



**MINUTES
ORANGEBURG COUNTY COUNCIL
AND
ORANGEBURG CITY COUNCIL
JOINT SPECIAL CALLED SESSION
DECEMBER 9, 2015
8:00 AM**



**JOINT CITY/COUNTY COUNCIL
PLANNING SESSION
ORANGEBURG COUNTY
DEVELOPMENT COMMISSION
125 REGIONAL PARKWAY
ORANGEBURG, S.C. 29115**

Pursuant to the Freedom of Information Act, the news media was notified and notice was posted.

COUNTY MEMBERS PRESENT:

**Johnnie Wright, Sr.
Johnny Ravenell
Harry F. Wimberly
Heyward H. Livingston
Willie B. Owens**

CITY MEMBERS PRESENT:

**Michael C. Butler
Charles W. Jernigan
Richard F. Stroman
Bernard Haire
L. Zimmerman-Keitt
Sandra P. Knotts**

ABSENT:

**Janie Cooper-Smith
Clyde B. Livingston**

ABSENT:

Charles B. Barnwell, Jr.

OTHERS PRESENT:

**Harold M. Young, County Administrator
John Yow, City Administrator
D'Anne Haydel, County Attorney
James Walsh, City Attorney
Faith E. Carter, Clerk to Council**

CALL TO ORDER

**Johnnie Wright, Sr., Chairman
County Council**

On the 9th day of December, 2015, Chairman Wright called to order a joint special session of the Orangeburg County Council and the Orangeburg City Council.

1. OPENING REMARKS

Mayor Butler advised that the Councils have worked very hard together over the past year. Mayor Butler thanked County Council for their efforts in assisting the City with several projects. Mayor Butler especially thanked County Administrator Harold Young and Chairman Wright. Mayor Butler advised that the citizens see the partnership between the County and the City as a positive step. Mayor Butler advised that he is looking forward to this relationship continuing into the future. Mayor Butler advised that, on behalf of City Council, that the City is willing to help the County in whatever way possible. Mayor Butler wished all the members a good Christmas and a Happy New Year.

Chairman Wright thanked Mayor Butler for his comments. Chairman Wright advised that the County has the same sentiments. Chairman Wright advised that the Councils are a team and there is a mutual need between the Councils when looking at the big picture. Chairman Wright advised that communication and meeting provides balance and serves the citizens in a more efficient manner. Chairman Wright advised that this is the key to moving forward. Chairman Wright asked the members to embrace a spirit of collaboration. Chairman Wright thanked the members of County Council for supporting him in his role as Chairman. Chairman Wright wished all of the members a safe Holiday and a happy New Year.

2. INVOCATION

3. INDIVIDUAL INPUT FROM MEMBERS

Councilwoman Zimmerman-Keitt advised that a one main concern for the City of Orangeburg is the litter control problems. Councilwoman Zimmerman-KiETT advised that it is important for the City to be clean when perspective companies come to view the area if they are interested in relocating their businesses.

Councilman Ravenell advised that he echoes Councilwoman Zimmerman-KiETT's sentiments and believes, also, that when people work together things get better. Councilman Ravenell advised that he believes that this is occurring because of recent meetings that have occurred as well as positive newspaper articles on the subject. Councilman Ravenell advised that the projects that face the County and City Councils require cooperation and advised that he will do whatever he and his district can to participate in that collaborative effort.

Councilman Owens advised that cooperation is the key. Councilman Owens advised that this reminded him of the biology term: symbiosis. Councilman Owens advised that the Councils have a symbiotic relationship: two organizations working together for the good of the other.

Councilman Wimberly advised that the joint session is about quality of life and economic development for Orangeburg County. Councilman Wimberly advised that it is about ensuring that the citizens of Orangeburg County are in good shape and have an improved quality of life. Councilman Wimberly advised that the assembled bodies govern Orangeburg County by their actions. Councilman Wimberly advised that a grave situation exists in Orangeburg County for farmers. Councilman Wimberly advised that the State of South Carolina will be without \$376 million in income due to agricultural losses. Councilman Wimberly advised that this will have an effect on the City of Orangeburg as well as the County. Councilman Wimberly advised this will also effect local businesses as the number one industry in the state is agriculture. Councilman Wimberly advised that the farmers have plead with the State and the Office of the Governor to request federal aid monies. Councilman Wimberly advised that the U.S. Congressmen from South Carolina have agreed to fight for this federal aid money if the Governor requests it. Councilman Wimberly advised that the Governor feels that Crop Insurance is a government subsidy to the farmer. Councilman Wimberly advised that the Governor has said that Crop Insurance is a subsidy to the farmer however, this is not true. Councilman Wimberly advised that Crop Insurance is written by insurance companies for the federal government in which the insurance company is being offset by the government to issue crop insurance to the farmer. Councilman Wimberly advised that it is not the farmer that is receiving the subsidy it is the insurance company. Councilman Wimberly advised that approximately \$80 billion goes to insurance companies to write policies for crop insurance. Councilman Wimberly advised that the farmer pays the insurance premium for the insurance. Councilman Wimberly advised that the Governor believes that farmers purposefully underinsure themselves. Councilman Wimberly advised that the federal government only allows the farmer to purchase insurance up to 75%. Councilman Wimberly advised that never in history have farmers experienced a loss on every crop. Councilman Wimberly advised that a farmer may loose on one crop during a year and the insurance helps offset some of the debt. Councilman Wimberly advised that this year it is every crop; not just one. Councilman Wimberly advised that every farmer in the County is hit hard. Councilman Wimberly advised the cotton gins have processed 3,000 bales when they are used to processing 30,000 bales which is a big impact. Councilman Wimberly advised he was in Columbia yesterday and there were 250 farmers from across the state; 50 from Orangeburg County. Councilman Wimberly advised that Branchville/Bowman chartered a bus and had 50 people on that bus. Councilman Wimberly provided a detailed explanation of how crop insurance is written, purchased, and adjusted.

Councilman Wimberly requested that both parties participate in the construction and signing of a letter to Governor Haley asking her to consider requesting the federal aid monies that are available. Councilman Wimberly advised that the letter needs to go out today because the federal government will shut down on Friday if a bill is not passed.

After some discussion, the Councils agreed to write a letter to Governor Haley and each of the members will individually sign.

Councilman Heyward Livingston advised that he has been on County Council for several years and this is the third joint meeting. Councilman Heyward Livingston advised that the

last two meetings have produced more cooperation than he has seen over previous years. Councilman Heyward Livingston advised that he would like to see the Councils working together continue into the future.

Councilman Richard Stroman advised that he wanted to thank the County for meeting with City Council and for lowering the taxes on the airplanes. Councilman Stroman advised that they have a new plane coming in from Sumter. Councilman Stroman advised that his door is always open and thanked the Councils for meeting. Councilman Stroman advised that he agrees with Councilman Wimberly. Councilman Stroman advised that he was raised on a farm, very poor.

Councilman Owens asked for an updated on the airplanes. Councilman Stroman advised that he is aware of three new planes at the hanger now. Councilman Stroman advised that they are looking forward to addressing some space issues in the new year for additional aircraft.

Councilman Haire advised that he wished to thank the members for coming together for the purpose of improving the quality of life in Orangeburg and he wished everyone a Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year.

Councilwoman Knotts advised that she appreciates the openness, honesty, and cooperative spirit that each of the members have had, as Councilman Heyward Livingston said, over the previous meetings. Councilwoman Knotts advised that these meetings have had a real impact on city and county residents. Councilwoman Knotts advised that she would like to see the collaboration continue.

Councilman Jernigan advised that the members like to see industry coming into town because that provides jobs and income. Councilman Jernigan advised Orangeburg County and the City of Orangeburg are rural in nature. Councilman Jernigan advised that the news that was given to the members today hit home. Councilman Jernigan advised that when our farmers are trouble it is like a member of the family who is in trouble. Councilman Jernigan advised that anything we can do to support the farming community should be done. Councilman Jernigan advised that he is pleased that the body has agreed to write and sign this letter. Councilman Jernigan advised that anything else we can do as individuals, whether it be phone calls or talking to people we know, then that is something we should do.

Mayor Butler advised not to allow anything to destroy the relationships that have been built because it is easy to see the honesty and genuine desire around the table to work in a collaborative manner. Mayor Butler advised that he really appreciates that from the members.

Chairman Wright advised that he appreciates all of the members and thanked each of the members for participating in the writing of the letter. Chairman Wright advised that many of members grew up on farms in the past and understand the importance of the farming community in Orangeburg County.

4. CITY FIRE TAX DISTRICT AND COST RECOVERY ORDINANCE(S)

City Administrator John Yow advised that they would like to give the members a basic overview of the City Fire Tax District. Administrator Yow advised that one of the things that the City and the County have done jointly is working to remove dilapidated buildings. Administrator Yow advised that people tend to think of these building as simply eye-sores but they are one of the greater areas of exposure for fire service. Administrator Yow advised that there are several more buildings on the table for the City and the County to work jointly on which are projects being handled at the staff level. Administrator Yow advised it is important for the staff to work jointly on these projects.

Administrator Yow advised that the City would now provide an overview of the Fire District and the reasons for establishing a City Fire Tax District vs. a contract scenario. Administrator Yow introduced Chief Mike Adams, Chief of Public Safety, for the presentation of City Fire Tax District.

Chief Adams gave the members an overview of the fire service area for the City of Orangeburg.

Administrator Yow advised that the City would like to move away from the contract system and utilize the same process as the County utilizes to assess millage. After some discussion, the members agreed to establish the finer points in writing and review the draft document at a later date.

Chairman Wright thanked the members for their input on the subject. Chairman Wright advised that the members would now receive a briefing from Director Robinson of the Economic Development Commission about the Orangeburg County One Initiative.

Orangeburg County Economic Development Director Gregg Robinson gave a presentation on the Orangeburg County One Initiative.

Chairman Wright thanked the members for attending the meeting.

Meeting Adjourned.



Johnnie Wright, Sr.

Chairman

Orangeburg County Council



Faith E. Carter

Faith E Carter

Clerk to Council

Orangeburg County Council