

CHAPIN TOWN COUNCIL
Special Called Meeting & Work Session Meeting Minutes

Thursday August 20, 2020
3:00 p.m.

Town Hall Community Room
157 NW Columbia Ave, Chapin

Members Present: Mayor David W. Knight, Mayor Pro Tempore Al Koon, Council Member Kay Hollis, Council Member Leland Teal, and Council Member Mike Clonts

Members Absent: none

Staff Present: Director of Finance Laura Culler, Utility Director Andy Metts, Town Engineer Dan Lambert, Town Attorney Lisa Lee Smith

Staff Absent: Director of Public Affairs Nicholle Burroughs, Zoning Administrator Ian Ashford, Chief of Police Seth Zeigler

Guests: Lil Mood and Debbie Summers

Call to Order: Mayor Knight called the meeting to order at 3:00 p.m. and determined there was a quorum. The appropriate notifications in compliance with the SC Freedom of Information Act had been met.

Presentation

Comet Board Update – Mayor Pro Tem Koon introduced Lil Mood and Debbie Summers as members with him on the COMET Board of Directors. Lil Mood was appointed to the board for Lexington County and had recently been elected as the Chairman of the Service Committee for the COMET. Debbie Summers is a Lexington County Councilwoman and serves on the COMET board representing the city of Springdale. Chapin became involved with the COMET last year when the route from Newberry to Columbia was established.

Debbie Summers began the presentation by giving a background on public transportation. She stated that Lexington County currently records the population at 300,000 people, but projects that by the year 2050, the population will increase to roughly 550,000 people. This means more tax dollars that would be allocated to road maintenance due to more traffic on the roads. This can potentially lead to more accidents creating more of a need for emergency services.

By working with the CMRTA, known as the COMET, Lexington County has an opportunity to shape how transportation would look for its citizens. The number one question from people looking to move into the area is where is the closest public transportation. Without public transportation, Lexington County won't qualify for federal funding to help senior citizens with transportation. The COMET partners with Uber and Lyft to fill the gaps without having empty busses running back and forth.

Lil Mood noted that out of the three, she, Debbie Summers, and Al Koon, she was the only voting member of the COMET board for Lexington County.

There were three questions that she presented to Council as a part of the presentation.

1. Who runs the bus system and what voice do people have in the region on how it is operated? A law creating the Regional Transit Authority System governs the COMET. The structure that the COMET board operates off of is established by an intergovernmental agreement that has to be signed by all parties that agree. The structure of how the board has operated over the years has changed. Now, there are advisory members that are non-voting and an 11-member voting board. Advisory members can participate in board meetings and have an active voice in

discussions, but they cannot vote. Debbie Summers and Al Koon are advisory members while Lil Mood is the only voting member for Lexington County. Debbie Summers noted that local municipalities pay Lexington County to be a part of the COMET Board and Lexington County writes one check giving Lexington County one vote. They are desiring to, and in the process of changing this process to give more local municipalities equal and fair vote.

2. Long Term goals: Long term study of services plan is underway. The routes for the bus system can be built on two main types of routes:
 - production routes: Looks at the heaviest flow of traffic, main corridors, and where most people ride, and builds the routes around those areas. This would help alleviate traffic concerns and get people living in those areas where they need to be.
 - Coverage Routes: Serving an entire area. This type of route is harder because more rural areas are not as profitable.

They are currently looking at what system will work best for each area that will meet the needs of each type of route.

3. Immediate Concerns: The most immediate concern relates to the budget for the COMET. The task is trying to structure routes to provide the most service while staying within the budget. Due to COVID-19, ridership dropped by 50%. That number is gradually coming back up as more businesses open and people start moving again. The service committee is currently looking at each route on the system, for each hour on those routes to determine if it is financially feasible to run. The bus route that came through Chapin has stopped. The program that brought the COMET through Chapin was in a pilot program for one year to see if it would be beneficial to add that as a permanent route. COVID-19 interrupted that trial time. They are currently looking at extending that time period in order to make a decision.

Chapin Town Council has the power to pay into the system, which would roughly be \$450 per year, to keep the express route, not pay because service stopped, or wait until the trial to end to decide if Chapin would like to continue having a more permanent route. She encouraged Council to keep Chapin on and to have an active voice in deciding how public transportation will look for this area. Mayor Knight expressed his concern that when Council nominated Al Koon, he would only be an advisory member and would not get a vote, but also that we would need to pay to have a vote. Lil Mood clarified that paying into program doesn't guarantee a vote and most of the money that Lexington County pays for each of its jurisdictions comes from federal and state funds. The task that they are working toward now, is making sure that smaller jurisdictions in the county benefit from this service as a Regional Transit Authority.

New Business

a. Ordinance – To Provide for a General Property Tax Millage Rate Adjustment for the Tax Year 2020 – Ordinance #012-08-2020 – 2nd reading

Mayor Knight the Town did not do a general property tax millage rate increase for 2019. Director Culler stated that when Lexington County reassesses the property values, the Town is required by law to calculate a rollback millage in order to equalize the taxable amount collected from each resident prior to the reassessment. Director Culler also confirmed the rate adjustment to be 13.07. Member Clonts made a motion to accept the General Property tax Millage Rate Adjustment for the Tax Year 2020. Member Teal seconded. There was no further discussion. Motion passed.

Mayor Knight:	Yes	Mayor Pro Tem Clonts:	Yes
Council Member Hollis:	Yes		
Council Member Koon:	No vote recorded		
Council Member Teal:	Yes		

b. Amending Chapter 3: Animals, Articles 1 and 2 of the Chapin Town Code through adoption by reference of amendments to Lexington County Animal Control Ordinance 20-13 – 1st reading

Mayor Knight stated that the purpose of this ordinance was to provide direction for what Lexington County Animal Control would do about nuisance cats. Clerk Bowers stated that Lexington County sent a copy of their amended ordinance addressing the nuisance cat issue. They redefined pets to include cats and defined nuisance cats to further explain the process that Lexington County Animal Control would follow in regards to these animals. Because Chapin Town Council adopted the Lexington County Animal Control Ordinance in its entirety in 2006, any time a change is made, Town Council has to pass an ordinance adopting those changes in order for Lexington County Animal Control services to continue. Member Clonts made a motion to accept the ordinance amending Chapter 3: Animals, articles 1 and 2 of the Chapin Town Cod through adoption by reference of amendments to Lexington County Animal Control ordinance #20-13. Member Teal seconded the motion. There was no further discussion. Motion passed.

Mayor Knight:	Yes	Mayor Pro Tem Clonts:	Yes
Council Member Hollis:	Yes		
Council Member Koon:	No vote recorded		
Council Member Teal:	Yes		

c. Resolution – In support and honor of the first responders, educators, health care workers, and military members and their families of Lexington County

Mayor Knight noted that Lexington County Council and other municipalities and organizations in the county are offering up a joint resolution in honor and support of our first responders, teachers, medical workers, and military members and their families for the work they have been doing and continue to do for our communities.

Member Clonts noted that there was not a clause in the resolution about utility workers. He would agree to approve the resolution as modified to include utility workers. Motion passed to approve resolution as amended to include utility workers.

Mayor Knight:	Yes	Mayor Pro Tem Clonts:	Yes
Council Member Hollis:	Yes		
Council Member Koon:	No vote recorded		
Council Member Teal:	Yes		

Before the Council update, Mayor Knight asked Director Metts if he would explain the stormwater management issue for Lexington County. Director Metts noted that Lexington County was looking to make a list of any drainage issues in our area to include on the list to send to Lexington County to be addressed. If anyone has any issues to address, they are to let Director Metts as soon as possible.

Council Update

Director Culler stated that an application to receive CARES Act funding has been signed and submitted. The first step in this process is to be approved for funding. The South Carolina Cares Grant is for municipalities to submit eligible COVID-19 expenses to the State for relief funds. The Town has been approved, which gives access to their portal to submit proofs for reimbursement. Director Culler explained that this would only be for necessary expenditures not accounted for in the budget due to COVID-19 and incurred from March 1, 2020 through June 30, 2020. The funds cannot be used for government shortfalls and revenue replacement. Director Culler noted that everything that could be submitted has been.

Executive Session

Member Clonts made the motion to enter into an Executive Session to discuss the Waste Water Treatment Plant Contract regarding negotiations incident to proposed contractual arrangements pursuant to SC Code Section 30-4-70 (a)(2). Mayor Pro Tem Koon seconded the motion. No further discussion was had. Motion passed unanimously. Council entered into executive session at 4:21 p.m.

Mayor Knight:	Yes	Mayor Pro Tem Clonts:	Yes
Council Member Hollis:	Yes	Council Member Koon:	Yes
Council Member Teal:	Yes		

Council returned from executive session at 4:49 p.m. Member Clonts made a motion to authorize the Mayor to sign and engagement letter from Eric Norton authorizing him to give the Utility Department assistance with construction legal advice to respond to claim #1 from MB Kahn. Mayor Pro Tem Koon seconded. Motion passed unanimously.

Mayor Knight:	Yes	Mayor Pro Tem Clonts:	Yes
Council Member Hollis:	Yes	Council Member Koon:	Yes
Council Member Teal:	Yes		

Items for discussion for next Council meeting

Mayor Knight noted that if there were anything regarding stormwater fees, Director Metts would report at the next meeting.

Mayor Pro Tem Koon asked that a presentation be added to the agenda for the next meeting for members of The Courage Center to speak to council. They are looking to establish a presence in the Chapin area.

Mayor Knight then asked Council if the September 1, 2020 meeting would be held in person or electronically. Council decided to meet in person at 3:00 p.m. in the community room to facilitate for social distancing.

Public Comments

There were no public comments.

Adjournment:

Member Teal made a motion to adjourn the meeting. Mayor Pro Tem Koon seconded. Meeting was adjourned at 4:53 p.m.

COUNCIL APPROVED: 9-1-2020