

DATE: 6/14/22 FILE NO: DATE547
TO: Cherokee County Council
SUBJECT: Minutes of PH & Regular Meeting, 6/13/22

There was a PH & Regular Meeting of County Council, 6/13/22 at 5 PM in Council Chambers. Chairman Tim Spencer presided with Tracy McDaniel leading in prayer. All council members were present along with Administrator Bratton, Asst. Admin. Merv Bishop, Attorney Joe Mathis and Master Clerk Doris Pearson. The news media was informed by agenda and it was posted in accordance with the SCFOIA. One news media was present. There were 11 visitors.

Councilman Lyman Dawkins made the motion to adopt the agenda of the PH & Regular Meeting of Monday, 6/13/22 as received and amended by removing under No. 8 Ordinance No. 2022-20. Tracy McDaniel seconded and council voted in favor.

Councilman Mike Lyman Dawkins made the motion to approve the minutes of the Regular Meeting of Monday, 6/6/22 as received. Mike Fowlkes seconded and council voted in favor.

Councilman Mike Fowlkes made the motion to approve the claims for Cherokee County in the amount of \$430,665.89. Tracy McDaniel seconded and council voted in favor.

Chairman Tim Spencer opened the public hearing pursuant to Section 4-9-130, Code of Laws of SC, 1976, on the proposed ordinances adopting the operating budgets for the period of 7/1/22 through 6/30/23 for the following: Cherokee County General Fund, Grassy Pond Fire District, Cherokee Creek Fire District, Corinth Fire District, Buffalo Fire District, CKC Fire District, Antioch Fire District, The Gaffney Fire Protection District, Blacksburg Fire District, Goucher/White Plains Fire District and DMW Fire District. Those requesting to speak were: Captain Ronnie Painter, Lt. Brandon Dorsett, Sheriff Mueller & Dick Lavender.

Captain Ronnie Painter stated we appreciate council putting in a 3% across the board raise for the FYB 22/23 for all county employees but I would like to ask you to please consider giving a 6% across the board raise for all county employees and to add the 96 cents/hr. raise to all Sheriff Officers. A few years back council gave the newly hired deputies that completed their academy training a 96 cent/hr. raise but did not give it to the rest of the Sheriff Officers and that brought them up to making almost as much as we do. That's not fair. Times have changed and it is more dangerous than it used to be. 50% of the people out there carry guns; there is not respect for law enforcement officers anymore. You tell us you appreciate us but show us your appreciation and give us this 6% raise. Chairman Spencer replied that all law enforcement officers are appreciated by this council and we will take this request under consideration.

Lt. Brandon Dorsett replied that at the last council meeting he passed out a packet to each council member requesting for the 6% raise consideration for the FYB 22/23. We do appreciate the proposed 3% but we are asking that you please consider the 6% across the board raise for all county employees.

Sheriff Steve Mueller stated for the past 12 years, I have been coming before council requesting more pay for our law enforcement officers & all county employees to at least keep up in line with our surrounding counties. It's hard for me to keep officers when they can make more going to another county. When school starts back, I will need about 4 new RSO; our force will need to be increased to respond to the growth we are having in our county. Look at the pay scale you did a few years back and try to fix our pay so we can keep our officers/employees. Councilman Quay Little replied I truly appreciate all you & our staff does but we are dealing with the taxpayer's money and we are their stewards. A pay raise is a tremendous amount of our budget. We have to balance the budget. I'm watching the numbers and trying to see what we can do to give our employees more. I'll do everything I can to make sure you have the tools and the pay to perform your duties. Councilman David Smith asked Sheriff Mueller how long does it take to train your officers for RSO? Sheriff replied 12 weeks. I don't like to put new hires in that position; I like for them to have some experience in the field first. Councilman Lyman Dawkins replied the RSO at Draytonville would only be there about 1/4th of the day and then he had to go cover another school. How can they keep our schools safe when they are not there all day long while the students are? I just want to remind you that not only are we considering the 3% raise but council is also absorbing the increase in the employee portion of the health insurance and retirement. If we passed that increase onto the employee, it would eat up the raise plus more.

Petitioner Anthony Wilson also was present to speak on the FYB 22/23. He asked council to consider giving more of a raise. We need help in raising our kids. Your county employees are very loyal and that should count for something. We have a lot of complaints from people and no matter how hard we try; it seems we can't do anything right. It seems to me that you are giving money away to the school district by giving them the 50/50 split. I'm a Class A Driver and a guy can get hired as a bumper off the street and he can come in making more than me, is that fair? Thank you for paying the increase in our insurance & retirement, I didn't know that. Councilman Lyman Dawkins replied we realize we are behind in our pay scale and employees feel what we give is a drop in the bucket but just want to let you know that we are loyal to our position as well and we try to do what we feel is best for our county employees and for our tax payers. Anthony stated I appreciate the 3% but that is not fair across the board for those who make more, they get much more of a raise. That's not being fair in my opinion.

Councilman Mike Fowlkes replied I've been watching the numbers and I'm asking Admin. tonight what does 4% cost us? Admin. Bratton replied around \$150,000 - \$175,000 more. Mike replied we did the pay scale several years back and then we got away from it. That pay scale was meant to help us move forward with salaries and help us pay our employees so they would be willing to stay and not leave for more money. Chairman Spencer asked how much would 6% across the board cost us? Steve replied roughly \$1 million. Quay Little replied we have roughly 2 more weeks before we finalize the budget and I will assure you, we will do what we can. David Smith asked how much can we increase our tax milage? Steve replied up to 10.4% which will be \$2 million. The Consumer Price Index (CPI) this year has increased due to growth & inflation. Tracy McDaniel replied our people can't put gas in their vehicles & buy groceries due to inflation and you're talking about going up 10.4 mils. They can't afford that. David replied next year we will be limited on how much we can raise taxes.

Dick Lavender asked does anyone know how much it will cost for you to refurbish ACE Hardware, Alma School, BRE and build the Animal Shelter? Admin. Bratton replied Alma Project is not in the budget for this year. ACE will cost around \$2 million; Animal Shelter will cost around \$4 million; and BRE around \$6 to 7 million. We have the funds in the bank from when council did the bond in Aug., 2021 for \$11 million and we also have funds from the American Rescue Fund. We are out of balance for the FYB 22/23 \$990,000 at this time.

Chairman Tim Spencer closed the discussion on the Public Hearing.

Councilman Quay Little made the motion to adopt the 2nd Reading of Ordinance No. 2022-15 to amend the Agreement for Development for Joint County Industrial Park by & between Spartanburg & Cherokee Counties, SC, so as to include additional property in Spartanburg Co. as part of the Joint County Industrial Park and other matters relating thereto. (INGRAM MICRO, INC.; DUNCAN, LP; GREER SOUTH CAROLINA NECKNELL INVESTORS, LLC; ABNER REED INDUSTRIAL OWNER, LLC; BLACK ARROW PROPERTIES, LLC; ATLAS AT IPG, LLC). Lyman Dawkins seconded and council voted in favor.

Councilman Quay Little made the motion to adopt the 2nd Reading of Ordinance No. 2022-19 authorizing the execution & delivery of a Fee in Lieu of Tax Agreement by & between Cherokee Co., SC and PROJECT FRANCIS with respect to certain economic development property in the county, whereby such property will be subject to certain payments in lieu of taxes, and including the creation of a Joint County Industrial & Business Park with an adjacent county and the provision of Certain Special Source Credits; and other matters related thereto. Mike Fowlkes seconded and council voted in favor.

2nd Reading of Ordinance No. 2022-20 authorizing the execution & delivery of a FILOT Agreement by & between Cherokee Co., SC and PROJECT FLOW with respect to certain economic development property in the county, whereby such property will be subject to certain payment in lieu of taxes, and including the creation of a Joint County Industrial & Business Park with an adjacent county and the provision of Certain Special Source Credits; and other matters related thereto was taken off the agenda for action tonight.

Councilman Lyman Dawkins made the motion to change the Regular Meeting scheduled for Monday, 8/8/22, 5 PM to Monday, 8/15/22, 5 PM. David Smith seconded and council voted in favor.

Administrator Steve Bratton reported on Bid 2022-15 Sand, Stone & Gravel. Only one bid was received 6/6/22 and it was from Reeves Construction. We have reviewed it and everything seems to be in order and the prices quoted will be good for 1 year. **[Councilman Tracy McDaniel made the motion to award Bid No. 2022-15 for Sand, Stone & Gravel to Reeves Construction as received. Lyman Dawkins seconded and council voted in favor.]**

Administrator Steve Bratton reported that the Lime St. Splash Pad in Blacksburg was opened Sat., 6/11/22, 10:30 am and it was a huge success. Hopefully, we will be opening the one at Midway Complex soon.

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Asst. Admin. Merv Bishop had no report.

Attorney Joe Mathis had no report.

Chairman Spencer reminded council that we will meet again Monday, 6/27/22 @ 5 PM.

As there was no other business to come before council at this time, Chairman Spencer adjourned the meeting at 5:58 PM.

APPROVED: 6/27/22

BY ITS CHAIR: Tim Spencer

Respectfully submitted,

Doris F. Pearson, Master Clerk to Council