

**GREENVILLE COUNTY COUNCIL
COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE
MINUTES
AUGUST 19, 2014
4:47 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 BOB TAYLOR
VICE CHAIRMAN WILLIS MEADOWS
SID CATES
JOE DILL *arrived 4:55*
XANTHENE NORRIS

FRED PAYNE
LIZ SEMAN
BUTCH KIRVEN
LYNN BALLARD
JIM BURNS

COMMITTEE MEMBERS ABSENT:

JOE BALDWIN
LOTTIE GIBSON

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
SANDRA YUDICE, Assistant to the County Administrator
BOB MIHALIC, Governmental Relations Officer
ERIC VINCENT, Director, Planning and Code Compliance

OTHERS PRESENT:

CAPTAIN CHRIS JONES, Operations Manager, South Carolina National Guard

CALL TO ORDER

Chairman Bob Taylor

INVOCATION

Councilor Sid Cates

Item (3)

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

ACTION: Councilor Norris moved to approve the minutes of the Committee of the Whole meeting of June 17, 2014.

Motion carried unanimously by all County Council Members present.

Item (4)

SCTAC / NATIONAL GUARD UPDATE

Captain Chris Jones, South Carolina National Guard Operations Manager, stated he was standing in for Colonel Lewis, South Carolina National Guard Facility Director, who was not able to attend. He stated he assisted the Facility Manager in day-to-day operations and flight operations at Donaldson Center. He stated his intent was to provide some insight into what they did, who they employed and how they would hopefully positively impact the local area in a couple of different ways. Mr. Jones stated they train aircraft personnel and aviators. He stated currently there were 10 aircraft on site (4 Lakota's and 6 Chinook's), 57 full-time employees and were in the process of hiring an additional 19 employees. He stated they currently average 15 flights per week. On a normal day the following tasks were performed: aircraft maintenance, training flights, flight evaluations, provide mission support and aircraft refueling operations. He stated work hours and shifts were adjusted to support day or night training requirements at the facility. Many different maintenance requirements for aircraft created the necessity for multiple skill sets: aircraft mechanics, a variation of pilots, avionics repairs, electricians, engine mechanics, sheet metal mechanics, computer support, logistics specialists, flight medics, quality control, hazard material handlers and administrative. He stated because they had plenty of space, the facility had the ability to support additional aircraft. The Security and Support Battalion had supported many homeland defense issues, including the BP oil spill. All aircraft at the flight facility were utility helicopters, performing internal and external loads. The economic impact of the facility was as follows: 57 employees; 95 family members; annual payroll was approximately \$3.9 million; 12 homes purchased; and 187,000 gallons of fuel was anticipated to be used at the Donaldson field from the contractor on site who was currently providing the refueling.

Chairman Taylor asked if the employees were civilians.

Captain Jones stated the employees were dual-status technicians (Federal and National Guard employees). He stated the employees hired had to have membership in the National Guard.

Councilor Norris inquired about the amount of males and females employed with the company.

Captain Jones stated there were two females employed with the company in Greenville. More were employed, however, they decided they did not want to move from Columbia.

Councilor Payne asked if there was currently or if there would be future plans to provide training in cooperation with Greenville Technical College.

Captain Jones stated the joint-use facility's purpose was to allow Greenville Technical College to use the bottom half of the building for educational classes. He stated there were plans to also use the future regional maintenance center for educational purposes. Captain Jones stated Greenville Technical College was very involved in the design of the

buildings.

Councilor Ballard asked how many days per week did the employees work.

Captain Jones stated typically they worked a 5-day work week and the work schedule depended on drills and training; hours and schedules were adjusted accordingly.

Councilor Burns thanked Captain Jones and everyone at the facility for their service. He asked if the average of 15 flights per week would remain steady.

Captain Jones stated he believed 15 flights per week would remain the typical average. He stated it was normally 5 days a week, during the week.

Chairman Taylor asked other than the economic impact, were there other ways he felt the area benefited from having the National Guard in Greenville.

Captain Jones stated it gave more visibility to what the National Guard had to offer, and with the help of Greenville Technical College, technical skills in Greenville allowed for a quality pool of candidates to choose from.

Chairman Taylor asked how many guardsmen were housed in units at Donaldson Center.

Captain Jones stated each unit had at least 150 soldiers. He stated there were roughly 220 soldiers at the facility.

Councilor Kirven asked Captain Jones to explain the external lift training procedure with Chinook helicopters.

Captain Jones stated external lift training with Chinook helicopters was held at a closed runway at the facility; approximately 50 – 100 feet above ground.

Councilor Kirven asked if the crew would need specific certification as part of the training process.

Captain Jones stated training tasks would require proficiency in currency for the air crews to fly over, pick up and release the loads. He stated if a sling was able to be attached to an external load, the Chinook helicopter had the ability to pick it up. He stated the external load capacity was 25,000 pounds. Captain Jones stated the helicopter had the capability to do fire suppression as well.

Councilor Dill asked the County Administrator what authority did Greenville County have over the facility.

Mr. Kernell stated the City of Greenville and Greenville County jointly owned Donaldson Center however, it was his understanding that the property housing the National Guard was sold to another party. He stated the State and Federal Government would control the facility.

Councilor Dill thanked Captain Jones for his information. He asked if helicopter maintenance training was still a part of the operations at the facility.

Captain Jones stated maintenance training would be conducted and the main purpose of the facility was to provide training to the 250 soldiers that came in during their weekend drill. He stated two soldiers recently completed a licensing program required to operate a Lakota Helicopter. Greenville Technical College produced FAA certified mechanics.

Chairman Taylor thanked Captain Jones for his informative presentation.

Item (5)

ADJOURNMENT

ACTION: Councilor Meadows moved to adjourn the meeting at 5:17 p.m.

Respectfully submitted:

Theresa B. Kizer, Clerk to Council