will look at it to see if it is possible for us to give a better credit this year. Quay asked Steve to look at every angle we can before we hit the taxpayers. Steve replied there is not a fluff in this budget and there are not a lot of places to cut.

Councilman Quay Little recused himself from making an appointment to the Commission on Alcohol & Drug Abuse Board due to a conflict and asked council to consider appointing someone at-large to serve on that board.

As there was no other business to come before council at this time, Chairman Spencer adjourned the meeting at 7:59 PM.

APPROVED: 5/17/21

BY ITS CHAIR: Tim Spencer

Respectfully submitted,

Doris F. Pearson, Master Clerk to Council