

DATE: 5/3/22 FILE NO: DATE543

TO: Cherokee County Council

SUBJECT: Minutes of Regular Meeting, 5/2/22

There was a Regular Meeting of County Council Monday, 5/2/22, 5 PM in Council Chambers. Chairman Spencer presided with Mike Fowlkes leading in prayer. All council members were present except Lyman Dawkins. Administrator Bratton, Asst. Admin. Merv Bishop, Attorney Joe Mathis and Master Clerk Doris Pearson were present. The news media was informed by agenda and it was posted in accordance with the SCFOIA. One news media was present. There were 14 visitors.

Councilman Quay Little made the motion to adopt the agenda of the Regular Meeting of 5/2/22 as received and posted in accordance with the SCFOIA. Tracy McDaniel seconded and council voted in favor.

Councilman Tracy McDaniel made the motion to approve the minutes of the Regular Meeting of 4/18/22 as received. Mike Fowlkes seconded and council voted in favor.

Councilman Quay Little made the motion to approve the claims for Cherokee County in the amount of \$437,498.58. Mike Fowlkes seconded and council voted in favor.

Administrator Steve Bratton presented to Freida Miller a proclamation declaring May, 2022, as Mental Health Month.

Administrator Steve Bratton read a proclamation declaring Sunday, May 15, 2022 as National Peace Officers Memorial Day.

Councilman Mike Fowlkes made the motion to adopt the 2nd Reading of Ordinance No. 2022-03 to authorize the transfer of a 50' county road easement held by Cherokee County in exchange for the County's receipt of a 50' strip of property to re-route Mill Gin Road at the intersection of Mill Gin Road & Chesnee Highway. Quay Little seconded and Attorney Joe Mathis stated at 1st Reading I provided a copy of the survey that shows the exchange being made and the 1st survey included a telephone pole; the updated survey for 2nd Reading shows that telephone pole is not included in the property. Council voted in favor.

Administrator Steve Bratton presented a road to be accepted into the county road system off of Lemons Lane behind QT. This is a new subdivision that meets all county road requirements. **Councilman Quay Little made the motion to accept Steuer Place Subdivision Road into the County Road System as presented. David Smith seconded and council voted in favor.**

Administrator Steve Bratton stated this is not on the agenda but came to my attention. We have some paving that needs to be addressed. We awarded the bid to Cherokee Landscaping back in August for paving at \$94/ton; part of the verbiage in that contract allows us to continue to utilize that contract and the pricing can be adjusted accordingly to the increase in asphalt pricing that Cherokee Co.

Landscaping has incurred. Mr. Brown's increase in pricing has gone up \$16/ton. I am asking council to authorize me to continue this contract with Cherokee Landscaping with the increase in asphalt pricing at a price of \$110/ton. **[Quay Little made the motion to allow Administrator Bratton to continue the contract with Cherokee Landscaping for the increased price of \$110/ton for asphalt. David Smith seconded and council voted in favor.]** Councilman Mike Fowlkes asked Steve to make available to council a list of the roads to be paved.

Administrator Steve Bratton gave council an update on his proposed 22/23 FYB. Finance Director Howell, Merv and myself have met with all the Dept. Heads since early March, 2022, and heard their requests. I plan to have 1st Reading at the meeting of 5/16/22. The proposed budget is up \$1.7 million from last year. Currently, there is no salary increase included. There is a 1% increase to retirement for regular employees, it went from \$16.56 to \$17.56; and for police retirement from \$19.24 to \$20.24 which will cost an additional \$182,000; health insurance increased across the board for all state & local governments by 18.1% which is all being passed on to the employers & none to the employees. Load factor which is based on our claims experience is an additional 7.6% increase which will be added so our total health insurance will go up 25.7% for a cost of \$288,000/yr. That load factor also implies to the employee coverage premiums but I have absorbed that in our budget for a cost of \$20,000. The only new position we created is the Criminal Investigator for the Solicitor's Office. Our biggest increase is in fuel which is up \$177,000. Last year we were paying \$1.98/gallon and now we are paying \$3.33/gallon; diesel was \$2.09/gallon and now it is \$4.33/gallon making the diesel cost up \$192,000 and those two together is \$377,000 up from last year. Before we do anything, we are down \$370,000 for those two; plus, we are down another \$470,000 for health insurance and retirement. Other things included in this budget: food contract at the Detention Center is up \$36,000; health contract at the Detention Center is up \$45,000; pipe expense for DPW for normal driveways, etc. is up and I increased the budget \$15,000 to cover that; heavy equipment maintenance – I increased the budget by \$55,000 to cover that. We have a bid out now for gravel and they have already told us they would not honor the old price but that their price will be going up and I increased the budget for gravel by \$25,000; yard waste disposal – increased budget to \$30,000 and that might not even touch their increase with the amount of yard waste that is being brought in. Again, there are no salary increases included in this budget right now. I'm hearing that other counties & cities are giving a 3% increase in salaries. 3% across the board will cost us \$447,783. Last year you gave a flat rate of 75 cent per hour/per employee and that price now will be between \$500,00 - \$600,000; if you drop that down to 50 cents per hour/employee, you will be at the same number if you were to give a 3% raise. You are going to begin the discussions on zoning and you have a workshop planned for Monday, 5/23/22 @ 5:30 pm. There is no cost in this budget for that but I think the estimated cost for that will be around \$250,000 to do a full-blown study & implementation of zoning for our county which that figure is not currently in this budget. GOOD NEWS...our revenues are holding up; this is re-assessment year; the amount of growth that we can capture is significant; value of property is very high that it is really driving the value of our milage up which is up above \$200,000/mill which is good news from our standpoint. Currently, we are out of balance by \$186,000. We have numerous people asking for new positions in their departments. DPW Chairman McDaniel & his committee spoke with Scott Griffith regarding his needs for

more help and none of that was put in this budget. That is something we need to address. I am proposing in this budget that we take a look at and adjust building permit costs. They haven't been adjusted in many years. Also, our ticket fee charged to businesses at our landfill is \$25/ton and that has not been addressed in at least 12 years, so I am looking at increasing that as well. I will check with what our surrounding counties are charging. Councilman Smith asked Steve to be sure and get council a copy of the proposed budget so they will have an opportunity to study it before the next meeting. Steve replied he would, but I can assure you I will not have it totally ironed out by 1st Reading, but we will before 3rd Reading. I haven't received the new state local aid figures yet so there will be many changes. Quay Little asked about the ambulance service? Steve replied I have that in the budget at \$1.3 million. I plan to go out for bid sometime in June, 22. We will only incur half of that expense this year.

Asst. Admin. Merv Bishop had no report.

Attorney Joe Mathis had no report.

Chairman Spencer made the motion to appoint Ms. Robyn Hill to serve a term on the Upstate Workforce Board in the Private Sector position. David Smith seconded and council voted in favor.

Chairman Spencer reminded council for the Workshop scheduled for Monday, 5/23/22, 5:30 pm in Council Chambers for the introduction & discussion of preliminary zoning for Cherokee County.

As there was no other business to come before council at this time, Chairman Spencer adjourned the meeting at 5:25 PM.

APPROVED: 5/16/22

BY ITS CHAIR: Tim Spencer

Respectfully submitted,

Doris F. Pearson, Master Clerk to Council