



MINUTES GREENVILLE COUNTY COUNCIL

Committee of the Whole

November 17, 2015

4:15 p.m.

County Square – Conference Room D

COUNCIL MEMBERS

Mr. Bob Taylor, Chairman
Mr. Butch Kirven, Vice Chairman
Mr. Joe Dill
Mr. Joe Baldwin
Mr. Willis Meadows
Mr. Sid Cates

Mr. Jim Burns
Mrs. Xanthene Norris *arrived @ 4:28 p.m.*
Mrs. Liz Seman
Mrs. Lottie Gibson
Mr. Lynn Ballard
Mr. Fred Payne *arrived @ 4:26 p.m.*

Pursuant to the Freedom of Information Act, notice of the meeting date, time, place and agenda was posted on the bulletin board at the County Square and made available to the newspapers, radio stations, television stations and concerned Citizens.

COUNCIL MEMBER(S) ABSENT:

None

STAFF PRESENT:

Joe Kernell, County Administrator
John Hansley, Deputy County Administrator
Mark Tollison, County Attorney
Dean Campbell, Deputy County Attorney
Theresa Kizer, Clerk to Council
Regina McCaskill, Deputy Clerk to Council
Bob Mihalic, Governmental Relations Officer

OTHERS PRESENT

Doug Dent, General Counsel, Greenville County Redevelopment Authority
Stanley Wilson, Executive Director, Greenville County Redevelopment Authority

CALL TO ORDER

Chairman Bob Taylor

INVOCATION

Councilor Liz Seman

Item (3) APPROVAL OF MINUTES

ACTION: Councilor Ballard moved to approve the minutes of the November 3, 2015 Regular Committee of the Whole Meeting.

Motion carried unanimously.

Item (4) INTRODUCTION OF THE NEW GREENVILLE COUNTY REDEVELOPMENT AUTHORITY DIRECTOR – STANLEY WILSON

Doug Dent introduced Stanley Wilson, the new Executive Director of the Greenville County Redevelopment Authority.

Item (5) REFUGEE RELOCATION RESOLUTION

ACTION: Councilor Cates moved to adopt a resolution declaring Greenville County Council's opposition to the relocation of refugees from the United States Refugee Resettlement Program in Greenville County and the rejection of State funds to assist in the program.

Councilor Meadows stated he had provided a copy of proposed amendments to Councilor Cates' resolution to each Council Member. The proposed amendments were highlighted in bold lettering.

AMENDMENT: Councilor Meadows moved to amend the resolution as outlined.

By roll call vote, the motion to amend carried unanimously.

Councilor Baldwin stated Council needed to discuss what needed to be done for the people of Syria. He stated the proposed resolution had no legal effect. Councilor Baldwin stated the United States needed to create a safe haven in Syria. He agreed the refugees created a financial burden on governments.

Councilor Cates stated he had done a lot of research on the issue. He stated the United States took in about 60,000 refugees each year. Councilor Cates stated the refugees needed to be properly vetted in order to insure no one was admitted into the United States that could cause harm. He stated one of the eight terrorists responsible for the killings in Paris was part of a refugee program. Councilor Cates added if clear vetting of the refugees was possible, he would be in favor of accepting refugees into Greenville County.

Councilor Baldwin asked if all countries voted to not allow refugees, where were they supposed to go.

Councilor Burns stated there was some misinformation out in the community regarding Syrian refugees. He stated according to the information provided at the last Committee of the Whole meeting, there were currently no refugees from Syria in Greenville County. Councilor Burns stated President Obama has indicated the United States has agreed to take in 10,000 more Syrian refugees. He stated the Federal government had failed us because they have not assured the safety of its citizens by allowing refugees to enter the county. Councilor Burns stated Council needed to err on the side of safety but must not give in to fear. He stated Council must not castigate an entire religion due to the acts of a few individuals. Councilor Burns stated Greenville County was blessed to have numerous international companies and added Council did not want to send a message to these companies that they were not welcome in Greenville County.

Councilor Gibson stated she had seen and heard information about the Syrian refugee situation on television and in the newspaper. She stated she considered herself a Christian and prayed about the situation. She stated it was very difficult for her to vote in favor of allowing the refugees to come to Greenville County when so many of their own citizens were in need.

Councilor Gibson called for the question.

Motion as amended carried unanimously.

Item (6) AIRPORT ENVIRONS PLANNING COMMISSION (1 vacancy)

Candidates:

- *Michael Middleton*
- *Van Swafford*

By a vote of seven (Baldwin, Meadows, Cates, Burns, Norris, Gibson and Seman) to five (Dill, Taylor, Ballard, Kirven and Payne), Van Swafford was elected to fill the vacancy on the Airport Environs Planning Commission. His name was forwarded to full Council for final approval.

Item (7) EXECUTIVE SESSION (legal matter)

ACTION: Councilor Kirven moved to go into Executive Session for the receipt of legal advice where the legal advice relates to a pending, threatened, or potential claim or other matters covered by the attorney-client privilege, settlement of legal claims, or the position of the County in other adversary situations involving the assertion against the County of a claim concerning municipal tax increment revenues and invocations.

Motion carried and the Committee of the Whole entered into Executive Session at 4:43 p.m.

RECONVENE

Mr. Tollison reported Greenville County Committee of the Whole out of Executive Session stating no action was taken during the session.

The meeting reconvened at 5:34 p.m.

Item (8) TAX INCREMENT DISTRICT AGREEMENT

ACTION: Councilor Kirven moved to approve the proposed agreement for Tax Increment Financing Revenue Distribution with the City of Greenville.

Motion carried with one (Gibson) voting in opposition.

Item (9) INVOCATIONS

ACTION: Councilor Dill moved to continue with the current policy regarding Invocations.

Motion carried unanimously.

Item (10

ADJOURNMENT

ACTION:

Councilor Kirven moved to adjourn the meeting at 5:35 p.m.

Motion carried unanimously.

Respectfully submitted:

Theresa B. Kizer, Clerk to Council