

MINUTES OF REGULAR MEETING
SALUDA COUNTY COUNCIL
MONDAY, JULY 11, 2022 AT 6:00 P.M.
COUNCIL CHAMBERS, SALUDA COUNTY ADMINISTRATION BUILDING
400 WEST HIGHLAND STREET, SALUDA, SOUTH CAROLINA

A. CALL TO ORDER

Chairman Jim Moore called the regular meeting of Saluda County Council to order at 6:00 P.M.

Present were:

Chairman Jim Moore
Councilman J. Frank Daniel, Sr.
Vice-Chairman Justin Anderson
Councilman Jack Atkinson
Councilman Carey Bedenbaugh

Also present were:

County Director, Sandra G. Padgett
Clerk to Council, Regina Turner
Attorney, Virginia Bozeman

B. INVOCATION

Vice-Chairman Anderson delivered the invocation.

C. PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

Chairman Moore led the Pledge of Allegiance.

D. PUBLIC INFORMATION

It is noted by the Clerk herein, that in compliance with the Freedom of Information Act, notice of the budget work session was given to the local news media and properly posted, to include the county website.

Due to COVID-19, the following notice was placed at the beginning of the agenda:

Please note the council meetings are open to the public, but seating will be limited for social distancing in response to COVID-19. Access to the live video is available when the meeting begins by going to the County's Facebook page (Saluda County, SC Government).

E. APPROVAL OF AGENDA

On motion of Councilmen Bedenbaugh, seconded by Councilman Daniel the agenda was unanimously approved.

F. APPROVAL OF MINUTES

On motion of Councilman Bedenbaugh, seconded by Councilman Atkinson, the minutes for June 20th and 28, 2022 were unanimously approved as submitted.

G. REPORTS OF COUNCIL MEMBERS:

Councilman Bedenbaugh thanked the volunteers in the county for their service. Councilman Anderson recognized the Girls and Boys Recreation teams going to the State. Councilman Atkinson stated that he was thankful for the recent rain and for the full house at the meeting. Councilman Daniel was thankful for the attendance and interest in how government works. Chairman Moore asked that Council members look over the board and committee appointments and to make sure their representatives were up to date. He also requested that Council members meet with their committees on a regular schedule and report on that in the upcoming meetings.

H. PUBLIC HEARING

Chairman Moore opened the Public Hearing on Ordinance No. 07-22, "AN ORDINANCE TO CALL A PUBLIC REFERENDUM IN SALUDA COUNTY, SOUTH CAROLINA TO DETERMINE WHETHER THE QUALIFIED ELECTORS WISH TO KEEP THE PRESENT COUNCIL FORM OF GOVERNMENT WITH FIVE (5) COUNCIL MEMBERS OR ADOPT THE COUNCIL-ADMINISTRATOR FORM OF GOVERNMENT WITH FIVE (5) COUNCIL MEMBERS."

No one signed up to speak and the public hearing was closed.

Chairman Moore opened Public Hearing on Ordinance No. 08-22, "AN ORDINANCE APPROVING SALE OF REAL PROPERTY LOCATED AT THE SOUTHEAST INTERSECTION OF HIGHWAY 378 AND NORTH BOUKNIGHT FERRY ROAD IN SALUDA COUNTY, SOUTH CAROLINA TO F&A OF SALUDA, LLC."

Ms. Almastine Butler spoke on her request to purchase land in the Commerce Park that was previously denied.

Kevin Crouch stated that he was pro-growth for Saluda County but did not think we should sell property to a company that would sell items that could already be purchased from existing local businesses.

No one else signed up to speak and the public hearing was closed.

I. PUBLIC PRESENTATION

Ms. Ann Watkins spoke on the need for Animal Control in the County. She requested a committee be made to address issues and enforce fines for violations.

Mr. James Allen spoke on the Anniversary of the 1755 Saluda Treaty and its historical significance. He requested a Letter of Friendship be issued in remembrance.

J. OLD BUSINESS

On motion of Councilman Bedenbaugh, seconded by Councilman Anderson the motion was approved with Chairman Moore and Councilmen Daniel, Anderson and Bedenbaugh voting for to amended the title of Ordinance No. 03-22, from “AN ORDINANCE PROVIDING FOR THE RECOVERY OF COSTS BY SERVICE CHARGES FROM USERS OF FIRE PROTECTION AND EMERGENCY SERVICES.” to “AN ORDINANCE PROVIDING FOR THE RECOVERY OF FIRE PROTECTION AND EMERGENCY SERVICES COST.”

Luke Downing, Fire Services Coordinator, stated that this is not an additional tax on the citizens nor would and citizen be billed individually for any cost. This ordinance is just for insurance reimbursement. Councilman Atkinson questioned whether the county needed third party billing for this recovery cost. Luke responded that we did due to the company’s knowledge of filling insurance claims. On motion of Councilman Bedenbaugh, seconded by Councilman Daniel third reading was approved with Chairman Moore and Councilmen Bedenbaugh and Daniel voting for and Councilmen Atkinson and Anderson voting against on Ordinance No. 03-22, “AN ORDINANCE PROVIDING FOR THE RECOVERY OF FIRE PROTECTION AND EMERGENCY SERVICES COST.”

On motion of Councilman Anderson, seconded by Councilman Atkinson third reading was approved with Chairman Moore and Councilmen Daniel and Anderson voting for and Councilmen Atkinson and Bedenbaugh voting against on Ordinance No. 07-22 “AN ORDINANCE TO CALL A PUBLIC REFERENDUM IN SALUDA COUNTY, SOUTH CAROLINA TO DETERMINE WHETHER THE QUALIFIED ELECTORS WISH TO KEEP THE PRESENT COUNCIL FORM OF GOVERNMENT WITH FIVE (5) COUNCIL MEMBERS OR ADOPT THE COUNCIL-ADMINISTRATOR FORM OF GOVERNMENT WITH FIVE (5) COUNCIL MEMBERS.” Chairman Moore stated that he felt it needed to go on the ballot for citizens to decide if we should keep the Council form of government with a Director or to have an Administrator form of Government. Councilman Anderson thought that the timing would be good to implement it now due to the upcoming retirement of the current Director and he also felt it would be best for the citizens to decide how they want the county operated. Chairman Moore stated that the citizens needed to be aware of the differences between the two options. Councilman Atkinson recommended postponing this vote until the next meeting so everyone would have time to think about the options.

Councilman Atkinson made the motion to defer third reading until the next council meeting. Motion died of lack of a second.

On Motion of Councilman Bedenbaugh, seconded by Councilman Danial, third reading was approved with Chairman Moore, Councilmen Daniel, Anderson and Bedenbaugh voting for and Councilman Atkinson voting against on Ordinance No. 08-22, “AN ORDINANCE APPROVING SALE OF REAL PROPERTY LOCATED AT THE SOUTHEAST INTERSECTION OF HIGHWAY 378 AND NORTH BOUKNIGHT

FERRY ROAD IN SALUDA COUNTY, SOUTH CAROLINA TO F&A OF SALUDA, LLC.” Chairman Moore expressed that this was a Commerce Park and he understood the impact on local business and that the previous discussion about race and bribery was not true. He believed that this is what is best for Saluda County. Councilman Atkinson stated that he felt that the park should be used for industrial use and manufacturing.

K. NEW BUSINESS

Chairman Moore recognized Denise Wilkinson with Pawmetto Life Line to present her proposal of a Spay and Neuter program to be offered to the county citizens as a beginning step to decrease the unwanted population of pets in the county. Heather Williamson explained the process and how it would be set up for our County with using volunteers. On motion of Councilman Bedenbaugh, seconded by Councilman Anderson it was unanimously approved to sign the agreement with Pawmetto Life Line for a Spay and Neuter Program for Saluda County.

Dan Neel with Westview Behavioral Health expressed the need to have the building on Ramage Street painted and Heather Griffin, Purchasing Coordinator, presented the recommendation of award for the project to TruBlue Services. On motion of Councilman Daniel and seconded by Councilman Atkinson it was unanimously approved to award the painting of the Westview Behavioral Health Building to TruBlue Services in the amount of \$12,530 to be paid from the Public Buildings Repair Reserve Account.

Chairman Moore recognized Gary Stooksbury, CEO of Aiken Electric, to present his proposed broadband project for underserved areas of Saluda County. Aiken Electric proposed adding broadband availability to an area off of Johnson Highway connecting to their already served area. This would be a \$2,000,000 project with Aiken Electric matching Saluda County’s ARPA plan funding. Mr. Stooksbury also explained the upcoming State funding that is being offered and how it will affect our area. On motion of Councilman Anderson and seconded by Councilman Bedenbaugh it was unanimously approved to award Aiken Electric the qualified Broadband project as submitted in compliance with the sole source policy and using funds that were appropriated in the ARPA funding plan adopted August 19, 2021.

Jill Warren, Grants Coordinator, and Luke Downing, Fire Coordinator, requested consideration of applying for the Community Development Block Grant through Upper Savannah to purchase a fire truck for the Midlands Fire Department which will replace two of their current trucks. On motion of Councilman Daniel and seconded by Councilman Bedenbaugh it was unanimously approved to submit a grant application through Upper Savannah for \$500,000 to purchase a fire truck with the County 10% match to be paid using funds that were appropriated in the ARPA funding plan adopted August 19, 2021.

Council, Memmus Forrest, Auditor and Justin Ridgell, Tax Assessor discussed the recent bill passed by the State regarding Agricultural Tax on buildings owned by producers and how it will affect the county revenue for the upcoming tax year. We are looking at a county shortfall of approximately \$300,000 to \$350,000 and about the same for the school. The County is waiting for guidance from the Department of Revenue as to how to interpret the bill that was passed and what qualifies as an agricultural building.

L. EXECUTIVE SESSION

On motion of Councilman Bedenbaugh, seconded by Councilman Daniel it was unanimously approved for Council to go into Executive Session pursuant to Section 30-4-70(a), (2) of the South Carolina Code of Laws 1976, as amended to discuss a Contract with the US Department of Agriculture and for the purpose of receiving legal advice and to return at the call of the chair.

On motion of Councilman Anderson and seconded by Councilman Bedenbaugh it was unanimously approved to come out of executive session.

On motion of Councilman Bedenbaugh and seconded by Councilman Anderson it was unanimously approved to authorize Saluda County personnel to renegotiate the contract with the US Department of Agriculture.

M. ADJOURNMENT

On motion of Councilman Bedenbaugh, seconded by Councilman Anderson it was unanimously approved to adjourn the meeting at 8:16 P.M.

Regina H. Turner, Clerk to Council

James L. Moore, Chairman

August 8, 2022
Date Approved