

CITY COUNCIL MINUTES

May 14, 2020

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Orangeburg City Council held a special meeting on Facebook Live via Cisco WebEx on Thursday, May 14, 2020 at 12:00 Noon with Mayor Michael C. Butler presiding.

PRESENT:

Michael C. Butler, Mayor

PRESENT BY TELEPHONE:

Dr. Kalu Kalu

Bernard Haire

Jerry Hannah

L. Zimmerman Keitt

Sandra P. Knotts

Richard F. Stroman

ABSENT:

None

A motion was made by Councilmember Keitt and seconded by Councilmember Stroman to approve the March 3, 2020 City Council minutes. The motion was unanimously approved by roll call vote.

A motion was made by Councilmember Stroman and seconded by Mayor Pro Tem Kalu to approve the March 17, 2020 City Council minutes. The motion was unanimously approved by roll call vote.

A motion was made by Mayor Pro Tem Kalu and seconded by Councilmember Keitt to approve the April 16, 2020 City Council minutes. The motion was unanimously approved by roll call vote.

City Administrator John H. Yow addressed Council regarding acceptance of FAA CARES Act Grant for the Orangeburg Municipal Airport. He stated, "You have before you as the first item of business the acceptance of a FAA CARES Act Grant for Orangeburg Municipal Airport in the amount of \$69,000. This Grant would need to be executed by the City and certified by the City Attorney by June 1st. At this point, the Federal share of the cost is 100%. It is my recommendation that City Council accept this Grant on behalf of the City so we can submit costs for reimbursement."

A motion was made by Councilmember Haire and seconded by Councilmember Stroman to accept the FAA CARES Act Grant for Orangeburg Municipal Airport. The motion was unanimously approved by roll call vote.

City Administrator Yow addressed Council regarding authorizing the City Administrator to enter contract for SW Apron Expansion Project and acceptance of FAA Grant for construction. Mr. Yow stated, "As Council knows from the items presented in your package, the City conducted a bid opening for this apron expansion last week on Friday, May 8th. We had our engineers for the airport, WK Dickson, conduct the bid opening and do an analysis of the bid submittals. Council has had an opportunity to review the bid tabulation sheet that was sent out to you. Council also has been provided a copy of the Airport Improvement Plan that has been adopted by the Airport Commission, by City Council, and approved by the FAA and this SW Apron Expansion is part of that Airport Improvement Plan. I would bring to your attention on the bid tabulation sheet that there were 5 bids submitted. They ranged from \$1.6 million to the high bid of \$1.946 million. There were 3 bids in the \$1.8 million range. Also included for you is a copy of the letter of recommendation from WK Dickson that we approve entering into a contract with the Zachary Construction Corporation in the amount of \$1,610,893.50. I also provided Council a plan drawing, if you will, a geometric design that outlines this project's dimensions and where it's located at the Orangeburg Municipal Airport. As you can see from that drawing, this is a 375-foot by 210-foot area. I would point out that on the airport improvement plan there is a number shown as \$1.3 million for this project and the bid is \$1.6 million. Before we would actually enter into any contract

with Zachary Construction Corporation, we would have FAA approval of that contract and a clear understanding of how the funding will occur. Currently, the FAA is funding 100% of improvement projects, which is one of the reasons we wanted to get this on the agenda so that if they do approve it, we can move forward while they are still funding 100%. If the FAA asks us to fund ²⁸⁹³ of the project, it would come from the Penny Capital Projects Sales Tax that City Council has approved for airport improvement projects. I will certainly be happy to answer any questions."

Councilmember Keitt asked, "Even though they were the lowest bid, have we had any information about them or worked with them before?"

City Administrator Yow responded, "Ms. Keitt, we have not done work with this company, but we have a process where a company is fully vetted before we enter into a contract. As you know from your many years of experience, we will make sure they are able to acquire all the bonding, all the insurance that is required. There's a process that we go through before a contract is done and that will also be reviewed by the FAA."

Mayor Butler added, "And that would tell us, Ms. Keitt, what kind of work they've done and their rating, what kind of company they are."

City Administrator Yow added, "One thing we also do, Ms. Keitt, that's important that I failed to mention, we also check all their licensing and registrations in the state of South Carolina to make sure they are current."

Mayor Pro Tem Kalu asked, "Did we have any local construction companies apply for the business?"

City Administrator Yow replied, "Dr. Kalu, the bids are placed in several plan rooms and the requests for bids are advertised. Any local company that is qualified to do this work could apply. I do not know of any local companies that bid, but local companies that meet the qualifications could submit a bid, yes sir."

Mayor Pro Tem Kalu stated, "My second question is if there are any stipulations for subcontractors for any local businesses to be part of this?"

City Administrator Yow responded, "That is not a requirement of the contract. But we do encourage that with contractors. That would have to be a policy set by City Council prior to bids."

A motion was made by Councilmember Haire and seconded by Councilmember Keitt to authorize City Administrator Yow to enter into a contract with Zachary Construction Corporation in the amount of \$1,610,893.50 for SW Apron Expansion Project and accept the FAA Grant for said project. The motion was unanimously approved pending FAA approval of the contract.

Mr. Warren Harley, DPU Manager updated Council on policy to suspend disconnection of utilities for nonpayment. Mr. Harley stated, "I want to give you an update on where we are with respect to our policy that we enacted to suspend disconnections of utilities for nonpayment. As of yesterday, our current numbers look a little different from the last time we reported. At last month's meeting, we told you there was a little over 3,000 delinquent accounts total. At this point, there are 2,775 delinquent accounts. Last month we told you there was around \$1.5 million in delinquent balance. As of yesterday, there is \$1.7 million delinquent with respect to how much we have outstanding. So, although the number of delinquent accounts has reduced, the dollar amount of those delinquent accounts still outstanding has gone up. Of course, that is due to the fact that some account holders are multiple months behind at this point. To help customers, DPU has been working on formulating a plan to reach out to customers who are behind to try to work out a way for them to begin to reduce that amount. We have been sending out notices to those people that we are open to working out ways to reduce those account balances. At this point, we will hold fast on where we are in terms of our date that Council set at the last meeting on May 30th. We will evaluate where we are on May 30th and then bring back to Council a recommendation as to how we proceed forward at that time. At this point, there is nothing that I am requesting of you. I just wanted to inform you of where we are and what the status of those accounts were in terms of how many and the dollar value associated with it. I'll take any questions that you might have at this time."

Councilmember Keitt stated, "We thank you so much for what we're doing for the citizens of Orangeburg. It is so important at this time in our lives that we work as close as we can with those citizens. It is a terrible time right now, but if we keep working together, we will make it through."

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Councilmember Knotts asked, "Mr. Harley, what was the number of the delinquent accounts again?"

Mr. Harley answered, "The total number of delinquent accounts as of yesterday was 2,775. That's 13% of our total accounts."

Councilmember Keitt asked, "Please repeat the dollar amount."

Mr. Harley replied, "The exact amount is \$1,766,293."

Councilmember Haire asked, "Mr. Harley, what is happening statewide, as it relates to this? I know that the Governor asked that we not shut off accounts. Do we have any kind of feel for whether that's still practiced with other utilities in the state?"

Mr. Harley replied, "Mr. Haire, that's a good question and at this point from what we are able to gather with our colleagues across the state and as well as across the country there is a holding pattern. I don't know of any utilities at this point that are disconnecting anyone for nonpayment. To my knowledge, all the utilities in the state of South Carolina, or the ones that I've talked with, are continuing to hold off on any disconnections at this point."

There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned.

Respectively submitted,



John D. Singh
Assistant City Administrator

/lhh

