



GREENVILLE COUNTY COUNCIL

Minutes
Regular Meeting
June 20, 2023
6:00 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	Hesha Gamble , Assistant County Administrator
Mark Tollison , County Attorney	Tee Coker , Assistant County Administrator
Dean Campbell , Deputy County Attorney	Shannon Herman , Assistant County Administrator
John Hansley , Deputy County Administrator	Bob Mihalic , Governmental Relations Officer
Regina McCaskill , Clerk to Council	Ted Lambrecht , Director, Parks, Recreation and Tourism
Pam Gilliam , Administrative Assistant	Rashida Jeffers-Campbell , Planning Director
Phillip Simmons , Information Systems	Meredith Papapieris , Director of Grants and Special Projects
Nicole Wood , Assistant County Administrator	Dr. Tom Blackwell , Medical Director, Emergency Management Services

Others Present

Sheriff Hobart Lewis

Call to Order

Chairman Dan Tripp

Invocation

Councilor Stan Tzouvelekas

Pledge of Allegiance

Item (4) **Approval of Minutes**

a. **June 6, 2023 – Regular County Council Meeting**

Action: Chairman Pro Tem Kirven moved approval of the minutes from the June 6, 2023, Regular County Council Meeting.

Motion carried unanimously.

Item (5) **Proclamations and Special Recognition**

Girl Up Greenville

Councilor Fant recognized members of Girl Up Greenville, an organization that exists to serve middle and high school girls from under resourced communities in Greenville, whose goal was to initiate early, life-changing success by empowering girls to reach their highest potential.

Recognizing Kevin Taylor, ERT Founding Member

Councilor Barnes presented a proclamation to Mr. Kevin Taylor who was retiring after 42 years of outstanding service to Greenville County. Thanking him for his decades of valuable contributions to Greenville County and acknowledging that his leadership and mentorship have ensured that the current and future Emergency Rescue Teams would be the best trained teams in the nation.

Item (6) **Appearances – Current Agenda Items**

- Elizabeth Tinkle, Cleveland – appeared regarding Item 11 (d) Greenville County Historic and Natural Resource Trust Project / Camp Awanita Project
- Matthew Thomas, Simpsonville – appeared regarding 11 (d) Greenville County Historic and Natural Resource Trust Project / Camp Awanita Project
- John Ehlers, Marietta – appeared regarding 11 (d) Greenville County Historic and Natural Resource Trust Project / Camp Awanita Project
- Kristen Gunter, Greenville – appeared regarding 11 (d) Greenville County Historic and Natural Resource Trust Project / Camp Awanita Project

Item (7) **Public Hearings**

a. **Land Development Regulations Amendment / Subdivision Application Process Waiting Period**

A public hearing was held for the purpose of receiving comments from the public regarding an ordinance to amend the Greenville County Land Development Regulations to establish a waiting period for the submission of subdivision applications following a denial by the Planning Commission.

There being no speakers, Councilor Fant declared the public hearing closed.

b. United Community Bank / First Amendment to the Fee Agreement and Special Source Credit Agreement

A public hearing was held for the purpose of receiving comments from the public regarding an ordinance authorizing the execution and delivery of a first amendment to a fee in lieu of tax and special source credit agreement between Greenville County, South Carolina and United Community Bank; and other matters related thereto.

There being no speakers, Chairman Pro Tem Kirven declared the public hearing closed.

c. Lima One Capital, LLC (formerly Project Blue) / Fee in Lieu of Tax Agreement

A public hearing was held for the purpose of receiving comments from the public regarding an ordinance authorizing the execution and delivery of a fee in lieu of tax agreement by and between Greenville County, South Carolina and Lima One Capital, LLC, with respect to certain economic development property in the County, whereby such property would be subject to certain payments in lieu of taxes; and other matters related thereto.

There being no other speakers, Chairman Pro Tem Kirven declared the public hearing closed.

Item (8) Consent Agenda

- a. Community Project Application / Pleasant Valley Connections \$5,000.00
- b. Community Project Application / Greenville County Recreation – Summer Camps \$4,456.00
- c. Community Project Application / Greenville County Sheriff’s Office – Improving Deputy Safety / Training Division \$5,000.00
- d. Community Project Application / Greenville County Recreation Department / Furman United Soccer – Improving Juvenile Soccer Fields \$11,000.00
- e. Community Project Application / Piedmont Park Fire Department – Improving Fire Safety \$2,000.00
- f. Community Project Application / City of Travelers Rest / Parks and Recreation – Dicey Langston Statue and Park \$2,000.00
- g. Community Project Application / Greenville County Recreation Department – Pavilion Walking Trail \$20,456
- h. Community Project Application / Greenville Convention Center - \$4,036.00
- i. Community Project Application / Duncan Chapel Fire Department – Rescue Equipment \$3,000.00
- j. Community Project Application / Berea Fire Department – Equipment \$3,000.00

Action: Vice-Chairwoman Seman moved approval of the Consent Agenda items.

Motion carried unanimously.

Item (9) Resolutions

a. Precorp of South Carolina Inc. and Walter USA, LLC / Partial Assignment and Assumption Resolution

Action: Chairman Pro Tem Kirven moved for adoption a resolution authorizing and approving the partial assignment and assumption of a fee in lieu of tax agreement by and between Precorp of South Carolina, Inc. and Walter USA, LLC; and other matters related thereto.

Motion carried unanimously.

b. Project Slurp / Inducement Resolution

Action: Chairman Pro Tem Kirven moved for adoption a resolution authorizing the execution and delivery of an inducement agreement by and between Greenville County, South Carolina and Project Slurp, whereby, under certain conditions, Greenville County will execute a fee in lieu of tax and special source credit agreement with respect to a project in the county whereby the project would be subject to payment of certain fees in lieu of taxes, and whereby project/company will be provided certain credits against fee payments in reimbursement of investment in related qualified infrastructure; and providing for related matters.

Motion carried unanimously.

c. University Ridge Project Revenue Resolution

Action: Chairman Pro Tem Kirven moved for adoption a resolution establishing a program pledging certain revenues from Greenville County's University Ridge Redevelopment Project to Countywide reduction of the County's operating ad valorem property tax millage.

Councilor Tzouvelekas stated the resolution was non-binding of future Councils but it was a noble goal and he would be supporting the effort.

Motion carried unanimously.

Item (10) Ordinances – Third Reading

a. Glassy Mountain Fire Service Area / Millage

Action: Chairman Pro Tem Kirven moved for adoption at third reading an ordinance to provide for the millage rate to be levied by the Glassy Mountain Fire Service Area.

Motion carried unanimously.

b. United Community Bank / First Amendment to the Fee Agreement and Special Source Credit Agreement

Action: Chairman Pro Tem Kirven moved for adoption at third reading an ordinance authorizing the execution and delivery of a first amendment to a fee in lieu of tax and special source credit agreement between Greenville County, South Carolina and United Community Bank; and other matters related thereto.

Motion carried unanimously.

c. Lima One Capital, LLC (formerly Project Blue) / Fee in Lieu of Tax Agreement

Action: Chairman Pro Tem Kirven moved for adoption at third reading an ordinance authorizing the execution and delivery of a fee in lieu of tax agreement by and between Greenville County, South Carolina and Lima One Capital, LLC, with respect to certain economic development property in the County, whereby such property would be subject to certain payments in lieu of taxes; and other matters related thereto.

Motion carried unanimously.

d. **County of Greenville / FY 2024 Budget**

Action: Chairman Pro Tem Kirven moved for adoption at third reading an ordinance adopting the County of Greenville FY 2024 Budget.

Action: Councilor Shaw moved to suspend the rules to allow for amendments.

Motion was denied.

Councilor Tzouvelekas thanked Mr. Kernell and staff for preparing the proposed budget; however, he was unable to support a 15% millage increase. He stated he, along with others, had submitted a proposed amended budget to Council, however, no one wanted to talk about it. In that proposed budget, there was no increase in millage, no salary cuts and no positions eliminated. Some positions would be frozen and the following “extras” would be eliminated:

- Affordable housing
- Greenspace
- Council Member District Expense Funds
- Reduced mass transit funding
- Reduced and deferred capital projects

Councilor Tzouvelekas stated approval of the proposed would give Council the opportunity to present a more fiscally responsible budget to the citizen of Greenville County.

Councilor Harrison stated Council had been provided a copy of Mr. Tzouvelekas’ proposal. He stated, in light of transparency, he wanted to point out that it proposed a reduction in respective department salary budgets by \$1.9 million and lowered the cost of living adjustment for existing employees by 50%.

Chairman Pro Tem Kirven stated the budget process had been long and hard; it was time for a decision. The easiest way to make a hard decision was to study the facts, weigh the pros and cons, and use good judgement in determining the best course of action. Mr. Kirven stated he would take responsibility for his decision; he planned to vote in favor of the item.

Vice-Chairwoman Seman stated everyone owed a lot to the employees of Greenville County, most of whom were County taxpayers. She asked all County employees in attendance to stand. She thanked them for all their hard work. Ms. Seman stated the budget process had been difficult. Council Members were elected to make hard decisions; those decisions were not always going to be popular with everyone. Councilor Seman stated she hoped Council would see fit to pass the budget.

Councilor Shaw stated when Council was given the proposed budget, they were informed that the millage rate had to be raised in order to avoid cutting deputy and public safety positions. Mr. Shaw stated the proposed budget allotted millions of dollars for government affordable housing schemes, “city” buses and the purchase of conservation easements. The County’s budget should prioritize its two main functions; public safety and roads. Higher taxes versus hiring deputies was a “straw man campaign” and not the issue before Council. Mr. Shaw stated the actual issue at hand was prioritizing deputies, public safety and roads over progressive spending schemes. He inquired as to how adding bureaucracy and a government middle man provided incentives to wealthy developers to make housing more affordable for the truly needy. Throwing millions of dollars at city buses was not a reason to increase taxes. A city “bus bureaucracy”, with huge buses on regular routes, was a 1960’s and 1970’s solution for major urban cities. There were more efficient ways to help disadvantaged people get where they needed to be at a much lower cost. He questioned why Greenville County should contribute far more than the City of Greenville for the “bus bureaucracy.” The City of Greenville budgeted \$1.7 million for public transit for next year; the County had proposed \$3 million

with an additional \$3.5 million for the following year. The County's proposed budget recommended using millions of taxpayer dollars to purchase remote conservation lands, with extremely limited public use. Mr. Shaw stated he admired the work that private conservation visionaries had achieved. He stated that he supported continuing the \$1 million the County already contributed for that purpose; however, he could not support expanding that amount to \$4.5 million. The County desperately needed more sports fields and its "greenspace priority" should be to have fantastic ballfields as well as dog parks that were close to where County residents lived. Mr. Shaw stated County Council should aggressively create conservation lands while slowing new residential development through developer exactions, impact fees and transfer of development rights. It was important to appoint Planning Commission members from a broad, cross-section of residents to ensure that new residential developments had the most careful and fairest scrutiny legally allowed. There were currently approximately 120 new businesses receiving 160 FILOT breaks. He asked if those companies were providing the affordable housing, transportation options and greenspace they were creating the need for. County Council had clear orders from its constituents to fix the roads; the proposed millage increase would not accomplish that. The County must prioritize its growing revenue, focusing on priorities, not new spending schemes. A final version of the budget must protect all County positions, add additional deputies, provide for a cost of living adjustment while adding no new tax burden for Greenville County residents. Mr. Shaw urged his colleagues to vote in opposition to the proposed budget.

Councilor Harrison stated affordable housing, public transportation and the purchase of conservation easements were tools, not schemes, to help manage growth. The County actually lost money on 4% unoccupied homes; they were expanding further and further into the County. Mr. Harrison stated the County's services were strained. More deputies and public safety personnel were needed to meet those needs.

Councilor Barnes stated public safety was the County's main priority. He was in favor of the proposed budget.

Mr. Kernell stated a very sound fiscal plan had been presented to Council. He took exception when talking about "schemes"; the County did not participate in schemes. The proposed budget focused on the needs of the various County operations. Mr. Kernell stated department heads and elected officials did not direct requests for additional personnel or other items directly to Council; it was his responsibility to follow state law by providing a budget to Council for approval. The proposed budget should not be a surprise to existing Council Members. Mr. Kernell stated there may be questions about percentages; however, Greenville County had not raised its millage rate in the past 28 years. If the millage increase was approved, the County's percentage was actually very small. When the Recreation Department became a County department, the County took a district tax and made it a County tax. Mr. Kernell stated a lot of misinformation had been put out about the proposed increase. To some degree, growth had been helpful to the County over the years and was one of the reason taxes had not been raised. Mr. Kernell stated it took 221 new medium-priced homes to pay for one deputy position. In addition to salaries, there were other costs, such as training and equipment, involved in hiring new deputies. Mr. Kernell stated the County needed "thousands and thousands" of new homes just to add law enforcement and EMS positions. Mr. Kernell stated the proposed millage adjustment was needed; otherwise, he would not have recommended it.

Councilor Fant thanked Mr. Kernell and Mr. Hansley for putting together a fantastic budget. Greenville was at a crossroads; it had transformed from a large town to a small city. Mr. Fant stated that transformation brought growing pains. Council was in a position of leadership to prepare for the future; they had to decide to either move forward or move backwards. Mr. Fant stated Council Members were elected to lead. He urged his colleagues to look at the numbers and make good decisions for the citizens of Greenville County. He stated he would be voting in favor of the proposed budget.

Chairman Tripp turned the gavel over to Vice-Chairwoman Seman.

Councilor Tripp stated there was not one Council Member who wanted to raise taxes. He stated his mother was a widow, living on a fixed income. He had to explain the misinformation that was being spread regarding the proposed millage increase. The budget debate kicked off with a “big lie”, stating taxes would increase by 23%. There were competing visions among Council Members regarding the budget. Councilor Tripp stated the other side’s vision was calling from the 1990’s by a man named Grover Norquist. Mr. Norquist stated he wanted to put government in a bathtub and drown it. Mr. Tripp stated the other side would cut law enforcement, cost of living adjustments, affordable housing and greenspace. On the other hand, the vision of the remaining County Members may not be perfect; it was about Greenville moving forward not backwards. Mr. Tripp stated when he took the position of Chairman, he spoke clearly about the fact that 250,000 people were expected to move to Greenville within the next 20-30 years. Many people were not happy about the expected growth; it was coming whether it was wanted or not. County Council had to work as leaders and deal with the need for infrastructure. Otherwise, Greenville would turn into another Atlanta, Charlotte or Los Angeles. It was important to honor the people already living in Greenville County and welcome newcomers with open arms. He would not cut law enforcement positions in order to allow certain people to win their war slogans on the dais. Councilor Tripp stated he would be voting in favor of the proposed.

Vice-Chairwoman Seman returned the gavel to Chairman Tripp.

Councilor Blount stated Council represented twelve (12) very distinct districts. He had been put on the “other side” by proxy; he was not in favor of cutting employment for any County employee. Mr. Blount stated he had to answer to the 50,000+ citizens he represented in his district. There was a large number of households on limited budgets and/or living in poverty in his district. Mr. Blount stated he would not be voting in favor of the budget.

Councilor Russo stated for a short period of time, he stood next to some of the law enforcement officers in attendance. He was committed to making things better for his district. In response to the proposed amendment to cut \$1.9 million in salaries, he could not understand how that could be done without firing people and it was disingenuous. Mr. Russo stated \$406,000 for new vehicles for new positions was irresponsible. He would continue to look at the budget and planned to vote against it.

Councilor Bradley stated he wanted to get the budget as low as possible can. It was a time consuming effort to get law enforcement to his part of the County. He did not want to cut any law enforcement positions. Council owed it to the citizens of Greenville County to “dig in” the budget and see what could be done.

Vice-Chairwoman Seman stated Council Members did represent their respective districts; however, they had a responsibility to make decision for the whole County. It was difficult to not have any at large representation on Council. Ms. Seman stated she would not give any of her colleagues that said they supported law enforcement “a pass.” Administration provided a budget and some concessions had already been made. If Council did not approve a budget by June 30, the County would be forced to close down. All Council Members had been given ample opportunities to ask questions about the budget.

Motion to approve was denied by a roll call vote of six (Barnes, Harrison, Mitchell, Fant, Kirven and Tripp) in favor and six (Russo, Blount, Shaw, Tzouvelekas, Seman and Bradley) in opposition.

Vice-Chairwoman Seman stated she voted against the proposed for procedural reasons. As she was on the prevailing side, she had the opportunity to ask for reconsideration of the item.

Item (11) Ordinances – Second Reading

a. Zoning Ordinances

- i. **CZ-2023-032,** Property of JNG of Greenville LLC, 1008 W. Lee Road, Taylors, (Council District 20), R-M20 to I-1

Action: On behalf of the Committee, Councilor Fant moved approval of the ordinance at second reading.

Motion carried unanimously.

- ii. **CZ-2023-035,** Property of Michael L. Riddle, 812 and 820 Antioch Church Road, Greenville (Council District 25), R-S to I-1

Action: On behalf of the Committee, Councilor Fant moved approval of the ordinance at second reading.

Motion carried unanimously.

- iii. **CZ-2023-036,** Property of Donaldson Resources, LLC, Highway 25 and Donaldson Road, Greenville (Council District 25), C-2 to S-1

Action: On behalf of the Committee, Councilor Fant moved approval of the ordinance at second reading.

Motion carried with Mr. Tzouvelekas providing a written abstention.

b. Greenville County Zoning Ordinance Text Amendment / Patios and Decks (CZ-2023-033)

Action: Councilor Fant moved for approval at second reading an ordinance to amend the Greenville County Zoning Ordinance to amend Article 5, Section 5:9.7-8 Patio or Deck.

Motion carried unanimously.

c. Greenville County Comprehensive Plan Amendment / Augusta Road Corridor Strategic Plan (CP-2023-01)

Action: Councilor Fant moved for approval at second reading an ordinance to adopt the Augusta Road Corridor Strategic Plan as an amendment to the Greenville County Comprehensive Plan (2020).

Motion carried unanimously.

d. Greenville County Historic and Natural Resources Trust (HNRT) / HNRT Project Campfire

Action: Chairman Pro Tem Kirven moved for approval at second reading an ordinance authorizing the Greenville County Historic and Natural Resources Trust (HNRT) to provide funding for a project known to the County at this time as HNRT Project Campfire.

Motion carried unanimously.

Item (12) Ordinances – First Reading

a. Zoning Ordinances

Councilor Fant presented for first reading Zoning Dockets CZ-2023-038 and CZ-2023-041 through CZ-2023-045.

Chairman Tripp referred the items to the Planning and Development Committee.

b. Project Power / Fee in Lieu of Tax Agreement

Chairman Pro Tem Kirven presented for first reading an ordinance authorizing the execution and delivery of a fee in lieu of tax agreement by and between Greenville County, South Carolina and a company or companies known to the county at this time as Project Power with respect to certain economic development property in the county, whereby such property will be subject to certain payments in lieu of taxes, including the provision of certain special source credits; and other matters related thereto.

Chairman Tripp stated the item would remain on Council floor for second reading.

c. Anderson / Greenville Multi County Industrial Business Park (2010 Park) Agreement Amendment – Project Power

Chairman Pro Tem Kirven presented for first reading an ordinance to amend an agreement for the development of a joint county industrial and business park (2010 Park) of Anderson and Greenville Counties so as to enlarge the park.

Chairman Tripp stated the item would remain on Council floor for second reading.

d. Project Safe / Special Source Credit Agreement

Chairman Pro Tem Kirven presented for first reading an ordinance authorizing the execution and delivery of a special source credit agreement by and between Greenville County, South Carolina, and Gordon Street Affordable, LP, with respect to certain investment in qualifying infrastructure related to the construction of a multifamily commercial housing development in the county to include certain affordable and workforce housing in the county, whereby such project would be subject to payments in-lieu-of taxes by virtue of its location in a joint county industrial and business park, and to application of certain special source credits; and other matters related thereto.

Chairman Tripp stated the item would remain on Council floor for second reading.

e. Anderson / Greenville Multi County Industrial Business Park (2020 Park) Agreement Amendment – Project Safe

Chairman Pro Tem Kirven presented for first reading an ordinance to amend an agreement for the development of a joint county industrial and business park (2020 Park) of Anderson County and Greenville Counties so as to enlarge the park.

Chairman Tripp stated the item would remain on Council floor for second reading.

Item (13) **Committee Reports**

No Report

Item (14) **Administrator's Report**

No Report

Item (15) **Requests and Motions**

- Councilor Harrison stated the BMW Pro Am was held the past weekend at Thornblade Club in District 21, and at Carolina Country Club in Spartanburg. The attendance was great and they were able to raise a lot of money for local charities. A four-year extension of that event in Greenville was announced.

- Councilor Fant commended the members of the Planning and Development Committee for their third Wednesday collaborations, which were held to address growth management in a strategic way. He stated his appreciation for staff and their great support and dialogue. They were currently trying to modernize growth strategies and bring them into the current era. One of the topics has been community septic systems, which they were trying to define.

Councilor Fant stated SCTAC was honored to hold an in-depth tour and briefing of the Lockheed Martin F-16 production facility at Donaldson Field for Secretary of Commerce, Harry Lightsey. It was Mr. Lightsey's third visit to Donaldson in the last 12 months, indicating strong support from the State's Chief Economic Development Officer.

- Councilor Bradley echoed Mr. Fant's comments on the community septic system. He stated it was great that they could come together and work on those types of issues with such a great staff.

- Councilor Seman thanked Mr. Kirven for helping with the ribbon cutting of the new portion of the Swamp Rabbit Trail.

- Chairman Tripp stated they had relatively strong decorum during the budget process and he was very appreciative of that fact. He stated by State law, the County had to have a budget passed by June 30th in order for the County Administrator to spend money. He stated they would take a couple of days off and then get to work sorting out the issues. He asked them to be prepared by Friday to hold special meetings.

Item (16) **Adjournment**

Action: Vice-Chairwoman Seman moved to adjourn the meeting.

Motion carried and the meeting adjourned at 7:06 p.m.

Respectfully submitted:

Regina G. McCaskill
Clerk to Council