



MINUTES
LAW ENFORCEMENT, PUBLIC SAFETY, HEALTH &
WELFARE COMMITTEE MEETING
January 28, 2009

COMMITTEE MEMBERS

Mr. Wayne McCall, Chairman, District II
Mr. Mario Suarez, District III
Mr. Joel Thrift, District IV

The Law Enforcement, Public Safety, Health & Welfare Committee met on Wednesday, January 28, 2009 at 5:30 PM in Council Chambers, 415 South Pine Street, Walhalla, SC with all Committee Members present [except Mr. Suarez], Mr. George Blanchard, District I, Mr. Reg Dexter, District V, County Administrator Dale K. Surratt and Elizabeth G. Hulse, Clerk to Council also present.

Oconee County Staff present: Mr. Lake Julian, Facilities Maintenance

Guests present: Mr. Derrick Hodgins, Mayor / City of Westminster, Mr. David Smith, Administrator / City of Westminster, and Chief Chris Smith, Westminster Fire

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, Peter Kent - WSNW Radio & Andrew Moore - Daily Journal.

Call to Order:

Chairman McCall called the meeting to order at 5:30 p.m.

Approval of Minutes:

Mr. Thrift made a motion, seconded by Mr. Dexter [who was on the committee for the January 12, 2009 meeting but has been replaced by Mr. Thrift], approved 2 – 0 that the minutes from the January 12, 2009 meeting be adopted as printed.

Discussion of Oconee County/Westminster Joint Fire Station:

Mr. McCall recognized Mr. Joel Thrift and asked that he run the meeting as the station is slated to be in his district. Mr. Thrift asked Mr. Blanchard to provide those present with a history regarding the joint station. He summarized the agreement that outlined each party's responsibilities to include: City of Westminster: purchase the land, pay for ongoing utilities and donate existing equipment for shared usage; and Oconee County: build the joint building to the specs required by both entities; house Emergency Operations Center [EOC], EMS and OMC Rescue Squad.

Mr. Surratt noted that the space freed up at the LEC by moving the EOC would help with much needed jail expansion. He noted that Council will have to deal with issues related to the jail

over the next few years and will likely have to replace the current facility within 10-15 years at an estimated cost of between \$30-35 million dollars. Mr. Surrett stated that moving the EOC out of the LEC it would free up space that is adjacent to the female portion of the jail. The freed up space could economically be converted into female dormitories.

Mr. Blanchard stated that the project was designed in two phases with the initial phase outlined above and phase II to consist of expansion for additional training facilities.

Chief Smith provided the Committee with a rough drawing of the City's needs for the station. Mr. Hodgins noted that he, the chief and Mr. Reed Adams had met with Mr. Surrett to discuss money expended by the City to date and their minimum requirements for a building.

Mr. Lake Julian, Facilities Maintenance, provided a more detailed floor plan [filed with these minutes]. The building as drawn measures 229' x 100'; totaling 22,906 square feet. Discussion followed regarding usage of the joint fire station to potentially house equipment, EOC, etc. Mr. Surrett noted that the estimated cost for the county's plan was approximately \$2.5 million dollars with another \$1 million for equipment and ongoing operations.

Discussion also took place regarding placement and requirements for a radio tower for the EOC.

Mr. Thrift asked that Mr. Surrett meet with the City of Westminster, Chief Smith and Mr. Julian to review the plans presented to ensure that all parties' needs are adequately met and to report back at a future meeting the results of the discussion. Mr. Surrett asked for clarification that it was still the intent of Council to build and occupy the joint station. Mr. Thrift and Mr. McCall assured Mr. Surrett that it is the Council's intention to continue moving forward with the project.

Mr. Thrift also asked that Mr. Surrett provide funding options when the plans are brought back to the Committee for review.

Mr. David Smith addressed questions regarding the bond taken by the City. He noted that they have a target completion date of April 2010 to meet the terms of the bond.

Old Business:

No Old Business was discussed at this meeting.

New Business:

No New Business was discussed at this meeting.

Adjourn:

Mr. Thrift made a motion to adjourn, seconded by Mr. Blanchard, approved unanimously at 6:20 PM.

Respectfully Submitted:

Elizabeth G. Hulse
Clerk to Council