



GREENVILLE COUNTY COUNCIL

Minutes
Committee of the Whole Meeting
March 7, 2023
3:49 p.m.

County Square - Council Chambers

Council Members

Mr. Dan Tripp, *Chairman, District 28*
Mrs. Liz Seman, *Vice-Chairwoman, District 24*
Mr. Butch Kirven, *Chairman Pro Tem, District 27*
Mr. Joey Russo, *District 17*
Mr. Mike Barnes, *District 18*
Mr. Benton Blount, *District 19*
Mr. Stephen Shaw, *District 20*
Mr. Chris Harrison, *District 21*
Mr. Stan Tzouvelekas, *District 22*
Mr. Alan Mitchell, *District 23*
Mr. Ennis Fant, Sr., *District 25*
Mr. Rick Bradley, *District 26*

Pursuant to the Freedom of Information Act, notice of the meeting date, time, place and agenda was posted online and on the bulletin board at County Square and made available to the newspapers, radio stations, television stations and concerned citizens.

Council Members Absent

None

Staff Present

Joe Kernell, County Administrator
Mark Tollison, County Attorney
John Hansley, Deputy County Administrator
Regina McCaskill, Clerk to Council
Jessica Stone, Deputy Clerk to Council
Terrence Galloway, Information Systems
Hesha Gamble, Assistant County Administrator
Bob Mihalic, Governmental Affairs Officer

Others Present

Call to Order

Chairman Dan Tripp

Invocation

Councilor Benton Blount

Item (3) *Approval of Minutes*

Action: Chairman Pro Tem Kirven moved to approve the minutes of the January 24, 2023, Committee of the Whole meeting.

Motion carried unanimously.

Item (4) *Conestee Dam Project* (Attachment 1)

Presenter: Kelly Lowry

Mr. Lowry stated the Lake Conestee Dam was built in 1892 to power the Conestee Mill. The dam was 543 feet long, 29 feet high and 3.5 feet deep; it was masonry construction. It was unknown if the dam was anchored to the bedrock, if it was solid all the way through or if there were voids present. Mr. Lowry stated engineering exploration could cause a cascade failure and the dam to breach.

Initially, the dam covered approximately 135 acres. As Greenville County grew and developed, it filled in considerably. In 2000, when the Conestee Foundation acquired the Conestee Nature Preserve and half of the dam, it was filled in to approximately 10% of its open water. The remainder was sedimented delta, as expected. There was quite a bit of industrial and residential waste put into the Reedy River, as rivers were historically waste conduits. Mr. Lowry stated the 120 acres that had filled in over time contained a number of pollutants; millions of pounds of sediments were behind the dam. With the enactment of the Clean Water Act approximately 50 years ago, the introduction of pollutants into the waste stream was slowly, yet significantly, reduced. Mr. Lowry stated all the “bad stuff” was capped, buried underneath clean sediment. The EPA and DHEC performed environmental studies and concluded the best strategy for managing the contaminated sediments found in the lake would be to leave the cap in place. That program, called “monitored natural recovery”, would only work with a stable dam. Currently, there was reason to believe that the dam was not stable, as it was about 75 years past its useful life term.

Since 2012, four engineering firms had looked at the dam. Mr. Lowry stated three of those firms had studied the situation intensely and considered twelve different alternative scenarios to address the dam. Those scenarios included doing nothing, building a new dam above or below the existing dam, removing the dam altogether as well as other possibilities. In 2022, the Legislature granted funding in the amount of \$3 million to DHEC for study the issue. The Conestee Foundation and the Lake Conestee Dam Restoration Fund worked with Caliber Engineering and Kleinschmidt Associates to analyze the alternatives, make a recommendation for the most promising, and provide a cost estimate for the suggested option. The engineers recommended building a new dam 10’ downstream of the existing dam at a cost of \$47.5 million; that recommendation was known as Recommended Alternative 9. Mr. Lowry stated they hoped to start the project in the fall of 2023. A proposal for funding had been pushed through the House Ways and Means, with support from the Greenville County Delegation. He stated the request, once it reached the Senate, would be for partial funding from the Legislature, along with public/private matches and local funding.

Mr. Lowry stated the issue had been on the “back burner” for about 10 years. There would be requests for funding from various bodies, with a request of approximately \$5 million from the City of Greenville and Greenville County. Other county governments and utilities would also be asked to contribute to the project. Mr. Lowry stated he was not making a formal request; however, he would like for Council to consider it.

Chairman Tripp asked about the consequences if the dam was breached.

Mr. Lowry stated the damage would be significant; with an estimated cost of about \$2 billion, if not more. All the hazardous materials currently locked behind the dam would be released. Boyd Mill Pond would be the first body of water affected; it would fill up rapidly. From there, the contaminants would be mobilized and carried down to the northeast arm of Lake Greenwood. Mr. Lowry stated, at that point, it was unknown if the contaminants would be carried to Lake Murray.

Chairman Pro Tem Kirven stated it was his understanding that some communities in the Lake Greenwood area acquired their drinking water from the lake.

Mr. Lowry confirmed some of those communities did obtain drinking water from the lake. Laurens County recently built a new water treatment plant; there were concerns the plant would be imperiled if the dam were to breach.

Item (5)

Appalachian Council of Governments Presentation (Attachment 2)

Presenter: Steve Pelissier, Executive Director

Mr. Pelissier thanked Council for supporting the Appalachian Council of Governments; he provided a brief report on ACOG's services and its return on investment for calendar year 2022. Mr. Pelissier thanked Councilors Bradley, Kirven, Fant and Mitchell for serving on the ACOG Board of Directors.

In 2022, Greenville County invested \$180,306 to the Appalachian Council of Governments. The return on investment to Greenville County was \$7,671,670, representing a ratio of \$42.55 for every \$1.00. Mr. Pelissier stated the largest portion was a \$5 million grant for a high-speed test track and loops at SCTAC, further enhancing the Greenville area as an automotive test and production center. Approximately \$1.8 million was used for services to seniors, the community's most vulnerable citizens. He stated the purpose of ACOG's Senior Program was to keep senior citizens in their homes; they thrived better and it was less expensive to do so. Many seniors only required minimal services, such as wheelchairs and transportation to medical appointments. ACOG provided approximately 72,000 meals to senior citizens and \$411,078 was spent for caregiver respite. Mr. Pelissier stated 215 seniors received in-home care. ACOG assisted 3,687 seniors navigate Medicare enrollment and options; investigated 259 cases of suspected abuse or neglect of a resident of a long term care facility. Minor home repair and non-emergency medical transportation were also provided.

Mr. Pelissier stated \$385,000 was provided through the Small Business and Entrepreneurial Revolving Loan Program; those funds leveraged \$480,000 in capital investment and created jobs. Statistics showed a great deal of employment growth was through small businesses. Grants from previous years were administered; those grants totaled \$2.3 million.

In 2022, no new projects were funded in ACOG's Rural Transportation Program; however, the Husk Creek Project continued at a cost of approximately \$4 million to replace the bridge. The detours were in place and the project was expected to be completed by late 2024.

Mr. Pelissier stated ACOG worked with GPATS (Greenville-Pickens Area Transportation Study), ANATS (Anderson Area Transportation Study) and SPATS (Spartanburg Area Transportation Study) on transportation modeling and development of long-range transportation plans. He stated ACOG provided the system and data used by GADC to respond to requests for information by entities interested in investing in Greenville County. ACOG worked with local municipalities and special purpose districts in budgeting processes, human resources and training. Mr. Pelissier stated ACOG worked with many of the smaller local governments in regards to administering funds from both the CARES Program and the ARPA Program.

Item (6) Sheriff's Office Citizen Advisory Board Appointments

Chairman Tripp stated there was no need to interview the applicants for the Sheriff's Office Citizen Advisory Board; each applicant was recommended by the Council Member representing their district. Mr. Tripp stated there were some districts with no recommended applicants. It was his understanding those recommendations were in process.

Action: Chairman Pro Tem Kirven moved to elect **Jim Barbare (D.17), Amy Green (D.18), Idell Koury (D.21), Todd Howard (D.24) , James Martin (D.25) , Kyle Gilley (D.26), Whitney Ferguson (D.27) and Scott Crosby (D.28)** to fill eight of twelve district-specific vacancies on the Sheriff's Office Citizen Advisory Board.

Motion carried unanimously.

Item (7) Board and Commission Interviews and Nominations

a. Alcohol and Drug Abuse Commission – 5 vacancies

The following individuals appeared before the Committee of the Whole and gave their personal presentations.

- Batson, Jimmy (D.17) – incumbent
- Briggs, Asa (D.23) – new
- Noonkesser, Laura (D.18) - new
- Yarborough, Hubert (D.24) – new

Action: Vice-Chairman Seman moved to close nominations and elect by acclamation **Tanisha Barrett, Jimmy Batson, Asa Briggs, Laura Noonkesser and Hubert Yarborough** to fill five vacancies on the Alcohol and Drug Abuse Commission.

Motion carried unanimously.

b. Greenville Technical College Area Commission – 1 vacancy

The following individual appeared before the Committee of the Whole and gave their personal presentation.

- Hackl, Jo (D.20) – incumbent

By ballot vote, **Jo Hackl** was elected to fill one vacancy on the Greenville Technical College Area Commission.

c. Greenville County Historic and Natural Resources Trust – 6 vacancies

Chairman Tripp stated it was only necessary to interview the applicants for District 17 for the Greenville County Historic and Natural Resources Trust; there was only one applicant for the other districts. Those individuals would be elected by acclamation.

The following individuals appeared before the Committee of the Whole and gave their personal presentations.

- McMakin, Elsa (D.17) – new
- Owen, Carlton (D.17) – incumbent

Councilor Shaw inquired about the number of females on the board as he would like to see more female representation. Mr. Shaw stated he personally knew Ms. McMakin; she cared very much about Greenville County and he supported her nomination to the board.

Chairman Tripp stated he did not know the total number of females on the board; however, two of the five remaining candidates were female.

By ballot vote, **Carlton Owen (D.17)** was elected to fill one vacancy for District 17 on the Greenville County Historic and Natural Resources Trust.

Action: Vice-Chairman Seman moved to close nominations and elect by acclamation **Nannette Iatesta (D.18), Pam Shucker (D.19), Alexander Reynolds (D.20), Stephen Parks (D.21) and Joe Pulliam (D.22)** to fill five of six district-specific vacancies on the Greenville County Historic and Natural Resources Trust.

Motion carried unanimously.

d. Thrive Upstate – 1 vacancy

The following individuals appeared before the Committee of the Whole and gave their personal presentations.

- Mathias, Peter (D.22) – new
- O’Brien, Amanda (D.26) – new

By ballot vote, **Peter Mathias** was elected to fill one vacancy on the Thrive Upstate Board.

Item (5) Adjournment

Action: Councilor Barnes moved to adjourn the meeting.

Motion carried unanimously and the meeting adjourned at 4:32 p.m.

Respectfully submitted:

Regina G. McCaskill
Clerk to Council