



## GREENVILLE COUNTY COUNCIL

### Minutes

Regular Council Meeting

March 1, 2022

6:04 p.m.

County Square - Council Chambers

#### Council Members

**Mr. Willis Meadows**, *Chairman, District 19*

**Mr. Dan Tripp**, *Vice-Chairman, District 28*

**Mrs. Xanthene Norris**, *Chairman Pro Tem, District 23*

**Mr. Joe Dill**, *District 17*

**Mr. Mike Barnes**, *District 18*

**Mr. Stephen Shaw**, *District 20*

**Mr. Chris Harrison**, *District 21*

**Mr. Stan Tzouvelekas**, *District 22*

**Mrs. Liz Seman**, *District 24*

**Mr. Ennis Fant, Sr.**, *District 25*

**Mr. Lynn Ballard**, *District 26*

**Mr. Butch Kirven**, *District 27*

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Pursuant to the Freedom of Information Act, notice of the meeting date, time, place and agenda was posted online and on the bulletin board at County Square and made available to the newspapers, radio stations, television stations and concerned citizens.

#### Council Members Absent

None

#### Staff Present

**Joe Kernell**, *County Administrator*

**Mark Tollison**, *County Attorney*

**Kim Wunder**, *Assistant County Attorney*

**John Hansley**, *Deputy County Administrator*

**Regina McCaskill**, *Clerk to Council*

**Jessica Stone**, *Deputy Clerk to Council*

**Pam Gilliam**, *Administrative Assistant*

**Hesha Gamble**, *Engineering*

**Tee Coker**, *Planning Director*

**Ted Lambrecht**, *Director, Parks, Recreation and Tourism*

**Nicole Wood**, *Assistant County Administrator*

**Meredith Papapieris**, *Director of Grants and Special Projects*

#### Others Present

**Sheriff Hobart Lewis**, *Greenville County Sheriff's Office*

#### Call to Order

Chairman Willis Meadows

**Invocation** - *introduced by Chairman Willis Meadows*

Pastor David Shoemaker  
Bethel Calvary Baptist Church, Taylors

#### Pledge of Allegiance

Councilor Shaw recognized an audience member, Leona Crouch, whose father was born in the Ukraine. He requested a moment of silence in support for the people of Ukraine and the struggles they were experiencing.

Councilor Fant recognized the members of Vision 25 and Upstate Circle of Friends who were in attendance.

**Item (4) Approval of Minutes**

**Action:** Councilor Seman moved to approve the minutes from the February 15, 2022, Regular County Council meeting.

Motion carried unanimously.

**Item (5) Appearances – Current Agenda Items**

- **Stevie Klein** - appeared regarding Item 14.b. Recall 2nd Amendment Sanctuary Ordinance from the Public Safety Committee
- **James Hoard** - appeared regarding Item 14.b. Recall 2nd Amendment Sanctuary Ordinance from the Public Safety Committee
- **Abraham Varaghese** - appeared regarding Item 14.b. Recall 2nd Amendment Sanctuary Ordinance from the Public Safety Committee
- **Mark Lynch** - appeared regarding Item 14.b. Recall 2nd Amendment Sanctuary Ordinance from the Public Safety Committee
- **Barbara Wilson** - appeared regarding Item 14.b. Recall 2nd Amendment Sanctuary Ordinance from the Public Safety Committee
- **James Wickes** - appeared regarding Item 14.b. Recall 2nd Amendment Sanctuary Ordinance from the Public Safety Committee and Item 8.b. Project Dolphin
- **Sarah Lynch** - appeared regarding Item 14.b. Recall 2nd Amendment Sanctuary Ordinance from the Public Safety Committee

**Item (6) Public Hearings**

**a. Metropolitan Sewer Subdistrict Annexation – West Georgia and Sullivan Roads**

A public hearing was held for the purpose of receiving comments from the public regarding a resolution to enlarge the Metropolitan Sewer Subdistrict to include the real properties located at the intersection of West Georgia Road and Sullivan Road, Simpsonville, South Carolina.

There being no speakers, Councilor Ballard declared the public hearing closed.

**b. Metropolitan Sewer Subdistrict Annexation – Jenkins Bridge Road Property**

A public hearing was held for the purpose of receiving comments from the public regarding a resolution to enlarge the Metropolitan Sewer Subdistrict to include the real property located at the intersection of Jenkins Bridge Road and Highway 418, Fountain Inn, South Carolina.

There being no speakers, Councilor Ballard declared the public hearing closed.

**Item (7) Consent Agenda**

- a. 2022 LWCF Funding Request – Pavilion Recreation Complex (Finance)**
- b. 2022 AARP Community Challenge (Finance)**
- c. South Carolina’s American Rescue Plan Grant Application (Finance)**
- d. Community Project Application / Upstate Circle of Friend – Computer Upgrades \$6,379.00 (Finance)**

**Action:** Councilor Kirven moved to approve the Consent Agenda Items.

Motion carried unanimously.

**Item (8)      Resolutions**

**a.      Metropolitan Sewer Subdistrict Annexation / West Georgia and Sullivan Roads**

**Action:**      Councilor Ballard moved for adoption a resolution to enlarge the boundaries of the Metropolitan Sewer Subdistrict to include the real properties located at the intersection of West Georgia Road and Sullivan Road, Simpsonville, South Carolina, and to provide for public notice thereto.

Motion carried unanimously.

**b.      Metropolitan Sewer Subdistrict Annexation / Jenkins Bridge Road Property**

**Action:**      Councilor Ballard moved for adoption a resolution to enlarge the boundaries of the Metropolitan Sewer Subdistrict to include the real properties located at the intersection of Jenkins Bridge Road and Highway 418, Fountain Inn, South Carolina.

Motion carried unanimously.

**c.      Project Dolphin / Inducement Resolution**

**Action:**      Vice-Chairman Tripp moved for adoption a resolution authorizing the execution and delivery of an inducement agreement by and between Greenville County, South Carolina and Project Dolphin, whereby, under certain conditions, Greenville County would execute a fee in lieu of tax and special source credit agreement with respect to a project in the County whereby the project would be subject to payment of certain fees in lieu of taxes, and whereby project/company would be provided certain credits against fee payment in reimbursement of investment in related qualified infrastructure; and providing for related matters.

Motion carried unanimously.

**d.      Project Lightyear / Inducement Resolution**

**Action:**      Vice-Chairman Tripp moved for adoption a resolution authorizing the execution and delivery of an inducement agreement by and between Greenville County, South Carolina and Project Lightyear, whereby, under certain conditions, Greenville County would execute a fee in lieu of tax and special source credit agreement with respect to a project in the County whereby the project would be subject to payment of certain fees in lieu of taxes, and whereby project/company would be provided certain credits against fee payment in reimbursement of investment in related qualified infrastructure; and providing for related matters.

Motion carried unanimously.

**e.      Project Hands / Inducement Resolution**

**Action:**      Vice-Chairman Tripp moved for adoption a resolution authorizing the execution and delivery of an inducement agreement by and between Greenville County, South Carolina and Project Hands, whereby, under certain conditions, Greenville County would execute a fee in lieu of tax and special source credit agreement with respect to a project in the County whereby the project would be subject to payment of certain fees in lieu of taxes, and whereby project/company would be provided certain credits against fee payment in reimbursement of investment in related qualified infrastructure; and providing for related matters.

Motion carried unanimously.

**f. Project Rebuild / Inducement Resolution**

**Action:** Vice-Chairman Tripp moved for adoption a resolution authorizing the execution and delivery of an inducement agreement by and between Greenville County, South Carolina and Project Rebuild, whereby, under certain conditions, Greenville County would execute a fee in lieu of tax agreement with respect to a project in the County whereby the project would be subject to payment of certain fees in lieu of taxes, and providing for related matters.

Motion carried unanimously.

**Item (9) Ordinances – Third Reading**

**a. Zoning Ordinances**

**i. CZ-2022-003:** Property of Kamlesh Patel of V-go Holdings, LLC, located on W. Georgia Road and Sullivan Road, requesting rezoning from R-S and FRD to FRD-MC with conditions.

**Action:** Councilor Dill moved adoption of the ordinance at third reading.

Motion carried unanimously.

**ii. CZ-2022-004:** Property of Little Loaders, LLC, located at 2310 Anderson Road, requesting rezoning from I-1 to S-1.

**Action:** Councilor Dill moved adoption of the ordinance at third reading.

Motion carried unanimously.

**iii. CZ-2022-008:** Property of Chowfair Co., Inc., located on B Street, 3<sup>rd</sup> Avenue, and 4<sup>th</sup> Avenue, requesting rezoning from R-7.5 to R-6.

**Action:** Councilor Dill moved adoption of the ordinance at third reading.

Motion carried unanimously.

**b. Anderson / Greenville Joint County Industrial Business Park Agreement Amendment / Equinox Mill, LLC**

**Action:** Vice-Chairman Tripp moved for adoption at third reading an ordinance to amend an agreement for the development of a joint county industrial and business park (2010 Park) of Greenville and Anderson Counties so as to enlarge the park to include certain property of Equinox Mill, LLC.

Motion carried unanimously.

**c. Anderson / Greenville Joint County Industrial Business Park Agreement Amendment / Old Dominion Freight Line, Inc.**

**Action:** Vice-Chairman Tripp moved for adoption at third reading an ordinance to amend an agreement for the development of a joint county industrial and business park (2010 Park) of Greenville and Anderson Counties so as to enlarge the park to include certain property of Old Dominion Freight Line, Inc.

Motion carried unanimously.

**d. Anderson / Greenville Joint County Industrial Business Park (2010 Park) Agreement Amendment – United Community Bank (formerly Project Spruce)**

**Action:** Vice-Chairman Tripp moved for adoption at third reading an ordinance to amend an agreement for the development of a joint county industrial and business park (2010 Park) of Anderson and Greenville Counties so as to enlarge the park (United Community Bank – Project Spruce - additional property) and to enter into an Intergovernmental Agreement with the City of Greenville, South Carolina, in connection therewith

**Action:** Councilor Fant moved to hold the item. He stated the other United Community Bank ordinance was held in the Finance Committee and he wanted to give it time to “catch up.”

Councilor Harrison requested information regarding why the item was held in the Finance Committee.

Chairman Meadows stated the item was held in order to obtain additional information.

Vice-Chairman Tripp inquired about the Mr. Fant’s questions, which were the reason the item was held.

Councilor Fant stated the item was simply held, it was nothing “nefarious.” Mr. Fant stated he had his questions ready and would submit them to United Community Bank.

Councilor Seman stated the motion to hold coming out of the Finance Committee was not a unanimous vote.

Vice-Chairman Tripp stated the groundbreaking for UCB (United Community Bank) was scheduled for later in the month. He felt there was something “nefarious” regarding the motion to hold; it was unfair for three (3) people to have the ability to hold an item and not present it to full Council for debate.

Chairman Meadows stated he did not want the audience to have a “false sense” of what was going on. County Council had operated with committees for a number of years. The “work” was done in the committees. They all consisted of five (5) Council Members; three (3) people on any committee was considered a majority. Mr. Meadows stated for anyone to say that three people controlled a committee was ludicrous. The committee system was how Council normally conducted business; sometimes a Council Member was on the “winning side” and sometimes they were on the “losing side”; however, that was no indication that the system did not work.

Councilor Seman asked would it be considered a public meeting if three members of a committee met outside of the committee to discuss an item on the agenda.

Chairman Meadows stated as far as he knew, that situation had never been considered a public meeting. He asked Ms. Seman if she was aware of any three members of a committee who had met outside the committee setting.

Councilor Seman stated it happened “all the time.” She asked Mr. Tollison to weigh in on the issue.

Mr. Tollison stated under state law, it would constitute a public meeting if those individuals were discussing Council business.

Motion to hold was denied by a roll call vote of six (Barnes, Meadows, Shaw, Tzouvelekas, Norris and Fant) in favor and six (Dill, Harrison, Seman, Ballard, Kirven and Tripp) in opposition.

Councilor Fant stated with the motion to hold having failed, the next vote could vote again to “kill” the item.

Councilor Seman stated the items that were under consideration on the evening’s agenda, and any agenda, had real consequences, with real people, real jobs and real impacts. She asked her colleagues to refrain from referring to Council business as games. She asked Mr. Tollison if the full Council could vote on an item that was held in a committee; she asked why the item was placed on the evening’s agenda, if it had been held in the Finance Committee.

Councilor Fant stated the item should not be on the agenda as it was held in the Finance Committee.

Mr. Tollison stated the item in question was a “separate piece” from what was held in committee; it was related to the part of Project Spruce that was approved by Council in 2021. If approved, it would add properties to the multi-county industrial park and was a separate economic development matter from the one that was currently sitting in committee.

Councilor Fant stated the Finance Committee could not “rubber stamp” every FILOT request presented. United Community Bank was supposed to pay \$1.4 million in taxes; a FILOT was approved for the company two (2) years ago which reduced the tax liability to \$800,000. The company had requested another FILOT which would reduce the tax liability to \$500,000. United Community Bank was building a new building; however, they were not adding additional jobs.

Councilor Seman stated the company planned to hire an additional 100 employees.

Councilor Fant stated if the tax liability was reduced for those companies who had the ability to pay but were not required to pay, the County would be forced to raise taxes for its citizens, including those on fixed incomes.

Councilor Seman stated Mr. Fant sat on the GADC (Greenville Area Development Corporation) board and was well aware of the economic impact involved.

Councilor Kirven asked if United Community Bank was the company that had promised to invest more than \$65 million in Greenville County; the company would also pay taxes on the new facility at the agreed upon rate.

Chairman Meadows confirmed the company would pay a fee in lieu of tax. Mr. Meadows stated the motion on the floor was to either approve or deny the item; Mr. Fant had requested to hold the item in order to obtain additional information.

Councilor Ballard requested clarification from Mr. Tollison in regards to the item in question and the item that was held in the Finance Committee; he asked if they were the same item.

Mr. Tollison stated it was the same company. In terms of the item in question, it was an ordinance to add additional properties to the multi-county park. The item held in the Finance Committee was a “different ask for”, to increase the company’s investment.

Councilor Ballard stated the proposed ordinance on the floor was not a request to increase the company’s present FILOT; it was an ordinance to add additional properties to the current MCIP.

Chairman Meadows stated it was related to the item held in the Finance Committee; it was like an inducement. The intent was to keep the two items together. Council “got in trouble once before” when they failed to keep items together.

Vice-Chairman Tripp reminded his colleagues that the item on the floor was at third reading. All twelve Council Members had voted to approve it at second reading. Mr. Tripp stated “to do this” at third reading was the “sheer definition of playing games.” The company was willing to invest millions of dollars and move its national headquarters to Greenville.

Chairman Meadows stated the discussion had lasted long enough. He requested Ms. McCaskill, Clerk to Council, call the roll.

Motion as presented was denied by a roll call vote of six (Dill, Harrison, Seman, Ballard, Kirven and Tripp) in favor and six (Barnes, Meadows, Shaw, Tzouvelekas, Norris and Fant) in opposition.

**e. NHT Southchase, LLC and MDH F1 Greenville Southchase, LLC / Fee in Lieu of Tax Agreement Amendment**

**Action:** Vice-Chairman Tripp moved for adoption at third reading an ordinance authorizing an amendment to a fee in lieu of tax agreement by and among Greenville County, South Carolina, NHT Southchase, LLC and MDH F1 Greenville Southchase, LLC.

Motion carried unanimously.

**f. Greenville – Anderson Multi County Industrial Business Park (2010 Park) Agreement Amendment / Lollis Metals, Inc.**

**Action:** Vice-Chairman Tripp moved for adoption at third reading an ordinance to amend an agreement for the development of a joint county industrial and business park (2010 Park) of Greenville and Anderson Counties so as to enlarge the park to include certain property of Lollis Metals, Inc.

Motion carried unanimously.

**Item (10) Ordinances – Second Reading**

**a. Zoning Ordinances**

**i. CZ-2022-011:** Property of Jeronimo Hirschfeld of OREI Greenville Land Property Owner, LLC, located on Stallings Road, requesting rezoning from R-12 to R-M20. The Planning Commission and Committee recommended denial.

**Action:** On behalf of the Committee, Councilor Dill moved approval of the ordinance at second reading.

Motion was denied unanimously.

**Item (11) Ordinances – First Reading**

**a. Master Lease Authorization for the New Greenville County Administrative Building**

Vice-Chairman Tripp presented for first reading an ordinance to authorize the County Administrator to negotiate leases of available office space in the Greenville County Administrative Building located at the corner of Church Street and University Ridge, Greenville, South Carolina; and to authorize the County Administrator and Chairman of County Council to execute such lease agreements.

Chairman Meadows stated the item would remain on the floor.

**b. Project Hands / Fee in Lieu of Tax Agreement**

Vice-Chairman Tripp presented for first reading an ordinance authorizing the execution and delivery of a fee in lieu of tax agreement by and between Greenville County, South Carolina and a company known to the County at this time as Project Hands with respect to certain economic development property in the County, whereby such property would be subject to certain payments in lieu of taxes, including the provision of certain special source credits; and other matters related thereto.

Chairman Meadows stated the item would remain on the floor.

**c. Project Lightyear / Fee in Lieu of Tax Agreement**

Vice-Chairman Tripp presented for first reading an ordinance authorizing the execution and delivery of a fee in lieu of tax agreement by and between Greenville County, South Carolina and a company or companies known to the County at this time as Project Lightyear with respect to certain economic development property in the County, whereby such property would be subject to certain payments in lieu of taxes, including the provision of certain special source credits; and other matters related thereto.

Chairman Meadows stated the item would remain on the floor.

**d. Project Rebuild / Fee in Lieu of Tax Agreement**

Vice-Chairman Tripp presented for first reading an ordinance authorizing the execution and delivery of a fee in lieu of tax agreement by and between Greenville County, South Carolina and a company or companies known to the County at this time as Project Rebuild, with respect to certain economic development property in the County, whereby such property would be subject to certain payments in lieu of taxes; and other matters related thereto.

Chairman Meadows stated the item would remain on the floor.

**Item (12) Committee Reports**

There were no reports.

**Item (13) Administrator's Report**

There was no report.

**Item (14) Requests and Motions**

**a. Recall Project Kick from Finance Committee**

**Action:** Councilor Ballard moved to suspend Council Rule 5.f.3. stated as follows:

*"Matters before committees shall be reported to full Council only if approved, approved as modified, or with 'no recommendation.' When the question before a committee is for approval or approval as modified, a tie-vote fails and the matter (other than a zoning matter) is defeated. The Chairman of a standing committee shall report upon the activity of the committee at each regular County Council meeting, and the agenda of every regular meeting shall provide a time for committee chairman to make these reports."*

**Action:** Chairman Meadows ruled Councilor Ballard's motion out of order.

**Point of Order:** Vice-Chairman Tripp called for a Point of Order.

Chairman Meadows stated when an item was defeated in committee, it could not be brought back up on the Council floor. An item could be resurrected in the committee where it was defeated. Mr. Meadows quoted Section 6.42 of Mason's Manual as follows:

*"If an amendment is defeated in committee, it may or may not come back for a vote before the committee. If it does not come back for a vote by the way of reconsideration at the next scheduled meeting of the committee, the bill dies. If the committee casts a vote on the bill that dies, then the bill is defeated and cannot advance or be recalled to the full body for reconsideration."*

Councilor Fant stated requested a roll call vote.



Vice-Chairman Tripp stated Mr. Meadows' ruling was premature. Mr. Ballard had not moved to recall Project Kick; he had simply asked to suspend Council Rules. The proper vote was whether to suspend Council Rules or not.

Chairman Meadows stated Mr. Tripp was correct.

Vice-Chairman Tripp requested support of the motion to suspend Council Rules. For too long, Council standing committees had become "kill committees." Many of the audience members were present as the Committee on Public Safety had become a "kill committee." There were at least six members of Council who fundamentally disagreed with the ability of three (3) Council Members to kill an item in committee and not allow full Council the right to discuss the item.

Councilor Fant stated the purpose of Council standing committees was to debate; there would be no point having committees if every item was presented to full Council without committee input. Mr. Fant stated there were no "kill committees" as evidenced by the number of items on the evening's agenda that were brought forward by a standing committee; 90% of the agenda were FILOT requests that the Finance Committee had approved. Tax money was given away "every single week" to businesses. Councilor Fant stated approximately 10% of FILOT requests were turned down by the Finance Committee.

Councilor Harrison stated all items presented to the Planning and Development Committee were sent forth to full Council for debate, whether they were approved or denied.

Chairman Meadows stated on all standing committees, three (3) people can vote to deny an item and it never comes to full Council for debate; zoning matters were the only exception. Mr. Meadows stated any item that was not "good" for the taxpayers would be "killed", if possible.

Vice-Chairman Tripp stated Mason's made allowances for recalls of defeated items. That was the purpose for Mr. Ballard's request as well as his own. The committees were working great until Chairman Meadows restructured them. Mr. Tripp stated Chairman Meadows tried to remove him as Chairman of the Finance Committee but was unsuccessful; he then reconfigured the committees.

Councilor Kirven stated all twelve Council Members were elected to look out for the taxpayers of Greenville County. There were twelve (12) Council Members, representing twelve (12) Council districts, serving the 525,000 citizens of Greenville County. Each Council Member was accountable to those citizens; they should all be able to discuss and vote on any issue that protected the taxpayers. Three people on a committee should not be allowed to make those decisions for all twelve (12) Council Members.

Chairman Meadows stated the committee system worked and he saw no reason to make any changes. If Council decided to present every item to the Committee of the Whole, the rules would have to be changed. At this point, things would remain as they were.

Motion to suspend Council Rule 5.f.3. was denied by a roll call vote of six (Dill, Harrison, Seman, Ballard, Kirven and Tripp) in favor and six (Barnes, Meadows, Shaw, Tzouvelekas, Norris and Fant) in opposition.

**b. Recall 2<sup>nd</sup> Amendment Sanctuary Ordinance form the Public Safety Committee**

**Action:** As noticed on the County Council agenda, Vice-Chairman Tripp moved to recall the Second Amendment Sanctuary ordinance from the Public Safety Committee.

Vice-Chairman Tripp stated it was his opinion that some Council Members had been "tone deaf" in regards to the issue. In light of world events, there was a real fear about the dangers of overshadowing government. Mr. Tripp stated it was time for a simple "yes or no" vote on the sanctuary bill.

Councilor Fant stated he understood the passion regarding the Second Amendment issue; however, the committee system was in place and the item had been referred to the Public Safety Committee. Mr. Fant stated the Attorney General had presented his opinion regarding the issue.

South Carolina Attorney General Wilson had offered an opinion regarding the issue; local governments were prevented from passing ordinances regulating firearms. The City of Columbia was successfully sued by the Attorney General regarding such an ordinance. Mr. Fant stated it appeared to him that County Council did not have the right to pass a similar ordinance.

Chairman Meadows stated the issue in question was whether the item should be brought out of the Public Safety Committee and presented to full Council, not if Council had the authority to pass such an ordinance.

Vice-Chairman Tripp stated the item had been refused to be held in the Public Safety Committee. The only alternative available was to withdraw it from the Committee.

Councilor Tzouvelekas stated he was “100% behind” the Second Amendment, the penalties and the right to have guns. He would not vote to pull the item out of committee. Mr. Barnes, Chairman of the Public Safety Committee, would put the item on an agenda in the near future. The committee would vote on the item. Mr. Tzouvelekas stated had plan to support the item when it was presented to the committee.

Councilor Dill asked if the email Mr. Tollison sent to Council regarding the Attorney General’s opinion was public information.

Councilor Shaw stated the Attorney General’s opinion on an issue was published and was considered public information.

Councilor Seman asked for confirmation regarding committee chairs’ jurisdiction regarding items on committee agendas; she asked if Chairman Meadows had jurisdiction over committee matters. The item in question was referred to the Public Safety Committee by Mr. Meadows; however, that committee had not taken the item up for discussion. Ms. Seman asked if Mr. Meadows had the ability to get the item on an agenda for the Public Safety Committee.

Chairman Meadows stated it was the decision of a committee chair to put an item on an agenda or not.

Councilor Shaw stated he was very interested in the item and appreciated all interested audience members who were in attendance. He did not think the Public Safety Committee had met since the proposed amendment was introduced; he suggested putting it on an agenda and let the members of that committee debate the issue.

Motion as presented was denied by a roll call vote of five (Dill, Seman, Ballard, Kirven and Tripp) in favor and seven (Barnes, Meadows, Shaw, Harrison, Tzouvelekas, Norris and Fant) in opposition.

Chairman Meadows stated there was one item left on the agenda.

**Action:**

Councilor Ballard moved to adjourn.

After a brief discussion regarding the validity of the motion, without objection, the meeting ensued.

**Requests and Motions (continued)**

- Councilor Dill recognized the students from Blue Ridge High School who were in attendance. Mr. Dill stated they were enrolled in Ms. Woods’ Government class.

Mr. Dill stated he wished there was some way Council Members were more accommodating to businesses wanting to invest in Greenville County. Most businesses paid 12% in taxes; homeowners paid 4% on their primary residence. New businesses would pay taxes; they were simply asking for a “solid fee”, not to be exempt from paying taxes. Mr. Dill stated the County competed with other entities for businesses. FILOT’s helped attract businesses; in turn, businesses brought good jobs to the area. Every decision Council made had an effect on the citizens of the County.

- Councilor Barnes stated landlords paid 6% in taxes on rental properties, as well as other business owners. That was the cost of doing business in Greenville County, along with insurance and other business-related costs.
- Councilor Harrison stated some other counties were considering a pandemic or Covid incentive for their employees. Mr. Harrison requested Administration explore the possibility of doing the same for all Greenville County employees. There may be some eligibility requirements involved, such as length of employment, etc. Mr. Harrison stated it was important to show appreciation to those individuals who worked during the pandemic.
- Councilor Tzouvelekas recognized his sister, Hope, who was in attendance.

Mr. Tzouvelekas wished Happy Birthday to Ms. Norris. He added that she had been on Council since 1994 and would be celebrating her 93<sup>rd</sup> birthday on March 6. Ms. Norris had dedicated her life to the residents of Greenville County.

- Councilor Norris stated one of the areas Council had recently disagreed about was actually owned by several prominent black families, consisting of school teachers, doctors and other professionals. They were very proud of the area and the City of Greenville had “never touched it.” Ms. Norris stated she wanted it preserved.
- Councilor Seman thanked all the individuals who interviewed earlier in the evening for the County’s board and commission vacancies; additional interviews would be conducted in the next few weeks. It was wonderful to see so many qualified people from across the County representing so many districts.

Ms. Seman stated she had the opportunity to attend the Urban League Gala for its 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary. It was great that Council had the opportunity to highlight the area’s non-profit organizations and the work those organizations were doing throughout Greenville County.

Several years ago there had been some discussion regarding the formation of a “Citizen Academy.” Ms. Seman requested staff resurrect those thoughts and present some possible opportunities. It was important to have an informed electorate; doing so would help explain the processes involved regarding economic development projects, zoning requests and other matters before Council.

Ms. Seman requested information regarding the County’s Leadership Academy; how current employers were being groomed and taught to lead.

- Councilor Fant thanked his colleagues for their “spirit of cooperation” earlier in the day in the appointment of new members of the Alcohol and Drug Abuse Commission and the Planning Commission. Council Members gave due diligence and great consideration when casting their votes.

Mr. Fant stated things were moving forward extremely well at SCTAC. Its largest tenant, Lockheed Martin, recently signed another 5-year lease. Some new ideas were on the forefront in regards to the branding of SCTAC in association with the presence of Lockheed Martin.

- Councilor Ballard stated that earlier he was under the impression that Council had voted to adjourn the meeting; he apologized for appearing disrespectful, as that was not his intent.
- Councilor Kirven stated he appreciated the lively discussion and the comments from the evening’s citizen speakers.

Mr. Kirven stated the County’s economic development system was complicated. The State of South Carolina was currently operating under a Constitution that was written in 1895; it stated that all industrial businesses, as well as a few other types of business properties, were to be assessed at a tax rate of 10.5%. If industries were assessed at that rate, the State would never get anyone to invest. Rather than changing the Constitution, the General Assembly developed the FILOT (fee in lieu of taxes) to equalize the playing field and make South Carolina competitive with other states. Mr. Kirven stated the tax assessment rate was normally reduced from 10.5% to 6%, the rate business and commercial properties were required to pay, and the property was subject to a fee instead of ad valorem property

taxes. The FILOT locked the rate in for a certain number of years in exchange for a graduated list of required capital investments. Industries brought good-paying jobs to the area, which was good for the economy. Companies were initially given a code name; they retained the right to accept a proposal or not. The code names protected the competitive field and gave all interested entities the opportunity to recruit some of the best companies. Nothing was given away; terms of a FILOT were carefully measured against what the industry would bring to the area in income and other benefits to the County. Mr. Kirven stated the process was complex; however, it was open and transparent.

**Item (15)**      **Adjournment**

**Action:**      Councilor Tripp moved to adjourn the meeting.

Motion carried unanimously and the meeting adjourned at 7:44 p.m.

Respectfully submitted:

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Regina G. McCaskill  
Clerk to Council