

MINUTES OF CALHOUN COUNTY COUNCIL
REGULAR MEETING
July 24, 2023
5:30 P.M.

Calhoun County Council held its regular meeting on Monday, July 24, 2023.

The following were present:

Chairman James E. Haigler, who presided
Vice-Chairman Ken Westbury
Councilwoman Rebecca Bonnette
Deputy Administrator Richard Hall
Clerk to Council Shayla Jenkins

Absent: Councilman Richard Carson
Councilman Cecil Thornton
Administrator John McLauchlin

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

Vice-Chairman Westbury made the motion to approve July 24, 2023 meeting agenda as outlined and was seconded by Councilwoman Bonnette. The motion passed unanimously.

Public Comments

None

Public Hearing

Sheriff's Department (Chief Deputy Trentham) - Grant from the US Department of Justice, Bureau of Justice Assistance application (Action required)

Chief Deputy Trentham reported that one of the conditions of the grant application was to have a period of public input and council approval. The grant is for equipment, and the department is looking at the Motorola project and cameras to monitor traffic and crime. After some discussion, Chairman Haigler opened the Hearing for questions. With no questions or comments, the Hearing was closed. Vice-Chairman Westbury made a motion to approve proceeding with the grant application, and was seconded by Councilwoman Bonnette. The motion passed unanimously.

~~June 26, 2023~~
July 24

Approval of Minutes

Minutes of the July 10, 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

Vice-Chairman Westbury reported that the Administration subcommittee met and approved that changes recommended by Administration to the vehicle policy. Councilwoman Bonnette told that she had compared the old and new version of the policy, and outlined suggestions that she had for the policy (attached). Chairman Haigler asked to be sent the recommendations for review and addressing the concerns.

Appearances

Kathy Booker of MUSC Health of Orangeburg and Calhoun Counties introduced Walter N. Bennett, III, CEO and Sem Ganthier, Executive Director of Operations, to Council. Mr. Bennett spoke of the mission and goal for MUSC Health, and keeping patients close to home. The mantra for the operation is "It's a new day" and he highlighted some of the recent endeavors and additions to services to the patients. Vice-Chairman Westbury inquired about permanent signage, which is anticipated around October. Chairman Haigler told Mr. Bennett that Council is looking forward to working together, as the hospital is an integral part of the community. After some conversation, Chairman Haigler opened the floor for any questions for Mr. Bennett. Once again, Council thanked Mr. Bennett for his efforts and moving forward.

Old Business

None

Resolutions

Resolution 16-2023 – A RESOLUTION SUPPORTING THE REQUEST FOR MODIFICATION TO THE CURRENT FEDERALLY AUTHORIZED LAKES MARION AND MOULTRIE, SOUTH CAROLINA, PROJECT, which is to request additional Federal funding to Lake Marion (LMRWA).

Vice-Chairman Westbury made a motion to approve Resolution 16-2023, was seconded by Councilwoman Bonnette and the motion passed unanimously.

New Business

The August 14, 2023 meeting is cancelled.

Ordinances

Ordinance 2023-16 AN ORDINANCE TO AMEND CHAPTER 30, ARTICLE III OF THE CALHOUN COUNTY CODE OF ORDINANCES, TO ALLOW FOR THE AMENDMENT OF THE BOUNDARIES OF FIRE PROTECTION SERVICE AREAS UPON APPROVAL BY THE

CALHOUN COUNTY FIRE DISTRICT COMMISSION was presented for **Second Reading**. Vice-Chairman Westbury made a motion to pass Second Reading of Ordinance 2023-16. Councilwoman Bonnette seconded, and the motion passed unanimously.

Administrator

No comments.

Adjournment

Vice-Chairman Westbury made a motion to adjourn with second by Councilwoman Bonnette. The motion passed unanimously, and the meeting adjourned at 5:59 p.m.



James E. Haigler, Chairman



Shayla C. Jenkins, Clerk to Council

Vehicle Policy

First of all, I would like to thank the administration for addressing some of my concerns that I expressed over the vehicle use during our most recent budget meeting.

I did a side-by-side comparison and the new policy does address more than the previous policy, but I do have a few comments that I would like to see addressed.

The addition of conduct awareness in the first bullet is a good addition. I do believe that line item lacks the necessary communication as to what proper conduct is, and how it would be handled if an employee is found to have violated that policy. Leaving it vague is not really fair to staff. I would like to see some examples and consequences added like in the 11th, 12th and 13th bullets regarding traffic violations, driving records and texting while driving.

The third bullet was changed to allow personal use. I am not sure that is a good idea given that it will increase fuel expenses and may not be covered under insurance.

I am also curious about the specific language to add samples of personal errands. It is open-ended and allows errands outside of the county. The bullet ends in stating "The use of County owned vehicles for private business is prohibited. That is contradictory when personal use is being allowed for errands. Personal errands DO equate to personal business.

The fourth bullet allows passengers. It doesn't state whether it was limited to passengers conducting county business, family members, or friends. How will this affect the insurance policy and will it increase premiums if we start allowing passengers that are not identified as conducting county business? The current policy does not cover passengers that are not affiliated to county business.

The 11th bullet, traffic violations. That really speaks to "getting caught" by law enforcement. The policy does not state anything about staff being subject to the GPS monitoring and consequences for violating speed limits and being in areas they should not be. I would like to see more details regarding GPS monitoring and consequences.

The 14th bullet needs to further define tobacco products. Smokeless tobacco should also be addressed and that should also be disallowed.

Bullet 15, Take home vehicles. I want to see who is authorized and understand why they are allowed to take them home. An after hours call is not likely for most of the positions we discussed earlier. Let me remind the administration, we are here to protect the taxpayer. Not provide take home vehicles to most staff as a benefit for working here. That is beyond impractical.

I am glad to see the IRS consideration at the bottom in the last bullet. I want the details as to how this will be tracked. Are staff going to be required to keep the necessary mileage logs? What are the IRS requirements? Who is going to be responsible for tracking this?