

REGULAR MONTHLY MEETING OF THE UNION COUNTY COUNCIL  
THURSDAY, JANUARY 13, 2011 AT 5:30 P.M.  
GRAND JURY ROOM AT UNION COUNTY COURTHOUSE

Present: Chairman Tommy Sinclair, Vice Chair Dora Martin-Jennings, Councilwoman Joan Little, Councilman Tommy Ford, Councilman Ben C. Ivey, Councilman Randall Hanvey, Councilwoman Kacie Petrie, County Attorney Sammy Diamaduros and Clerk to Council Linda G. Jolly

Absent: None

Notice of the meeting and a copy of the agenda giving the date, time and place of the meeting was posted on the bulletin board in the hall of the Union County Courthouse and a copy was mailed to the members of the Union County Council, the County Attorney, WBCU Radio Station, the Union Daily Times, Spartanburg Herald Journal, the Union County Development Board, Ms. Ann Canada, Mrs. Anne Brock with Clemson Extension, Mr. James Kollock, Mrs. Anna Brown with the County News, Mr. Mickey Gist, Mr. Frank Hart, Mr. Ray Treadway, Mr. Brooks Carwile, Mr. Howard Gibson, and Mr. Robert Small. A notice of the meeting was also posted on the County's website.

Chairman Tommy Sinclair called the meeting to order. Vice Chair Dora Martin-Jennings gave the invocation followed by the Pledge of Allegiance.

The Clerk to Council gave the Roll Call with the following results:

Joan Little, District 1 - Present

Dora Martin-Jennings, District 2 - Present

Tommy Ford, District 3 - Present

Ben Ivey, District 4 - Present

Randall Hanvey, District 5 - Present

Kacie Petrie, District 6 - Present

Dora Martin-Jennings: Made a motion to dispense with reading of the minutes of the regular monthly meeting of the Union County Council held on December 14, 2010 and to adopt the minutes as written.

Tommy Ford: Seconded the motion. The vote was unanimous.

Chairman Tommy Sinclair expressed his delight with the group present especially the students. He acknowledged our country's tragic loss in Arizona and asked everyone to join him in a moment of silent in memory of the dead and injured.

Mrs. Harriett Berry introduced the new director for the Union Carnegie Library Ms. Kathy Henry who began on January 3rd. Ms. Henry is from New York but is coming to Union because she loves small towns. She said she would like to hear from Council as to how they can better serve the public at the library.

Chairman Tommy Sinclair stated next on the agenda was to consider an appointment to the Workforce Investment Board. Councilman Tommy Ford asked if the position had been

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advertised and he was informed that it had not. Chairman Tommy Sinclair stated there were also vacancies on the Airport Commission to be considered.

Tommy Sinclair: Made a motion to advertise the position on the Workforce Investment Board and the vacancies on the Airport Commission.

Dora Martin: Seconded the motion. The vote was unanimous.

Chairman Tommy Sinclair stated there was a request on the agenda from Abby Allen, Josh Simpson and Jay Allen to discuss high school practice at the Timken Sports Complex. He reminded them that they are allowed to make a five minute presentation. Abby Allen said she was a sophomore on the Varsity Softball Team and had been playing for ten years. Her teammates selected her to address Council. She said she had commented to her father, Jay Allen, how beautiful the Timken Sports Complex is and how she wished they could practice and play there. Of all the fields they play on, those are the nicest. Being able to practice at Timken would make them feel comfortable on game day and would be a privilege and advantage. It would also give them home field advantage which is an important factor in winning and losing softball games. As a team, they do not expect something for nothing and would be ready to work on the field each and every time they use them. Josh Simpson stated his teammates had selected him to represent the Varsity and Junior Varsity baseball teams at Union County High School. When they first heard about the building of the Timken Sports Complex they were excited about having somewhere to play in such an elite complex. Seven out of eight seniors in the class of 2010 received scholarships to play college ball at the next level. This statistic proves that Union County does have an abundance of elite athletes that deserve to practice and play there. He compared the new complex to a new toy for a toddler that they had wanted for so long but then were limited to its use. That would leave the toddler unsatisfied and in a state of perplexity. They were allowed to practice one day before the games last year and they were excited and ready to go to practice. The attitudes and performance levels were so much greater after practicing at Timken. It gave them a sense of pride not only about themselves but about the county as a whole. Practicing at Timken gives them home field advantage and makes them comfortable with the field. They would maintain the facility both before and after each time they used it by doing whatever is needed to keep it top notch and beautiful. Their dream is to play and practice at the Timken Sports Complex. Mr. Jay Allen stated he was there to represent the group that made a ton of telephone calls and have been fighting for these kids for years and years. He said he had been doing it for ten years. What they are asking for is to give their kids the best. Whatever is the best in the County is what they would like to see these kids get. Regardless of the limitations, these are the future leaders. These are the ones striving to be the best and are willing to work. He said he had been working with Recreation Director Becky Cobb for at least ten years and they have never had a cross word. They work things out because they want what is best for the kids. The recreation department helped them move pitchers mounds, moved bases, lined fields and did it all. The fields were great and they never had a problem with them. They never complained about the fields and never asked for any better because they were playing at the best we had to offer. The girls were at the South Hills Complex and the boys were at the stadium. Now the County has decided to make our place better by building a wonderful complex that everybody in the state talks about. When the travel teams come here they think it is unbelievable. He said he felt sorry for the girls that had

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played on a field with a 280' fence and a girl's regulation field is supposed to be 200'. You couldn't get a home run there if you picked it up twice and hit it. We did them a huge disadvantage since they could have spent two thousand dollars on a fence and put a temporary fence up. They are fighting to be the best, are fighting to be leaders, and they want it. They will help and will work. The Council got a million phone calls and a million letters. Practice starts February 1st and they think Timken Sports Complex is the best place to practice. Let's give them the best. Councilman Tommy Ford said since practice starts February 1st he would like to see it brought to a vote.

Tommy Ford: Made a motion to vote on it.

Dora Martin-Jennings: Made a motion to put this into the recreation committee so each member of Council would be able to discuss it with one another.

Chairman Tommy Sinclair asked Councilman Tommy Ford what his motion was for. Councilman Tommy Ford said it was to vote on whether they could practice at Timken Sports Complex. Chairman Tommy Sinclair asked if he was making a motion they be allowed to practice there or not be allowed to practice. Councilman Tommy Ford said his motion was that they be allowed to practice at the Timken Sports Complex.

Chairman Tommy Sinclair restated the motion that the boys baseball team at Union High School and the girls softball team at Union High School be allowed to have unlimited practice and unlimited games at the Timken Sports Complex. The motion died for lack of a second.

Dora Martin-Jennings: Made a motion to put this in the Law Enforcement, Judiciary and Recreation Committee so each Council Member will be able to discuss and talk about what they want done and how they feel about it instead of making a motion right here.

Chairman Tommy Sinclair restated her motion that this matter be given to committee for further discussion and evaluation.

Kacie Petrie: Seconded the motion. The motion carried with five (5) Council Members voting in favor of the motion and one (1) Council Member (Tommy Ford) opposing.

Mr. Jay Allen said they had been talking about this for a year and a half and it unnerves him that they are going to put it off again. Practice starts February 1st. They just got the information out and Council has the information. It hurts they could not get a second for a vote. Bring it to a vote. They want it. They are going to blow Council's phones up and these people are going to fight for it. Whatever it takes, they are not stopping. They want it. Chairman Tommy Sinclair said he understands that but there is a process and the majority prevails until another vote. Mr. Jay Allen said they want these kids to have the best and are willing to work for it. They will raise money, do the fields and do whatever it takes. They are ready to work. They want a vote. They want a second. They want to play.

Chairman Tommy Sinclair called for any elected officials or department heads who wanted to address Council. He said the committee had voted on doing the first layer of the GIS system and the guy came with a proposal for some additional layers.

Recreation Department Director Becky Cobb stated that once the snow melts and the ice is gone they will continue with their process of getting the ball fields ready for practice and play. Due to weather, the youth basketball start date was moved back a week.

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Mr. Ronnie Wade stated they had been working on the roads, sidewalks, and whatever to help out during the snow.

Chairman Tommy Sinclair called for any committee reports.

Dora Martin-Jennings: Made a motion to pass the resolution to redeem the 2001 bond and reissue it to help the Wallace Thomson Hospital.

Randall Hanvey: Seconded the motion. The vote was unanimous.

Dora Martin-Jennings: Made a motion to proceed with the mapping for the GIS system at a cost of \$21,000.00 for the foundation layer to be paid from the contingency fund.

Kacie Petrie: Seconded the motion. The vote was unanimous.

Dora Martin-Jennings: Made a motion to turn the County stadium around as it has been in the past to be used for practice and/or play for baseball whatever the high school decision is.

Joan Little: Seconded the motion. The motion carried with five (5) Council Members voting in favor of the motion and one (1) Council Member (Kacie Petrie) opposed.

Chairman Tommy Sinclair stated that for this County to get through the snow event in three days without mishap and without injury was pretty significant. Nurses and doctors got moved. Two ambulances got stuck but it was all dealt with. They were asked if they were going to get any reimbursement and the answer is no. If this county incurred \$85,000 or more expense above and beyond normal expenses then it can qualify for reimbursements if it truly is a state of emergency. If the state does not reach a five million dollar threshold it does not matter if the county reached \$85,000. If the state does not qualify then the county does not qualify. The county will have to pay the overtime out of our pocket but it was worth it. The county has 260 miles of roads that are county owns. There are 600 plus miles of state maintained roads in the county. The entire State of South Carolina ran out of salt yesterday afternoon.

Chairman Tommy Sinclair stated he would call Council Members with the validation of committee assignments.

Chairman Tommy Sinclair called for any other business.

Dora Martin-Jennings: Made a motion to adjourn the meeting.

A lady in the audience asked why the Timken Sports Complex was built. Chairman Tommy Sinclair said he had studied the minutes and his deduction is that it was built primarily as a revenue generating entity that would take advantage of the traveling ball tournaments. As he read the minutes of previous meetings, that seemed to be the theme that came through although it did not restrict it from use by anybody else. It is a six plus million dollar facility and the snow took out some of the canopies. A gentleman from the audience stated there would not be a Timken Sports Complex without Timken. They donated twenty six acres of land and \$500,000.00 for the complex. Another gentleman in

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the audience asked what was involved in the process of sending the matter to a committee. Chairman Tommy Sinclair stated there would be a committee meeting and information would be put out, discussed and questioned. That committee will then make a motion as they reach a consensus to bring back to Council for their vote. When that committee meets will be up to the chair of that committee. The next regular County Council meeting is the second Tuesday in February. They are trying to get a bond passed for the hospital which is time sensitive as well. He suspected they would hold a special Council meeting within the next two weeks. A gentleman in the audience asked who was on the committee and what they would meet about. Councilwoman Kacie Petrie stated Councilwoman Joan Little is Chair of the committee with Councilwoman Dora Martin-Jennings, Councilman Tommy Ford and Councilman Ben Ivey serving on the committee. Chairman Tommy Sinclair stated this is the month the Supervisor makes committee assignments and he sent out a letter to Council asking what committees they would like to serve on. He had gotten three of them back this evening which will be used as feedback. The Council understands the time sensitive situation. Chairman Tommy Sinclair stated every ball team has a place to play and practice which is provided by the County. It is actually a school district responsibility. Councilman Randall Hanvey said they are talking about two ball teams and asked Recreation Director Becky Cobb how many little league teams are in the county. Mrs. Cobb responded there are probably close to twenty between Dixie Youth, Dixie Boys and Dixie Girls. Councilman Randall Hanvey stated they have as much right to be out there practicing at the complex as these two teams do. If you look at it that way then there is no way that facility would hold up. How can they allow the high school teams to practice there without allowing every team in the county to practice at the complex? Mr. Jay Allen said watching the high school teams play is a dream the smaller kids have. When you put the kids at the best facility then that is their dream and it makes them better. The school system also pays a fee so if the other teams want to practice there they should pay what the school pays. They want to be unified with the Council and make a decision that makes everybody happy. They want the best for this county. They pay their taxes and they have a voice. They are going to make phone calls and let Council know what they want.

Chairman Tommy Sinclair asked Councilwoman Dora Martin-Jennings to withdraw her motion for adjournment to consider first reading of an ordinance for the General Obligation Bonds which she did.

Chairman Tommy Sinclair introduced an ordinance authorizing the issuance and sale of General Obligation Bonds, Series 2011, of Union County, South Carolina, in the principal amount of not exceeding \$2,400,000; fixing the form and certain details of the bonds; authorizing the County Supervisor to determine certain matters relating to the bonds; providing for the payment of the bonds and the disposition of the proceeds thereof; and other matters relating thereto.

Dora Martin-Jennings: Made a motion to dispense with referring the ordinance to a committee and to accept first reading of the ordinance authorizing the issuance and sale of General Obligation Bonds, Series 2011 as stated.

Randall Hanvey: Seconded the motion. The vote was unanimous.

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Councilwoman Dora Martin-Jennings stated the people wanting permission for the high school baseball teams to practice at the Timken Sports Complex are worrying about the matter going into committee. When it goes into the committee the members of Council have the opportunity to express their feelings concerning the matter and the committee will come back with a consent that will be better than a split vote here. She asked them to give Council time to do this. Council is trying to do for them what is the very best they can for what they have here in the best way they know how to do it. They may not come back with the exact thing each one of them wants but Council will be satisfied that they have done the very best for this county. That is what they expect from these young people is that they do the very best that they can regardless as to what it is.

Dora Martin-Jennings: Made a motion to adjourn the meeting.

Randall Hanvey: Seconded the motion. The vote was unanimous

The meeting was adjourned at 6:13 p.m.

Thomas L. Sinclair, Chairman  
Union County Council

Linda G. Jolly, Clerk to Council