

MINUTES OF CALHOUN COUNTY COUNCIL
REGULAR MEETING
February 13, 2023
5:30 P.M.

Calhoun County Council held its regular meeting on Monday, February 13, 2023.

The following were present:

Chairman James E. Haigler, who presided
Vice-Chairman Ken Westbury
Councilwoman Rebecca Bonnette
Councilman Richard Carson
Administrator John McLauchlin
Deputy Administrator Richard Hall
Human Resources Director Brandy Roberson

Absent: Clerk to Council Shayla Jenkins

The following press was notified of the meeting by mail, electronic mail, or by fax in accordance with the Freedom of Information Act: The Calhoun Times, The Times and Democrat, and Sandy Run News. An Agenda was also posted on Calhoun County's website calhouncounty.sc.gov.

Call to Order

Chairman Haigler called the meeting to order.

Invocation

Invocation was offered by Councilwoman Rebecca Bonnette.

Approval of Agenda

Councilman Carson made the motion to approve February 13, 2023 meeting agenda as outlined and was seconded by Vice-Chairman Westbury. The motion passed unanimously.

Public Comments on Agenda

Bobby Temple spoke about his concerns related to solar farms in the county. Asked the county to pause on approving any new solar farms

Rhett Taber spoke about concerns with solar farms and asked the county to advertise the comp plan survey more.

Amy Hill spoke about concerns with solar farms and the toxic chemicals. Also presented some information from SCDHEC related to solar panels and raised concerns about lower property values related to solar installations close to other properties.

Janet Echols spoke about concerns with solar farms and asked for a moratorium until the 2024 comp study can be completed. Also questioned property values after solar farms put in.

Francis Mack spoke about solar farm concerns related to loss of property values. Said that trees are better than glass. Indicated that this is a countywide issue.

Dick Watkins spoke about solar concerns. Indicated that he is a fort Motte land owner. Will provide input on comp plan and wants to move through the planning process before more solar is approved.

Pastor Wagner spoke about solar panel concerns. Gave a packet to council on the subject. Said solar will never replace other energy production, reduces the demand. Said China is just sending us their junk and has concerns about getting rid of solar trash.

Public Comments on other matters

None

Public Hearing

Chairman Haigler opened a Public Hearing on Ordinance 2022-26 AN ORDINANCE TO AMEND CHAPTER 2, ARTICLE IV, WITH RESPECT TO VARIOUS BOARDS AND COMMISSIONS. There were no questions or comments; therefore, the Hearing was closed.

Third Reading of Ordinance 2022-26. Councilman Carson made a motion to pass Third Reading of Ordinance 2022-26, and seconded by Councilman Westbury. The motion passed unanimously.

Approval of Minutes

Minutes of the January 23, 2023 regular meeting were presented for approval. Motion was made by Vice-Chairman Westbury and seconded by Councilwoman Bonnette to approve the minutes as presented. The motion passed unanimously.

Committee Reports

None

Appointments

None.

Proclamations

None

Appearances

Marc Briggman gave an update on the status of the various penny sales tax projects

Resolutions

None

Old Business

None

New Business

Magistrates schedule presented.

Judge Jeffrey Bloom, St Matthews Magistrate Office
2833 Old Belleville Rd. St Matthews
Monday-Friday 9:00am-4:00pm

Judge Joseph Teague, Sandy Run Magistrate Office
1724 Old State Rd., Gaston 29053
Monday-Tuesday-Wednesday 9:00am-12:00pm; 1:00pm-5:00pm

Judge Cassandra Keller, Part-time Calhoun County Magistrate Office
1313 Bridge Street, St Matthews 29135
Thursday 9:00am-4:00pm

Motion to approve was made by Councilman Thornton and seconded by Councilman Carson, and the motion passed unanimously.

Sheriff's Department funding request

Matt Trentham came to request the ability to transfer funds within the approved budget to cover costs for communications system. Motion to approve was made by Councilman Westbury and seconded by Councilwoman Bonnette, and the motion passed unanimously.

Solar Farm Discussion

John McLaughlin spoke about the requests for a review of solar farms. The request was made to for council to direct administration to work with the county attorney on ordinance language for a moratorium. Councilwoman Bonnette asked if the moratorium could be longer than 6 months. Councilman Thornton stated that council will take this seriously and will not let the county be fleeced and will move forward in the appropriate manner. John McLaughlin stated that staff will bring something to council. Chairman Haigler said that council can't just act immediately but will look at it carefully. Councilwoman Bonnette asked for the county attorney to work with an environmental law group before moving forward. Chairman Haigler said that the state is also looking at this.

Ordinances

1. ORDINANCE 2023-1

Second Reading

AN ORDINANCE TO AMEND CHAPTER 2, ARTICLE V, DIVISION 4 OF THE CODE OF ORDINANCES, REGARDING AUTHORIZATION REQUIRED FOR VARIOUS COUNTY CONTRACTS

Councilwoman Bonnette made a motion to amend 2023-1 to amend 2-454 (4) by striking \$50,000.00 and inserting \$20,000.00. Vice-Chairman Westbury seconded the motion and the motion passed unanimously. Vice-Chairman made a motion to pass Second Reading of Ordinance 2023-1, as amended. Councilman Carson seconded, and the motion passed unanimously.

Administrator

Administrator McLauchlin offered condolences to the families of Becky Furtick and Maxwell Jenkins. Also presented the budget calendar to council.

Executive Session

Vice-Chairman Westbury made a motion to go into executive session to get legal advice, RMC/MUSC update and legal overview, and economic development matters project Chateau and Hooper. Motion was seconded by Councilwoman Bonnette and the motion passed unanimously. Chairman Haigler said there would be no action taken coming out of executive session.

Chairman Haigler reiterated that he would like to continue to communicate with citizens regarding needs in the county.

Adjournment

Councilman Carson made a motion to adjourn with Vice-Chairman Westbury seconding. The motion passed unanimously, and the meeting adjourned at 6:32 p.m.



James E. Haigler, Chairman



Richard Hall, Deputy Administrator

FROM: Ken Westbury, Vice Chairman
Calhoun County Council
St. Matthews, SC 29135



TO: James Haigler, Chairman
Calhoun County Council
St. Matthews, SC 29135

DATE: February 13, 2023

I hereby recuse myself from participation in any discussion or vote impacting a Solar Farm on property now or formerly belonging to Wiles Farm in Calhoun County for the following reason:

Erline B. Wiles is my family member (sister-in-law) by state ethics law. She is a landowner in the Solar Farm.


I request to be allowed to leave the room during any such discussion or vote.

From: Richard Carson
Calhoun County Council
St. Matthews, SC 29135

To: James Haigler, Chairman
Calhoun County Council
St. Matthews, SC 29135

Date: February 13, 2023

I hereby recuse myself from participating in any discussion or vote impacting a Solar Farm.



Richard Carson