

September 18, 2019

MINUTES OF CALLED MEETING
SALUDA COUNTY COUNCIL
WEDNESDAY, SEPTEMBER 18, 2019 at 5:30 P.M.
COUNCIL CHAMBERS OF SALUDA COUNTY ADMINISTRATION BUILDING
400 WEST HIGHLAND STREET, SALUDA, SOUTH CAROLINA 29138

A. CALL TO ORDER

The Called Meeting of Saluda County Council was called to order by Chairman Derrick W. Jones at 5:30 P.M.

Present were:

Chm. Derrick W. Jones
Coun. Justin Anderson
Coun. Jones P. Butler
Coun. J. Frank Daniel, Sr.
Coun. Wayne Grice

Also present were:

County Director, Sandra G. Padget
Clerk to Council, Karen T. Whittle
County Attorney, Christian G. Spradley

B. INVOCATION

Coun. Anderson delivered the invocation.

C. PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

Chm. Jones led the Pledge of Allegiance.

D. PUBLIC INFORMATION

It is noted by the Clerk herein that in compliance with the Freedom of Information Act, notice of the called meeting and agenda were given to the local news media and properly posted, to include the county website.

E. OLD BUSINESS

Before second reading of the ordinances, Chm. Jones recognized County Attorney Chris Spradley to give a presentation on the fee ordinances and balancing of the county budget.

Atty. Spradley stated he was not in favor or against the fees and emphasized that all the information he presented was not secret; it had been addressed in public meetings and work sessions of County Council.

Atty. Spradley presented the amounts of money that past and current Council had transferred from the county's fund balance each year for the past ten years to balance the county operating budgets, with a balance of approximately \$2.6 million currently remaining in the county's reserve fund balance. For Fiscal Year 2019-2020, \$1,027,822.00 was transferred from fund

balance to balance the county operating budget. Atty. Spradley said one more year transferring the amount as in FY19-20, the county would need to do tax anticipation note bonds to operate the county until property taxes began being collected in December, which would involve paying bond attorneys and paying interest on money borrowed. Atty. Spradley said the county could not raise the millage to cover the \$1 million deficit due to state law did not allow the millage to be raised above the consumer price index percentage (CPI%). Atty. Spradley said other options to reduce the deficit were: delete 22.6 county positions; furlough county employees; fees; or a combination of these options.

Atty. Spradley addressed comments that had been made since EMS had been taken over by the County, that EMS was the reason for the increase of using fund balance. Atty. Spradley said in Fiscal Year 2012-2013 Saluda County appropriated \$627,750.00 to the Saluda Nursing Center for EMS. Atty. Spradley said the EMS budget last year was \$1,895,877.00 and EMS fees collected were \$1,235,237.00. Atty. Spradley said based on the difference of approximately \$660,000.00 in expenses and revenues last year and the amount appropriated for EMS in FY12-13, EMS costs the county approximately \$32,000.00 over the past six to eight years. Atty. Spradley also addressed the county purchased ambulances for EMS while they were operated under the Saluda Nursing Center, as well as purchasing ambulances now that they are operated under the County.

Atty. Spradley addressed the Saluda County Detention Center budget had increased due to the S.C. Department of Corrections mandated seven new positions at the Detention Center.

Atty. Spradley addressed the state was requiring the county to build a new detention center. Atty. Spradley said the penny sales tax was approved for five projects over an eight year period, to be funded in the order as listed, with the new Saluda County Detention Center as the fifth (last) project. Atty. Spradley explained Council was seeking bonds to do all five projects at the same time in order to begin construction soon to avoid increased construction costs later, and the sales tax revenue would go towards the bond payment. Atty. Spradley explained on October 25th, a delegation from the county had to go to New York to meet with Standard and Poor's to present information to obtain a credit rating for Saluda County. In order for the county to borrow money, the county needed to show the problem of balancing the county operating budget from fund balance had been solved. Atty. Spradley said the current Council had to decide how to solve the problem that had been handed down to them by past Councils and they had decided to implement the proposed fees.

Atty. Spradley said there were approximately 9,300 parcels with a taxable structure or a mobile home in the county. Atty. Spradley explained the proposed public safety fee was \$50.00 for a taxable structure on a parcel/lot of land and \$50.00 per titled mobile home, because mobile homes were not tied to the land. Atty. Spradley said if a person was exempt from taxes, they were exempt from the fee, unless during the reassessment year their house reappraised higher and was no longer fully exempt and they received a tax bill, then the fee would be on the tax bill. Atty. Spradley reiterated it was not \$50.00 per structure, it was \$50.00 per parcel/lot with a structure.

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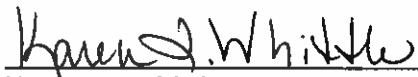
Atty. Spradley said there were approximately 20,200 vehicles in the county. Atty. Spradley explained the motor vehicle fee was \$20.00 on each licensed motor vehicle; it would not be placed on boats and motors. If a person or organization's vehicles were exempt, they would be exempt from the fee.

After Atty. Spradley made the presentation and explained the fees, the public was allowed to ask questions and make comments. (A recording of the meeting is on file in the Clerk to Council's office).

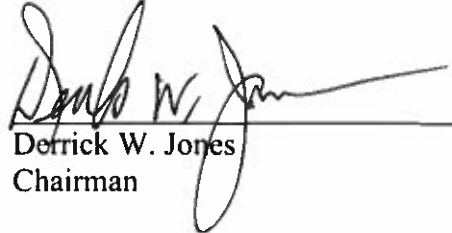
1. On motion of Coun. Butler, seconded by Coun. Anderson, Second Reading failed on Ordinance No. 06-19, "AN ORDINANCE TO ESTABLISH A UNIFORM SERVICE CHARGE FOR PUBLIC SAFETY IN SALUDA COUNTY, SOUTH CAROLINA." (Voting in Favor: Coun. Butler). (Opposed: Chm. Jones, Coun. Anderson, Daniel, Grice).
2. On motion of Coun. Anderson, seconded by Coun. Butler, Second Reading failed on Ordinance No. 07-19, "AN ORDINANCE TO ESTABLISH A UNIFORM SERVICE CHARGE FOR MOTORIZED VEHICLE USERS OF THE COUNTY ROADS OF SALUDA COUNTY, SOUTH CAROLINA." (Voting in Favor: Coun. Butler). (Opposed: Chm. Jones, Coun. Anderson, Daniel, Grice).

F. ADJOURNMENT

On motion of Coun. Anderson, seconded by Coun. Butler, it was unanimously approved to adjourn the meeting at 6:12 P.M.



Karen T. Whittle
Clerk to Council



Derrick W. Jones
Chairman

October 14, 2019
Date Approved