



Chester County Council Meeting

R. Carlisle Roddey Government Building
1476 J A Cochran Bypass | Chester, SC 29706
Monday, April 15, 2024 | 6:00 PM

MINUTES

Present: Chairman Joe Branham, Vice Chairman Pete Wilson, Councilman William Killian, Councilman Mike Vaughn, Councilman Corey Guy, Councilman John Agee, County Administrator Brian Hester, Attorney John Marshall Mosser, Clerk to Council Kristie Donaldson

Absent: Councilwoman Erin Mosley, due to illness.

1. CALL TO ORDER

Chairman Joe Branham called the meeting to order at 6:01pm.

2. PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE AND INVOCATION

The Pledge of Allegiance was recited, and Councilman Guy gave the invocation.

3. APPROVAL OF MINUTES

a) April 1, 2024 Council Meeting Minutes

Councilman Vaughn motioned to approve, second by Vice Chairman Wilson, Vote 6-0 to approve.

4. CITIZEN'S COMMENTS

Mac Flores (4501 Garrow Street, Houston, TX) with Ecoplexus addressed Council regarding moving forward with a solar development in Chester County. He stated their company is hosting a community engagement meeting to address concerns and that he has a meeting with County Administrator Hester on May 8th.

5. PUBLIC HEARING

6. ORDINANCES | RESOLUTIONS | PROCLAMATIONS

7. ADMINISTRATOR'S REPORT

County Administrator Mr. Hester updated Council that EMS 5 went into service at the North Chester Fire Department on April 3rd. He also thanked everyone for their attendance at the Grand Opening of North Chester Fire Department. Mr. Hester stated that EMS 5 would be in service for three days a week for now but if Council approved the new budget, the ambulance would be in service seven days a week and 12 hours per day at the North Chester Fire Department until the West Chester Fire Station renovations are completed the following fiscal year where the ambulance would be more centrally located and operate 24 hours a day, 7 days a week. Mr.

Hester updated Council with news that the interviews for the open General Counsel position will be taking place for the week of April 29th. He also updated on the open positions with Great Falls Fire Department that will be funded in the upcoming fiscal year—he stated there are six applicants for Captain and ten for the Firefighter position. Mr. Hester informed Council of EMS Supervisor and Senior Paramedic interviews happening this week. Mr. Hester updated about the Planner position stating the position’s salary would not be taken out of our budget and would be funded by the Economic Development Fee-In-Lieu stream and that they have already had a candidate reach out to them about the position. He updated about the final reviews for the Rodman Ball Field that are with DHEC and under final review, then the project will go out for bid in mid-May or June. Mr. Hester updated Council on the progress of the Animal Control facility. He stated that the floorplans and building footprints are about 85% decided on and cost estimates will be done to ensure the project is still within budget. Lastly, Mr. Hester updated that a team-building retreat and leadership training has been scheduled for government managers and supervisors.

8. OLD BUSINESS

- a) 2nd Reading of CCMA24-06 Michael R. Franklin requests Tax Map #079-04-02-002-000 at 651 Lancaster Hwy., Chester, SC 29706 to be rezoned from Single Family Residential District (RS-1) to Limited Commercial District (LC). The Planning Commission voted 5-0 to approve.
Councilman Agee motioned to uphold the Planning Commission’s decision to approve the rezoning, second by Vice Chairman Wilson, 6-0 to approve.
- b) Chester County Prioritized Community Needs
Vice Chairman Wilson motioned to approve, second by Councilman Vaughn. Vote 6-0 to approve.
- c) Policy regarding Council Member attendance at Meetings
County Administrator Hester recommended that no additional policy be put in place regarding Council Members attending meetings with other entities. Mr. Hester stated that there are already FOIA and ethics rules in place and that in the future if there are important topics we can incorporate them into the agenda or have a Special Called Meeting. Mr. Hester recommended that council members just continue to be considerate and conscientious. This was taken as information only, no action was taken.

9. NEW BUSINESS

- a) Fiscal Year 2023 Financial Statement Audit Report
Tommy Darby, Treasurer
Marc Wood, Auditor, Sheheen Hancock & Godwin, LLP
Mr. Marc Wood presented the County’s 2023 Fiscal Year audit report. Mr. Wood informed Council that the County received an unmodified report, which is the highest opinion given on a set of financial statements. He explained the outline of the audit report and pointed out to Council that the report stated that all federal money that was received was spent in accordance of the client’s requirements. Mr. Wood stated that the general

fund shows total assets as \$33.8 million, total liabilities and deferred inflows are \$14.5 million and the fund balance as of 6/30/23 was \$19.8 million. He also informed Council that the total revenues were \$30.6 million, operating expenditures were \$25.7 million, and the positive change in fund balance was about \$4.6 million. For proprietary funds, Mr. Wood informed Council that the Gateway had a positive change of \$113,000 and the Landfill had a negative change of about \$163,000. Mr. Wood stated that the revenues exceeded budget by a little over \$2 million and expenditures were under budget by \$2.6 million, transfers and other financing sources were under budget by \$23,000. Mr. Wood stated that this was a very good report and the county has a healthy fund balance. Mr. Wood thanked Treasurer Tommy Darby and all of his staff for their help.

b) Lutz Foundation Grant Match for Community Alters

Jessica Roof, Animal Control Director

Ms. Roof with Animal Control informed Council that a Lutz Grant was received for \$11,000 and a grant match is being requested for \$5,000 to fulfill the needs of the community alters to the end of the fiscal year. Councilman Vaughn motioned to approve the grant match funding of \$5,000, second by Vice Chairman Wilson. Vote 6-0 to approve.

c) Assessor's Office Update

Rick Anderson, Assessor

Mr. Rick Anderson informed Council of the duties of the Assessor's Office; appraise all the property in Chester County with the exception of property that is assessed by the Department of Revenue as manufacturing property, process legal residents applications, agricultural use applications, and update GIS mapping system that is used by EMA and 911. Mr. Anderson informed Council about a flyover completed in February that would update the imagery available for their use of assessment and for EMA and 911 to use as well. He let Council know that their department is working on the 2024 assessment changes for property changes in value over \$1,000 and that property owners are sent a notice so that they are aware of the change. Mr. Anderson stated that their department is on track to complete the countywide reassessment in 2025 which, in the past, has been delayed one or two years over the last four reassessment cycles. Mr. Anderson said there are over 25,000 parcels of land in Chester County and everyone in the county is affected by what their office does—this is taken very seriously and their department works hard to be equitable in their assessment of properties.

d) Chester County Welcome Sign Proposal

Harold Hayes, Project Manager

Mr. Harold Hayes informed Council that there are currently eleven "Welcome to Chester County" signs posted at the entrances of the county. Some of the current signs are battered and faded and Mr. Hayes took on the project of redesigning the signs to upgrade them throughout the county. Mr. Hayes presented Council with eleven options and Council narrowed the options to four. Councilman Guy made the motion to allow Mr. Hester to proceed with polling citizens on the website for sign numbers 2, 6, 8, and 11 and then reporting back to council for final vote. Second by Councilman Vaughn. Vote 6-0 to approve citizen polling.

10. BOARDS AND COMMISSIONS

11. EXECUTIVE SESSION

Councilman Guy motioned to enter into executive session, second by Councilman Vaughn. 6-0 to enter into executive session.

- a) Discussion of matters relating to the proposed location, expansion, or the provision of services encouraging location or expansion of industries or other businesses in the area served by the public body – Project P2410
- b) Discussion of personnel matter regarding Economic Development

12. ACTIONS FOLLOWING EXECUTIVE SESSION

Councilman Vaughn motioned to come out of executive session and enter back into regular session. Second by Councilman Guy. Vote 6-0. All items for executive session were taken as information only.

- a) Action taken relating to the proposed location, expansion, or the provision of services encouraging location or expansion of industries or other businesses in the area served by the public body – Project P2410
- b) Action taken regarding Economic Development personnel matter

13. COUNCIL COMMENTS

Vice Chairman Wilson thanked everyone for attending the North Chester Substation Grand Opening and thanked Council for always supporting this project. Mr. Wilson commented that the building is beautiful and well-built and an asset for many years to come. In the future, Mr. Wilson stated that he is excited for the future projects and keeping them on schedule, and the positive financial situation of our county. Councilman Guy apologized for not being able to attend the Grand Opening of the fire station but commended the county for completing the project and complimented the building. Chairman Branham complimented the Grand Opening ceremonies and stated that he was keeping Mrs. Mosley in his prayers in regards to her absence due to migraine headaches. Councilman Vaughn commended about the dedicated volunteer fire fighters that Chester County is blessed to have. Councilman Agee commented on the fire fighters and what they have seen and go through and said that Mr. John Massey's idea of a memorial for the police officers, fire fighters that have died in the line of duty should be supported.

14. ADJOURN

Councilman Vaughn motioned to adjourn, second by Councilman Guy. Vote 6-0 to adjourn.

8:17PM

**Kristie Donaldson
Clerk to Council**