



GREENVILLE COUNTY COUNCIL

Committee of the Whole

Minutes

November 2, 2021

4:30 p.m.

County Square - Council Chambers

Council Members

Mr. Willis Meadows, *Chairman, District 19*

Mr. Dan Tripp, *Vice-Chairman, District 28*

Mrs. Xanthe Norris, *Chairman Pro Tem, District 23*

Mr. Joe Dill, *District 17*

Mr. Mike Barnes, *District 18*

Mr. Stephen Shaw, *District 20*

Mr. Chris Harrison, *District 21*

Mr. Stan Tzouvelekas, *District 22*

Mrs. Liz Seman, *District 24*

Mr. Ennis Fant, Sr., *District 25*

Mr. Lynn Ballard, *District 26*

Mr. Butch Kirven, *District 27*

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

Council Members Absent

None

Staff Present

Joe Kernell, *County Administrator*

Mark Tollison, *County Attorney*

Kim Wunder, *Assistant County Attorney*

John Hansley, *Deputy County Administrator*

Regina McCaskill, *Clerk to Council*

Paula Gucker, *Assistant County Administrator, Public Works*

Bob Mihalic, *Governmental Affairs Officer*

Nicole Wood, *Assistant County Administrator*

Meredith Papapieris, *Director of Grants and Special Projects*

Others Present

None

Call to Order

Chairman Willis Meadows

Invocation

Councilor Lynn Ballard

Item (3) Approval of Minutes

Action: Vice-Chairman Tripp moved to approve the minutes of the October 5, 2021, Committee of the Whole meeting.

Motion carried unanimously by Council Members present.

Item (4) Board and Commission / Nominations

a. Committee on Finance

i. Accommodations Tax Advisory Committee (2 at-large vacancy)

Action: On behalf of the Committee on Finance, Councilor Tripp nominated **Penny Cooper and Joyce McCarrell** to fill two at-large vacancies on the Accommodations Tax Advisory Committee and to forward the names to full Council.

Motion carried unanimously by Council Members present.

Item (5) Sewer Consolidation Settlement – Consent Orders

Mr. Tollison stated in December of 2020, Council started the sewer unification process. The process involved six (6) sewer subdistricts. There was some early litigation involved, which was ongoing. Four of the six subdistricts voluntarily transferred their sewer service; the boundaries of the Metropolitan Sewer Subdistrict had since been enlarged. After intense and extensive negotiations, a consent agreement had been developed which could end the litigation and allow the process of completing the sewer unification to begin.

Action: Councilor Seman moved to adopt a resolution authorizing the execution of consent orders in settlement of two lawsuits brought by Taylors Fire and Sewer District and Parker Sewer and Fire Subdistrict against Greenville County And Greenville County Council.

Councilor Tzouvelekas inquired about the millage rates involved. He had been advised by some of his constituents that the millage rates for the sewer subdistricts were being raised and the cost for service had actually risen.

Mr. Tollison stated the original consolidation ordinance proposed the creation of new fire districts to replace those affected by the ordinance. If new fire districts were not created, the existing districts would be stand-alone, state created fire districts. For election purposes, they would be co-equal to County Council in that they would be governmental entities recognized by the state. The original consolidation ordinance did not contemplate any millage issues. Some of the districts had split millage rates between fire and sewer. Mr. Tollison stated he was not aware of any increase in millage rates; however, he had not been tracking those rates.

Councilor Tzouvelekas stated Council was told that the consolidation would not cost the taxpayers any more money. He asked if that was still the case.

Mr. Tollison stated he was not aware of any increases in millage rates; some had actually decreased.

Vice-Chairman Tripp asked how it was possible for the millage rate to have increased.

Councilor Tzouvelekas stated some of his constituents had reported they were paying more for sewer service since the consolidation went into effect.

Chairman Meadows stated the millage rate for sewer services would be abolished under the consolidation; consumers would pay for actual usage. Mr. Meadows stated Gantt moved the sewer millage rate to the fire district; he was under the impression some of the other subdistricts had done the same thing. Legally, Council could do nothing about the situation.

Councilor Ballard stated all the subdistricts paid a tax millage for their sewer service. In switching over, customers now paid a usage fee; some paid more and some paid less, based on their usage. It was not in the County's purview to set millage rates for the districts.

Councilor Tzouvelekas stated he simply wanted to know why some bills had increased and others had not.

Councilor Ballard stated the bills were now based on usage, as opposed to a flat fee based on the value of one's home.

Chairman Meadows stated some of the districts had continued to charge the millage fee that they promised to "give up."

Vice-Chairman Tripp stated he distinctly remembered citizens speaking about how the commissioners of the subdistricts were elected to set the rates. Mr. Tripp stated if the millage rates had increased, those individuals should be held responsible.

Councilor Kirven stated County Council had essentially put the sewer subdistricts "out of business"; if the proposed resolution was not adopted by Council, Greenville County would take over both fire and sewer. The millage would then be set by the County. Metropolitan Sewer was a fee-based service, not millage-based. Ultimately, the courts would decide if Greenville County had to take over the fire and the sewer.

Councilor Shaw questioned the statement contained in both consent orders regarding Council's ability to increase the Metropolitan Sewer Subdistrict Board to accommodate two additional representatives. Those representatives would specifically represent Parker and Taylors. Mr. Shaw inquired if Council could be bound to increase the board.

Councilor Kirven stated the two additional members would initially come from the Parker and Taylors areas. After those two terms ended, the seats would be open to anyone.

Motion as presented carried unanimously.

Item (6) Recommendation on Reappointment of Metropolitan Sewer Subdistrict Commissioners

Action: Vice-Chairman Tripp moved to adopt a resolution recommending the reappointment of certain commissioners to the Metropolitan Sewer Subdistrict Commission.

Councilor Ballard stated the proposed reappointment of commissioner guaranteed continuity through the process; he stated it was a wise thing to do.

Motion carried unanimously.

Item (7) Adjournment

Action: Councilor Kirven moved to adjourn the meeting.

Motion carried unanimously by Council Members present and the meeting adjourned at 4:49 p.m.

Respectfully submitted:

Regina G. McCaskill
Clerk to Council