

MINUTES
UNION COUNTY COUNCIL MEETING
TUESDAY, OCTOBER 12, 2021 AT 5:30 P.M.
MEETING ROOM AT 103 WEST MAIN STREET
STREAMED TO FRANK HART UNION COUNTY
SUPERVISOR FACEBOOK PAGE

Present: Vice-Chairman Ben Ivey, Councilwoman Tracie Campbell (via telephone), Councilman Ralph Tucker, Councilman David Sinclair, Councilman Tommie Hill, Acting Clerk to Council Kindra Horne and County Attorney Sammy Diamaduros.

Absent: Chairman Frank Hart and Councilman John Flood

Notice of the meeting and a copy of the agenda giving the date, time and place of the meeting was posted on the bulletin board in the hall of the Union County Courthouse and a copy was mailed or emailed to the members of the Union County Council, the County Attorney, Jeff Fellers with Clemson Extension, Mr. Mickey Gist, Mr. Robert Small, Mr. James Kollock, Mrs. Casie Jolly, Mike Stevens, Daniel Prince at WBCU Radio Station, Graham Williams at the County News, the News Room at the Spartanburg Herald Journal, Shell Suber at MHISC, and Michael Lee with MHISC as well as to elected officials and heads of various county departments and offices. A notice of the meeting and a copy of the agenda were also posted on the County's website.

Vice-Chairman Ben Ivey called the meeting to order. Councilman David Sinclair gave the invocation followed by the Pledge of Allegiance.

The Acting Clerk to Council gave the Roll Call with the following results:

Tracie Campbell, District 1 – Present via telephone

Ralph Tucker, District 2 – Present

David Sinclair, District 3 - Present

Ben Ivey, District 4 - Present

Tommie Hill, District 5 - Present

John Flood, District 6 – Absent

Vice-Chairman Ben Ivey recognized the members of the Dixie Youth Team who went to the World Series that were present. He stated that on behalf of Union County we appreciate their effort and they did us proud coming in second place. It is a great accomplishment and he presented each member of the team with a certificate of appreciation.

Kevin Wimberly as President and CEO of SC Uplift Community Outreach which is a non-profit community development corporation in Columbia announced they had been awarded a \$1 million grant to make modifications to homes of elderly residents in Chester, Fairfield and Union counties. The grant provided through HUD's Older Adults Home Modification Program (IOAHMP) will allow low-income seniors to stay in their homes through low-cost home modifications up to \$5,000 that will reduce older adults' risk of falling. To be eligible the older adult must be the owner of the home as their primary residence and be age 62 or older whose total household income is 80% or below the Area Median Income (AMI) for the county in which they reside. He said the Union County Community Director Kathy Jo Lancaster has their contact information.

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Detention Center Director Niel McKeown stated they received a grant in the amount of \$89,079.00 from the South Carolina Department of Public Safety for personal protection equipment to be used for their officers and inmates. He said Kathy Jo Lancaster was very helpful in helping him with that grant. He said he was asking County Council to give him approval to enter into an agreement with an engineering firm to give us an engineering price and the bid packet for the proposed new addition for the Union County jail and detention center. Some of the funds could come from the American Rescue Plan Act if Council will approve it. He had drawings of the different proposed additions of modular cells to expand the jail facility. Due to the Minnie Brooks Act, they have to enter into an agreement to get prices on the Detention Center renovations. Vice-Chairman Ben Ivey called for a motion to have the County Supervisor and Niel McKeown move forward with receiving this information so they have the information we need.

David Sinclair: Made a motion to have the County Supervisor and Niel McKeown move forward with receiving this information so they have the information needed.

Ralph Tucker: Seconded the motion.

Councilman David Sinclair said he thought it was important the citizens realize the need for the expansion. Niel McKeown said most days they operate at capacity at the jail. They are supposed to house 62 inmates but sometimes they have over 100 inmates. The new wing would allow them to segregate COVID patients depending on the severity into different groups for safety purposes. The existing jail needs some work. Once they have the new addition, inmates can be moved to allow for renovations to the existing jail. Vice-Chairman Ben Ivey stated the added cells would be a safer environment where you can isolate inmates. Niel McKeown stated there are only two cells in the existing jail to put inmates on suicide watch. We would probably be looking at two years to complete the new addition.

Vice-Chairman Ben Ivey did a call for votes with Councilwoman Tracie Campbell via telephone voting in favor of the motion, Councilman Ralph Tucker voting in favor of the motion, Councilman David Sinclair voting in favor of the motion, Councilman Ben Ivey voting in favor of the motion and Councilman Tommie Hill voting in favor of the motion resulting in a unanimous vote.

Vice-Chairman Ben Ivey suggested referring the discussion of the Burn ordinance to the County Council Committee on Planning and Development which is chaired by Councilman John Flood.

David Sinclair: Made a motion to refer the Burn Ordinance to the County Council Committee on Planning and Development.

Tracie Campbell: Seconded the motion. Vice-Chairman Ben Ivey did a call for votes with Councilwoman Tracie Campbell via telephone voting in favor of the motion, Councilman Ralph Tucker voting in favor of the motion, Councilman David Sinclair voting in favor of the motion, Councilman Ben Ivy voting in favor of the motion and Councilman Tommie Hill voting in favor of the motion resulting in a unanimous vote.

Vice-Chairman Ben Ivey stated next on the agenda was to consider any requests to fill vacant budgeted positions but there were none.

Vice-Chairman Ben Ivey stated next on the agenda was to consider any requests for capital expenditures but there were none.

Vice-Chairman Ben Ivey called for any comments from elected officials and department heads.

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Fire and EPD Coordinator Dennis Merrifield had previously told Council they hoped the radio system would be in full operation but they were delayed due to weather. Tomorrow they should install the last of the equipment. Councilman David Sinclair asked if that would alleviate most of the dead spaces in Union County since there is concern about the Carlisle and Santuc areas. Mr. Merrifield stated there were two aspects and one is the broadcast side which is coming out of the main tower from the dispatch center. When you get down in the Carlisle areas you can receive a call but it is marginal. Then there is the transmission side. One of the towers that had been completely out is the Carlisle site. They are waiting for that equipment to come tomorrow. He hopes once they get that installed, he will be able to check the system so the fire departments and chiefs can tell him where any holes in communications are located if they exist.

Airport and Stadium Manager Ronnie Wade said they had been working the last four months on a new FBO for the airport. They have selected somebody and they will be bringing them in hopefully before they have Fun Day on October 30th. He said he along with County Supervisor Frank Hart and Economic Development Director Dolton Williams met with the engineers to see exactly what they need. Their five-year plan does not call for building hangars but they understand there may be a need for several 100' x 100' hangars that a gentleman out of Spartanburg would build. They will go through a contract negotiation for this which would be brought to Council as the hangars could be leased out for probably twenty years. At the end of the term, the County would own the property and it could be leased to the individual. Their five-year plan calls for it to go to the end of the taxi-way and the engineers have their drawings. The engineering firm is going to bring him back three proposals and if they do not match our five-year plan then we may have to adjust the current five-year plan. They have the dinner for the seniors for the fair on October 20th and Council is invited. They may be handing out dinners in front of the stadium since it is for the elderly. They will suggest the seniors go to the fair if they feel safe doing so. It looks like Morningside and First Baptist Church as well as a number of vendors will be providing candy for Halloween as a drive-thru event. Fun Day at the airport on October 30th will be an all-day event with music, airplane flights and kid's games.

Eric Harold as Director of EMS gave his report on call volume and response time. They have seen an increase in the number of overdoses. As of October 18th, they will be fully staffed. They have one person out due to a work injury. He said he has one part-time paramedic and one part-time EMT asking about full-time. He said he asked for money for EMS from funds for The American Rescue Plan Act of 2021 for cardiac monitors, stretchers and an additional mechanical CPR device. Their service technician has told him their cardiac monitors are over ten years old and there are no parts available for repairs. They need to replace the five cardiac monitors. Several of their patient care stretchers are over fifteen years old and he needs at least two new ones for the new trucks coming in. The power shift truck is missing the mechanical CPR device. He said he would like to fully equip, equalize and standardize all the equipment on those trucks. He is requesting about \$250,000.00 from those funds.

Community Director Kathy Jo Lancaster said they are continuing to explore grant opportunities for Union. The Union County branch of the NAACP is offering assistance through a program called SC Stay Plus which assists individuals who are late on rent and utilities. They will be having information sessions at 103 West Main Street this Friday from 1:00 p.m. until 6:00 p.m. and on Saturday from 10:00 a.m. until 3:00 p.m. with more sessions to be scheduled. Funding to help with rent would be paid directly to the landlord and not the individual and could fund up to three additional months for rent. Tourism Director Curtiss Hunter said she would be working the odd hours with this group.

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Alcohol and Drug Abuse Director Christina McDowell said they have seen an increase in overdoses in our county. They are looking at using funds from a COVID relief grant they received to set up a satellite agency in Lockhart as they have been identified as a hot spot. It is hard to get to the agency located in Union because of transportation issues. They will be looking at locations that will lend them some space to be there two to three days a week. They are still looking for someone to fill that clinician position.

Vice-Chairman Ben Ivey introduced a resolution to set the tax levy for fiscal year 2021-2022 with a total County levy of 168.9 mils and setting the tax levy for various fire districts in Union County.

David Sinclair: Made a motion to dispense with referring the resolution to a committee and to adopt the resolution to set the tax levy for fiscal year 2021-2022 with a total County levy of 168.9 mils and setting the tax levy for various fire districts in Union County. The Local Option Sales Tax Credit Factor for 2021-2022 was established at 0.002330.

Ralph Tucker: Seconded the motion. Vice-Chairman Ben Ivey did a call for votes with Councilwoman Tracie Campbell via telephone voting in favor of the motion, Councilman Ralph Tucker voting in favor of the motion, Councilman David Sinclair voting in favor of the motion, Councilman Ben Ivy voting in favor of the motion and Councilman Tommie Hill voting in favor of the motion resulting in a unanimous vote.

Vice-Chairman Ben Ivey presented for third and final reading an ordinance to adopt a comprehensive plan titled Comprehensive Plan 2031: A Shared Vision For Our Tomorrow; and to provide for other matters related thereto.

David Sinclair: Made a motion to adopt the ordinance to adopt a comprehensive plan titled Comprehensive Plan 2031: A Shared Vision For Our Tomorrow; and to provide for other matters related thereto.

Ralph Tucker: Seconded the motion. Vice-Chairman Ben Ivey did a call for votes with Councilwoman Tracie Campbell via telephone voting in favor of the motion, Councilman Ralph Tucker voting in favor of the motion, Councilman David Sinclair voting in favor of the motion, Councilman Ben Ivy voting in favor of the motion and Councilman Tommie Hill voting in favor of the motion resulting in a unanimous vote.

Vice-Chairman Ben Ivey called for any other business but there was none.

Ralph Tucker: Made a motion to adjourn the meeting.

David Sinclair: Seconded the motion. The vote was unanimous.

The meeting was adjourned at 6:20 p.m.

Ben Ivey, Vice-Chairman
Union County Council

Kindra Horne, Acting Clerk to Council