



MINUTES
LAW ENFORCEMENT, PUBLIC SAFETY, HEALTH &
WELFARE COMMITTEE MEETING
February 9, 2011

COMMITTEE MEMBERS

Mr. Wayne McCall, Chairman, District II
Mr. Archie Barron, District III
Mr. Joel Thrift, District IV

The Law Enforcement, Public Safety, Health & Welfare Committee met on Wednesday, February 9, 2011 at 7:00 PM in Council Chambers, 415 South Pine Street, Walhalla, SC with all Committee Members present [except Mr. Thrift], Administrator Scott Moulder and Elizabeth G. Hulse, Clerk to Council present.

Other Council Members Present: Mr. Paul Corbeil, District I, Mr. Reg Dexter, District V

Press:

Pursuant to the Freedom of Information Act, notice of the meeting, date, time, place of meeting and agenda were posted on the bulletin board at the County Administrative Offices, 415 South Pine Street, Walhalla, SC, and the County Council website [www.oconeese.com/council]. In addition it was made available to the newspapers, radio stations, television stations and concerned citizens.

Member of the press present: Ray Chandler – Anderson Independent Mail and Dick Mangrum – WGOG Radio

Call to Order:

Chairman McCall called the meeting to order at 7:00 p.m.

Discussion / Recommendation to full Council re: Administrator's Proposed Fire Plan

Mr. McCall stated that the sole purpose of the meeting is to identify a recommendation to take to full Council regarding the Administrator's proposed fire plan. Mr. McCall turned over discussion to Mr. Moulder who requested direction regarding components in the plan that Council wants to institute and a possible implementation schedule.

Mr. Moulder identified four key items he would like to begin work on as follow:

1. Initiate Organizational changes to include new staff positions [as outlined on organizational chart attached in PowerPoint presentation].
2. Receive direction regarding fire contracts with municipalities; specifically authority to negotiate a new contract with the City of Seneca as their contract expires June 30, 2011.
3. Increased funding for each fire station to begin to be funded in the FY 2011-2012 budget.
4. Increased staffing for Station 21 from the current six filled positions to 18 total positions.

Mr. Moulder noted that additional equipment and new substations were also needed to fully realize the plan as presented and improve protection for the citizens. Mr. Moulder noted that the potential cost for a substation would be approximately \$250,000 for a 2-bay, double stack, pre-engineered metal building with a concrete floor [to include a small bathroom/shower, office, etc.].

Mr. McCall voiced concerns that the County was unprepared with a "plan B" if negotiations with the City of Seneca fall through. Mr. Moulder outlined several options to include possible expansion of the surrounding rural departments, addition of a new substation or a possible paid county station.

Lengthy discussion followed.

Public Comment:

Mr. McCall opened the floor to those present if they wished to voice their opinions and/or suggestions regarding the plan and options discussed.

Chief Michael Mason, South Union Fire Station, addressed the Committee noting that the most pressing issue in his areas is the addition of a sub station as many residents are outside the 5 mile response area in his district. Mr. Moulder utilized the Proposed Fire Substation Map [included in the backup material] showing the Committee issues faced by not only South Union but other stations that border Lake Hartwell. Chief Mason felt that a substation could be constructed for less than Mr. Moulder's estimate and stated he felt that approximately \$75,000 would suffice to get a basic structure. Discussion also took place with Chief Mason regarding the possible donation of a boat to aid in fire response in his area.

Mr. Steve Moore addressed the Committee regarding previous fire studies and plans.

Chief Tracey Sanders, Oakway Fire Station, addressed the Committee voicing concerns about the inequity with the contract with Seneca; noting that their response outside of the city is usually two firefighters and a truck where other municipalities respond with all available trucks and staff.

Ms. Susie Cornelius addressed the Committee asking that impact fees be addressed as a funding mechanism for substations; noting that all citizens should not bear the responsibility for small area coverage.

Ms. Hulse read a statement from Mr. Thrift in his absence:

Overall I would recommend that this committee recommend to full council

[1] That the county administrator present next Tuesday at the council meeting a request for up to \$1.4 million to be included in the next fiscal years budget. Detail for spending to be determined later.

[2] That Council makes these decisions so that the Administrator can negotiate with the city of Seneca

[3] That Council move forward with the understanding that we may proceed selecting those options we agree fit the county's needs.

Mr. McCall stated that Council should move slowing and carefully not only making plans for the next fiscal year but also doing long term planning.

Mr. Barron made a motion, seconded by Mr. McCall, approved 2 – 0 to recommend to full Council at the February 15, 2011 meeting to implement Phase I of the fire plan as outlined and presented at this meeting pending budget limitations to be worked out during discussions in the upcoming budget workshops.

Other Business:

None discussed at this meeting.

Adjourn:

Mr. McCall adjourned the meeting at 8:15 p.m.

Respectfully Submitted:

Elizabeth G. Hulse
Clerk to Council