

DATE: 6/13/23 FILE NO: DATE578
TO: Cherokee County Council
SUBJECT: Minutes of PH & Regular Meeting 6/12/23

There was a Public Hearing & Regular Meeting of County Council Monday, 6/12/23, 5 PM in Council Chambers. Chairman Spencer presided with David Smith leading in prayer. All council members were present along with Administrator Steve 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. Two news media were present. There was 10+ visitors.

Councilman Tracy McDaniel made the motion to adopt the agenda of the Public Hearing & Regular Meeting of 6/12/23 as received and posted in accordance with the SCFOIA. Quay Little seconded and council voted in favor.

Councilman Lyman Dawkins made the motion to approve the minutes of the Regular Meeting of 5/15/23 and Public Hearing & Regular Meeting of 6/5/23 as received. David Smith seconded, and council voted in favor.

Councilman Tracy McDaniel made the motion to pay the claims for Cherokee County in the amount of \$127,974.23 as received. Lyman Dawkins seconded, and council voted in favor.

Chairman Spencer opened the public hearing pursuant to Section 4-9-130, Code of Laws of SC, 196, regarding the proposed Ordinances adopting Operating Budgets for the period of July 1, 2023 through June 30, 2024, for the Cherokee Co. 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. No one was present to speak, and the public hearing was closed.

Councilman Quay Little made the motion to adopt 3rd Reading of Ordinance No. 2023-03 adopting a budget for the County of Cherokee and to provide for the levying of taxes and fees for county purposes for the Fiscal Year beginning 7/1/23 and ending 6/30/24. David Smith seconded. Councilman Bill Blanton stated he has received several calls & emails from people on our proposed budget and I have studied it very hard. Steve gave us options when he presented the being out of balance by \$1.4MM as to how and balance it. He listed a Solid Waste Collection User Fee of \$10/month = \$120/yr. to be included on residential property tax bills; he listed to increase millage by enough to cover the deficit; use ARP monies; reduce expenditures listed in the budget; and Quay suggested to use our LOST Funds. We talked about doing away with curbside collection and go to convenient centers which I feel would create a world of problems. Therefore, **[[Councilman Bill Blanton made an amendment to the stated motion to balance the FY 23/24 Proposed Budget by implementing a Solid Waste Collection User Fee of \$10/month to be included on residential property tax bills. David Smith seconded.]]** Quay Little stated at this time due to economic uncertainties, I cannot vote for a fee to balance the budget. We have money that we have not used in LOST Funds. Based on the school board

raising taxes and the City raising taxes, I feel we can go one year without burdening the county with another tax increase and use the fund balance and allow it to see where it falls. The \$10 SWC fee will generate \$1.1 million extra. Administrator Bratton replied, currently property taxes generate only half of the county's operating expenditures; revenues from other sources fund SWC, Sheriff Office, Detention Office, R&B, and many of our largest depts. That is already how we are funding our budget for the most part. We have 23,109 single family residential units in the county by what no. you want to use as a SWC fee. Total cost to operate the SWC Dept. is \$2,475,500 + and additional \$300,000 for capital. We budgeted \$137,000 for 2100 trash cans in this budget/year. Then, we have another \$224,000 for a new SWC Trash Truck. Councilman Smith stated he is in favor of the \$10 SWC fee which would still make us about \$150,000 short. Steve replied if you do the \$10/month SWC Fee, you will be able to purchase the new SWC Trash truck out of the fee monies and still be able to operate the department, but the capital would still be under the budget. Quay Little stated council needs to remember, that the milage has already been set on this and we are down on the entire budget \$1.4 million. We're not down \$2.8 million so this fee would be putting more money in our revenues that needed for the budget. Chair Spencer stated he cannot vote for the SWC fee either. If we are going to raise taxes or implement a fee, we need to give it back to our employees. They do a great job, and we need to show them how much we appreciate them. Steve replied if you do the SWC Fee, you will make enough to pay the shortfall of \$1.4 million on the proposed budget and then you can give the remainder of about \$1.1 million toward the employees. Lyman Dawkins replied we keep putting off and we need to address the long-term problem; this issue will be back again next year if we don't do something to increase our revenues. Quay replied we have balanced the budget with fund balance many years and it want hurt us to do it one more year to see where we stand with LOST Funds; let's hold tight, see what our growth does. How can we be putting that money in a LOST account if we are using it all in the budget? Steve replied, it is in the budget. The reason is we have had funds in other accounts is that we never were reimbursed the general fund bank account for any money, so it is all compiled. That money has always been part of this budget. Annual revenue from LOST is included in your budget. Elliott Hughes stated he agrees with Quay; we need to wait one more year before we think about implementing a fee. Tracy McDaniel stated that Cherokee Co. is very low compared to other counties as far as taxation. We are the only county in the state that offers free curbside pickup. We have not been able to maintain our buildings throughout the county; nor upkeep our equipment because we did not want to raise taxes. Borrowing from fund balance is deficit spending and not good sound practice. We suffer all around with lack of recreation facilities and other services. When are we going to stop this and do what is necessary to move our county forward. Quay Little stated I don't think it is fair to raise taxes when inflation has gone up 12% and we don't have to. **[Chairman Spencer stated we have a motion & second on the floor on the amended motion to balance the proposed FYB 23/24 by implementing a \$10/month Solid Waste Collection Fee to be included on residential property tax bill. Voting in favor: Bill Blanton, Tracy McDaniel, Lyman Dawkins & David Smith. Opposed: Tim Spencer, Quay Little & Elliott Hughes. Motion carried 4 to 3.]**

Administrator Steve Bratton reported that on the FYB 23/24 for the General Fund Budget & Capital Budget we made a few changes: we had a total of approximately \$15,310.89 in operating expenses in the general fund that came from corrections for the retirement calculations in our excel sheet; on the capital side we had to increase the expenditures by \$96,751.92; we purchased a compactor that we purchased several years ago and the last payment is higher than the others and we had to increase it by \$23,851.92; the walk-in cooler at the Detention Center needs to be replaced at a cost of \$70,000; building inspections for a lab-top & computer monitor at a cost of \$2900. All these changes come to a total of \$96,751.92. **[Attorney Mathis replied that you can now vote on the original motion made by Quay Little & seconded by David Smith. Quay Little rescinded his motion.] [Councilman Bill Blanton made the motion to adopt 3rd Reading of Ordinance No. 2023-03 adopting a budget for the County of Cherokee and to provide for the levying of taxes & fees for county purposes for the Fiscal Year beginning 7/1/23 and ending 6/30/24 with the amendments of implementing the SWC Fee of \$10/month and the changes to the budget just given to you by Administrator Bratton. David Smith seconded. Voting in favor: Bill Blanton, Tracy McDaniel, Lyman Dawkins & David Smith. Opposed: Tim Spencer, Quay Little and Elliott Hughes. Motion carried 4 in favor 3 opposed.]**

Chairman Spencer presented the 3rd Reading of Ordinances adopting budgets proposed by the County Administrator containing estimates of proposed revenues and expenditures by the County of Cherokee and to provide for the proposals for the Fiscal Year beginning 7/1/23 and ending 6/30/24 for the following fire departments:

Councilman Tracy McDaniel made the motion to adopt 3rd Reading of Ordinance No. 2023-04 Antioch Volunteer Fire Dept. as presented. David Smith seconded, and council voted in favor.

Councilman David Smith made the motion to adopt 3rd Reading of Ordinance No. 2023-05 Buffalo Volunteer Fire Dept. as presented. Tracy McDaniel seconded, and council voted in favor.

Councilman Lyman Dawkins made the motion to adopt 3rd Reading of Ordinance No. 2023-06 Cherokee Creek VFD as presented. Tracy McDaniel seconded, and council voted in favor.

Councilman Tracy McDaniel made the motion to adopt 3rd Reading of Ordinance No. 2023-07 CKC VFD as presented. David Smith seconded, and council voted in favor.

Councilman Elliott Hughes made the motion to adopt 3rd Reading of Ordinance No. 2023-08 Corinth VFD as presented. Lyman Dawkins seconded, and council voted in favor.

Councilman Lyman Dawkins made the motion to adopt 3rd Reading of Ordinance No. 2023-09 Gaffney Fire Protection. Bill Blanton seconded, and council voted in favor.

Councilman Bill Blanton made the motion to adopt 3rd Reading of Ordinance No. 2023-10 Grassy Pond VFD as presented. Lyman Dawkins seconded, and council voted in favor.

Councilman Elliott Hughes made the motion to adopt 3rd Reading of Ordinance No. 2023-11 Goucher/White Plains VFD as presented. David Smith seconded, and council voted in favor.

Councilman David Smith made the motion to adopt 3rd Reading of Ordinance No. 2023-12 Draytonville/McKown's Mountain/Wilkinsville (DMW) VFD as presented. Elliott Hughes seconded, and council voted in favor.

Councilman Tracy McDaniel made the motion to adopt 3rd Reading of Ordinance No. 2023-13 Blacksburg Fire District as presented. Lyman Dawkins seconded, and council voted in favor.

Councilman Lyman Dawkins made the motion to adopt 2nd Reading of Ordinance No. 2023-14 authorizing the execution & delivery of an amended and restated Fee in Lieu of Tax Agreement by & between Cherokee County, SC and CC-85 Landco Owner, LLC with respect to certain economic development property in the county, whereby such property will be subject to certain Special Source Credits and will be designated as being in a Multi-County Industrial & Business Park; and other matters related thereto. David Smith seconded, and council voted in favor.

Councilman David Smith made the motion to adopt 2nd Reading of Ordinance No. 2023-15 authorizing the execution & delivery of an amended and restated Fee in Lieu of Tax Agreement by & between Cherokee County, SC and CC-85 2A Owner, LLC with respect to certain economic development property in the county, whereby such property will be subject to certain payments in Lieu of Taxes, including the provision of Certain Special Source Credits and will be designated as being in a Multi-County Industrial & Business Park; and other matters related thereto. Lyman Dawkins seconded, and council voted in favor.

Administrator Steve Bratton thanked council for his opportunity to serve as County Administrator for the past 5 years. The county has completed several projects and have several more moving forward. You have dedicated employees throughout the county that work hard and work well to serve the citizens here; you also have great Dept. Supervisors and Elected Officials that strive to make Cherokee Co. a better place to live. It has been an honor for me to have the opportunity to serve as your County Administrator.

Asst. Admin. Merv Bishop asked council permission to list about 18 items on govdeals.com. We have vehicles from the VA Office, TAO, & Sheriff Office; the mobile unit at Alma School; and stuff at DPW & Recycling that we need to get rid of. **[Tracy McDaniel made the motion to allow Asst. Admin. to list these 18 items on govdeals.com. David Smith seconded, and council voted in favor.]**

Councilman Bill Blanton asked Administration where are we on the REA property? Asst. Admin. Merv Bishop stated that DP3 Architects will give an update next month to council.

As there was no other business to come before council at this time, Chairman Spencer adjourned the meeting at 6:10 PM.

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APPROVED: 7/10/23

BY ITS CHAIR: Tim Spencer

Respectfully submitted,

Doris F. Pearson, Master Clerk to Council