

ADMINISTRATOR'S REPORT:
COVID-19 Response Briefing

Mr. Roper stated since March 20th, we have been under a State of Emergency in Pickens County and as of today, we are up to 19 active cases of COVID-19 in Pickens County. He stated since Council enacted the Emergency Order, he has taken several actions to try and help. He presented the state of emergency benefits, which comes from the Emergency Management staff.

- State of Emergency Benefits
 - Allows private sector healthcare partners to receive assistance
 - Allows Emergency Management to hire temporary personnel to assist with gathering resources and response
 - Allows contracts, requisition and compensation for goods and services from private sources
 - Suspends the limit for daily expenditures to purchase resources to protect the health and safety of the public and first responders with needed equipment
 - Allows flexibility of the Acting Administrator to purchase needed equipment pertaining to employees and administration building to sustain the County during the Covid-19 pandemic

Mr. Roper stated under the provisions of Council's emergency ordinance, it allows the administration to form task forces to help at risk populations. He presented a few pictures of the Library custodians who have graciously been helping clean and help with packaging at Meals on Wheels these past few weeks.

Mr. Roper stated he has sent out a series of Emergency Orders and he is keeping a log of these, because after all of this is over, he would like for Council to be able to review all of the actions he took that he considers outside the bounds of normal day-to-day operations. He gave a quick overview of these orders, stating that he has:

1. Closed the Administration Building to foot traffic
2. Directed Emergency Operations Center to form a task force
3. Sent all employees in the 70+ age risk category home & have been paying them through their sick leave
4. Made non-essential employees in the 60-69+ age category not report to work beginning on Monday, March 23rd unless we could make them work remotely, or isolate them within the work environment
5. Provide employees with children some flexibility on their hours and also complied with federal law changes
6. Suspended employee drug screens
7. Reassigned some library staff
8. Reassigned staff from tourism office to task force
9. Moved forward to hire a temporary elections director
10. Recycling Centers
11. Rotating staff and allowing some employees to work remotely
12. For the employees sent home weeks ago, Mr. Roper refreshed their sick leave and gave them 10 days

Mr. Roper stated staff has been putting general information in the newspapers regarding COVID-19 and Pickens County offices. He stated Pickens County has also started a red ribbon campaign to show support for healthcare workers, first responders, truck drivers, grocery store staff and other employees who continue to serve the community during this trying time.

Mr. Roper presented some pictures of Pickens County Employees and Elected Officials who continue to serve the citizens during the COVID-19 pandemic. He presented a picture of staff working the drive-thru and offering curbside service when necessary.

Mr. Roper presented a photo of one of the Election board members, Herb Thompson, who was able to come up to the Administration Building at the last minute so that he could swear in two county librarians, Amy Hallenbeck and Margaret Holder, to allow the Elections office to remain operational. He stated the remainder of the board, besides Mr. Thompson and Ms. June Bowers, resigned without any notice. Mr. Roper stated we also have Ms. Christain, who has recently retired from the Greenville County Elections office, who has come in and is serving to give us technical expertise's in this office.

Mr. Roper stated that is all he had for this evening, but he will answer any questions Council may have.

Councilman Wes Hendricks stated he would like for Mr. Roper to clarify something from his viewpoint seeing that he is knowledgeable about the Elections Board. He stated there has been a lot of misinformation going on in social media regarding the Elections Board, and the role of County Council in regards to the Elections Director. Councilman Hendricks stated he would like for Mr. Roper to clarify and state the facts of Council's role with this department, which we do not have a role with the Elections Board, nor do we have a role with the Director of Voters Registration. He asked Mr. Roper to clarify so citizens do not get misinformed by inappropriate posts on social media.

Mr. Roper stated state law was changed a few years back by the General Assembly, and signed by the Governor taking almost any control locally away from the County for the Elections Office. He stated instead, it vested power almost exclusively in a non-elected board, in an appointed board that was elected by the governor. He stated that board, in this instance, would not be open to our input and County Council had absolutely no control over the day-to-day operations in the elections office. Mr. Roper stated County Council did, on many occasions, fund the elections office as was requested. He stated there may be some implication that since they funded them, then they have control, but year to year Council passes the budget and it is up to the board that Council has no control over in the conduct of the elections. Other than Council annually approving the budget, state law gives Council zero authority over the Elections office. Mr. Roper stated to keep in mind that a stunt was pulled where all the elections office staff and board members resigned at once. He stated when this happened, the County was in a State of Emergency and he is not sure what this Council could have done then. He stated since we had the emergency powers, he was able to staff the office with employees from the Library temporarily. Mr. Roper stated Council has absolutely no authority over the elections office.

Councilman Trey Whitehurst stated Mr. Roper has done a great job using his current resources and reallocating them. He stated it is his understanding that we can't do that unless we are under this emergency position we are in now. He stated he would like to know if Mr. Roper can publish the emergency orders to be transparent as possible. He stated he wants to know what he is doing, and the public does as well. He asked if there was a way we could do this.

Mr. Roper stated yes, absolutely. He stated he does not mind any of these orders being published as far and wide as they need to be. He stated he will also put out a list of the monies that we have spent in response. He stated that money is being tracked carefully, because we are going to apply for reimbursement of those expenses.

Vice Chairman Chris Bowers asked Mr. Roper if the funds are reimbursable for the employees who have higher risk of the coronavirus and are having to stay home during this time.

Mr. Roper stated we are going to apply for those funds and to his understanding, he believes it will be a reasonable request. He stated we are certainly going to apply for those and are keeping track of how much time people are spending in the emergency operations. He stated not only is it sick leave requested, but office hours of employees have spent in the emergency operations rather than their own job.

Chairman Roy Costner asked Mr. Roper a question regarding the Census. He asked how the county is doing regarding the Census.

Mr. Roper stated a couple of weeks back, Pickens County was lagging behind significantly but as of yesterday, Pickens County moved above the state average and we are now responding as a county above what the state response was. He stated we still have some areas that are lagging, and it is Central and Clemson. He stated they normally lag due to a huge amount of student population. He stated the students aren't there, and the census information stated today that 1 in 4 students are still in Clemson, while the rest are back home. He stated our GIS Department sent more maps to the Census staff to tell where the students are to keep trying to get a better, complete count for Central and Clemson. Mr. Roper stated 45% of Pickens County has responded.

COMMITTEE REPORT:

The Committee of the Whole met in Council Chambers, at the Pickens County Administration Facility, on Monday, March 16, 2020, but due to the COVID-19 pandemic, Council adjourned that meeting and immediately went into a special-called emergency meeting to discuss COVID-19 and the impact it is having in South Carolina.

COUNCIL CORRESPONDENCE:

Chairman Roy Costner announced the following:

- There will be a Budget Work Session meeting on Monday, April 20, 2020 at 6:00 PM in the Main Conference Room of this facility, in lieu of the Committee of the Whole meeting.
- There will be a Special-Called Council Meeting on Monday, April 27th, 2020 at 6:00 PM in Council Chambers of this facility.
- The next Council Meeting will be on Monday, May 4, 2020 at 6:30 PM in this auditorium of this facility.

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.

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.

CONSIDERATION OF EXTENSION OF STATE OF EMERGENCY

Councilman Wes Hendricks stated he would like to make a motion that we extend the ordinance through the next Council meeting, however; he stated he would like for Council to omit 1-D-8 be in that Ordinance. He stated Pickens County residents do not need to have the fear that anything is going to happen to their guns. He stated this Council will not do anything to their guns.

- Motion was made by Councilman Wes Hendricks, and seconded by Councilman Ensley Feemster. Chairman Roy Costner asked if there was any discussion.
 - Chairman Roy Costner stated he would like to make an amendment to the motion, stating he would like for us to put Ordinance 526 on the consent agenda to go into the Committee of the Whole and once this pandemic is over, we can take a look at our entire emergency ordinance to ensure it has everything in it to protect the citizens of Pickens

County. Motion was seconded by Councilman Carl Hudson. Motion carried unanimously (6-0).

- Chairman Costner asked if there was any other discussion on Councilman Hendricks motion above.
 - Councilman Carl Hudson stated as a former law enforcement officer, we have gun laws that are state and federal. He stated his fear is under the emergency protection at, his fear is when people need the ability to protect themselves in an emergency, you would infringe on their rights. In other words, if CWP holders had to go to the grocery store or to check on a family member, they would possibly have to leave their residence without their firearm. He stated as a former police officer, legally armed citizens are some of the best protection and the best help that officers who are trying to enforce law have. He stated he wouldn't want to see anything that would impede that ability for citizens to protect themselves and he agrees with Councilman Hendricks.
 - Councilman Whitehurst asked Mr. Roper is what we are doing legal.
 - Mr. Roper stated yes. He stated what Council is allowed to do under the law, is enact emergency ordinances. He stated these ordinances can be enacted in one reading. He stated this would be an emergency enactment of the ordinance to amend it and take out 1-D-8, which is involving guns, alcohol and gasoline. Mr. Roper advised it is allowable because emergency ordinances are only required to have one reading.
 - Councilman Whitehurst stated he is always hesitant when government steps in. He stated this goes back to his comment before, he would like everything published to the public that we are doing under this emergency and we have a price tag on every nickel we are spending and how we are spending it.
 - Seeing no other discussion, Chairman Costner asked for all those in favor to please signify by raising hands. Motion carried unanimously (6-0).

WAIVER OF CREDIT CARD FEES IN THE PICKENS COUNTY TREASURERS OFFICE.

Chairman Costner stated he asked to put this on the agenda for tonight's meeting to discuss and it becomes even more important today now that our drive-thru is no longer functional. He stated he would like for Council to consider waving the credit card fees related to the collection of taxes in the Treasurer's office for a 30 day window. He stated we would collect roughly \$15,000-\$18,000 in fees. He stated these are fees that we pass along in consumer that we are paying directly to the credit card companies. He stated we would have to absorb this cost in the general fund.

- Chairman Costner stated he would like to make a motion that we consider waving the credit card fees for thirty days. Motion was seconded by Vice Chairman Chris Bowers. Chairman Costner asked if there was any discussion:
 - Vice Chairman Bowers stated he brought this up when we first started talking about COVID-19 and Mr. Roper was going to be looking into numbers. He stated this has been on his radar since the beginning. He asked Mr. Roper if Council needs to do this, or under the Emergency act, could this fall under Mr. Roper's lane. He stated he is trying to separate Council's role during a state of emergency, versus the Administrators role during a state of emergency.
 - Mr. Roper stated it would fall within the emergency powers. He stated as he looked at it, he was inclined not to do it because it seemed to be most people would only realize a small amount from the credit card fees. He stated he knew it was not fees that came to the county directly. He stated we would have to take the money out of the general fund to pay the credit card companies directly. He stated facts have changed his mind, and those

facts are that he is watching citizens sit in the lines to do this in person at the county admin building. Mr. Roper stated he has learned by experience that this is probably a good thing to do. He stated especially since our drive-thru is now broken, we need to incentivize the best way we can for the county administration building. Mr. Roper stated he knew this would be on the agenda this meeting, and while he has the power to do this, he wanted to wait until Council could meet.

- Councilman Wes Hendricks stated he would like for Council to consider that should this be one of the viable options, that if the thirty day period is not long enough, we look at extending it longer for our tax payers so they do not get faced with extra fees should they have to rely on this further down the road.
- Councilman Whitehurst stated after this crisis is over, we need to look at our credit card company processing fees. He stated these are open ended contracts and he has done these before. He stated it is an opportunity for someone to take advantage of a large government and that is a lot of money that the taxpayers are paying. He stated he feels this is something we need to review.
- Seeing no other discussion, motion carried unanimously (6-0).

FIRST READING IN TITLE ONLY OF AN ORDINANCE NO. 582 TO PROVIDE FOR ADOPTION OF A BUDGET AMENDMENT CONTAINING ESTIMATES OF REVENUE AND EXPENDITURE CHANGES FOR PICKENS COUNTY FOR THE FISCAL YEAR BEGINNING JULY 1, 2019 AND ENDING JUNE 30, 2020.

Chairman Costner asked for a motion to constitute first reading in title only of Ordinance No. 582.

- Motion was made by Vice Chairman Chris Bowers, seconded by Councilman Carl Hudson and carried unanimously (6-0).

FIRST READING IN TITLE ONLY OF AN ORDINANCE NO. 583 TO PROVIDE FOR THE LEVY OF TAXES IN PICKENS COUNTY FOR ORDINARY COUNTY PURPOSES FOR THE FISCAL YEAR BEGINNING JULY 1, 2020, AND ENDING JUNE 30, 2021, AND TO DIRECT EXPENDITURE THEREOF.

Mr. Roper presented the Budget Transmittal Letter to County Council, stating:

This Budget (along with this transmittal letter) is provided to you in compliance with Section 4-9-640 of the South Carolina Code of Laws, which provides:

The county administrator shall prepare the proposed operating and capital budgets and submit them to the council at such time as the council determines. At the time of submitting the proposed budget, the county administrator shall submit to the council a statement describing the important features of the proposed budgets including all sources of anticipated revenue of the county government and the amount of tax revenue required to meet the financial requirements of the county.

Previous action of Council set April 6, 2020 as the date for First Reading (of a required three readings) by County Council of an Ordinance enacting the Budget. Traditionally this First Reading is in title only, with second and third readings following at later dates, along with as many budget work sessions as Council deems, in its sole discretion, to be needed.

When staff began the Budget formation process, we were informed and guided by County Council's stated Goals for 2020. These goals were 1) Maintain Conservative Budget, 2) Broaden Economic Development, 3) Plan for Capital Expenditures, 4) Establish Sustainable Road Maintenance, 5) Develop Comprehensive Tourism Approach, and 6) Advance Unified Emergency Services. All County

departments were instructed to submit their various budget requests on or before January 31, 2020. In keeping with Council Goal #1, County finance officials and I met with each department head individually and reviewed their requests, asking for justification and/or explanation on a budget-line-by-budget-line basis. These meetings were integral in challenging budget assumptions, answering questions, and insuring that zero-based budgeting principles were maintained.

The Budget we then developed contemplated the other Goals of Council, and insofar as budgetary constraints allowed, planned for the implementation of those stated goals. But with the advent and spread of the COVID-19 virus, these priorities were changed by outside forces. At its March 16, 2020 Committee of the Whole meeting, Council instructed staff to simplify the budget process in response to the COVID-19 outbreak, and to submit a budget to Council that reflected no tax or fee increases. Council's manifest desire was the preparation and submission of the budget that could be easily digested and expeditiously passed, so that County staff and County Council could focus more exclusively on the looming COVID-19 situation.

- Due to technical difficulties, Chairman Costner made a motion to suspend the meeting until Councilman Feemster was able to get back on the Zoom meeting. Motion was seconded by Vice Chairman Bowers and carried unanimously (5-0).
- Chairman Costner called the meeting back to order.

Mr. Roper continued on the transmittal letter: Fortunately, County Council's previous direction - indeed its first stated goal - made this process easier than it would have been. Attached to this transmittal memorandum is a proposed budget with no tax or fee increase. Wants are not reflected, but instead only needs are provided. Only one staff position has been added, despite department requests for an additional 28 county employees. Vehicle replacement requests have only been granted where our fleet maintenance department has concurred with department requests as being in the best interest of the fleet maintenance budget. No additional vehicles are being provided, only replacements when appropriate. In fact, we have taken steps to reduce the overall size of our motor vehicle fleet.

This proposed budget is cognizant of council's clear direction, both before and after the COVID-19 outbreak. Accordingly, we have begun implementation of a five-year capital plan; including a dedication of specific millage (to the extent available) to partially offset the expenses of this year's needed capital purchases. The balance of capital expenses will be drawn from proceeds from the sale of capital assets, with a plan for subsequent budget years to include a growing portion of dedicated millage going to capital purchases instead of monies currently in the bank.

The proposed Budget also centralizes the fire districts' training expenses and equipment purchases so as to maximize the county's buying power and provide uniformity and efficiencies where possible within the current fee structure. No fire fees will increase, as per council's instruction.

In keeping with the intent of the enabling ordinance and previous use of the funds, this Budget specifies that all of the proceeds from the \$20.00 Road User Fee be allocated exclusively to work on our county and municipal road system. It also provides for the continued operation of our parks and tourism efforts, as well as our economic development initiatives. During this time of crisis, these departments are more important than ever to the wellbeing of our citizens.

I am confident that staff's proposed FY2021 Budget balances the needs of the current crisis with the long-term wellbeing of the county government and its citizens. As correctly pointed out by the members of County Council, more audacious plans for county operations are not appropriate during the pendency of the COVID-19 pandemic. Accordingly, we have endeavored to make this Budget transparent and easily understood, reflecting our current year's budget with only minimum changes.

I would be remiss if I did not thank Ralph Guarino and Jodi Laws of our Finance Department for their dedication, professionalism and adaptability to what became an evolving budget process. I also want to commend the various department heads and elected officials for their cooperative attitudes and openness to dialogue as we developed the Budget.

Mr. Roper stated this document will be on the website tomorrow for the citizens to review.

Chairman Costner asked for a motion to constitute first reading in title only of Ordinance No. 583.

- o Motion was made by Vice Chairman Chris Bowers, seconded by Councilman Carl Hudson and carried unanimously (6-0).

THIRD 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 third reading of Ordinance No. 579.

- o Motion was made by Vice Chairman Chris Bowers, seconded by Councilman Wes Hendricks and carried unanimously (6-0).

CONSENT AGENDA:

1. Declaration of Emergency Ordinance
2. 2020 Accommodations Tax Recommendations – *Committee of the Whole*
3. 2020 Recreation Funding Recommendations - *Committee of the Whole*
4. Noise Ordinance – *Committee of the Whole*
5. COVID-19 Update – *Committee of the Whole*
6. RESOLUTION NO. 2020-03 DESIGNATING APRIL 2020 AS FAIR HOUSING AWARENESS MONTH IN PICKENS COUNTY.

7. PROCLAMATION NO. 2020-04 DECLARING THE WEEK OF APRIL 12-18, 2020 TO BE NATIONAL TELECOMMUNICATORS WEEK IN PICKENS COUNTY.
8. SECOND READING OF AN ORDINANCE NO. 580 TO DEVELOP A JOINTLY OWNED AND OPERATED INDUSTRIAL/BUSINESS PARK IN CONJUNCTION WITH OCONEE COUNTY, SUCH INDUSTRIAL/BUSINESS PARK TO BE, AT THE TIME OF ITS INITIAL DEVELOPMENT, GEOGRAPHICALLY LOCATED IN OCONEE COUNTY AND TO INCLUDE CERTAIN PROPERTY NOW OR TO BE OWNED BY A COMPANY KNOWN TO THE COUNTY AT THIS TIME AS “PROJECT AZTEC” OR ITS ASSIGNEE, AND ESTABLISHED PURSUANT TO SOUTH CAROLINA CODE OF LAWS 1976, SECTION 4-1-170 ET SEQ., AS AMENDED; TO PROVIDE FOR A WRITTEN AGREEMENT WITH OCONEE COUNTY PROVIDING FOR THE EXPENSES OF THE PARK, THE PERCENTAGE OF REVENUE ALLOCATION, AND THE DISTRIBUTION OF FEES IN LIEU OF AD VALOREM TAX; AND MATTERS RELATED THERETO.

9. SECOND READING OF AN ORDINANCE NO. 581 SETTING FORTH TERMS AND CONDITIONS FOR THE LEASING OF CERTAIN REAL PROPERTY LOCATED AT 116B COMMONS WAY CENTRAL, SC TO CLEMSON PAW PARTNERS, A NOT FOR PROFIT AGENCY ORGANIZED AND EXISTING UNDER THE LAWS OF THE STATE OF SC AND MATTERS RELATED THERETO.

- Motion was made by Vice Chairman Chris Bowers, seconded by Councilman Carl Hudson and carried unanimously (6-0).

ADJOURN:

Hearing no further Council business, Chairman Roy Costner called for a motion to adjourn. Motion was made by Vice Chairman Chris Bowers, seconded by Councilman Carl Hudson and carried unanimously (6-0). Pickens County Council stood adjourned at 7:40 p.m.

Respectively Submitted:

Approved:

Meagan Bradford, Clerk to Council

Roy Costner, Chairman of County Council