



GREENVILLE COUNTY COUNCIL

Minutes

Special Called Council Meeting

December 21, 2021

5:02 p.m.

County Square - Council Chambers

Council Members

Mr. Willis Meadows, *Chairman, District 19*

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

Mrs. Xanthene 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*

Chris Antley, *Assistant County Attorney*

Regina McCaskill, *Clerk to Council*

Jessica Stone, *Deputy Clerk to Council*

Pam Gilliam, *Administrative Assistant*

Paula Gucker, *Assistant County Administrator, Public Works*

Nicole Wood, *Assistant County Administrator*

Tee Coker, *Planning Director*

Hesha Gamble, *Engineering*

Keith Brockington, *Transportation Planning Manager, GPATS*

Others Present

None

Call to Order

Chairman Willis Meadows

Invocation

Councilor Dill

Item (3) Ordinance – Third Reading

a. Woodruff Road Congestion Relief Project

Action: Vice-Chairman Tripp moved for adoption at third reading an ordinance to accept financial assistance from the South Carolina State Infrastructure Bank and provide a local match for the Woodruff Road Congestion Relief Project; and to authorize various agreements in furtherance of the project.

Action: Vice-Chairman Tripp moved to suspend Council Rule III(B) regarding notice.

Motion carried unanimously.

Action: Vice-Chairman Tripp moved to suspend Council Rule IV(B)(3) to allow for amendments at third reading.

Motion carried unanimously.

Action: Vice-Chairman Tripp moved to amend the ordinance by striking language in Section 3.2 of the State Infrastructure Bank Agreement so that it now reads:

Section 3.2 Greenville County and Other Funding Sources

The County shall provide the local match funds and other financial contributions for the Project that consist of the following sources:

- A. *The County shall provide \$30,336,773 from its own funds for the Project. ~~The County intends to issue revenue bonds in FY 2023 in the amount of \$30,336,733 to fulfill this obligation and to use its original road maintenance fee of \$15 per vehicle established in 1993 as the source of repayment of the revenue bonds. The County hereby warrants, covenants, and represents that this use of this road maintenance fee is legally permissible and enforceable. The debt service on the revenue bonds shall be a legally enforceable first priority lien on all such road maintenance fee revenues. The foregoing funding obligation by the County is due and payable by the County regardless of whether the aforementioned funds revenue bonds are issues or the revenue from the aforementioned road maintenance fees are available for this funding. The Greenville-Pickens Area Transportation Study (“GPATS”) shall make a contribution of \$42,000,000 to the Project from sources available to it.~~*

The County or SCDOT must expend all of the financial contributions and funds to the Project listed in this Section 3.2. above, for Eligible Costs of the Project before the Bank will be obligated to pay or reimburse any Eligible Costs on the Project. The Bank shall be provided full and complete access by the County to all records and information concerning the financial contributions and funds listed in this Section 3.2. and expenditures of those financial contributions and funds. The Bank may require the financial contributions identified in this Section 3.2. to be deposited in an account or fund authorized by the South Carolina State Treasurer from which the Bank may make disbursements and payments for the Project, and in that event, the Bank will provide Greenville County reports on all expenditures from that account or fund.

Motion to amend carried unanimously.

Action: Vice-Chairman Tripp moved for adoption at third reading an ordinance to accept financial assistance from the South Carolina State Infrastructure Bank and provide a local match for the Woodruff Road Congestion Relief Project; and to authorize various agreements in furtherance of the project, as amended.

Motion carried unanimously.

b. Road Improvement Funding

Action: Vice-Chairman Tripp moved for adoption at third reading an ordinance to authorize funding for road and bridge improvements for FY 2022, 2023, and 2024.

Motion carried unanimously.

Item (4) Redistricting Presentation and Discussion (Discussion Only)

Frank Rainwater	Executive Director, South Carolina Revenue and Fiscal Affairs Office
Victor Frontroth	Political Cartographer, South Carolina Revenue and Fiscal Affairs Office
Kathryn Kelley	South Carolina Revenue and Fiscal Affairs Office

Mr. Rainwater stated Greenville County currently had a deviation of 32%; the goal was to bring the deviation under 10% by shifting 13,000 residents. There were two options or scenarios available for Council to consider. The deviation had to be balanced along with Voting Rights Act and Communities of Interests. Council may prefer one scenario over the other; they may not like either one of them. Mr. Rainwater stated it was hoped that one of the options would be a starting point. Not all of the input received could be accommodated.

Mr. Rainwater reviewed the two possible scenarios, including the pros and cons of each.

SCENARIO 1:

- Pros:
 - Provided a lower standard deviation range
 - Affected less census blocks
 - Included input received from County Council
- Cons:
 - Did not accommodate all requests
 - Decreased minority influenced District 25 due to the surrounding demographics

Changes included:

1. Voting Rights Act
 - Attempted to create equal population throughout each district
 - Did not have a significant impact to the voting age population (VAP) or the race
 - Prison population was excluded
2. Deviation
 - The deviation range was reduced from 32.72% to 5.85%
3. Traditional redistrict principles
 - 9 districts were impacted
 - 297 census blocks were changed
 - 55 precincts were affected
 - When possible, the plan attempted to follow natural boundaries like waterways, major highways or other features
4. Input from Council and the public was considered

SCENARIO 2:

- Pros:
- Provided a standard deviation range slightly over 5% but under the required 10%
 - Passed the “eye test” more effectively with respect to compactness
 - Focused on Council and public input
 - Contained a lower number of precincts

- Cons:
- Did not accommodate all requests
 - Decreased minority influenced District 25 due to the surrounding demographics

1. Voting Rights Act

- Attempted to create equal population throughout each district
- Did not have a significant impact to the voting age population (VAP) or the race
- Prison population was excluded

2. Deviation

- The deviation range was reduced from 32.72% to 8.73%

3. Traditional redistrict principles

- 9 districts were impacted
- 301 census blocks were changed
- 52 precincts were affected
- When possible, the plan attempted to follow natural boundaries like waterways, major highways or other features

4. Input from Council and the public was considered

Chairman Meadows stated Council had just received the information and had not had an opportunity to review as of yet. He reminded his colleagues that any changes they wanted in their respective districts would have consequences for other districts. It may be best for Council Members to review the maps along with their counterparts in adjoining districts. Chairman Meadows suggested sending any proposed changes to Ms. McCaskill to be passed on to Mr. Rainwater.

Vice-Chairman Tripp asked if the Revenue and Fiscal Affairs Office planned to set up interactive maps for Council to use to see the effect of possible changes.

Chairman Meadows stated it was his understanding that any possible changes would be sent to Mr. Rainwater and he would report back to Council.

Mr. Tollison stated it would be helpful for Council Members to work together on possible changes to see how all the districts would be affected.

Mr. Rainwater stated proposed changes could be sent to his office and he would report how those changes affected the districts. Also, Greenville County had a very good GIS staff. The basic documents could be provided to the County’s GIS department; they could outline the impacts of any potential changes.

Councilor Ballard stated he had two maps for his district, as did Mr. Fant and Ms. Norris. He was unable to see much difference in the two maps.

Mr. Tollison stated there were some subtle differences, which may be as small as 100 people. Greenville County had 9000 census blocks; the two possible scenarios affected approximately 300.

Councilor Tzouvelekas inquired about the timeline to submit suggested changes.

Chairman Meadows stated that no definite date had been set; he suggested submitting potential changes as soon as possible.

Mr. Tollison stated time would be needed to set up space for Council Members to study the maps.

Chairman Meadows stated it would more than likely happen after the beginning of the year.

Councilor Shaw asked if split precincts were combined in either of the scenarios; if not, what was the biggest impediment to consolidating precincts.

Mr. Rainwater stated they were unable to eliminate split precincts. The biggest impediment to consolidating precincts was balancing the deviation as well as the minority districts. Within the census blocks and the precincts, population was not of equal size or equal mix. Mr. Rainwater stated they could show which precincts were split, as well as any other changes. He felt redistricting could not be done without splitting precincts.

Councilor Dill asked if any of Council's requests were implemented in the two scenarios.

Mr. Rainwater stated they tried to accommodate as many of Council's request as possible; however, he was unable to implement all of them. He would include that data with the maps. Population totals were the main reason all of the requests could not be implemented; some requests were conflicting with others.

Councilor Kirven stated he wished they could have avoided the more "granular areas" or "street by street." They were now at the point of swapping some areas with others; it was unknown how many citizens would actually be affected by the proposed swaps.

Chairman Meadows stated he was under the impression that they were talking about swapping actual neighborhoods as opposed to specific streets.

Councilor Fant asked if the deviation could be 10%.

Mr. Rainwater stated a 10% deviation was the highest allowed.

Item (5) Public Comments and Questions Regarding Redistricting

The following individuals appeared regarding the proposed redistricting:

- Lawson Wetli
- Curtis Askew
- Tikeeta Wallace

Chairman Meadows stated all the information regarding the proposed redistricting was public knowledge. If a citizen wanted their voice heard, it was their duty to speak to their Council Representative. He asked Mr. Kernell if the maps could be made available to the public on the Greenville County website.

Vice-Chairman Tripp stated Council had not seen any of the maps prior to the meeting. No rules or framework had been adopted by Council in regards to the redistricting. Council was being transparent in the process.

Chairman Meadows stated the State of South Carolina had adopted rules regarding redistricting and the counties were expected to follow those rules.

Councilor Kirven stated Council was seeing the proposed maps for the first time. There was plenty of time for the public to weigh in on the redistricting.

Councilor Fant stated some of his colleagues were not happy with the “first draft.” He was confident there would be a number of changes in the future.

Councilor Seman stated most people did not understand the process and nuances involved in the redistricting process.

Chairman Meadows stated each district was supposed to have approximately 43,000 citizens; some districts had far fewer than the average and some exceeded that amount by 10,000. A lot of “shifting” was required in order to make the districts more equal in terms of population. Some districts had only a few proposed changes while others had more “dramatic” changes proposed. Council Members had to take their time and work together in order for the redistricting to benefit all the citizens of Greenville County.

Vice-Chairman Tripp suggested an “email sign up” for those individuals requesting notification of meetings.

Mr. Kernell stated he would speak to the IS department regarding Mr. Tripp’s suggestion.

Councilor Norris stated Alan Mitchell lived in her district and planned to run for Council next year as she had decided not to run again. She had been working with Mr. Mitchell, talking with residents to see what things they wanted to see done in the district. Ms. Norris encouraged her colleagues to do the same.

Item (6) Adjournment

Action: Councilor Kirven moved to adjourn the meeting.

Motion carried unanimously and the meeting adjourned at 5:46 p.m.

Respectfully submitted:

Regina G. McCaskill
Clerk to Council