



MINUTES
GREENVILLE COUNTY COUNCIL
Committee of the Whole
November 1, 2016
4:50 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
Mrs. Liz Seman
Mrs. Lottie Gibson **Absent**
Mr. Lynn Ballard
Mr. Fred Payne

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.

STAFF PRESENT:

Joe Kernell, County Administrator
Mark Tollison, County Attorney
John Hansley, Deputy County Administrator
Theresa Kizer, Clerk to Council
Regina McCaskill, Deputy Clerk to Council
Paula Gucker, Assistant County Administrator, Public Works
Shannon Herman, Assistant to the County Administrator
Bob Mihalic, Governmental Relations Officer
Sandra Yudice, Assistant to the County Administrator

OTHERS PRESENT

Chris Stone, President, Yeah, that Greenville

CALL TO ORDER

Chairman Bob Taylor

INVOCATION

Councilor Fred Payne

Item (3) **APPROVAL OF MINUTES**

ACTION: Councilor Ballard moved to approve the minutes of the October 4, 2016, Regular Committee of the Whole Meeting.

Motion carried unanimously by Council Members present.

Item (4) **THRIVE UPSTATE PRESENTATION**

Bob Ariail, Chairman
Thrive Upstate

Mr. Ariail stated that Thrive Upstate, formerly DDSN, has done very well since County Council replaced board members approximately 5 years ago. Alex McNair served as Chairman until recently when he resigned due to a new job conflict. Mr. Ariail stated the agency had a positive financial status with reserves in excess of \$1 million and most debts had been paid.

The board hired John Cocciolone as Director and replaced several other individuals in key positions. Mr. Ariail stated they hired a new Human Resources staff and a new Facilities Manager. He added Thrive Upstate was a large agency with a \$22 million budget. There were approximately 44 residential facilities and 2108 people served. Thrive Upstate provided jobs for consumers in private industries, which generated \$772,000 paid to these consumers based on the jobs they do. This boosted self-esteem for the consumers and the board hoped to double that amount within the next two years. Mr. Ariail stated approximately 210 high school students fell within their jurisdiction every year. He stated the bottom line, Thrive Upstate was stable with good leadership from the board. He praised the high quality staff and stated the relationship between staff and the board was much stronger.

Item (5) **SOUTH CAROLINA CHILDREN'S THEATRE PRESENTATION**

Debbie Bell, Executive Director
South Carolina Children's Theatre

Ms. Bell stated the mission of the SC Children's Theatre was to educate and stimulate the minds and imaginations of young people and their families through participation in high quality theatre, year-round education, and accessible outreach. Last year, approximately 47,000 people experienced or participated in SCCT activities.

Ms. Bell stated in the past 2 years, the theatre has worked with 13 of the 19 Title I schools in Greenville County, as well as neighborhood-based non-profits such as Youth Base and the Frazee Center. The theatre has also worked with organizations serving people with disabilities or illnesses, such as the Meyer Center, the Washington Center, Camp Courage and the Marshall I. Pickens Adolescent Program.

More than 20,000 people attended Main Stage performances last year and over 6,500 people attended 2nd Stage productions at the SCCT Headquarters. Of the attendees, 57% were from outside the City of Greenville and 26% were from outside of Greenville County. Ms. Bell stated 4% of attendees were from out of state.

Economic analysis showed that attendees spent significant amounts of money while in Greenville County. Average attendees of cultural events spent \$25 per event, not including admission, at local restaurants and retail shops.

Ms. Bell stated the City of Greenville awarded \$1.5 million to the construction of a new proposed building due to the economic impact to the area and the connection to hospitality. Currently, \$4,692,000 has been raised from individual donors and foundations and the total raised to date was \$6.2 million. Ms. Bell stated an additional \$2,300,000 in requests were currently under consideration by donors.

SCCT provided free field trips for Title I elementary schools which allowed children to attend Main Stage performances at Gunter Theatre. Ms. Bell stated 6,700 local students participated in the Bully Prevention program. Theatre residencies at public and private schools throughout Greenville County and year-round classes at SCCT bring theatre education to 4,300 children aged K3-12th grade.

Ms. Bell stated the SC Children's Theatre was formally requesting an investment of \$300,000 per year over a 5 year period, or any other pledge period desired, for a total investment of \$1.5 million in Hospitality Tax Funds from Greenville County. She added the investment would be matched 3 to 1 from private donors and would give the stamp of approval needed to raise the remaining funds in order to reach the goal of \$10 million.

Chairman Taylor asked if the theatre only served special needs children.

Ms. Bell stated the theatre served all children. Special needs children were served by the theatre's Outreach Fund.

Councilor Seman stated that, speaking from personal experience, the SC Children's Theatre was an amazing place for children. She added that participation built confidence in children and the County's opportunity to expand the reach of the theatre would have great impact and was very meaningful.

Chairman Taylor asked if the theatre served the entire State of South Carolina.

Ms. Bell stated the intention was to continue to grow further into the State but that would only be possible with a new facility.

Councilor Cates stated he had recently visited the theatre and was very impressed. He added the theatre made the best of the situation with the current facility's limitations. Councilor Cates asked if Greenville County Schools contributed.

Ms. Bell stated Greenville County Schools contributed fees to pay for the Bullying Prevention Program. Each school participating paid a \$250.00 fee.

Councilor Cates asked if the school system had been approached about contributing to the new facility.

Ms. Bell stated they had not asked the school system to contribute to the new facility.

Councilor Cates stated drama was certainly a confidence builder for children. He inquired about the anticipated date for construction to begin on the building.

Ms. Bell stated they hoped to break ground in the Summer of 2017.

Item (6)

HOSPITALITY TAX SUPPLEMENTAL APPROPRIATION ORDINANCES

(a) Visit Greenville SC and Chico Bolin Park

(b) SC Children's Theatre and Greenville Center for Creative Arts

Joe Kernell stated there was a need for improvements to be completed at Chico Bolin Park, which was located in Travelers Rest. The park was on the site of the old high school and was purchased jointly by the City of Travelers Rest and Greenville County with funds from the Hospitality Tax. Some of the funds were used for improvements but they were unable to finish all the improvements. A Magistrates' building was constructed on the adjacent site and the money requested would complete all the work at Chico Bolin Park. The City of Travelers Rest has completed their portion of the improvements and this would allow Greenville County to complete its portion.

Mr. Kernell stated there was also a request from Visit Greenville SC for numerous events scheduled for 2017. He stated there were already 7 events on the books with an estimated cost of \$130,000. Mr. Kernell stated these were the types of events that helped the Hospitality Tax fund as well as Accommodations Tax. Based on the projects currently scheduled, 23,265 room nights were already accounted for which translated to a lot of spending in the City of Greenville, Greenville County and the surrounding counties. Mr. Kernell asked Council to amend the current request and add an additional \$75,000 to the Visit SC appropriation for a proposed event. He added the additional funds would not be utilized unless the event actually occurred.

Chairman Taylor asked Mr. Kernell to name the events already on the books for next year. He also requested Mr. Kernell remind everyone about the rule to amend an ordinance.

Mr. Kernell stated the ordinance required a $\frac{3}{4}$ vote to approve which translated to nine Council votes. He added that Exhibit A was not usually amended unless there was a need which involved a request for additional money. Mr. Kernell stated the following events were on the books for Visit Greenville SC: SCC Women's Basketball, Leadership Team Development, NCAA Men's Basketball, SC United Methodist Conference, Jehovah's Witness Conference (2 times), and USA Karate.

Councilor Seman asked how Chris Stone would report expenditures to Council.

Joe Kernell stated Mr. Stone would report directly to Council on some occasions as well as to individual Council Members and board liaisons.

Councilor Burns stated the request outlined how the monies would be spent on each event.

ACTION:

Councilor Kirven moved to forward the Ordinance to full Council for first reading without a recommendation on specific amounts.

Councilor Dill stated he agreed on sending the second portion of the item B, but the part dealing with Visit Greenville SC and Chico Bolin Park he didn't see a reason why Council could not go ahead and do that.

AMENDMENT: Councilor Dill stated he wanted to make an amendment in regards to what Mr. Kernell had suggested in the amount of \$75,000 and attach that to the CVB amount and then send the whole thing to full Council.

Councilor Kirven stated the amendment would affect how much money would be available for the other applications.

Councilor Cates asked if that meant there was a finite amount for the Hospitality Tax left over.

Councilor Kirven stated this was money to be spent over the next five years.

Councilor Burns asked if staff was confident they would have funds coming in to allow for the \$75,000.

Joe Kernell stated based on the next year's projections and current obligations, he felt the amount would continue to grow. The County's ability to pay off current obligations was why monies had been freed up to make this possible.

Councilor Seman asked about the Center for Creative Arts and other moving parts that may play into the request.

Joe Kernell stated he spoke with Cherington Schucker at the Center for Creative Arts, and she asked to hold off and give her some more time which worked in the County's favor. There had been some discussion about the use of the SHARE building in the West End and the potential for a public/private partnership. He stated the money could be taken out, but if the money was used somewhere else, it could not be put back in so it would be wise to leave it in place. The Chico Bolin money was fixed; either the project was finished or it was not.

Councilor Meadows inquired about the monies going to the Peace Center, the Cancer Survivors Park and the ARC Grant match.

Joe Kernell stated those projects were all paid off early which freed up money for what was being proposed. The County had a debt service of about \$48,000,000 which was being serviced each year, payments came first, and this was the growth after the fact.

Councilor Norris was supportive of the projects but was hesitant regarding the funding.

Councilor Baldwin inquired about the average growth rate of the Hospitality Tax and when was the last time the County did not see a growth.

Joe Kernell stated the average growth rate was 2% per year. The County had seen a growth in the Hospitality Tax basically every year. He stated growth did slow down a few years ago when there was a decline in the economy.

Councilor Kirven accepted Councilor Dill's amendment as a friendly amendment to add the \$75,000.

ACTION: Councilor Kirven moved to send both Hospitality Tax Ordinances forward to full Council for first reading with Mr. Dill's amendment and without recommendations on amounts.

Councilor Burns recused himself from voting on the item due to a potential conflict of interest.

Motion carried unanimously by Council Members present with one (Burns) abstention and one (Gibson) absent.

Item (7) **ADJOURNMENT**

ACTION: Councilor Kirven moved to adjourn the meeting at 5:36 p.m.

Motion to adjourn carried unanimously by Council Members present.

Respectfully submitted:

Theresa B. Kizer, Clerk to Council