



GREENVILLE COUNTY COUNCIL

Minutes
Regular Meeting
July 18, 2023
6:05 p.m.

County Square - Council Chambers

Council Members

Mr. Dan Tripp, *Chairman, District 28*
Mrs. Liz Seman, *Vice-Chairwoman, District 24*
Mr. Butch Kirven, *Chairman Pro Tem, District 27*
Mr. Joey Russo, *District 17*
Mr. Mike Barnes, *District 18*
Mr. Benton Blount, *District 19*
Mr. Stephen Shaw, *District 20*
Mr. Chris Harrison, *District 21*
Mr. Stan Tzouvelekas, *District 22*
Mr. Alan Mitchell, *District 23*
Mr. Ennis Fant, Sr., *District 25*
Mr. Rick Bradley, *District 26*

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
Dean Campbell, Deputy County Attorney
John Hansley, Deputy County Administrator
Regina McCaskill, Clerk to Council
Jessica Stone, Deputy Clerk to Council
Pam Gilliam, Administrative Assistant
Phillip Simmons, Information Systems
Hesha Gamble, Assistant County Administrator

Tee Coker, Assistant County Administrator
Shannon Herman, Assistant County Administrator
Bob Mihalic, Governmental Relations Officer
Ted Lambrecht, Director; Parks, Recreation and Tourism
Meredith Papapieris, Director of Grants and Special Projects
Ruth Parris, Budget Director
Stephanie Brown, Human Resources
Steward Lawrence, Human Resources

Others Present

Sheriff Hobart Lewis

Call to Order

Chairman Dan Tripp

Invocation

Councilor Alan Mitchell

Pledge of Allegiance

Item (4)

Approval of Minutes

- a. **June 20, 2023 – Regular County Council Meeting**
- b. **June 23, 2023 – Special Called County Council Meeting**

Councilor Tzouvelekas stated during the previous meeting, he had asked Mr. Kernell a question about the possibility of lowering the millage increase from 7 to 5 mills, with no effect on first responder positions. Mr. Tzouvelekas stated he had reviewed the draft minutes and that information was not included.

(NOTE: The information in question was recorded on page 3 of the June 23, 2023, Special Called County Council Meeting draft minutes.)

Action: Vice-Chairwoman Seman moved approval of the minutes from the June 20, 2023, Regular County Council Meeting and the June 23, 2023, Special Called County Council Meeting.

Motion carried with Councilor Tzouvelekas voting in opposition.

Item (5)

Proclamations and Special Recognition

- a. **Honoring John Hansley on his Retirement**

Vice-Chairwoman Seman presented a proclamation to Deputy County Administrator John Hansley on his retirement. Mr. Hansley guided generations of staff, providing support and sharing his wisdom from decades of experience, helping to create a dynamic workforce of professional public servants who honor his legacy with proficiency and results.

Greenville County Council honored the significant impacts made by Mr. John Hansley, acknowledged that his financial leadership helped create and maintain our community's outstanding quality of life, and thanked him for his leadership and abundant contributions to Greenville County, and wished him well in his retirement.

- b. **Honoring Paul Wickensimer on his Retirement**

Chairman Tripp presented a proclamation to Paul Wickensimer, Clerk of Court. Mr. Wickensimer was appointed Clerk of County in 2000 and was re-elected to five additional terms, making him one of the longest serving Clerks of Court for Greenville County. Mr. Tripp stated he had been a dedicated leader, a kind and gracious co-worker and a constant encourager with great wisdom, humor and humility.

Greenville County Council honored the outstanding career of Paul Wickensimer, thanked him for his 23 years of valuable service as the Clerk of Court, in addition to his prior 15 years as County Council representative for District 22, and wished him the very best in his retirement

Item (6)

Appearances – Current Agenda Items

There were no speakers.

Item (7)

Public Hearings

- a. **Greenville County Historic and Natural Resources Trust (HNRT) / Camp Awanita Project (formerly Project Campfire)**

A public hearing was held for the purpose of receiving comments from the public regarding an ordinance authorizing the Greenville County Historic and Natural Resources Trust (HNRT) to provide funding for the Camp Awanita Project.

- **Doug Harper** – appeared in favor of the proposed
- **Crystal O’Connor** – appeared in favor of the proposed
- **Harold Hall** – appeared in favor of the proposed
- **Kristin Austin-Gunter** – appeared in favor of the proposed

There being no other speakers, Chairman Pro Tem Kirven declared the public hearing closed.

Item (8)

Consent Agenda

- a. **SC Animal Care and Control Association Grant**
- b. **FY2023 Implementing Crisis Intervention Teams – Community Policing Development Grant**
- c. **FY2023 Law Enforcement Agency De-Escalation – Community Policing Development Grant**
- d. **Duke Energy Foundation Grant**
- e. **FY2023 Healthy Greenville Grant**
- f. **Lakeside Park Marker / 60 Year Celebration of the District 25 Community**

Action: Chairwoman Seman moved approval of the Consent Agenda items.

Motion carried unanimously.

Item (9)

Resolutions

- a. **Historic Property Designation – Slater Hall**

Action: Councilor Fant moved for adoption a resolution approving local historic designation for Slater Hall, located at 5 Whitney Street in Slater.

Councilor Shaw stated it was his understanding Representative Mike Burns and Senator Tom Corbin received \$100,000 per year for the upkeep and promotion of Slater Hall.

Councilor Fant stated he was unaware of any monies received for Slater Hall.

Chairman Tripp stated the item in question did not appropriate any monies to Slater Hall. The purpose of the item was to approve local historic designation for it.

Motion carried unanimously.

- b. **Historic Property Designation – Cedar Falls Park**

Action: Councilor Fant moved for adoption a resolution approving local historic designation for Cedar Falls Park, located at 201 Cedar Falls Road in unincorporated Fountain Inn.

Motion carried unanimously.

c. FY2024 – FY2026 Greenville County Redevelopment Authority Urban County Requalification

Action: Chairman Pro Tem Kirven moved for adoption a resolution to approve the extension of the Cooperative Agreement between Greenville County and the municipalities of Fountain Inn, Greer, Mauldin, Simpsonville, and Travelers Rest to obtain Urban County status with the United States Department of Housing and Urban Development and appoint the Greenville County Redevelopment Authority (GCRA) as its agent for the purpose of administering any grant funds received as a result of said agreement.

Motion carried unanimously.

d. Project Firehouse / Inducement Resolution

Action: Chairman Pro Tem Kirven moved for adoption a resolution authorizing the execution and delivery of an inducement agreement by and between Greenville County, South Carolina and Project Firehouse, 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.

e. Project Everest / Inducement Resolution

Action: Chairman Pro Tem Kirven moved for adoption a resolution authorizing the execution and delivery of an inducement agreement by and between Greenville County, South Carolina and Project Everest, whereby, under certain conditions, Greenville County would execute a fee in lieu of tax an 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, an whereby project would be provided certain credits against fee payments in reimbursement of investment in relate qualified infrastructure; and providing for related matters.

Motion carried unanimously.

Item (10) Ordinances – Third Reading

a. Zoning Ordinances

i. CZ-2023-032: Property of JNG of Greenville, LLC, located at 1008 W. Lee Road, Taylors, requesting rezoning from R-M20 to I-1.

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

Motion carried unanimously.

ii. CZ-2023-035: Property of Michael L. Riddle, located at 812 and 820 Antioch Church Road, Greenville, requesting rezoning from R-S to I-1.

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

Motion carried unanimously.

Councilor Tzouvelekas left the room, recusing himself from discussion and voting on the following item.

- iii. **CZ-2023-036:** Property of Donaldson Resources, LLC, located on Highway 25 and Donaldson Road, Greenville, requesting rezoning from C-2 to S-1.

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

Motion carried with a written abstention from Councilor Tzouvelekas.

Councilor Tzouvelekas returned to the meeting.

b. Greenville County Zoning Ordinance Text Amendment / Patios and Decks

Action: Councilor Fant moved for adoption at third reading an ordinance to amend Article 5, Section 5:9.7-8 Patio or Deck.

Motion carried unanimously.

c. Greenville County Comprehensive Plan Amendment / Augusta Road Corridor Strategic Plan (CP-2023-01)

Action: Councilor Fant moved for adoption at third reading an ordinance adopting the Augusta Road Corridor Strategic Plan as an amendment to the Greenville County Comprehensive Plan (2020).

Motion carried unanimously.

d. Greenville County Historic and Natural Resources Trust (HNRT) / Camp Awanita Project (formerly Project Campfire)

Action: Chairman Pro Tem Kirven moved for adoption at third reading an ordinance authorizing the Greenville County Historic and Natural Resources Trust (HNRT) to provide funding for the Camp Awanita Project.

Motion carried unanimously.

e. County of Greenville / FY 2025 Budget

Action: Chairman Pro Tem Kirven moved for adoption at third reading an ordinance adopting the County of Greenville FY 2025 Budget.

Action: Councilor Bradley moved to delay the review and approval of the County of Greenville FY 2025 budget until the last Council Meeting in March of 2024, allowing Council to review the actual expenditures of the financial year 2024 to determine expenditures for the following year.

Councilor Bradley stated Council had recently approved the largest budget increase in Greenville County history. The County's average growth revenue increase exceeded 10% annually. In addition, the County employee salary adjustment surpassed inflation and placed those salaries in the top 20%, compared to other counties nationwide. Mr. Bradley stated it was important to note that the cost of living in Greenville County remained below the national average. Considering those circumstances, it was crucial to exercise prudent financial responsibility by thoroughly evaluating the implication of such significant budget decisions. In other South Carolina counties, it was customary to review the budget for the following year only after assessing expenditures and new revenue for the current year, allowing Council make formal decisions based on actual financial data rather than rely solely on projected figures. He stated that practice would allow for more reasonable adjustments based on timely economic conditions. Mr. Bradley stated he made the motion to delay approval of the item in question to provide Council with ample time to review the actual expenditures of FY 2024 and base decisions on real data and financial insight. Councilor Bradley asked his colleagues to support the motion.

Motion was denied by a roll call vote of four (Blount, Shaw, Tzouvelekas and Bradley) in favor and eight (Russo, Barnes, Harrison, Mitchell, Seman, Fant, Kirven and Tripp) in opposition.

Councilor Shaw asked if the Advanced Target System for the Sheriff's Office was to be funded from the 2024 or 2025 Budget.

Mr. Kernell stated funding for the Advanced Target System was eliminated when the millage was reduced from the recommended 11 mills to 7 mills.

Councilor Shaw asked if a Council Member voted in favor of the proposed item, would they be voting against the Advanced Target System.

Chairman Tripp stated funding for the item was removed when the FY 2024 budget was approved.

Action: Councilor Tzouvelekas moved to suspend Council Rules to add the Advanced Target System back into the budget.

Action: Chairman Tripp ruled Councilor Tzouvelekas' motion out of order.

Councilor Tzouvelekas asked his colleagues to vote against the item in question. He stated the CEO of the Greenville Housing Authority had been charged with racketeering.

Action: Chairman Tripp called Councilor Tzouvelekas out of order stating his comment was not germane to the budget.

Councilor Tzouvelekas stated the FY 2025 proposed budget included no extra funding for roads. He stated he wanted the citizens of Greenville County to know there was a rumor that a potential 1¢ sales tax increase would "come out." Mr. Tzouvelekas stated the citizens of Greenville County should know they were potentially going to "be hit" with a 1¢ road increase.

Chairman Tripp stated there was no tax increase included in the FY 2025 budget.

Councilor Tzouvelekas asked Mr. Kernell would the salaries of first responders be decreased if the millage increase was reduced from 7 mills to 5 mills.

Mr. Kernell stated reducing the millage increase to 5 mills would result in a \$6 million deficit; something would have to be cut.

Councilor Tzouvelekas asked if the millage could be reduced to 5 mills without getting rid of any first responders.

Mr. Kernell reiterated that \$6 million would have to be cut from the budget.

Councilor Tzouvelekas stated \$10 million had been allotted for affordable housing, greenspace and “all that.”

Mr. Kernell stated it was up to Council to decide what items should be eliminated from the budget.

Councilor Tzouvelekas stated he wanted to remind everyone that the millage increase could be cut to 5 mills. He stated Council had been told that first responders “would not get their money” and the tax burden was “on the citizens.” Mr. Tzouvelekas stated he could not support the budget and asked his colleagues to follow suit.

Councilor Shaw stated he was disappointed in how difficult it was for a Council Member to get any information or factual numbers. He stated Mr. Kernell had provided “some numbers.” Mr. Shaw stated he had asked a number of questions and had consulted with a “senior Council Member.” The bottom line for him was the County ran out of COVID money and there was a massive expansion of spending schemes; affordable housing, city busing and charitable conservation easements. It was all a promotion of Asheville and Atlanta values on Greenville County citizens. Given that information, combined with a very expensive new building, there was nothing to do except ask the taxpayers for a “bail out.”

Councilor Bradley stated he was not in favor of the budget; however, Mr. Kernell had always answered all of his questions. Mr. Bradley stated he was kept well-informed by Mr. Kernell and staff.

Action: Vice-Chairwoman Seman called for the question.

Motion to call for the question carried.

Councilor Tzouvelekas requested a roll call vote.

Motion as presented carried by a vote of eight (Russo, Barnes, Harrison, Mitchell, Seman, Fant, Kirven and Tripp) in favor and four (Blount, Shaw, Tzouvelekas and Bradley) in opposition.

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

a. **Project Power / Fee in Lieu of Tax Agreement**

Action: Chairman Pro Tem Kirven moved for approval at second 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 Power 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.

Motion carried unanimously.

b. Anderson / Greenville Multi-County Industrial Business Park (2010 Park) Agreement Amendment – Project Power

Action: Chairman Pro Tem Kirven moved for approval at second 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.

Motion carried unanimously.

c. Gordon Street Affordable, LP (formerly WAHP Project Safe) / Special Source Credit Agreement

Action: Chairman Pro Tem Kirven moved for approval at second reading an ordinance authorizing the execution and delivery of a special source credit agreement by and between Greenville County, South Carolina, and Gordon Street Affordable, LP, with respect to certain investment in qualifying infrastructure related to the construction of a multi-family commercial housing development in the County to include certain affordable and workforce housing in the County, whereby such project would be subject to payments in lieu of taxes by virtue of its location in a joint county industrial and business park, and to application of certain special source credits; and other matters related thereto.

Motion carried unanimously.

d. Anderson / Greenville Multi County Industrial Business Park (2020 Park) Agreement Amendment – Gordon Street Affordable, LP (formerly WAHP Project Safe)

Action: Chairman Pro Tem Kirven moved for approval at second reading an ordinance to amend an agreement for the development of a joint county industrial and business park (2020 Park) of Anderson and Greenville Counties so as to enlarge the park.

Motion carried unanimously.

Item (12) Ordinances – First Reading

a. Zoning Ordinances

Councilor Fant presented for first reading Zoning Dockets **CZ-2023-046** through **CZ-2023-050**.

Chairman Tripp referred the items to the Planning and Development Committee.

b. Greenville County Land Development Regulations Amendment / Community Septic Systems

Councilor Fant presented for first reading an ordinance to amend and update the County Land Development Regulations to address the use of community septic systems.

Chairman Tripp stated the item would remain on the floor

c. Project Firehouse / Fee in Lieu of Tax Agreement

Chairman Pro Tem Kirven 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 Firehouse 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 Tripp stated the item would remain on the floor

d. Project Everest / Fee in Lieu of Tax Agreement

Chairman Pro Tem Kirven 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 Everest 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 Tripp stated the item would remain on the floor

e. Millage Opt-Out Ordinance

Councilor Shaw presented for first reading the “Greenville County Taxpayer Millage Opt-Out Ordinance”, an ordinance to enable Greenville County taxpayers to opt-out of certain (non-core) County Government spending schemes.

Chairman Tripp stated he had questions about the proposed item. He asked Mr. Tollison to weigh-in on the issue.

Mr. Tollison stated the proposed ordinance submitted by Mr. Shaw met the form and draftsmanship requirements; however, it was not prepared by the County Attorney’s Office. If consulted, the Legal Department would have informed those individuals interested in pursuing the matter that the item was in contradiction to Article 10 of the State of South Carolina Constitution, which indicated that “taxes must be uniform as levied.” Mr. Tollison stated there was no ability to do an “opt-out”, which would more than likely require an amendment to the South Carolina Constitution through a referendum. The General Assembly would be a good approach for those interested in pursuing the item in question. Mr. Tollison stated there were constitutional infirmities associated with the proposed.

Councilor Shaw asked Mr. Tollison if his legal opinion was that there was no way to accomplish the proposed constitutionally in the State of South Carolina.

Mr. Tollison stated he would be happy to work with Mr. Shaw on the issue.

Chairman Tripp referred the item to the Finance Committee.

Item (13)

Committee Reports

There were no reports.

Item (14)

Administrator's Report

Mr. Kernell stated most of the staff had moved to the new building and the evening's meeting would be the last held at the old County Square building. A committee meeting was held the previous evening in the new building and things went fairly well. Staff had been working very hard during the move. He had heard from several citizens regarding the new building and had received a number of compliments.

Mr. Kernell thanked John Hansley for his many years of dedication to Greenville County. Mr. Hansley's sound financial mind had helped Greenville County maintain its AAA bond rating for a number of years. Mr. Hansley's retirement was a sincere loss and would be sensed by all County employees, citizens and colleagues, whose lives were knowingly or unknowingly improved by his service to Greenville County.

Item (15)

Requests and Motions

- Councilor Russo stated it had been an honor to work with Mr. Hansley.

Mr. Russo stated people's livelihood was something he took very seriously, as was his seat on County Council. He stated the County had plenty of work to do and good things were coming to Greenville County.

- Councilor Barnes thanked Mr. Hansley and Mr. Wickensimer for their many years of service to Greenville County. They were both very appreciated.
- Councilor Blount stated he had five citizens in his district who were never happy; however, one of those individuals, Mr. Bill Cartee, had been working on an issue for quite some time. Mr. Kernell had assisted Mr. Cartee on that issue and he was elated.
- Councilor Shaw stated if anyone wanted to use his parking space at the new building, they were welcome to do so.
- Councilor Harrison stated Mr. Hansley treated everyone the same, no matter their position with the County. He congratulated both Mr. Hansley and Mr. Wickensimer on their retirements.
- Councilor Tzouvelekas congratulated Mr. Hansley and Mr. Wickensimer.

Mr. Tzouvelekas stated while he was excited about the new building, he had seven questions for the County Administrator. He asked about the original budget for the new building as well as the executed contract amount.

Chairman Tripp stated that line of questioning was not appropriate under Requests and Motions. Mr. Tripp suggested speaking with Mr. Kernell one-on-one.

Mr. Tzouvelekas stated he wanted his questions to "be public."

Chairman Tripp stated Mr. Tzouvelekas' questions would not be entertained.

Councilor Tzouvelekas requested a roll call vote.

Chairman Tripp stated there was no item currently on the floor which would require a vote. Mr. Tripp stated grandstanding during Requests and Motions would not be tolerated. If it continued, he would rule that any request and/or motion to be presented during that time would have to be submitted on the Friday prior to each Council Meeting.

- Councilor Mitchell announced that the Prisma Health / Roger C. Peace Hospital Health and Wellness Community Initiative groundbreaking was scheduled for July 27 at 11 a.m. at Unity Park. He invited his colleagues and well as the public. A number of services and programs were planned for the space and would be available to all residents of Greenville County.
- Vice-Chairwoman Seman congratulated Mr. Hansley and Mr. Wickensimer. She stated prior to meeting Mr. Wickensimer, she had never been called for jury duty. Two weeks after meeting him, she was called for jury duty. Ms. Seman jokingly stated Mr. Wickensimer told her it was a coincidence.

Ms. Seman stated over the years, County Council and staff had adapted to the old building. She thanked some of her current and former colleagues for approving the new building some years ago. Ms. Seman stated the new building would benefit the entire County.

- Councilor Fant stated he and John Hansley were the only two people in attendance who were present when County Square was originally opened, as he was serving on Council at that time. He stated he been given the privilege to sit at the dais for both the first and last Council Meeting held at County Square. Mr. Fant stated he and Mr. Wickensimer were elected to Council at the same time. He stated he had presided over the first committee meeting held in the new building during the previous evening. The building was beautiful, the technology was outstanding and he looked forward to future meetings.

Mr. Fant stated SCTAC recently received approval from Norfolk Southern for a rail crossing that would allow direct access to the ITIC Automotive Test Track from the Steel City Complex. Once completed, the crossing would greatly enhance SCTAC's development of those buildings into a landing pad for manufacturing and test track customers.

- Councilor Bradley stated he would like to get his district changed to number 16 so that his parking spot was not so far away.
- Councilor Kirven stated it was very nostalgic looking around the room, knowing it was the last Council Meeting. Council worked through hard issues in this room, trying to get things done for the people of Greenville County. Mr. Kirven stated he looked forward to having meetings in the new building.

Item (16) **Adjournment**

Action: Councilor Barnes moved to adjourn the meeting.

Motion carried and the meeting adjourned at 7:18 p.m.

Respectfully submitted:

Regina G. McCaskill
Clerk to Council