



JASPER COUNTY COUNCIL
SPECIAL CALLED WORKSHOP
Jasper County Clementa C. Pinckney Government Bldg
358 3rd Avenue Ridgeland, SC 29936
Friday, January 10, 2025
Minutes

Officials Present: Chairman John Kemp, Vice Chairman Joey Rowell, Councilman Chris VanGeison and Councilman Joe Arzillo **Absent:** Councilman Marty Sauls

Staff Present: County Administrator Andrew Fulghum, Clerk to Council Wanda Giles, Kimberly Burgess, Lisa Wagner, Danny Lucas, Chief Russell Wells, Vanessa Wright and Videographer Jonathan Dunham.

Also Present: Treasurer Mike Skinner, Judge Albert Kleckley, Sheriff Malphrus, Chief Deputy Atwood

Call to Order of Council Meeting by Chairman Kemp

Chairman Kemp called the Special Called Workshop to order. The Report of Compliance with the Freedom of Information Act was read for the records as follows: *In accordance with South Carolina Code of Laws, 1976, Section 30-4-80(d), as amended, notification of the meeting and the meeting agenda were posted at least 24 hours prior to the meeting on the County Council Building at a publicly accessible place, on the county website, and a copy of the agenda was provided to the local news media and all person's or organizations requesting notification.*

The Pledge to the Flag was given and the Invocation was given by Councilman Rowell

Approval of Agenda:

The agenda was unanimously approved by all Councilmembers.

Discussion regarding Proposed Resolution #R-2025-04 and potential amendments and or supplementation of Resolution #R-2024-06 (County Bank Accounts)

Councilman VanGeison read a letter that he received from a constituent for the record. The letter read as follows:

Councilman VanGeison's amending resolution not only upholds the law written by its own legislators, but respects the will of the voters he duly elected Mr. Skinner to oversee the money flowing in and out of Jasper County government.

Jasper County ordinance regarding the Disposition of Funds Collected is a County Law that was specifically written in plain language and passed by our legislative body. The law reads, "all such funds generated from fees collected and monies received by the county departments' employees and / or elected officials shall be memorialized with appropriate accounting methods for the purposes of audit all such funds shall be timely deposited with the county treasurer's office".

Let's consider Black's Law definition of funds - Available monies, Cash in hand, bank balances and accounts receivable.

Now "Monies", which means collectively; all cash, notes drafts or similar items of payments, foreign currencies, credits, compensation, including instruments evidencing such amounts that are deposited or credited to any account held by a banking or financial institution.

The ordinance does not include the Office Of The Sheriff -it does not include the Office Of The Clerk Of Courts. And -it certainly does not include the Office Of Jasper County's Probate Judge.

That language is clear - all search funds shall be timely deposited with the county treasurer's office

This unnecessary litigation - including the frivolous lawsuit instigated but our County Attorney has cost We The People more than \$200,000 dollars. To me, this entire debacle, which has all the markings of a personal / political vendetta - has placed our community in a very bad light.

In closing, it is my understanding that this body is considering adding additional language, specifically "home rule", to this amendment.

Why? For what purpose and to what end would we mucky up a perfectly crafted resolution? Adding superfluous language would not only create ambiguity to the resolution itself, as South Carolina's Home Rule is not law- it is a process that allows county governments to deviate from established State Law.

Notwithstanding, Jasper County's laws relating to the responsibility of the duly elected treasurer almost mirrors South Carolina's laws governing a State Treasurer.

It is time this legislative body stop wasting our hard-earned tax money on damn lawyers and consultants. This isn't complicated - it's good old common sense. (See attachment A for copy)

Public Comments:

Vanessa Wright, Registrar of Deeds spoke regarding the ROD Regular Standard Account and the ROD Escrow Account. She noted that she had these two accounts in her department and just wanted to make sure everything was done properly. She also mentioned that if Treasurer Skinner wanted signatory rights, then they could just let him pay everything and remove her name from the account. She said that she could send him reports to take care of all the payments and that she was just uncomfortable with more than one signatory on the account.

Sheriff Malphrus noted that he wanted Treasurer Skinner to have full access to everything on his accounts for transparency. He noted that it would make it easier if they went to training as Mr. Skinner could assist his staff in his absence for purchases, giving another layer of transparency.

Chief Wells discussed his accounts, the 1% money that comes to the Treasurer's office, and noted he had no problem with him wanting access. He asked Treasurer Skinner to please provide him in writing, a letter stating what he wants. He also noted that their concerns were because there are restricted funds that they want to make sure no errors occur within those accounts.

Judge Kleckley noted That the word signatory is one of the things that had gotten everyone there. He mentioned that transparency is everything and that they wanted to make it easier, so he was on board to do so.

Clerk of Court Keith Horton noted that he had run on the platform of open transparency and that he was on board as well period.

Discussion:

Mr. Fulghum noted that the accounts handled under Administration were the: Tax Collector, Finance, Emergency Services Revenue, Detention Center, Planning and Building, and Register of Deeds. Mr. Fulghum noted that they wanted to be sure because if the Council approved the resolution changes would have to be made at the bank.

Councilman Rowell stated that there had to be procedures established regardless. Mr. Fulghum noted that the Treasurer had been in the office for 2 years now. He then noted that 6-7 years ago they had a discussion regarding a Central Cash Register. He mentioned that for this County software would have to be in line for the different departments to be able to get into Central Cashier. He noted that they did not want to have money in different parts of the building and that this Central Cash Register system would be the next step to consider. Councilman VanGeison noted that the purpose of this resolution was to put the past 18 months to rest and put a final period on the end of this issue. He mentioned that he wanted the language to stay as presented.

Ms. Burgess noted that Ms. Wright prepares checks at the end of the month and gives them to the Treasurer after she reconciles her books. She also noted that Ms. Wagner and the Business License Department followed the same procedure. Councilman Arzillo said that Mrs. Wright noted that if an additional person was added to her accounts as a signatory, it could just as well be that Treasurer Skinner could handle the processing from his office. Councilman Arzillo said he'd like to let Treasurer Skinner respond to that. Treasurer Skinner said that this was not how he was told the county worked which proves this point. He noted that they needed to move to rein in all the bank accounts, use less banks, and move to a centralized system. He said this eliminated the need for all the small accounts. Ms. Burgess noted that having more accounts meant that you have less control issues. The types of accounts, processing of accounts, backup information for the checks, checks and procedures were all discussed thoroughly. The Council expressed the need for procedures to be in place, so that the procedures be known by everyone and followed. The council discussed their desire for transparency and for everyone to work together. The item of the Resolution was left for Councilman VanGeison to have ready for the 01.21.2025 Council Meeting e-packet.

General Discussion:

Chairman Kemp noted that people needed to be appointed to positions on certain boards. He noted that the following appointments were needed:

2 for the New Life Board

1 for the Library Board of Trustees

7 for the Parks and Recreation Board

1 for the TCL Board (which was a Delegation Appointment, so Council makes a referral)

2 for Lowcountry Council of Governments (one as a minority member and one as a Council Member)

1 for LATS Council Appointment

1 Councilmember for SOLOCO (he noted has 8 jurisdictions that get together to meet every month)

1 Councilmember for Cypress Ridge Business Industrial Park Design Review Committee

Mr., Fulghum noted that there had been some changes so some modifications may need to be done on this.

He noted that Ms. Wagner administers this board and the Power Company is on this board.

Chairman Kemp said he need to have someone to attend the City of Hardeeville Meeting, Town of Ridgeland Meeting and the Jasper County School Board Meeting. Chairman Kemp noted that at the 27th Meeting they would like to review agencies. Mr. Fulghum noted that on the first day they would have the legal group(s) and the consultant(s) there and on the second day the Audit firm, staff updates on all projects and what will be coming to the Council in the upcoming year would be presented. They discussed upcoming workshops that were needed.

The following Councilmembers agreed to attend these meetings throughout the year:

Councilman Rowell – SOLOCO and LATS Meetings

Councilman VanGeison – Cypress Ridge Business Industrial Park Design Review Committee Meetings and the Town of Ridgeland Meetings

Councilman Arzillo - Jasper County School Board Meetings

Chairman Kemp – City of Hardeeville Meeting

Chairman Kemp noted changes were coming to the agenda. They discussed the desire to have Town Hall Meetings in their districts.

For more information on this workshop please go to our YouTube Channel for the video go to https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCBmloqX05cKAsHm_ggXCjIA

Adjournment

Motion to adjourn: Councilman Rowell

Second: Councilman Arzillo

Vote: Unanimous

The motion passed and the workshop adjourned.

Respectfully submitted:



Wanda H. Giles
Clerk to Council



John Kemp
Chairman

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