



County Council Committee Minutes

Public Safety and Judiciary Committee May 18, 2020

The Public Safety and Judiciary Committee of Spartanburg County Council met on Monday, May 18, 2020, in County Council Chambers of the County Administrative Office Building. In compliance with the Freedom of Information Act, notice of this meeting was provided in advance to the local news media and other interested parties. The following were in attendance: Honorable Michael Brown, Chairman; Honorables Whitney Farr and Bob Walker, Committee Members; along with Honorables Manning Lynch, Jack Mabry, David Britt, and Roger Nutt, Council Members. Also attending were Cole Alverson, County Administrator; Earl Alexander, Deputy County Administrator; John Harris, County Attorney; and Ginny Dupont, County Attorney.

I.

Chairman Brown called the meeting to order.

II.

- A. Captain Raymond Gist, Sheriff's Office, presented information in reference to a request from the **Sheriff's Office** to apply for the Coronavirus Emergency Supplemental Funding Program grant. The Sheriff's Office requested to apply for the Coronavirus Emergency Supplemental Funding grant through the Department of Justice (JAG). This is a no match grant for \$207,884. This grant will allow the Sheriff's Office to purchase personal 472 Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) kits, 185 cases of protective gloves, 285 cases of hand sanitizer, and ten unmanned Aerial Drones to aid in the search for vulnerable adults, runaways, the apprehension of criminal suspects, and crowd control. Long-term the grant will allow the Sheriff's Office to lessen their reliance on the use of their helicopters. The drones will be assigned throughout the Sheriff's Office. Motion made by Mr. Walker to approve this request. Motion seconded by Mr. Farr. Mr. Brown stated that as far as the application of ten drones being tied to the specific provision of COVID-19, he thinks there are other means that you could use to go about doing some of the things that were expressed. Mr. Gist stated that drones could be activated much

quicker than the helicopter. Mr. Brown asked if this would be an all or nothing type of presentation based upon the overriding need for the PPE equipment if the drones are not included in the request, or if the grant application could still go forth without including the drones. Captain Gist stated that he thinks so. Mr. Farr stated that a lot of people have issues right now with drones and them invading people's privacy. There is a lot of discussion about who is receiving the information. Mr. Brown asked if the leading manufacturers of drone technologies are located in a different place besides the USA. Mr. Farr stated they are located outside the USA. Mr. Farr was in favor of applying for the PPE equipment, but he did not know if ten drones were needed right now. Mr. Brown stated that he understands Captain Gist's position as to what is presented as a necessity for drones, but he thinks what he is hearing from Council so far is the direct application as it relates to the COVID-19 situation and what is fundamentally and overall being presented is the need for the PPE kits. He did not see the correlation as it relates to the drones. Based on what had been discussed, Mr. Brown did not know if what had been moved and seconded was for everything as presented except for the ten drones. Mr. Farr asked if this item could be carried over until the Main Meeting. The grant application was due on May 29, 2020. Mr. Britt stated drones have been valuable to them in industry. Mr. Britt feels that if Captain Gist and Sheriff Wright say they need them, he has always said to give the team that does what is best what they need. Mr. Britt was in favor of the drones. Mr. Nutt stated that we trust our Sheriff, and our Sheriff is going to uphold the Constitution. However, one day we may not have a Sheriff that upholds the Constitution, and it might be a problem. He sees no problem with Sheriff Chuck Wright being in charge of any drones or anything that he needs to get his job done. Mr. Britt stated that he also trusts Captain Gist. Mr. Farr asked Captain Gist if he could get more information on the drones prior to the Main Meeting. Motion carried.

- B. Mr. Murray Glenn, Administrator, 7th Circuit Solicitor's Office, presented information in reference to a request from the **Solicitor's Office** to apply for the 2021 Body Worn Cameras Fund Financial Assistance grant. In 2017, the Solicitor's Office purchased a server to store law enforcement body cameras. The initial purchase was projected to last five years. Usage data is showing that capacity will be reached in three years. The annual storage volume has grown much faster than anticipated due to the deployment of high-definition video cameras, increased utilization in the number of cameras deployed locally by law enforcement and an increase in the number of criminal cases generated by law enforcement. The request was for \$17,400 in state grant funding for the purchase of 24 drives to extend the life of the server to meet the five-year projection. The grant request does not require a local match. Motion made by Mr. Walker to approve request. Motion seconded by Mr. Farr and carried.

- C. Motion made by Mr. Farr to authorize the commission of **Charles P. Thornton**, Building Codes Department, as a Spartanburg County Building Codes Enforcement Officer. Motion seconded by Mr. Walker and carried.
- D. Updated information received regarding activities of Building Codes

Meeting adjourned.