

**GREENVILLE COUNTY COUNCIL
COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE
MINUTES
December 4, 2012
4:40 p.m.
County Square - Conference Room D**

Pursuant to the Freedom of Information Act, notice of the meeting date, time, place and agenda was posted on the bulletin board at County Square and posted on the County's web page for all media and concerned citizens to access and review.

COMMITTEE MEMBERS PRESENT:

CHAIRMAN BUTCH KIRVEN
DAN RAWLS
JOE BALDWIN
JOE DILL

FRED PAYNE
WILLIS MEADOWS
XANTHENE NORRIS

JIM BURNS
SID CATES
LOTTIE GIBSON

COMMITTEE MEMBERS ABSENT:

VICE CHAIRMAN BOB TAYLOR
LIZ SEMAN

STAFF PRESENT:

JOE KERNELL, County Administrator
MARK TOLLISON, County Attorney
JOHN HANSLEY, Deputy County Administrator
THERESA KIZER, Clerk to Council
REGINA MCCASKILL, Deputy Clerk to Council
PAULA GUCKER, Assistant County Administrator, Public Works
SHANNON HERMAN, Assistant to the County Administrator
BOB MIHALIC, Governmental Relations Officer
SANDRA YUDICE, Assistant to the County Administrator
TOM MEEKS, Planning Department
JOHN OWINGS, Planning Department
HESHA GAMBLE, Public Works
ERIC VINSON, Planning Department
DAVID CARTER, Information Systems

OTHERS PRESENT:

PHIL LEAZER, Engineer, York County Transportation Planner

CALL TO ORDER

Chairman Butch Kirven

INVOCATION

Councilor Xanthene Norris

Item (3)

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

ACTION: Councilor Meadows moved to approve the minutes of the Regular Committee of the Whole meeting of November 20, 2012.

Motion carried unanimously by all members present.

COMMENT

Chairman Kirven reminded committee members of expected changes with the reduction in transportation funding from the State of South Carolina and the federal reduction of 7%. The SC Highway Commission made a decision to reallocate 25% of funds originally designated for projects to maintain existing roads in the state system. The economy was picking up, which brought more road congestion and it was an important component to economic development and the quality of life for citizens to be able to maneuver around the County without road delays, bottlenecks and other traffic issues. It was elected officials responsibility to overcome obstacles, in an effort to continue to improve the road system. He stated Mr. Phil Leazer, Engineer, York County Transportation Planner would inform the committee how York County utilized a provision of state law in funding transportation projects.

Item (4)

ROAD IMPROVEMENT FINANCING OPTIONS

Mr. Phil Leazer, Engineer, York County Transportation Planner, gave the committee financing options for road improvement projects. He stated a county may approve a local options tax for capital projects, such as constructing buildings, roads, bridges, water and/or sewer projects, school district, or transportation tax, which provides funding for various transportation projects that involved highways, roads, streets, bridges, mass transit systems, greenbelts, and other transportation-related projects. Local sales and use taxes were imposed in addition to the State sales and use tax. The local taxes were collected and administered by the South Carolina Department of Revenue on behalf of the counties. Items subject to a maximum sales and use tax were exempt from the local sales and use taxes. Voters may approve 1% Local Option Sales and Use Tax and/or local tax for capital projects or transportation. The question of implementing a local option, capital or transportation tax was held during the month of November. Then, if approved, the tax would become effective May 1 following the election. There were strict guidelines set for the capital Project Sales Tax Act Program. There were time limits (Sunset date – 2, 4, 6 and 8 years); projects must be listed in priority order on the referendum ballot; money collected must be spent on the approved projects; they must protect the citizens; provide a specific formula for the creation of a 6-member citizen's based commission to create the project list for the public's consideration (formulation based on population) which is intended to keep overall politics out of the program. The County has only the option of full approval or full denial authority. In 1998, the State Infrastructure Bank helped York County reduce the Pennies for Progress shortfall; widened 18 miles of Interstate 77 from 4-lanes to 8-lanes reconfigured two major interchanges and helped to complete the multi-lane corridor connecting I-85 and I-77 across York County and into Cherokee County. In 2003, Pennies for Progress generated \$172 million by sales tax revenues. To date, the Pennies for Progress included 147 miles of highway improvements, 97 miles of County gravel roads, 31 bridges repaired, replaced or widened and 122 major intersections improved, totaling \$645 million. The citizens of York County funded 27% (\$178 million) of roadway improvements. Mr. Leazer stated the project was currently managed in-house. He stated in York County there were community meetings held to receive citizen input.

Councilor Baldwin asked when the initial vote was scheduled.

Mr. Leazer stated York County held a special election, however, now the law specified the vote to be held on a General Election day.

Councilor Cates asked if the federal government funded 90% and the state funded 10% of the widening of Interstate 77. He stated economically the government and citizens were in a better place

in 1997 versus the current state of things.

Mr. Leazer stated during that time, it was 80% federal and 20% state funding. He stated although the program required a 1% sales tax, citizens were approached again in August 2011, and over 82% of citizens said yes. He stated a marketing firm was not used in 1997; however one was used in 2011.

Chairman Kirven stated the law prohibited government lobbying on issues.

Mr. Leazer stated the Chamber of Commerce led the way in promoting the program.

Councilor Payne asked if the program did include bridges, railroad crossings and shoulder widening.

Mr. Leazer stated the program included bridges, railroad crossings and shoulder widening, however it would not maintain them.

Councilor Dill asked if the sales tax was added to the 6% tax.

Mr. Leazer stated the tax was in addition to the 6% sales tax, however groceries were exempt.

Item (5)

ADJOURNMENT

ACTION: Councilor Dill moved to adjourn the meeting.

Without objection, the Committee of the Whole meeting was adjourned at 5:29 p.m.

Respectfully submitted:

Theresa B. Kizer, Clerk to Council