

Regular Pickens County Council Meeting

January 6, 2020

6:34 PM

County Council met in regular session, in the Auditorium of the County Administration Facility, with Chairman Roy Costner presiding. Agendas, bearing date, time, and location of meeting were mailed to members of council and local news media on December 31, 2019.

Council Members in Attendance:

Roy Costner, Chairman

Chris Bowers, Vice Chairman

Wes Hendricks, Vice Chairman Pro-Tem

Trey Whitehurst

Ensley Feemster

Carl Hudson (absent)

Staff in Attendance:

Ken Roper, County Acting Administrator

Meagan Bradford, Clerk to Council

Les Hendricks, Contract County Attorney

WELCOME AND CALL TO ORDER:

Chairman Roy Costner called the meeting of January 6, 2020 to order and welcomed those in attendance. Chairman Roy Costner led the Invocation and Pledge of Allegiance. The University Singers, with Southern Wesleyan University, sang the National Anthem.

PUBLIC FORUM:

Chairman Roy Costner opened the Public Forum and requested the Clerk to call upon the citizens signed up to speak. The Clerk called on the following speaker:

1. John Bednar: Mr. Bednar stated he is a retired professor from Clemson University. He stated he is running for the House of Representatives seat in Washington for District 3 in the November Election, and he knows he will not be elected. He stated he is doing this for a symbolic reason. Mr. Bednar stated he believes our national debt has gone through the roof. He stated he has children, and grandchildren, and they are going to be paying in the coming years. He stated he is trying to draw attention to this by running for office. Mr. Bednar stated he is running independent with a budget of \$0. He stated this is why he will not be elected. In order to get his name on the ballot, Mr. Bednar stated he needs to have a petition with 10,000 signatures. He stated he started a couple of weeks ago and currently has 107 signatures. He stated anyone at the meeting who may be interested in signing his petition, who is a registered voter in District 3, he is happy to wait around for anyone to sign. Mr. Bednar stated he would like feedback on what citizens expect from their elected official in Washington.
2. Allan Quinn: Mr. Quinn stated he is there to speak regarding the lack of Economic Development in Pickens County. Mr. Quinn stated he has tried, for over three years, to convince Council that we have a problem here compared to the other five counties in Appalachian Council of Government. He stated some members of Council are board members on the ACOG Board. Mr. Quinn stated in the last six months, he feels he had to change strategies and start addressing the problem at the Council meetings each month. He stated he hopes this has convinced Council and the Acting County Administrator that we have a serious problem. He stated he believes half of

Council does not think we have a problem, and the other half continue to give reasons that you have been giving by the Commerce Park. He stated some of the reasons that Council has given are:

1. Pickens County land is “too hilly.”
2. Interstate 85 does not come through Pickens County.
3. We do not have major highways through Pickens County.
4. Land is too expensive in Pickens County.
5. Cannot get any more exits approved on Highway 123 between Easley & Clemson
6. The previous Council did not join Upstate Alliance because they were not helping us. This council rejoined at \$50,000 a year.
7. Pickens County does not have the right infrastructure (sewer and water).
8. The train doesn’t stop here anymore.

Mr. Quinn these are the reasons he has been given, and he has determined these are not reasons, but excuses. After more discussion, he stated 65% of people living in Pickens County commute to other counties for work. He stated this is almost double the number of surrounding counties. He stated for the next couple of months, he will continue coming back to address council with facts. He stated most of Council only has less than a year on their term. Mr. Quinn stated he hopes they take proactive action.

3. Steve Haynie: Mr. Haynie stated he would like to thank Mr. Roper with providing him with information that he used at this evening’s delegation meeting. He stated he pointed out to the delegation that after the county gets finished spending money on state expenses, versus what we get in local government funds, which the county spent over \$1.8 million dollars in county taxes to take care of state government. He stated the actual number is \$1,835,360. Mr. Haynie stated he pointed out that they are supposed to represent their constituents here in the County, so they should be fighting for us and give us that money so we can use for other things like sewer lines, landfills, etc. Mr. Haynie stated the county could use that money and put it at better use rather than paying for state government. He stated he let the delegation and audience know this at the meeting.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES:

Chairman Roy Costner called for a motion to approve the following minutes as presented:

- December 16, 2019
 - Motion was made by Councilman Ensley Feemster, seconded by Councilman Trey Whitehurst and carried unanimously (5-0).

ADMINISTRATOR’S REPORT:

Courthouse

Mr. Roper stated he would like to update Council on an incident that happened last month at the Pickens County Courthouse. He stated a water pipe burst in the attack, and it impacted all three floors of the Courthouse. He advised he wanted to update Council to let them know the Risk Manager, Michael Hayes, was in touch with our insurance and our insurance representative came out to the Courthouse the next day. He stated they accessed the damage and they are accepting the claim. Mr. Roper stated our responsibility will be a \$2,500 deductible to repair the damage. He stated court room operations were not impacted, but our insurance will be accepting the claim.

Litter Control Officer

Mr. Roper stated through a Palmetto Pride grant, Pickens County is extending our litter control efforts. He stated this Council, from the very beginning, has stressed litter control in our beautiful county through initiatives such as “Team Up and Clean Up,” and the “Five on Friday” initiative. He stated we now have a Litter Hotline, and the phone number is 864-898-5256. Mr. Roper stated this hotline is for any citizen to use/call and it will go to voicemail. He stated on the voicemail, the citizen should leave the location of any litter spotted, and the litter officer will coordinate between the Roads and Bridges Crew, our Code Enforcement, and our litter crews to pick it up. He advised the Litter Officer will follow up with the complainant to address the problem. He stated the Litter Officer is paid partially through the grant. Mr. Roper stated they would like for this grant to be put to good use and we are excited about our Litter Control Officer, Chris Carroll, to get underway with this.

Council Goals

Mr. Roper stated Council had a workshop on November 11, 2019 and set goals for 2020. He presented the 6 main goals, and stated two of the goals will be discussed in tonight’s meeting. The first goal is to Maintain Conservative Budget, and the second goal that will be discussed is Establish Sustainable Road Maintenance. He stated these will be discussed later this evening.

Mr. Roper asked if Council had any questions regarding his report.

Vice Chairman Chris Bowers stated he knows that there has been some discussion on opening up a landfill site on Wednesdays. He asked if there were any new updates on this discussion.

Mr. Roper stated they have discussed this internally. He stated last month, during executive session, there was discussion on the County Engineer position. He stated based on the approvals Council gave him, he has offered this position and it has been accepted. Mr. Roper stated Mack Kelley will serve as our County Engineer and Public Works Director. He stated a press release will be out in the coming days. He stated that they decided to wait until he can do an assessment in a couple of weeks. Mr. Roper stated our landfill guys have come back with some data about this, and the best course of action will probably be to open the main center on Wednesdays. He stated he wants to let the new director take a shot at this when he starts in the coming weeks.

COMMITTEE REPORT: None

COUNCIL CORRESPONDENCE:

Chairman Roy Costner announced the following:

- Due to Martin Luther King Holiday on Monday, January 20th, the next Committee of the Whole meeting will be on Tuesday, January 21st, 2020 at 6:00 PM in the Main Conference Room of this facility.
- The next Council Meeting will be on Monday, February 3rd, 2020 at 6:30 PM in this auditorium of this facility.
- Chairman Costner advised that staff is in the process of dates for upcoming Budget Work Sessions. He stated they will probably coincide with Committee of the Whole meetings.

Chairman Roy Costner called for other council correspondence. Seeing no other correspondence, Chairman Roy Costner announced moving to Motion Period and New Business.

MOTION PERIOD AND NEW BUSINESS:

Chairman Roy Costner opened the floor for motion period.

- o Vice Chairman Chris Bowers made a motion to add a personnel matter to Executive Session. Motion was seconded by Councilman Ensley Feemster and carried unanimously (5-0).

Hearing no other items for Motion Period, Chairman Roy Costner closed the floor.

Chairman Roy Costner opened the floor for new business.

Hearing no items for new business, Chairman Roy Costner closed the floor.

UPDATE FROM CLEMSON PAW PARTNERS REGARDING SPAY/NEUTER PROGRAM

Ms. Margaret Thompson, President of Clemson Paw Partners, stated in 2017, she volunteered for the Animal Shelter in Pickens and had an eye opening experience. Ms. Thompson stated that she believed more could be done, so she decided to start her own non-profit. She stated that she talked with a few of her friends, whom are a lawyer, accountant, etc. and people who she knew who had money. Ms. Thompson stated they formed a 501-C3 and they started up everything with no cost. She stated the lawyer did the website, and the accountant did the bookkeeping. She stated that she wanted to focus on a spay and neuter program to reduce the population.

Ms. Thompson stated Clemson Paw Partners mission is *“Clemson Paw Partners is an animal welfare organization that raises funds through the help of local businesses and our community to help save the lives of animals. Funds are used to help homeless animals and those in low income households obtain low-to-no cost spay and neuter services and other necessary medical care treatments. We are also focused on building a foster network, assisting with transport services and providing education of humane animal treatment. We believe that by reducing the problem of companion animal overpopulation in our area and providing assistance to caring animal owners that may not have otherwise been able to afford it, we will reduce the number of animals and euthanasia rates in our surrounding shelters.”*

After more discussion, Ms. Thompson stated she is not at the meeting this evening to ask Council for money. She stated she would actually like to help the County make money. She stated they are sending animals from the Pickens County Animal Shelter to Anderson and Greenville County to be spayed and neutered. Ms. Thompson stated Anderson PAWS has such a nice building because of the money they make off of Pickens County with spayed and neutered pets. She stated that they could easily spay and neuter pets here in Pickens County. She stated she would like to stay in the Central-Clemson area and find a building, or build on land, a spay and neuter clinic. She stated she has spoken with Acting Administrator Roper and they think it is time that Pickens County hires its own veterinarian. After more discussion, Ms. Thompson stated there is a dark side to this business that she does not like. She stated there are people who complain but do not do anything about it. She stated they try to stay away from the negativity and focus on doing that here in Pickens County.

Ms. Thompson stated she is proud of Clemson Paw Partners numbers. She asked the Clerk to pass a copy of this statement to Council. Ms. Thompson stated Council will see that as a non-profit, in 2019, CPP grossed \$55,000. She stated this is a non-profit who has not taken grants, outside funding from government, etc. She stated this money comes from people digging in their back pockets saying they want to help. She stated she is proud of CPP’s program expenses. Ms. Thompson stated they have spent almost \$40,000 on the care of animals. She stated they did not spend money on themselves. She stated this is pure volunteer hard work. She stated for Christmas, she took around 25 people to dinner for helping with Clemson Paw Partners and the money came from her pocket, not out of Clemson Paw Partner’s budget. She stated she believes they should be accountable to their donors. She stated another thing that has helped them out so well is sending thank you cards, rather than a call/text.

After more discussion, Ms. Thompson stated she is talking with people who own land for sale, but it has to stay in the Central-Clemson area. She advised she would like for it to stay in that area because of the growing University, the Economics, etc. She stated if we open a low-cost clinic, not only could we draw from our county, but Oconee County and Anderson County as well. She stated she believes it needs to be visible, and people need to be able to access it easily. Ms. Thompson stated she is not asking Council to build this, she is simply saying there is a need and we need to do something. She stated she would like to see the County furnish a doctor that would work at the Shelter and help with the Clinic. Ms. Thompson advised when doctors come out of veterinarian school, they do not have the money to open up a vet office. Ms. Thompson stated we have a University in this county that has won 3 National Championships, there is no reason why we cannot open a spay and neuter clinic. She stated we have an animal science program at Clemson University, and a Veterinarian Tech Program at Tri-County Technical College. Ms. Thompson stated we could draw a lot from this but it all depends on the area you put this in. She stated she would like to be off of Highway 123, where people can access it easily, or she wouldn't mind being in the Town of Central. She stated we need to stop spending Pickens County Taxpayer's money in Anderson, which is why they have the better facilities than Pickens County.

Vice Chairman Bowers stated he agrees with Ms. Thompson. He stated he just had his animal fixed and drove to Greenville because that was the low-cost option. He stated we do need something like this and he was not familiar with what Clemson Paw Partners was doing. He stated getting a veterinarian on board full time will be the big hurdle but he thinks she is exactly right.

Ms. Thompson stated when she worked for Pickens County Government, and then started two different businesses; it is a different world between Private and the Government. She stated she looks at this as a business stance and she feels it is way past time we do this.

Chairman Costner stated the work that Ms. Thompson has done has been nothing short of extraordinary. He stated he is proud of where we have come with the Animal Shelter, but he agrees that we need to start looking at options on taking the next step. Chairman Costner stated as we enter into the budget process, he hopes that all six councilmen will take this into consideration.

After more discussion, Councilman Trey Whitehurst asked what we are spending from the county's perspective on these animal services. He stated part of this is an offset cost.

Mr. Roper stated he does not know the exact numbers, but what we are spending at Anderson County PAWS in 2019 was in the range of \$75,000. Mr. Roper stated to also think about the personnel time, and the transfers, wear and tear on the vehicles, etc.

Councilman Whitehurst asked how much do veterinarians make when starting their career and getting out of school.

Ms. Thompson stated everything is workable. She stated if you work with a good 501-C3 and we are transparent, then we can solve all those problems. If Pickens County needs a transport, Clemson Paw Partners can come pick them up.

Councilman Whitehurst stated it sounds to him like there is already \$75,000 on the table.

Vice Chairman Chris Bowers asked if every animal we adopt out spayed or neutered.

Mr. Roper stated yes, but to keep in mind that there are animals fostered that may not be old enough to be fixed yet.

Ms. Thompson stated they are presenting the idea this evening and not asking for anything. Ms. Thompson stated she wants to build a good relationship because once you lose that trust; it's hard to get that trust back if you aren't transparent with your organization.

Chairman Costner thanked Ms. Thompson and congratulated her on all of her hard work.

EMPLOYEE INCENTIVE PROGRAM DESCRIPTION

Mr. Roper stated at the Council Workshop, back in November 2019, it was mentioned to begin an Employee Incentive Program, to reward good employees specifically who find ways to saving tax payer dollars. Mr. Roper stated they have discussed this concept for a couple of months now, and they are unveiling the Pinnacle Performer Reward this month. He stated the idea behind calling it the "Pinnacle Performer Reward" is the highest mountain that is located entirely within Pickens County is Pinnacle Mountain. He stated the slogan is "Helping Us Reach New Heights." He stated there are specific guidelines that have been set out. Mr. Roper stated for an overview, any county employee can nominate any other county employee. He stated this is for people showing excellence in their duties and figuring out way to save taxpayers' dollars. Mr. Roper they will name an employee monthly, and they will find different ways to thank them for their work. He stated the twelve monthly winners will be evaluated at the end of the year to see which one has saved the taxpayers' the most money. He stated they will receive the Pinnacle Yearly Reward, and that will come with a 2% merit pay increase. Mr. Roper advised our first reward will be for January 2020, and that reward will be given out the first week in February.

Vice Chairman Chris Bowers asked who the forms will be turned into each month.

Mr. Roper stated the forms will be available in Human Resources Office, and on ESS. He stated the form will be turned into Human Resources each month.

Chairman Roy Costner asked who makes the determination of the winner each month.

Mr. Roper stated it would be good for the Administrator, Director of Human Resources, and one other person he designates on the Committee to determine. Mr. Roper stated he feels HR should be involved, because we are a large enough organization where we do not want to give someone the Pinnacle Award for someone who may have a great idea, but also be on probation for misconduct.

Chairman Costner stated he is very happy we are doing this, and we have great employees who work in Pickens County.

BUDGET CALENDAR FOR 2020-2021 BUDGET CYCLE

Mr. Roper stated this is a common practice in recent years, but he feels it's important as we start to develop the budget for the public and staff to have a good schedule in front of them for transparency purposes. Mr. Roper stated Council can have as many budget work sessions they would like to have, with 24 hour notice. He stated this is a guide, it is definite, but he wanted to give a calendar for staff to work off of.

Pickens County, South Carolina Staff Budget Calendar for Fiscal Year 2020 - 2021

January 10 th 2020	Distribution of budget package sent to Elected and Appointed Officials, Department Heads, Agencies and Fire Districts.
Jan 10 th -Jan 31 st	Budget requests prepared by individual departments; separated by operational and capital improvements.

January 31 st	Departments submit individual budget requests to Finance Department.
February 10 th	Finance Department submits departments' requests to Administrator.
February 21 st	Outside Agencies budget requests are due to Finance Department.
February 10 th – February 28 th	Administrator reviews and meets with departments to discuss budget requests.
March	Finance Director completes preparation of revenue estimates for the new budget year with assistance from Department Heads and County Auditor.
April 6 th	Submission of Administrator's budgetary recommendation to County Council and First Reading of Fiscal Year 2020 – 2021 budget.
April 13 th and/or 20th	Council work session(s) on budget
April 10 th (prior to)	Notice of advertisement of Public Hearing to appropriate media.
May 4th	Public Hearing and Second Reading of budget.
May 11 th and/or 18th	Council work session(s) on budget, as needed
June 15th	Third Reading and adoption of Budget Ordinance.
June 16 th - June 30th	Finance Department prepares account ledgers and payroll information.
July 1 st	Begin new fiscal year with implementation of adopted budget.

Chairman Costner asked when Council would receive their request for the break out percentages.

Mr. Roper stated that will come at the first reading on April 6th.

Chairman Costner asked if we could get this year's percentages as well, to compare.

Mr. Roper stated that will be no problem. He stated we will publicize this calendar so the public is aware as well.

SECOND READING OF AN ORDINANCE NO. 579 TO CERTIFY THE AMERICAN HOUSE SPINNING MILL AS A TEXTILE MILL SITE UNDER THE SOUTH CAROLINA TEXTILES COMMUNITIES REVITALIZATION ACT, AND MATTERS RELATED THERETO.

Chairman Costner asked for a motion to constitute second reading of Ordinance No. 579.

- o Motion was made by Councilman Wes Hendricks, seconded by Vice Chairman Chris Bowers and carried unanimously (5-0).

DISCUSSION OF COUNTY ROAD USER FEE AND ALTERNATIVES

Mr. Roper stated this is the beginning of a conversation; Council had asked staff to come up with different options during the Council Workshop in November. He stated he is going to present Council with six options, and there could be more options but these are the six options that staff can develop. Mr. Roper advised some of these options are not great options, but he feels it is his duty to give all of the options he can think of because ultimately it is Council's decision to make. He stated the Roads and Bridges Director, Michael Clark, and our Finance Director, Ralph Guarino, is here this evening and they have assisted him in this presentation.

Mr. Roper presented Council with several pictures of County Roads, comparing the good roads and the roads that need paving. The roads he presented were: Secona Road, Hood Road, Durham Mill Road, Piper Lane, Rhymes Lane, Breezedale Road, Rices Creek Church Road, Griffin Road, Kennemer Road, and Persimmon Drive. Mr. Roper went into detail on each road.

Mr. Roper presented six options for funding roads with discussion:

- Option 1 – Do nothing; continue at same pace
 - Pave 6 miles per year for a 75+ year life cycle
- Option 2 – Increase User Fee
 - \$20 road user fee generates \$2,200,000 per year for 658 miles of County roads; County retains 75% or \$1,650,000 for roads, bridges and litter crew. 20 year life cycle would cost \$8,225,000 per year. Increase the road user fee to \$100.00 per vehicle.
- Option 3 – Raise Property Taxes
 - Under Act 388, the County would be limited to raising taxes by population and CPI growth. First year would increase millage by 5.0 by using rollback allowance and generate about \$2,810,000. The following years would generate an additional \$843,000 per year.
- Option 4 – Implement Capital Project Sales Tax
 - Add a 1% sales tax for capital improvement type projects. The County currently collects about \$10,000,000 per year. This amount does not include the amount of sales tax for cities. Revenue generated by the cities will be determined by the State.
- Option 5 – Issue GO Bonds
 - Current debt capacity is \$16,000,000. Issue GO Bonds every two years to generate the \$8,225,000 needed to replace roads each year. Increase debt service millage by 29 mils. No CAP debt service millage under ACT 388.
- Option 6 – General Fund Balance
 - June 30, 2019 unassigned fund balance is \$24 million. This would be a one-time infusion of funds that would cover 3 years' worth of paving. It would reduce investment income for operations to zero. County would have to issue debt to fund operations until taxes come in from taxpayers in December each year. ****These are approximate numbers****

After more discussion, Mr. Roper stated he is recommending that Council refer this to the Committee of the Whole for further discussion, as this is just the starting point of the conversation. He stated our new Public Works Director begins work on Monday, January 20th, which happens to be a County Holiday, so his first day will be on Tuesday, January 21st. He stated he would like to figure out ways to bend this curve to give us flexibility.

Vice Chairman Bowers asked if Road User Fee is on the Committee of the Whole Log.

Mr. Roper stated only the Minimum Maintenance Program is on the Log, not the Road User Fee.

- Councilman Trey Whitehurst made a motion to add the Discussion on Road Maintenance and General Including Fees. Councilman Whitehurst stated it is a broad subject and he feels our

answer is in a combination of all of these things. Motion was seconded by Vice Chairman Chris Bowers and carried unanimously (5-0).

CONSENT AGENDA:

1. DISCUSSION OF COUNTY ROAD USER FEE AND ALTERNATIVES *(as added during agenda item #12)*
 - o Motion was made by Councilman Ensley Feemster, seconded by Councilman Trey Whitehurst and carried unanimously (5-0).

EXECUTIVE SESSION: S.C. Code of Laws, Section 30-4-70 (a):

Chairman Roy Costner called for a motion to convene into Executive Session as defined by S.C. Code of Laws, Section 30-4-70 (a). Chairman Costner further stated that each issue would be discussed as the Law provides.

- o Motion was made by Councilman Wes Hendricks, seconded by Vice Chairman Chris Bowers and carried unanimously (5-0), to convene in executive session for the stated purposes after a five minute recess.

Personnel – Section 30-4-70 (a) (1)

- Personnel Matter *(as added during Motion Period and New Business)*

Boards and Commissions – Section 30-4-70 (a) (1)

- Board and Commission Vacancies (43):
 - a) Assessment and Appeals
 - b) Beautification Committee
 - c) Construction Board of Appeals
 - d) Economic Development Alliance Board
 - e) Emergency Services Advisory Board
 - f) Library Board of Directors
 - g) Planning Commission
 - h) Public Service Commission
 - i) Recreation Funding Advisory Board
 - j) Sedgewood Tax District
 - k) Tri-County Board of Visitors
 - l) Water Authority
 - m) WORKLINK
 - n) Zoning and Appeals
 - o) *Pickens County Museum Non-Profit Corporation Board
 - p) *Pickens County Performing Arts Center Non-Profit Corporation Board

ACTION AS NEEDED VIA EXECUTIVE SESSION ITEMS:

Chairman Roy Costner called the Public Session back to Order and advised the following:

Personnel – Section 30-4-70 (a) (1)

- Personnel Matter *(as added during Motion Period and New Business)* – **No Action Taken**

Boards and Commissions – Section 30-4-70 (a) (1)

- Board and Commission Vacancies (43): **Councilman Ensley Feemster made a motion to appoint the following citizens to a Pickens County Board or Commission. Motion was seconded by Vice Chairman Chris Bowers and carried unanimously (5-0).**
 - a) Assessment and Appeals
 - b) Beautification Committee
 - c) Construction Board of Appeals
 - d) Economic Development Alliance Board – **Moved to reappoint Pam Cobb to the Economic Development Alliance Board.**
 - e) Emergency Services Advisory Board
 - f) Library Board of Directors
 - g) Planning Commission – **Moved to appoint Philip Smith to the Planning Commission.**
 - h) Public Service Commission
 - i) Recreation Funding Advisory Board
 - j) Sedgewood Tax District
 - k) Tri-County Board of Visitors
 - l) Water Authority
 - m) WORKLINK
 - n) Zoning and Appeals
 - o) *Pickens County Museum Non-Profit Corporation Board
 - p) *Pickens County Performing Arts Center Non-Profit Corporation Board

ADJOURN:

Hearing no further Council business, Chairman Roy Costner called for a motion to adjourn. Motion was made by Councilman Wes Hendricks, seconded by Councilman Ensley Feemster and carried unanimously (5-0). Pickens County Council stood adjourned at 9:04 p.m.

Respectively Submitted:

Approved:

Meagan Bradford, Clerk to Council

Roy Costner, Chairman of County Council