

MINUTES
UNION COUNTY REGULAR MONTHLY COUNCIL MEETING
TUESDAY, JULY 9 2024, AT 5:30 P.M.
GRAND JURY ROOM AT UNION COUNTY COURTHOUSE

Present: Chairman Phillip Russell, II, Councilman Danny Bright, Councilman John Glenn, Vice Chair David Sinclair Councilwoman Annie Smith, Councilwoman Carolyn Rutherford, Councilman John Flood, County Attorney Jennifer Williams, 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 on the bulletin board in the Union County Government Building, 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 approximately 5:45PM, the meeting was late beginning due to the public hearing concerning the Santuc Fire Department bond referendum.

Chaplain Councilman Danny Bright gave the invocation and vice chair David Sinclair led the Pledge of Allegiance. Chairman Russell requested the Clerk perform roll call.

Roll call was performed with the following results:

District 1 Danny Bright- present
District 2 John Glenn- present
District 3 David Sinclair- present
District 4 Annie Smith- present
District 5 Carolyn Rutherford- present
District 6 John Flood- present

Chairman Russell presented service awards to the following:

Debbie Robertson-Treasurer, 5 years of service
Sgt. Wendy Childers-Sheriff's Office-20 years of service

Chairman Russell called for a motion to accept the minutes for the regular June council meeting. Councilmember Annie Smith made a motion to dispense with referring to committee and adopt the minutes as written. Vice chair David Sinclair seconded the motion. There were no questions or discussion. Chairman Russell called for the vote and the vote carried unanimously.

There were no applications for Board Appointments, and no appointments were made.

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Chairman Russell introduced the Union County Multi-Jurisdictional Hazard Mitigation Plan. The document was posted on the website for several weeks for council and public review. It is a document provided by FEMA and the State that allows us to identify the hazards that we may have in the county, and to determine if an emergency or disaster happens what are the resources and responsibilities to cover those. The plan identifies that. It gives us the ability to reach out to the State for National Guard assistance, fire assistance etc...., it allows us to get mutual aid from other counties; basically, it is a check list of how we will function and operate if something bad happens. This plan must be reviewed and adopted by council every five years. This year we spent a lot of time getting it right with many different groups involved. The benefit of approving the plan is that it allows the Governor to declare an emergency in our area and then the county has the ability to submit applicable expenses to the State or FEMA for reimbursement. He called for a motion to adopt the plan. Councilman John Glenn made a motion to dispense with referring to committee and adopt the plan. Councilman John Flood seconded the motion. Chairman Russell called for discussion, there was none. He called for a vote and the motion carried unanimously.

Chairman Russell explained that SC PEBA Board of Directors had voted to amend the definition of "employee" for the purpose of insurance eligibility. The amendment allows councils of participating counties and municipalities to exercise a one-time irrevocable option to exclude their councilmembers from the definition of "employee". PEBA is requiring all participating counties to submit an addendum to their employer agreement, defining their councilmembers as "employees" if they wish to allow councilmembers to participate in PEBA's Health Insurance plan. Historically, we have considered our council as employees. If you want to continue that you would vote yes, if you would like to change that you vote no. Chairman Russell called for the motion. Councilman Bright made a motion to dispense with referring to committee and to continue considering council as employees. Vice chair Sinclair seconded the motion. There were no questions. Chairman Russell called for the vote and the motion carried unanimously.

Chairman Russell stated that the next item on the agenda was to consider donations to any youth team from Union County who advances to World Series Tournaments. The request comes from the Diamond League, formerly Dixie Boys Baseball, which is now boys' baseball and girls' softball. They have one girls' softball team that has advanced so far and will travel to Tennessee. Councilmember Smith asked what we had provided last year. Chairman Russell stated that we did not have any teams that advanced to World Series play last year, however, we did provide some funds to each team that went to the State Tournament. It did not come to council, we handled that through Timken Park. We had some money left from the gate fees collected to pay umpires, so the amount left after paying umpires was given back to the teams that went to State. Councilmember John Glenn made a motion to dispense with referring to committee and provide \$500 to any team that advanced to World Series play. Councilmember John Flood seconded. Councilmember Carolyn Rutherford said she thought this was great and it was huge for Union County; but she wanted to know if we would be able to offer other teams or groups the same support. Chairman Russell, said he thought that if the teams were going to the World Series, then we should, whether it be baseball, softball, volleyball etc....; this is a Union County team they picked all stars and that is the group that is going. Councilman Flood noted that it was for National exposure. Councilmember Danny Bright said that he would not be in favor. It was a charitable donation using tax dollars. That we could fill the room with kids representing Union County on various teams for various sports, and that he would personally donate out of his pocket, but he did not want to see tax dollars used for it. Chairman Russell stated that if council did vote to do this, he would advise it come from the

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council contingency fund, there is seldom any funds spent from that account. Councilman Flood stated it could come from Tourism because they had a surplus. Chairman Russell stated that it was a new budget year, so everyone did right now. Chairman Russell stated that council could decide if they were going to donate and then they could determine where it would be paid from. Vice chair Sinclair said that the only thing that concerned him was that if council opened the door too wide then they would have everyone coming in trying to get funds. He noted that his daughter went to the State in Cross Country and they did not come to the county, they did fundraisers to cover the cost. He said that some folks had reached out to him that were not in favor of this because it was tax payers' money. Councilman Flood said that he had raised an issue about this before when we donated, but now we have set a precedent. Councilman Glenn noted that he had coached for many years and that former Supervisor Sinclair had always made sure the teams had funds and transportation because it was very expensive to travel to the state tournaments. Vice chair Sinclair stated he wasn't against it, he donated through his business; he was just concerned on the county level. Councilman Glenn said he felt we needed control and a limit, but he didn't think we should not give them anything because they were wearing Union County on their uniforms. Councilman Bright stated it was a blurry line. Councilmember Rutherford asked if there was one team going and one that might go. Chairman Russell said yes, and he called for the vote. Vice chair Sinclair had one more question, and asked if we could set the precedent a little higher and say we are only going to do this for World Series? Chairman Russell said yes, councilman Bright said what if we have a pageant contestant that makes it to the national level, or a travel league, it goes on and on. Councilmember Smith asked if we could state that the team must be a Union County team. Councilman Bright stated that Diamond League was not a Union County sponsored team, we don't fund the team. Chairman Russell called for the vote. The motion carried five to one with councilmember Bright opposing.

Chairman Russell read an Ordinance, 3rd and final reading, calling for a referendum in the Santuc Fire District as to whether or not the Santuc Fire District shall be authorized to issue a General Obligation Bond, not exceeding \$500,000, and pending favorable results of the referendum, approve the issuance of said bond by the Santuc Fire District. Councilman John Flood made a motion to dispense with referring to committee and adopt the Ordinance. Councilmember Rutherford seconded the motion. Chairman Russell called for questions or discussion. Vice chair said let's clarify that this is not to exceed \$500,000 and it rolls off after the last payment is made. Chairman Russell said yes, and we are not authorizing them to go into \$500,000 dollars' worth of debt, council is authorizing that it goes to the public, the citizens in the district who would be paying for it, to vote on whether or not it should be done. There were no other questions and he called for the vote. The motion carried unanimous.

Chairman Russell recognized elected officials present. Treasurer Debbie Robertson stated her office was in the new building they opened the drive through window and one person had been through it.

Sheriff Jeff Bailey presented council with some information on tasers. The ones that his officers are using now are out of date, and maintenance is increasingly expensive. He and some other folks approached Timken Foundation and did a presentation to the board members and they approved us for a \$40,000 grant. To obtain the tasers is a five-year committal. The grant would pay for the first year, after that the County would be responsible for \$26,580.42 for the next four years. This includes, training, instructors and a warranty. Ther Sheriff noted that the good thing about this taser is it is the new less lethal version. Tasers are less lethal, and officers would rather use something like this than to have to use a firearm. The ones the officers have now, if the fire it, they have one shot. They fire it and they are going to hit the person and take them down or they are going to miss and that's it. This new taser has ten

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shots. It gives officers a better opportunity to take someone down and get them under control before having to advance to the next more lethal weapon their belts. This new taser gives officers a better option than what they now, because officers never want to have to use their other weapons. Councilman Flood noted that the taser is less than lethal, however, there is a very small chance that it can be; unlike a firearm which in many cases is universally fatal. Sheriff Bailey stated there are many advantages with this and the training that goes along with it. Chairman Russell noted it would create some savings in their budget for cartridges and training and they are working on getting a dollar amount attached to the savings so the true additional cost can be determined if council decides to add these tasers.

Sheriff Bailey announced the Sheriff's Office annual Back to School give away, on July 27, 2024 at the Fairgrounds from 10AM-1PM and invited everyone to come.

Sheriff Bailey announced that on July 11 & 12th his office would be having their final inspection for accreditation and he hoped they would here something soon and have a presentation in Columbia for that.

Chairman Russell went over a few notes, but not a full Supervisor's Report, as he is working on his annual report. He said everything was going well with the new building, maintenance is addressing a sewer issue that occurred during construction. Offices are working on going through vaults to get the offices cleared from the courthouse and we hope to be done by the end of August, but we have limited staff to do that from the offices. The jail addition is going great and on schedule. The committee for the Spartanburg/Union line change is going to meet and will keep us updated. Preconstruction has been held for the Goshen Hill Fire Department; open house will be August 2. The Bonham Aerial Truck contract has been signed. The Gateway sign bid has been awarded, for 4 locations. We have a draft set of Animal Shelter drawings, with an estimate of 1.6-1.8 million without land and grading, this is not final it is just a start. Disc golf will open at South Hills, we had a grant for that, by August 1, 2024. Basketball has been put in there and the multi-purpose field will be ready in the next couple of months. We will have our first meeting on the joint City/County Shop in the next couple of weeks. We will have a community clean-up in West Springs this Friday. We will meet at the ballfield and lunch will be at Timken Park after.

Chairman Russell called for comments or questions from council. Councilman Glenn said he did not like that we have five entrances to Union County, and we are only replacing four signs. Chairman Russell stated that we only have four in place to revamp, but maybe we could look at adding one at some point. Councilman Glenn said if we had five entrances we needed five signs. Chairman Russell stated he was just working with what was already in place, but he understood. Councilmember Rutherford asked if there was a larger sign with lights on at Voter's Registration because people didn't know where it was. She asked if Chairman Russell had noticed the small sign there. He said he had not. Councilman Glenn agreed that people did not know where Voter's Registration was located. Councilmember Rutherford also asked how to get in touch with the Animal Shelter that she had called and couldn't get them. Her neighbor is interested in getting a kitten. Chairman Russell said that right now we only have three people working Animal and Code, we have 111 dogs, not including other animals. Some come from animal cruelty cases. They are swamped and they are out on calls and not always in the office to answer phones. He gave her the number and said he would reach out to the employees there and make sure they get her set up with a time to go to the Shelter to see the available kittens.

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There was no other business. Councilmember Annie Smith made a motion to adjourn and councilmember Rutherford seconded. All were in favor and the meeting adjourned at approximately 6:45PM.

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

Kindra W. Horne, Clerk to Council