



GREENVILLE COUNTY COUNCIL

Minutes
Special Called Meeting
August 6, 2024
6:01 p.m.

Council Chambers
301 University Ridge
Greenville, South Carolina

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, at 301 University Ridge, Greenville, 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
Andrew Price, Assistant County Attorney
Jessica Stone, Deputy Clerk to Council

Council Members Remote Participation

None

Pam Gilliam, Administrative Assistant
Terrance Galloway, Information Systems
Bob Mihalic, Governmental Affairs Officer
Nicole Wood, Assistant County Administrator
Hesha Gamble, Assistant County Administrator

Others Present

Conway Belangia, Director, Election Commission

Call to Order

Chairman Dan Tripp

Invocation

Vice-Chairwoman Seman

Pledge of Allegiance

Item (4) **Ordinances – Third Reading**

a. **Capital Projects Sales Tax Referendum Ordinance**

Action: Vice-Chairwoman Seman moved for adoption at third reading an ordinance enacted pursuant to the Capital Project Sales Tax Act, Title 4, Chapter 10, Article 3 of the Code of Laws of South Carolina, 1976, as amended, providing for the imposition of a one percent sales and use tax upon referendum approval; the form of the ballot to be used in connection therewith; the authorization of the issuance of general obligation bonds of Greenville County, subject to such referendum, to defray costs of projects and issuance costs; and other matters related thereto.

Councilor Shaw inquired as to whom in the County Attorney’s office was responsible for signing off on the ballot question.

Mr. Tollison stated that he, along with attorneys Kim Wunder and Andrew Price, had worked on it. They consulted with outside counsel, Bradley Love and Jeremy Cook with Haynsworth Sinkler Boyd Law Firm, applying their experience working with other jurisdictions in doing similar types of projects. The Capital Projects Sales Tax Commission had formed a ballot, which was transmitted to County Council and was part of the item in question.

Councilor Shaw asked Mr. Tollison if he was ultimately responsible for the language of the ballot.

Chairman Tripp stated that County Council was responsible for the final product in regards to the language of the ballot.

Councilor Shaw asked Mr. Tollison if he was responsible for the ballot, if it was determined to be insufficient legally.

Mr. Tollison stated based on the team’s experience, he did not feel that would be the case. However, the team would certainly respond if the ballot was challenged. He stated the proposed ballot appeared to be in line with what had been done in other jurisdictions. The team was comfortable with the information that had been given to the commission and used to develop the proposed ballot.

Councilor Shaw asked if a member of Council texted someone during a Committee of the Whole meeting, should that text be disclosed under the Freedom of Information Act.

Mr. Tollison stated that was a hypothetical question. He would be happy to research the question and provide an answer.

Councilor Shaw asked Mr. Tollison if he was aware that the County Attorney’s office had received a FOIA request for text messages that a member of Council had texted to a member of the Legislature, during a Council meeting, regarding the Capital Project Sales Tax.

Mr. Tollison stated the County Attorney’s office received numerous FOIA requests. He stated he could have been of more assistance if he had received prior notice about Mr. Shaw’s inquiry. Unfortunately, he did not have the current list of FOIA requests with him and could not adequately answer.

Action: Chairman Tripp called Councilor Shaw out of order stating his line of questioning was not germane to the item in question.

Councilor Tzouvelekas inquired about the minutes approving second reading of the proposed.

Chairman Tripp stated no minutes were included for approval on the agenda.

Councilor Tzouvelekas stated during the previous Council meeting, he had inquired if all the roads would be included on the ballot. He stated that Chairman Tripp had indicated his statement was a “red herring.” Mr. Tzouvelekas stated he had never been called that before; however, if the term “red herring” meant distraction, he had the sample ballot and a list of all the roads.

Chairman Tripp stated he had misspoken during the previous Council meeting. The ballot would contain a sampling of the roads. Staff was working to have the entire list available at each polling location. Mr. Tripp stated during the previous Council meeting, it appeared that Mr. Tzouvelekas was suggesting a lack of transparency in the process, which was false. The ordinance contained the entire road list.

Councilor Tzouvelekas asked Mr. Tripp if he wanted to publicly apologize.

Chairman Tripp replied in the negative. The “red herring” comment was in response to Mr. Tzouvelekas’ statement regarding lack of transparency.

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

Item (5)

Adjournment

Action:

Chairman Pro Tem Kirven moved to adjourn the meeting.

Motion carried and the meeting adjourned at 6:11 p.m.

Respectfully submitted:

Jessica M Stone
Deputy Clerk to Council