

UNION COUNTY COUNCIL
TUESDAY, AUGUST 13, 2019 AT 5:30 P.M.
GRAND JURY ROOM AT UNION COUNTY COURTHOUSE

Present: Chairman Frank Hart, Vice-Chairman Ben Ivey, Councilwoman Tracie Campbell, Councilman David Sinclair, Councilman Ralph Tucker, Councilman Tommie Hill, 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 or emailed to the members of the Union County Council, to the County Attorney, and to the Union County Development Board, Jeff Fellers with Clemson Extension, Jami Trammell with Chamber of Commerce, Mr. Mickey Gist, Mr. Robert Small, Mr. James Kollock, Mrs. Curtiss Hunter, Mrs. Casie Jolly, Mike Stevens at WBCU Radio Station, Graham Williams at the County News, Charles Warner at the Union Times, the News Room at the Spartanburg Herald Journal, Chris Lavender with the Spartanburg Herald Journal, Shell Suber at MHISC, Michael Lee with MHISC, Rob Fraim at Emergency Services and Randall Hanvey. A notice of the meeting was also posted on the County's website.

Chairman Frank Hart called the meeting to order. Council Chaplin David Sinclair gave the invocation followed by the Pledge of Allegiance.

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

Tracie Campbell, District 1 – Present
Ralph Tucker, District 2 – Present
David Sinclair, District 3 - Present
Ben Ivey, District 4 - Present
Tommie Hill, District 5 - Present
Kacie Petrie, District 6 – Present

Tommy Hill: Made a motion to dispense with reading of the minutes of the regular monthly meeting of the Union County Council held on July 9, 2019, the special meeting of County Council held on July 22, 2019 and to adopt the minutes as written.

Ralph Tucker: Seconded the motion. The vote was unanimous.

Chairman Frank Hart presented a service award certificate and gift certificate for Kendra Scott for 5 years, for Glenn Clark for 15 years, for Jermaine Smith for 10 years, for Wendy Childers for 15 years and for John Sherfield for 25 years of dedicated service to Union County.

Michael McLeymore stated he operates the Prodigal's Home men's rehabilitation center which is a men's addiction recovery home. They have eleven acres in Union County with four houses. He explained how the program works and stated they would be holding an Open House on September 28th at 5:30 p.m.

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Chris Wilbanks addressed Council about the activities they plan to provide for Fire Prevention Week at the fairgrounds beginning on October 5th. He stated they had received some donations and requested Council's support.

Cindy Miller with American Financial Credit Services, Inc. stated their company could help the County collect delinquent personal property taxes. They would add their fee of 20% to each tax bill and the County would receive 100% of what was owed to them. There would be no cost to the County.

Kacie Petrie: Made a motion to authorize the Supervisor to enter into a contract with American Financial Credit Services for the purpose of collecting delinquent personal property taxes.

Ben Ivey: Seconded the motion. The vote was unanimous.

Lisa Lucas stated she and her husband own Hospitality Heating and Air and are from York County. They were concerned about there being no air conditioning at the Union County Animal Shelter. Animal welfare and their needs are important to them. They requested permission to install a heating and air conditioning system and make some upgrades at the shelter at their expense. They are not looking for any funds from the County and they would do this as part of their charity work.

Kacie Petrie: Made a motion to allow the building superintendent to work with the owners of Hospitality Heating and Air to see if they can come up with a plan that would be sustainable that we believe will be beneficial to the animal shelter and the County in the long run.

David Sinclair: Seconded the motion. The vote was unanimous.

Sheriff David Taylor requested permission to purchase two laptops and one desktop computer at a cost of \$6,305.77 from the funds budgeted in the Capital Expenditures account.

Kacie Petrie: Made a motion to authorize an expenditure of not exceeding \$6,400.00 from the Capital Expenditures account for the purchase of two laptops and one desktop computer for the Sheriff's Office.

David Sinclair: Seconded the motion. The vote was unanimous.

Sheriff David Taylor gave an update on the installation of the Zuercher records management system. He stated they had gotten it up and running this past week. Things were going well but they had some issues with the mounts for the laptops for the vehicles. The printers have not come in yet but they should be able to install those. This should help cut down on overtime since the officers will not have to come back to the office to do their reports.

Sheriff David Taylor stated the County would need to look at replacing vehicles in the next budget year for the Sheriff's Office due to high mileage and wear on the vehicles we have now.

Probate Judge Will All requested funds from the Capital Expenditures account to cover the \$3,060.00 cost of purchasing scanners and a printer for the Probate Judge's Office.

Kacie Petrie: Made a motion to authorize an expenditure of \$3,060.16 for the purchase of scanners and a printer from the Capital Expenditures account for the Probate Judge's Office.

David Sinclair: Seconded the motion. The vote was unanimous.

Building Superintendent Ken West requested funds from the Capital Expenditures account for the purchase of two air conditioner units for the Health Department at a cost of \$13,670.00.

Ben Ivey: Made a motion to authorize an expenditure of \$13,670.00 for two new air conditioners at the Health Department from the Capital Expenditures account requested by the Building Superintendent.

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Ralph Tucker: Seconded the motion. The vote was unanimous.

Ronnie Wade requested funds from the Capital Expenditures account to purchase a tractor and tiller for the Timken Sports Complex.

Ben Ivey: Made a motion to authorize an expenditure of \$40,457.71 to purchase a tractor and tiller from the Capital Expenditures account for Timken Sports Complex.

Tommie Hill: Seconded the motion. The vote was unanimous.

Development Board Director Kathy Jo Lancaster stated the Union County Development Board would like to recommend the reappointment of Andrena Powell-Baker and Joe Nichols as their current term has expired.

Ben Ivey: Made a motion to accept the recommendation from the Union County Development Board to reappoint Andrena Powell-Baker representing private utilities and to reappoint Joe Nichols representing public utilities to serve another term on the Development Board.

David Sinclair: Seconded the motion. The vote was unanimous.

Chairman Frank Hart stated next on the agenda was to consider appointments to boards and commissions. Council received a copy of the current openings.

Ben Ivey: Made a motion to appoint Tony Neal to serve on the Board for the Phillipi Fire District.

Tracy Campbell: Seconded the motion. The vote was unanimous.

Chairman Frank Hart requested the County advertise to fill a vacancy on the Planning Commission as Carlisle Oxner has resigned to take a position on the DNR Board.

Ben Ivey: Made a motion to advertise to fill a vacancy on the Planning Commission as requested.

Tommie Hill: Seconded the motion. The vote was unanimous.

Chairman Frank Hart stated the treatment director for Alcohol and Drug Abuse had resigned and he requested permission to fill that position.

Kacie Petrie: Made a motion to fill the treatment director position for Alcohol and Drug Abuse which is a budgeted position.

Ralph Tucker: Seconded the motion. The vote was unanimous.

Airport Manager Ronnie Wade stated the weather system has been installed and they will have to put a fence around it. They are trying to purchase the Booker property at the airport for \$188,000. The FAA will reimburse the County 90% of the cost and the State will reimburse 5%. The property owner will get reimbursed on the moving costs once we know how much that will be. The County Attorney will need to handle the purchase of the property on behalf of the County. FAA suggested we need a parallel taxiway instead of a fence at the airport. They will be looking at engineering groups for the airport projects.

Chairman Frank Hart called for any comments from the elected officials and department heads.

Finance Director Ann Boggs said she is gearing up for the audit and the close out for the fiscal year.

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Neil McKeown showed Council a picture of the progress made on the educational/medical building at the Detention Center. They have spent about \$12,000 of the \$25,000 they have for the project and they have other grants pending for the building.

Tax Assessor Jake Black said Chairman Frank Hart had asked him to get some pricing on doing new aerial maps. The State of South Carolina has set up an account to do a full State flyover. They set aside \$2 million and the project is expected to cost \$1.8 million. There will be no cost to the counties. The County would only have to provide funding if we decide we want a different type of imagery. They anticipate starting the project in January or March. The State hopes to have this fund set up to do this every three to five years.

Building Superintendent Ken West stated there are some leaks in the courthouse and he will be taking bids for roof repairs.

Delinquent Tax Collector Lorene Bevis said they are posting notices on delinquent properties. They are doing title searches and they have their total down to less than eight hundred.

Stadium Manager Ronnie Wade stated the stadium renovation project is on schedule. They are making a new handicap parking and walkway leading down to the fairgrounds. They will set up a gate and hope to have a restroom there on that far end. They had looked at air conditioning for the press box but with the windows being open it would not be economical. They will be in the new concession this season and the Booster Club will be using the old concession. They are also working on the baseball concession. He said they will be holding a School Kickoff event at the stadium.

EMS Director Eric Harold stated they are wrapping up renovations at the EMS facility. They still have not heard anything on the AFG grant for a new ambulance. This month they are conducting mandatory training including the new mechanical CPR device. He was elected to the South Carolina EMS Association Board of Directors and will be attending a retreat so they can establish a set of goals and objectives. Their call volume for the month of July, 2018 was 473 calls and in July 2019 they responded to 433 calls. The year-to-date total in 2018 was 3,522 and the year-to-date total in 2019 was 3,217. He gave an update on their out-of-house time and average response time.

Workforce Coordinator Katherine Pendergrass stated they had the kids graduate from the training program who received \$500 each from Lockhart Power Company for completing the program. This is the third graduation. She commended the Council for providing the seed money for the first training program which has grown to where it is now. The Planning Commission presented the Comprehensive Plan and they will be meeting tomorrow to discuss health and education. She has people who want to start small businesses and there is a group that wants to start a Boys Girls Club. They are looking at how to better utilize the Recreation Department facility. The final transit report was made as a result of the transit study.

Tourism Director Curtiss Hunter stated they were awarded a \$5,000 Palmetto Pride Grant for mesh trash cans to be placed at our parks. They are looking at getting some of the cigarette but containers at no cost to us. On August 24th the Southern Legends motorcycle group will be coming through Union as part of their annual event to raise money for hospice. They are working on the Art & Music Festival which will be held in September and the Physic Garden received two pieces of art.

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Development Board Director Kathy Jo Lancaster said they are seeing a lot of activity around our sites. We have had 22 site visits this year including the spec building and Midway building. Councilman Ben Ivey asked why we are not seeing more industry and she responded a lot of that is related to concerns about tariffs. We do have the inventory which puts Union County in a better position.

Chairman Frank Hart introduced Christina Crosby who is the new executive director for Alcohol and Drug Abuse. She said she and three others were hired at the same time and they have asked to replace the treatment director who has left. They have seen an increase in members because they have changed their hours for open enrollment and walk-ins. Lynn Ford is the prevention director and he is trying to work more closely with the schools. They plan to ask the State for additional funding for salaries to get more qualified employees. They are looking at changing hours, adding programs, and looking at providing programs at the jail. They are trying to work out a program with the Solicitor's Office.

Chairman Frank Hart presented for third and final reading an ordinance authorizing the execution and delivery of a Quit Claim Deed to Emslie Elmore Allen conveying the interest of Union County, South Carolina, if any, in a certain parcel of real estate located on Jonesville Lockhart Highway as shown in tax map 37-0-0-1 for \$2,445.00 which represents the estimated taxes which would have been paid by Mr. Allen since 2005 when the property was deeded to Union County plus attorney's fees and costs.

Ben Ivey: Made a motion to adopt the ordinance authorizing the execution and delivery of a Quit Claim Deed to Emslie Elmore Allen conveying the interest of Union County, South Carolina, if any, in a certain parcel of real estate located on Jonesville Lockhart Highway as shown in tax map 37-0-0-1 for \$2,445.00 which represents the estimated taxes which would have been paid by Mr. Allen since 2005 when the property was deeded to Union County plus attorney's fees and costs.

Ralph Tucker: Seconded the motion. The vote was unanimous.

Chairman Frank Hart introduced in title only an ordinance ordering a referendum in Union County, South Carolina, to submit to the electors of the County the question of whether the County shall adopt the Council-Administrator form of government with a County Council comprised of six (6) Council Members elected for four (4) year terms from single member districts and a chairman of County Council elected for a four (4) year term from the County at large or shall retain its existing form of government (Council-Supervisor with a County Council comprised of six (6) Council Members elected for four (4) year terms from single member districts and a Supervisor elected for a four (4) year term from the County at large); providing for the form of ballot to be used; providing for notice of the referendum; and providing all other things necessary to submit the aforesaid question.

Ben Ivey: Made a motion to dispense with referring the ordinance to a committee and to accept first reading of the ordinance ordering a referendum in Union County, South Carolina, to submit to the electors of the County the question of whether the County shall adopt the Council-Administrator form of government with a County Council comprised of six (6) Council Members elected for four (4) year terms from single member districts and a chairman of County Council elected for a four (4) year term from the County at large or shall retain its existing form of government (Council-Supervisor with a County Council comprised of six (6) Council Members elected for four (4) year terms from single member districts and a Supervisor elected for a four (4) year term from the County at large); providing for the form of ballot to be used; providing for notice of the referendum; and providing all other things necessary to submit the aforesaid question.

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

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Chairman Frank Hart introduced in title only an ordinance amending and revising the terms and provisions of the Union County Code of Ordinances related to the appointment of trustees to the Union Hospital District, so as to reduce the number of trustees to three (3), and resetting their terms of office and appointment dates; and other matters related thereto.

Ben Ivey: Made a motion to dispense with referring the ordinance to a committee and to accept first reading of the ordinance amending and revising the terms and provisions of the Union County Code of Ordinances related to the appointment of trustees to the Union Hospital District, so as to reduce the number of trustees to three (3), and resetting their terms of office and appointment dates; and other matters related thereto.

Ralph Tucker: Seconded the motion. The vote was unanimous.

Chairman Frank Hart gave his Supervisor's Report. He thanked Senators Martin, Peeler, Cromer and Representative Doug Gilliam on the Local Government Fund. The LGF is now tied to the State General Fund so that if the General Fund is up 5% then the LGF would go up 5% and if it goes down then the LGF would go down. Because of the new law Union County will get \$58,000 more in Local Government Funds this fiscal year. He, Councilman Ralph Tucker and Councilman Tommie Hill attended the South Carolina Association of Counties Conference where they heard a presentation by the National Association of Counties Deputy Director. They are working with the federal government on the waters of the US regulations related to EPA and the Corp of Engineers getting down into things that really are a body of water which makes it cumbersome from the regulatory standpoint pertaining to storm drainage ditches and that sort of thing. They think they can get some changes this year that will make it easier for us to do business to help development and lower the cost of projects. They heard from a South Carolina Legislative panel that said one of the hot upcoming issues is Santee Cooper. South Carolina Electric and Gas was sold off to Dominion Energy. Santee Cooper is still held by the State. It impacts Union County because our cooperatives are tied into that and it can affect their rates to the customers. They will be looking at funding for local schools on how to be more equitable and provide a quality education for all the kids in South Carolina and not just in those areas where development is taking place. They talked about the Rural Economic Development Fund which is a new program the State has implemented to be used for school improvements and infrastructure in rural South Carolina. He attended a forum on public corruption in South Carolina where they proposed some good systems to reduce and eliminate corruption. We must define a process for reporting. We need an ethical conduct agreement with all elected officials and need to hold each other accountable. They recommend third party investigations of any allegations against elected officials in county government. Secretary of Commerce Bobby Hitt spoke about how economic activity has slowed a little and it is related to concerns over tariffs. Foreign direct investments were about 27% last year and it is expected to be about that again this year. It was over 50% previously. Mr. Hitt's recommendation was to be ready, to be site ready and the Department of Commerce plans to support rural communities more going forward. He talked about a program they had piloted with Volvo in Berkley County to provide GED applicant's training which employers would recognize as one year of manufacturing experience. Chairman Frank Hart stated we are already doing that with Operation Workforce by taking our kids who had no plans for post-secondary training and putting them through training for employment. He had several counties approach him about our community scholarship program as they were interested in providing it in their counties.

Chairman Frank Hart called for any committee reports but there were none.

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Ben Ivey: Made a motion to go into executive session to discuss a personnel matter and a contractual matter.

Tracie Campbell: Seconded the motion. The vote was unanimous.

The County Council went into executive session to discuss a personnel matter and a contractual matter.

Chairman Frank Hart stated they were ready to close the executive session and no votes were taken during executive session.

Ben Ivey: Made a motion to close executive session.

Ralph Tucker: Seconded the motion. The vote was unanimous

The County Council closed executive session and returned to regular session.

Chairman Frank Hart stated next on the agenda was to discuss the building official position.

Kacie Petrie: Made a motion to fill the building official position with a full time employee and allow the County Supervisor to negotiate and finalize the salary using the current budget which had been appropriated by Council for the fiscal year 2019-2020.

Tommie Hill: Seconded the motion. The vote was unanimous.

Chairman Frank Hart called for any other business but there was none.

Kacie Petrie: Made a motion to adjourn the meeting.

David Sinclair: Seconded the motion. The vote was unanimous.

The meeting was adjourned at 8:34 p.m.

Frank Hart, Chairman
Union County Council

Linda G. Jolly, Clerk to Council