

— Council —

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This time, Lindley said he wants to work out an agreement prior to new National Fire Protection Association standards taking effect later this year.

The early agreement could save the county as much as \$350,000-\$400,000, he said.

County Council Chairman David Pitts joined councilmen Stewart Jones and Jeffrey Carroll in voting against the measure, citing concerns over costs and increasing the department's debt load. Pitts also said the capital expenditures should be a part of the upcoming budget for the 2019-20 fiscal year.

Carroll suggested removing "bidding" from councilwoman Diane Anderson's motion, so that research could be done without expressing a serious intent to purchase the equipment, but Lindley said it would be difficult to get real prices without the bidding process. Anderson did not agree to change her motion.

Lindley said even if the purchase agreements were made sometime this year, the county would not take delivery of the vehicles until 2021 and would not be on the hook for payments until then. He said current debt on other vehicles will be retired in June 2020.

"Right now, we're an ISO 5," Lindley said. "We're trying to get down to a four or a three, but we can't do that with the apparatus that we have," Lindley said.

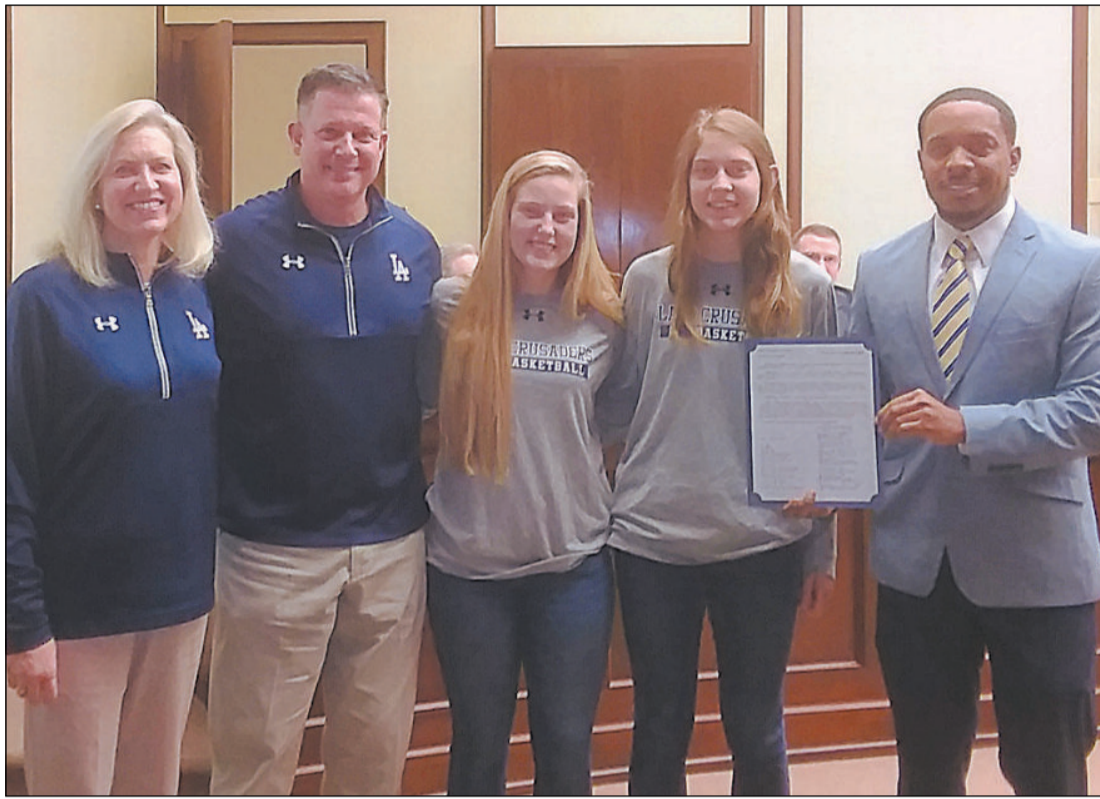


Photo by John Clayton

HONORED — Pictured are, from left, Laurens Academy girls basketball assistant coach Sandy Moore; head coach Jason Marlett; players, Reagan Williamson and Ruthie Moore; and Laurens County Councilman Garrett McDaniel at Tuesday's council meeting. McDaniel presented a resolution honoring the Crusaders for their second straight SCISA Class A state championship.

In other actions during Tuesday's meeting of county council:

- Council members unanimously adopted a resolution and held first reading on a tax-incentive ordinance for "Project Blueberry."

- Laurens County Development Corporation Executive Director Jonathan Coleman said Project Blueberry is an \$18 million investment that will bring 114

new jobs to the county.

- Council also unanimously approved second reading on a tax-incentive ordinance concerning "Project Needlepoint."

- Members of council also unanimously approved second reading of an ordinance that will ultimately transfer ownership of 12.5 acres of land to

the Laurens County Disabilities and Special Needs Board. The land immediately surrounds the LCD-SNB facilities.

- Council also adopted a resolution honoring the Laurens Academy girls basketball team for winning its second straight SCISAA Class A state championship.

Cook, Jones set for runoff

By John Clayton
Editor

Voters in Gray Court will return to the polls Tuesday for a runoff in the town's mayoral election.

Scott Cook and Stellarteane Jones are vying for the mayor's office after emerging as the top two vote-getters in the March 5 municipal election.

Cook finished with 67 votes (37.6 percent) and Jones had 57 votes (32 percent) in the three-way race with incumbent John Carter. Candidates needed 50 percent plus one vote to avoid the runoff.

The municipal election ended Carter's 32-year tenure as mayor of Gray Court. He also served 10 years on town council prior to being first elected mayor.

Now, the voters must decide between Cook, a local realtor, and Jones, who served eight years on town council.

Both Jones and Cook said they would be campaigning heavily following the runoff announcement.

Cook, who was defeated by Carter in the 2012 mayoral election, said he hopes voters will take a look at his campaign platform prior to the runoff.

"If you look at our town, you can see what kind of disrepair it's in. We've got a lot of empty buildings," Cook said. "If I'm elected, I will actively recruit businesses. Gray Court will support these businesses if they'll come here and open up."

Jones said she was initially urged to enter the mayoral race by friends, family and constituents. She gave up her at-large seat on the Gray Court Town Council to seek the office.

"I'd like to focus on projects we have to do, like infrastructure," Jones said. "We need to concentrate on our dilapidated buildings and make Gray Court a safer, more sustainable place to live."

In the municipal election, incumbent Adolphus Brewster was re-elected to his at-large seat on the Gray Court Town Council, and newcomer Shaterica Neal was elected to the at-large spot on council previously held by Jones.

All eligible voters can vote in the March 19 runoff at the Gray Court Town Hall. The Owings precinct will not be open for the runoff. Voters who usually cast ballots there are asked to vote at the Gray Court Town Hall.

Voting hours for the runoff election will be from 7 a.m. to 7 p.m.



Scott Cook



Stellarteane Jones

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