

MINUTES
UNION COUNTY COUNCIL MEETING
TUESDAY, MARCH 12, 2024, AT 5:30 P.M.
GRAND JURY ROOM AT UNION COUNTY COURTHOUSE

Present: Chairman Phillip Russell, II, Councilman Danny Bright, Councilman John Glenn, Councilwoman Annie Smith-by phone, Councilwoman Carolyn Rutherford, Councilman John Flood, County Attorney Sammy Diamaduros, and Clerk to Council Kindra Horne.

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, Daniel Prince at WBCU Radio Station, Graham Williams at the County News, 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 Russell opened the meeting at 5:30 PM. Councilman Danny Bright gave the invocation and Vice Chairman David Sinclair led the Pledge of Allegiance. The Clerk performed the roll call with the following results:

District 1 Danny Bright was present.
District 2 John Glenn was present.
District 3 District 3 David Sinclair was present.
District 4 Annie Smith was present via phone.
District 5 Carolyn Rutherford was present.
District 6 John Flood was present.

Chairman Russell presented a service award to Megan Lancaster-Clerk of Court's Office for 5 years of service.

Chairman Russell announced we had three sets of minutes for approval. The first set was for a Special Meeting held on January 16, 2024. He asked if there were any additions or deletions. Hearing none, he called for a motion to approve. Vice chair David Sinclair made a motion, Councilwoman Carolyn Rutherford seconded. The chairman called for a vote, all were in favor and the vote carried unanimously. Chairman Russell noted that the second set of minutes was for a Special Meeting held on January 23, 2024. The minutes were sent out as a draft and some additions were made and the draft was sent back out. He asked if there were questions. Councilman Bright, wanted to note that Adam opened the meeting stating that there were no real restrictions on council's communications with employees, and he wanted that added to the minutes. Chairman Russell noted that the restrictions were clarified in the law which had been added to the minutes, but he would turn it over to council for their input. Councilman Bright asked that it be added. Vice chair David Sinclair pointed out that the statement was already in the minutes and councilman Bright apologized that he had not noticed it since the new draft had been provided. Chairman Russell asked if there was a motion to approve the minutes. Councilman John Glenn made a motion to approve as written, Vice chair Sinclair seconded and the chairman called for a vote. Councilman Bright requested discussion and read the following statement: He said that the impression of the meeting that he had on the 23rd was that while communication between employees and

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council members is acceptable it is vital for both parties to recognize their respective roles. Employees serve under the county supervisor not directly under any council member; therefore, council members should refrain from issuing directives; but he also wanted to note that it is crucial to acknowledge that county employees are also constituents of council members and being an employee doesn't diminish their right to representation and also council members should not feel that they must forfeit their privilege in representing them.

Chairman Russell stated that he felt that it was made clear in the training that it was not the intent of council to make it seem that employees can't speak to council; but that they (employees) only have one boss and the day-to-day operations should be focused to that. He called for a vote and the vote to approve the minutes as written passed unanimously.

Chairman Russell asked if there were any additions or deletions to the proposed minutes for the regular February Council meeting minutes. There were none and councilman John Flood made a motion to approve as written, councilwoman Annie Smith seconded. Chairman Russell called for the vote and the vote carried unanimously.

Chairman Russell announced that we had a number of board vacancies and that we would go down the list for any appointments. He asked if there were any recommendations to the UCCADA Commission. Councilman Danny Bright recommended Dale Goff, councilwoman Carolyn Rutherford seconded, he called for the vote and all were in favor; the appointment carried unanimously. Chairman Russell noted that the appointments for UCCADA were to be made by District 2 and 3, rather than District 1. Vice chair David Sinclair, District 3 said that he approved for this appointment to show as his.

Chairman Russell noted that there were 5 vacancies on the Building Code Board of Appeals, Planning Commission 1 vacancy, Cross Keys FD 1 vacancy, CRCOG 1 vacancy. There had been no applications received for any of the vacancies other than the one appointment made to UCCADA. Chairman Russell noted that there was one person that had been interested in the CRCOG, but that he was already serving as board chair on a different board and did not want to step down from that to be appointed to the CRCOG. The way the ordinance reads council can only appoint an individual to serve on one board. Councilman Bright stated that in his conversations with Eleanor from Catawba Regional he did not think that applied to this board because it could even be a member of council that was appointed to serve on the CRCOG board. Chairman Russell stated we would continue to advertise and accept applications for all board vacancies.

Chairman Russell introduced a Resolution supporting the petition of former citizens of Union County seeking annexation back into Union County from Spartanburg County and a reciprocal request for Governor McMaster to appoint a commission for annexation pursuant to section 4-5-130. Spartanburg County Council has already passed a Resolution supporting this. Everything is lined up to proceed. Councilman John Flood made a motion to dispense with referring to committee and accept the Resolution as presented. Councilman Bright seconded the motion, chairman Russell called for discussion, there was none. He called for the vote and all were in favor, the vote carried unanimously.

Chairman Russell stated that he had an update, as council had requested him to determine what the process would be to have Sunday alcohol sales on the ballot in November for public vote. Vice chair Sinclair wanted to note that it was not all of council who made this request, only a few. Chairman Russell had reached out to our attorney and found that we would have to have an Ordinance created, three readings and a public hearing would be required. All of which would have to be completed by July

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1, 2024 in order to meet the deadline with the State to be put on the November ballot for public vote. Councilwoman Carolyn Rutherford made a motion to proceed with having the Ordinance prepared, councilwoman Annie Smith seconded the motion and opened the floor for discussion. Vice chair David Sinclair noted that he was not in favor of this, that he could not find any reports that had shown this to be beneficial for counties to do this, and that alcohol has been associated with domestic violence and violent crime all across our nation and that 80% of men who abuse females or their partners are problem drinkers, 57% of homicides are created by alcohol, alcohol can produce impulsive and aggressive behaviors, 50.6% of simple assaults involve alcohol, 30% of sexual assaults involve alcohol, South Carolina is ranked 7th in the nation for drunk driving, and he just doesn't see how it would be beneficial for our county. In addition, he wanted it noted that Sunday is the Lord's Day and it should be kept Holy. Councilwoman Rutherford said that she feels it would bring in more revenue, and she doesn't drink beer but to each his own, she feels we should keep the revenue here rather than individuals going to other counties to purchase alcohol on a Sunday. Chairman Russell called for further discussion, there was none. He requested that the Clerk to Council perform a roll call vote which carried 5/1 with the following results:

District 1-Danny Bright, Yes
District 2-John Glenn, Yes
District 3-David Sinclair, No
District 4-Annie Smith, Yes
District 5-Carolyn Rutherford, Yes
District 6-John Flood, Yes

Chairman Russell called on any elected officials present who may need to speak, and there were none.

Chairman Russell gave his supervisor's report which had been provided to council in written format and will be attached to the minutes.

Chairman Russell announced that the first of our Boards and Commissions training would be held on March 21, 2024 and that letters had been sent to all board members about the training. Two remaining training will be announced later. There will be a Finance Committee meeting for the Supervisor to present what he believes will be the operating and capital budget for FY 2024-2025 on March 25, 2024.

There were no committee reports and no other announcements.

Councilwoman Carolyn Rutherford made a motion to adjourn, seconded by vice chair David Sinclair. All were in favor and the meeting adjourned at 6:05PM.

Phillip G. Russell, II, Chair, Union County Council

Kindra W. Horne, Clerk to Council