



JASPER COUNTY COUNCIL
SPECIAL CALLED MEETING
Jasper County Clementa C. Pinckney Government Bldg
358 3rd Avenue Ridgeland, SC 29936
Monday, June 24, 2024
Minutes

Officials Present:, Vice Chairwoman Barbara B. Clark, Councilman John Kemp, and Councilman Joey Rowell
Absent: Chairman L. Martin Sauls IV

Staff Present: County Administrator Andrew Fulghum, Clerk to Council Wanda Giles, County Attorney David Tedder, Kimberly Burgess, Chief Russell Wells, and Videographer Jonathan Dunham.

Vice Chairwoman Clark called the Special Called Council Meeting to order at 6:30pm. The Report of Compliance with the Freedom of Information Act was read for the records as follows: *In compliance with the Freedom of Information Act, notice of meetings and agendas were posted and furnished to all news media and persons requesting notification.*

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

Approval of Agenda

Motion to approve the agenda: Councilman Rowell
Second: Councilman Kemp
Vote: Unanimous
The motion passed.

1. **Andrew Fulghum** - Consideration of the **Public Hearing** and **2nd reading** of Ordinance **#O-2024-16** to Levy And Impose A One Percent Sales And Use Tax, Subject To A Referendum, Within Jasper County Pursuant To Section 4-37-30 Of The Code Of Laws Of South Carolina 1976, As Amended; To Define The Specific Purposes And Designate The Projects For Which The Proceeds Of The Tax May Be Used; To Provide The Maximum Time For Which Such Tax May Be Imposed; To Provide The Estimated Cost Of The Projects Funded From The Proceeds Of The Tax; To Provide For A County-Wide Referendum On The Imposition Of The Sales And Use Tax And The Issuance Of General Obligation Bonds And To Prescribe The Contents Of The Ballot Questions In The Referendum; To Provide For The Conduct Of The Referendum By The Board Of Voter Registration And Elections Of Jasper County; To Provide For The Administration Of The Tax, If Approved; To Provide For The Payment Of The Tax, If Approved; And To Provide For Other Matters Relating Thereto (*1st reading 05.06.2024*)

Mr. Fulghum was present to address and review this request for the 2nd reading of Ordinance #O-2024-16 to levy and impose a One Percent Sales and Use Tax, subject to a Referendum, within Jasper County pursuant to Section 4-37-30 of the Code Of Laws of South Carolina 1976, as amended; to define the specific purposes and designate the projects for which the proceeds of the tax may be used; to provide the maximum time for which such tax may be imposed; to provide the estimated cost of the projects funded from the proceeds of the tax; to provide for a County-Wide Referendum on the imposition of the

Sales and Use Tax and the Issuance of General Obligation Bonds and to prescribe the contents of the Ballot Questions in the Referendum; to provide for the conduct of the Referendum by the Board Of Voter Registration and Elections Of Jasper County; to provide for the administration of the tax, if approved; to provide for the payment of the tax, if approved; and to provide for other matters relating thereto.

After Mr. Fulghum's overview and the information provided, the Public Hearing was called to order. Grant McClure, Kate Schaefer, Bill Fishburne, and Pegeen Hanrahan spoke regarding the Sales and Use Tax. Mr. Grant McClure also submitted his written comments which are attached as "Attachment A".

For more information on this meeting please go to our YouTube Channel for the video go to https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCBmloqX05cKAsHm_ggXCJIA

Adjourn:

Motion to adjourn: Councilman Rowell

Second: Councilman Kemp

Vote: Unanimous

The motion passed.

Respectfully submitted:



Wanda H. Giles
Clerk to Council


L. Martin Sauls IV, Chairman



6/24/2024

Dear Chairman Sauls and Jasper County Council Members,

On behalf of the Coastal Conservation League, thank you for the opportunity to provide comments on the proposed one percent transportation sales tax with conservation funding. The Conservation League commends the Jasper County Council for drafting this referendum, which we believe will provide time-sensitive funding to not only improve infrastructure, but also to protect the environment. We believe dedicating 20% of this funding for conservation projects is absolutely necessary to prevent suburban sprawl and protect greenspace.

As development pressure reaches all-time highs, it is critical for Jasper County to invest in conservation projects. Moreover, the timing of this funding is critical because the County's moratorium on large subdivisions in the Euhaw Broad River area is set to expire in July. Despite the moratorium, within the past year, we have seen developers pursue plans to construct thousands of new residences in the Euhaw Broad River area.

While growth supports the economy, when it is rapid and unchecked, it can gravely impact the quality of life in our communities and harm natural resources and wildlife. A local conservation fund in Jasper County will help to strike a balance, safeguarding sensitive lands and existing rural communities like the Euhaw Broad River Corridor from incompatible development.


Ample money at the local level will also help Jasper County taxpayers get more bang for their buck. Jasper County will be able to tap into Beaufort County's Greenspace funding more easily, promoting regional planning efforts and safeguarding water quality at a watershed scale. Local matching dollars will also open the door to receive additional state and federal funding from the State Conservation Bank, the Department of Defense, and more.

Additionally, having conservation dollars at the ready will go a long way toward realizing the County's Parks and Recreation Masterplan and providing more public access to the County's waterways. We strongly encourage Jasper Council to pursue a referendum that dedicates 20% of the funds toward conservation. A ballot measure that provides less than 20% for conservation projects will not be sufficient to strike the necessary balance between rapid growth and preservation.

We also believe voters are more likely to support the referendum if 20% of the funding is dedicated toward protecting open space. Finally, we recommend defining the term "green belt" or simply "conservation" on the ballot for greater public awareness and transparency.

Investing in our landscapes today will ensure that the next generation has the opportunity to recreate, explore, and reflect in Jasper County's iconic tidal creeks, pine savannahs, and tupelo-cypress swamps. Thank you very much for your time and consideration. Please feel free to reach out with any questions.

Respectfully,


Grant McClure
South Coast Project Manager
843-522-1800|grantm@scccl.org