

MINUTES  
UNION COUNTY COUNCIL MEETING  
TUESDAY, MARCH 14, 2023 AT 5:30 P.M.  
GRAND JURY ROOM AT UNION COUNTY COURTHOUSE  
LIVE STREAMED TO WWW.FACEBOOK.COM/GEARUPUNIONSC

Present: Chairman Phillip Russell, II, Councilman Danny Bright, Council Vice Chair David Sinclair, Councilwoman Annie Smith, Councilwoman Carolyn Rutherford, Councilman John Flood, Clerk to Council Kindra W. Horne and County Attorney Sammy Diamaduros.

Absent: Councilman Ralph Tucker

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, 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.

Chairman Phillip Russell, II called the meeting to order. Councilman Danny Bright gave the invocation followed by the Pledge of Allegiance lead by Councilman John Flood.

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

Danny Bright, District 1 – Present

Ralph Tucker, District 2 – Absent

David Sinclair, District 3 – Present

Annie Smith, District 4 - Present

Carolyn Rutherford, District 5 – Present

John Flood, District 6 – Present

David Sinclair: Made a motion to approve the minutes as written of the regular monthly meeting of the Union County Council held on February 14, 2023.

John Flood: Seconded the motion. Chairman Phillip Russell, II called for a vote with all in favor of the motion. Chairman Russell called for opposing votes and there were none. The motion carried.

Chairman Phillip Russell, II presented a service award to Robert Gossett, an Officer with the Detention Center for 10 years of dedicated service to Union County. Mr. Gossett was not in attendance, but Director Niel McKeown accepted on his behalf.

Chairman Russell recognized Development Board Director Dolton Williams. Dolton made note that much of the economic development success that Union County has had over the last few years can be attributed to Lockhart Power and many of our other partners, and that we are very lucky to have them. He recognized Andrena Powell Baker with Lockhart Power who presented a check to Union County for Lockhart Power's Utility Tax Credits in the amount of \$200,000. Mrs. Powell Baker made note that the donation was specifically made for infrastructure improvements to the Cudd site on Highway 18. LPC

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has donated their UTC for a number of years to Union County. This is the second largest donation LPC has made.

Chairman Russell recognized Access Health, Brook Henderson. Mrs. Henderson explains that Access Health works with Union and surrounding counties to get uninsured patients connected to primary care and other health services. Access Health received a grant to begin developing the program prior to COVID and COVID slowed the process but they have consistently been working on the Comprehensive Health Improvement Plan for Union County. This group is the same group that worked to bring in an Urgent Care to Union County. Mrs. Henderson introduced Erica Rhodes, who let Council know that we now have a community health advocate that will be housed in the office of Dr. Jeter's OBGYN practice. The advocate can work with patients to help them get services they may need. She had previously provided council with a copy of the CHIP and other documents highlighting plans for Union County.

Chairman Russell recognized the Bonham Fire Board and Chief Scott Austin. Chief Austin addressed council about the fire department working with former Fire Coordinator Dennis Merrifield on the purchase of a new fire engine for the cost of \$480,000. The project was put on hold when Chief Merrifield passed away, but the board has now voted to purchase the engine. They have been saving and have \$330,000 on hand to purchase it. It will take two years for the truck to be built once ordered, so as long as they watch their spending over the next two years, by the time they take delivery they should be able to pay for the truck with no financing needed. If they do have to finance it would be a minimum due to their savings they already have. The board and Chief would like Council approval to move forward on purchasing the truck. Chief Austin asked if there are questions. Councilman Flood asked if there will be any new taxes to cover the cost and Chief Austin says there will not be. Chairman Russell calls for a motion to allow Bonham Fire Department to proceed with the purchase of the Fire truck. Councilwoman Annie Smith made the motion, John Flood made the second and Chairman Russell called for questions from Council. Councilman Sinclair asked if this was to replace a truck and Chief Austin states that it is to replace one that was just auctioned off on Govdeals. It was having some pump issues. Chairman Russell added that the cost of trucks and the time to build them has gone crazy over the past few years. Councilman Flood notes that Monarch purchased a truck almost identical a year ago and the cost has increased at least 10%. Chairman Russell called for a vote and the motion passed unanimously.

Chairman Russell stated that Council needed to consider approving the jail addition. The original budget of the project was \$7.1 million dollars, the bids came in at \$8.6 million. A Finance Committee meeting was held on March 7, 2023 and he was asked to find some options and he has done that and explained those options to council. He called for a motion to move forward with the jail addition. David Sinclair made the motion and John Flood made the second. Chairman Russell called for discussion and there was none. He called for a vote to move forward and all voted in favor. The motion passed unanimously. Chairman Russell called for a proposal from the Finance Committee on infrastructure improvements to the Cudd property. Finance Committee Chair Councilman Flood says that a motion is made from the Finance Committee to proceed with pouring of the 200,000 square foot concrete pad. Dolton Williams corrects this to be grading for the concrete pad. Councilwoman Smith seconded the motion, Chairman Russell called for discussion and he explained that the project was to prepare the land for a pad at the Cudd property and that the County portion of the funding in the amount of \$25,000 would come from fund 327, Economic Development fund. Councilman Flood noted that the remainder of the funding approximately \$1.5 million would come from grants. Chairman Russell called for a vote, all voted in favor and the motion passed unanimously.

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Chairman Russell called for anyone with request to fill vacancies. There were none.  
He called for any request for capital fund expenditures and there were none.  
He called for reports from Elected Officials and there were none.  
He noted that his supervisor's report had been provided to all council and the media in writing so he would not go over it.  
Chairman Russell called for committee reports or announcements from council and there were none.

Chairman Russell called for a motion to enter into Executive Session to discuss a contractual matter. Councilman David Sinclair made a motion to enter into executive session, Councilman Annie Smith made a second. There was no discussion, all voted in favor of the motion. Chairman Russell asked the Economic Development crew and Human Resources Manager Kindra Horne to remain in the executive session. Council entered into executive session at 5:55PM

Council came out of executive session at 6:20pm. Councilman Sinclair made a motion to end the session and Councilwoman Smith seconded. All were in favor.

Chairman Russell announced that the executive session was closed with no action taken and called for a motion to adjourn the meeting. Councilwoman Annie Smith made a motion to adjourn seconded by Councilman Danny Bright. All were in favor and the meeting adjourned at 6:23pm.

Phillip Russell, II, Chairman  
Union County Council

Kindra W. Horne, Clerk to Council