

City Council Minutes
August 15, 2023

Orangeburg City Council held its regularly scheduled meeting on Tuesday, August 15, 2023, at 6:00 PM with Mayor Michael C. Butler presiding.

PRESENT:

Michael C. Butler, Mayor
Jerry Hannah
Dr. Kalu Kalu, Mayor Pro Tem
L. Zimmerman Keitt
Sandra P. Knotts
Richard F. Stroman

ABSENT:

Bernard Haire

Mayor Butler opened the Public Hearing: Consideration of an ordinance to raise revenue and adopt a budget for the City of Orangeburg, SC for the Fiscal Year October 1, 2023, through September 30, 2024. There was no one to speak at the Public Hearing. The Public Hearing was closed.

A motion was made by Councilmember Stroman, seconded by Councilmember Keitt to approve the August 1, 2023, City Council minutes. The motion was approved 5-0-1. Councilmember Knotts abstained.

A motion was made by Mayor Pro Tem Kalu, seconded by Councilmember Keitt to approve the July 10, 2023, City Budget Workshop Minutes. The motion was unanimously approved.

Mr. Marc Wood, Sheheen, Hancock & Godwin, LLP, CPAs presented Council a financial update. He stated, "For the financials for July 31, 2023, the General Fund Revenues were 86% of your budget and your ideal budget should be 83%. Expenditures were 86% of your budget. Expenditures were a little over, however you will notice over the last two months, revenues have now exceeded expenditures. We have approximately \$413,000 surplus currently."

Councilmember Hannah asked, "What do you attribute this surplus?"

Mr. Wood stated, "We have had better than anticipated revenue from the Municipal Association. Also, we have been diligent on expense spending by requesting directors to shop around and if possible, hold off on some purchases to the next budget year to build reserves."

A motion was made by Councilmember Keitt, seconded by Councilmember Knotts to approve the second reading of an ordinance amending the budget for the City of Orangeburg, SC for the Fiscal Year October 1, 2022, through September 30, 2023. The motion was unanimously approved.

City Administrator Evering addressed Council concerning second reading of an ordinance to raise revenue and adopt a budget for the City of Orangeburg, SC for the Fiscal Year October 1, 2023, through September 30, 2024. He stated, "As a reminder, I wanted to point out some highlights of this proposed budget. We are requesting this budget include an entry-level salary increase for public safety officers (PSO I) from \$40,000 to \$47,000. This proposed budget will allow us to hire six new Fire Engineers and a Fire Inspector. We are requesting an increase for CDL drivers from \$17 - \$20 per hour to make us more competitive. We are requesting an increase in Commercial and Residential Sanitation rates to cover the cost of services. Our Commercial Sanitation rates are extremely low at \$16 per month on a 4-yard container compared to our peers and the private sector at \$115 per month and above. We are proposing a 3% Cost of Living Adjustment (COLA) for all employees. Councilmember Hannah requested some additional information for a COLA tier option that we included in your packet."

Mayor Butler stated, "These budget increases are for the citizens to make Orangeburg a safer place with the increases for police and fire protections. Some of the salary raises are for retention of employees. With these increases, we hope to restart the recycling program. City employees need these proposed cost of living raises."

Councilmember Stroman asked, "What is the increase for the commercial sanitation rates?"

City Administrator Evering stated, "The current rate is \$16 compared to commercial vendors rate of \$115. We are requesting a new rate of \$80 which is below the market and other municipalities. It is our intention to start a public campaign and not increase the rates until January 1st. This will give us time to get the information out to the public. The current rates are extremely low, and this would allow us to hire additional CDL drivers and we could restart the recycling program."

Councilmember Hannah stated, "Concerning the COLA three tiers provided in the packet, I am struggling with which one of these to choose because I see the impact on the budget numbers. I am looking at what we can do for those employees at the lower part of the scale to bring them some additional funds."

City Administrator Evering stated, "As an overview, we provided Council three different options based on tiers of three pay ranges of 1) less than \$50,000, 2) \$50,000 to \$79,999 and 3) \$80,000 and above. Also listed are the COLA options with respect to the above scales. Option 1) 5%, 4%, 3%, Option 2) 4%, 3%, 2%, and Option 3) 3%, 2%, 1%. Each option would provide a higher percentage of COLA for those who earn less."

Mayor Butler stated, "In an organization, you must be fair to all employees. I think the best way to give COLA is the same across the board for all employees. The City and DPU have put a process in place of evaluations and merit pay for salary increases."

Mayor Pro Tem Kalu asked, "I understand my colleague's request, but we must understand salaries are determined by several factors including training and the market. The increase for the police officers is due to market trend. The COLA is based on revenue calculated on proposed increases, correct?"

City Administrator Evening stated, "Yes, the budget is based on revenues versus expenses. So, if we make any changes, we will have to go back and adjust the budget."

Councilmember Keitt stated, "I think we should remain at 3% across the board for everyone to be treated fairly."

A motion was made by Councilmember Keitt, seconded by Mayor Pro Tem Kalu to approve second reading of an ordinance to raise revenue and adopt a budget for the City of Orangeburg, SC for the Fiscal Year October 1, 2023, through September 30, 2024. The motion was approved 5-1. Councilmember Hannah opposed.

A motion was made by Councilmember Stroman, seconded by Mayor Pro Tem Kalu to appoint Mr. Jay Union to the Hillcrest Golf Commission to serve the term expiring 07-01-2026. The motion was unanimously approved.

A motion was made by Councilmember Stroman, seconded by Councilmember Keitt to go into Executive Session concerning Discussion of negotiations incident to proposed contractual arrangements and/or the receipt of legal advice regarding matters covered by the attorney-client privilege – Sale of Old City Gym located at 1420 Broughton Street, S.C. code Sec. 30-4-70(a)(2) and Discussion of negotiations incident to proposed contractual arrangements and/or receipt of legal advice regarding matters covered by the attorney-client privilege – Fire Tax District S.C. Code Sec. 30-4-70(a)(2). The motion was unanimously approved.

A motion was made by Councilmember Stroman, seconded by Councilmember Keitt to Return to Open Session. The motion was unanimously approved.

City Administrator Evering addressed Council concerning first reading of an ordinance authorizing the execution and delivery of a Fire Service Agreement and Contract to purchase real and personal property with Orangeburg County; authorizing the termination of individual fire contracts – Title Only. He stated, "For your consideration this is title only. This will allow the City to continue to negotiate with the County in regards to our fire tax district. If we come to a formal agreement, we will have it for your consideration for second reading and subsequent third reading."

A motion was made by Councilmember Keitt, seconded by Mayor Pro Tem Kalu to approve first reading of an ordinance authorizing the execution and delivery of a Fire Service Agreement and Contract to purchase real and personal property with Orangeburg County; authorizing the termination of individual fire contracts – Title Only. The motion was unanimously approved.

A motion was made by Mayor Pro Tem Kalu, seconded by Councilmember Keitt to adjourn. The motion was unanimously approved.

Respectfully submitted,



Linda McDaniel
City Clerk

