

MINUTES OF THE SPECIAL MEETING
OF THE
LANCASTER COUNTY COUNCIL

August 5, 2008

Chairman Carter called the special meeting to order at 12 noon and offered the invocation.

County Council members present were Rudy Carter, Fred Thomas, Wesley Grier, Jack Estridge, Wayne Kersey, Bryan Vaughn and Larry Honeycutt. Also present were Steve Willis, Irene Plyler, Frannie Heizer, Mike Ey, Architect Jodi Munnerlyn, several department heads and one member of the press.

The following press were notified of the meeting by mail or by fax in accordance with the Freedom of Information Act: Lancaster News, York Observer, Kershaw News Era, The State, The Rock Hill Herald, Fort Mill Times, WRHI Radio, Cable News 2, Channel 9, and the local Government Channel.

The purpose of the special meeting was to discuss a plan of action because of the courthouse fire.

AGENDA APPROVAL

MOTION was made by Fred Thomas to approve the agenda. SECONDED by Wesley Grier. PASSED UNANIMOUSLY 7-0.

COURTHOUSE

Steve Willis gave Council a brief outline of what happened Monday morning after the fire at the courthouse was discovered. SLED and ATF feels the fire is suspicious and are investigating.

Actions take so far are:

- The city-owned building on 15th Street has been looked at to move court into until a new Justice is complete. Locations within the City of Lancaster must first be considered due to the constitutional requirement to be within the County Seat. The rent would be free, but upgrades to the building would be needed.
- The downstairs of the county administration building will be renovated to allow for temporary housing of the Clerks of Court's staff, Public Defender staff, and Solicitor's staff who were housed in the courthouse.
- John Jervy from SCAC has viewed the damage. We basically have replacement value plus a generous allowance for relocation and other expenses.
- Architect Jodi Munnerlyn and a structural engineer inspected the courthouse. Mr. Willis will be asking to utilize the \$110,000 the county had earmarked for windows to make emergency repairs to the courthouse, which will involve bracing the rear wall to the original rear wall, getting a roof cover in place, asbestos removal, and cleaning to allow for a full structural inspection.
- Records were removed from the courthouse to the county administration building Monday afternoon. Our Records Management Director is working with State Archives to preserve the records.
- Servpro has been contacted to bring in fans and dehumidifiers to keep the air circulating and drying out of the courthouse. Servpro will also remove the carpet and tile from the building to reduce the possibility of mold/mildew problems.

Council was informed that the courthouse can be saved, but how to proceed on rebuilding is the question. The courthouse has been damaged by more than 50% of its value so the rebuilding process will require bringing the building up to current building code. Steve Willis noted that Council will need to begin thinking about what they want to use the courthouse for in the future, such as a museum, office space, etc.

Steve Willis asked permission to move forward to see that all county-owned buildings have functioning security systems in place.

MOTION was made by Fred Thomas to declare this situation an emergency and invoke an emergency procedure process and ratify all actions taken by the County Administrator and staff since the Monday morning of the fire. SECONDED by Larry Honeycutt. PASSED UNANIMOUSLY 7-0.

MOTION was made by Larry Honeycutt that the County Administrator and/or Finance Director are authorized to take the following steps related to the Courthouse fire: Engage the services of Boykin-Munnerlyn to oversee emergency repairs to the County Courthouse; take such other steps as may be needed in consultation with SCAC and county staff to preserve the building and contents of the County Courthouse; consult with the City of Lancaster regarding the potential use of the city building on 15th Street as a temporary Courthouse; take such steps as may be needed to include installation of security/alarm systems to secure other county buildings to prevent similar occurrences; and establish a separate account to handle expenses related to the Courthouse fire for accounting purposes. Funding for these shall be taken utilizing the approved \$110,000 that was budgeted for the replacement of the Courthouse windows. SECONDED by Fred Thomas. PASSED UNANIMOUSLY 7-0.

EXECUTIVE SESSION

MOTION was made by Fred Thomas to go into executive session and then immediately adjourn since there will be no action taken as a result of executive session. SECONDED by Larry Honeycutt. PASSED UNANIMOUSLY 7-0.

The meeting adjourned at 12:50 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Irene Plyler
Clerk to Council

APPROVED BY COUNCIL 09-08-2008

Wesley Grier, Secretary