

DATE: 5/19/26 FILE NO: DATE675

TO: Cherokee County Council

SUBJECT: Minutes of Regular Meeting, 5/18/26

There was a Regular Meeting of County Council Monday, 5/18/26, 5 PM in Council Chambers. Chairman Tim Spencer presided with David Smith leading in prayer. All council members were present with Billy Blanton being on phone call. Admin. Bishop, Asst. Admin. Bradley, 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 along with 30+ visitors.

Councilman Elliott Hughes made the motion to adopt the agenda as received and posted in accordance with the SCFOIA and as amended taking off Item 10 – Award Recommendations for RFP 2026-24. Donnie Hardin seconded and council voted in favor.

Councilman Donnie Hardin made the motion to approve the minutes of the Regular Meeting of 5/4/26 as received. David Smith seconded and council voted in favor.

Councilman David Smith made the motion to pay the claims for Cherokee County in the amount of \$821,126.98 as received. Donnie Hardin seconded and council voted in favor.

Administrator Merv Bishop read a proclamation for National Emergency Medical Services Week and recognized all present thanking them for their service.

Councilman Donnie Hardin made the motion to adopt a resolution to accept the petition for a referendum from the Grassy Pond Fire Department and to allow Fire Chief Gladden Smoke to present his referendum from the Grassy Pond Fire District requesting a fire tax increase to the Voter Registration Dept. for their certification. David Smith seconded and council voted in favor.

Councilman Donnie Hardin made the motion to adopt 2nd Reading of Ordinance No. 2026-05 to develop a Jointly Owned & Operated Industrial/Business Park in conjunction with Spartanburg County, such Industrial/Business Park to be geographically located in Cherokee County and 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 Co. to provide for the expenses of the park, the percentage of revenue application and the distribution of Fee in Lieu of Ad Valore Taxation; and providing for other matters related (Project Cruiser). Peter Wilkins seconded and council voted in favor.

Councilman David Smith made the motion to adopt 2nd Reading of Ordinance No. 2026-06 authorizing the Execution & Delivery of a Fee in Lieu of Tax Agreement by & between Cherokee County, SC and Project Cruiser, the code name for a Delaware Limited Liability Company 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 other matters related thereto. Donnie Hardin seconded and council voted in favor.

Councilman Donnie Hardin made the motion to adopt 2nd Reading of Ordinance No. 2026-27 ordering a referendum to determine whether the SC Dept. of Revenue may issue temporary permits to allow for the possession, sale & consumption of alcoholic liquors by the drink to bona fide nonprofit organizations and business establishments authorized to be licensed for consumption on-premises sales and to allow the sale of beer and wine at permitted off-premises locations without regard to the days or hours of sales. Peter Wilkins seconded and council voted in favor with David Smith opposing. Motion carried 6 to 1.

Councilman Elliott Hughes made the motion to adopt 1st Reading of Ordinance No. 2026-09 to amend the agreement for Development of a 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. (SC Spartanburg Zimmerman I, LLC and RK Final Spartanburg., LLC). Peter Wilkins seconded and council voted in favor.

Councilman Donnie Hardin made the motion to adopt 1st Reading of Ordinance No. 2026-10 authorizing the execution & delivery of a Joinder Agreement to provide for the addition of Aerowerks Real Estate Inc. as a sponsor affiliate to the Infrastructure Credit Agreement between Cherokee Co., SC and Aeroworks Corp. of America, to amend the investment period and to address other matters related thereto. David Smith seconded and council voted in favor.

Administrator Merv Bishop stated that Administration & Finance have worked diligently to prepare a balanced & fiscally responsible budget based on feedback from Tuesday night's meeting that maintains essential county services while remaining mindful of the financial impact on our citizens. This proposed budget reflects a conservative approach to county operations & prioritizes public safety, infrastructure, and operational sustainability. Throughout the budget process, efforts were made to identify cost-saving measures, reduce expenditures where practical and ensure responsible stewardship of taxpayer funds while continuing to meet the needs of the County. The Capital Fund budget is balanced at \$4,067,522.80. The E911 Tariff Fund is balanced at \$722,106. The Operating Budget is balanced at \$42,258,670.27 with no tax increase and no funds from general fund to help balance the budget. This year's budget does include a Solid Waste Disposal Fund budget (with User Fee) balanced at \$6,268,080. This reflects a proposed \$20.00/month fee associated with the collection and disposal of solid waste and is intended to offset the increasing operational costs related to providing this service countywide.

Councilman Donnie Hardin made the motion to adopt 1st Reading of Ordinance No. 2026-11 to adopt, charge and collect a User Fee for Disposal of Solid Waste for Cherokee Co., SC and other matters related thereto. David Smith seconded and council voted in favor with Elliott Hughes & Teresa Bonner opposing. Motion carried 5 to 2.

Councilman David Smith made the motion to adopt 1st Reading of Ordinance No. 2026-12 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 7/1/26 and ending 6/30/27 and declaring that the same shall

constitute the budget of the County of Cherokee for each fiscal year. Donnie Hardin seconded and council voted in favor with Elliott Hughes & Teresa Bonner opposing. Motion carried 5 to 2.

Chairman Spencer presented the 1st Reading of Ordinances adopting a budget proposed by the County Administrator containing estimates of proposed revenues and expenditures by the County of Cherokee to provide for the proposals for the fiscal year beginning 7/1/26 and ending 6/30/27 and declaring that the same shall constitute the budget of the following Volunteer Fire Departments for such fiscal year:

Ordinance No. 2026-13 for DMW (Draytonville, Mckowns Mountain & Wilkinsville) VFD: Councilman Elliott Hughes made the motion to adopt 1st Reading as presented. David Smith seconded and council voted in favor.

Ordinance No. 2026-14 for Grassy Pond VFD: Councilman Billy Blanton made the motion to adopt 1st Reading as presented. Donnie Hardin seconded and council voted in favor.

Ordinance No. 2026-15 Buffalo VFD: Councilman David Smith made the motion to adopt 1st Reading as presented. Peter Wilins seconded and council voted in favor.

Ordinance No. 2026-16 Corinth VFD: Councilman Elliott Hughes made the motion to adopt 1st Reading as presented. David Smith seconded and council voted in favor.

Ordinance No. 2026-18 Antioch VFD: Councilman Peter Wilkins made the motion to adopt 1st Reading as presented. David Smith seconded and council voted in favor.

Ordinance No. 2026-19 Cherokee Creek VFD: Councilman Billy Blanton made the motion to adopt 1st Reading as presented. Donnie Hardin seconded and council voted in favor.

Ordinance No. 2026-20 Goucher VFD: Councilman Elliott Hughes made the motion to adopt 1st Reading as presented. David Smith seconded and council voted in favor.

Ordinance No. 2026-21 Blacksburg Fire Dept: Councilman Peter Wilkins made the motion to adopt 1st Reading as presented. David Smith seconded and council voted in favor.

Ordinance No. 2026-22 CKC VFD: Councilman Peter Wilkins made the motion to adopt 1st Reading as presented. David Smith seconded and council voted in favor.

Councilman Billy Blanton made the motion to adopt 1st Reading of Ordinance No. 2026-17 levying an Ad Valorem Tax for the operation and maintenance of the Gaffney Fire Protection Area for the Calendar Year 2026/27. Donnie Hardin seconded and council voted in favor.

Administrator Merv Bishop stated on behalf of County Administration & County Council extended sincere congratulations to each county graduate for their achievement of years of hard work, dedication and perseverance. We encourage you to pursue your goals with determination & integrity.

We wish you all continued success and happiness in all your future endeavors. Congratulations to Class of 2026 to Gaffney High School Graduates, Blacksburg High School Graduates and SCC/CCC Graduates.

Asst. Admin. Kristy Bradley had no report at this time.

Councilman David Smith made the motion to go into Executive Session at 5:27 PM for two matters: 1) pursuant to Section 30-4-70(a)(5) discussion of matters relating to the proposed location, expansion, or the provision of services encouraging location or expansion of industries or other businesses in the area served by Cherokee County specifically Project Liberty and other matters; and 2) pursuant to Section 30-4-70(a)(1) discussion of a personnel matter regarding employment specifically to the Administration Dept. Peter Wilkins seconded and council voted in favor.

Councilman David Smith had to leave at 6:05 PM.

Councilman Peter Wilkins made the motion to come out of Executive Session at 6:07 PM. Donnie Hardin seconded and council voted in favor. Attorney Mathis reported that no vote or action was taken during Executive Session.

Chairman Tim Spencer appointed Chris Lemaster, Sr. to serve on the Grassy Pond Fire District. Elliott Hughes seconded and council voted in favor.

As there was no other business to come before council at this time, Chairman Spencer adjourned the meeting at 6:09 PM.

APPROVED: 6/1/26

Respectfully submitted,

BY ITS CHAIR: Tim Spencer

Doris F. Pearson, Master Clerk to Council