



**MINUTES
BUDGET WORK SESSION
FAIRFIELD COUNTY COUNCIL
MAY 26, 2020**

Present: Moses Bell, Bertha Goins, Doug Pauley, Cornelius Robinson, Clarence Gilbert, Council Members; Jason Taylor, County Administrator; Laura Johnson, Assistant County Administrator; Patti L. Davis, Clerk to Council.

By phone: Jimmy Ray Douglas

Absent: Mikel Trapp

In accordance with the South Carolina Code of Laws, 1976, Section 30-4-80 (e), as amended, the following persons and/or organizations have been notified of the time, date and location of this meeting: The Independent Voice of Blythewood and Fairfield, The Country Chronicle and one hundred forty one other individuals.

I. CALL TO ORDER

Chairman Robinson called the Work Session to order at 7:39 p.m.

II. APPROVAL OF AGENDA

Motion made by Vice Chair Goins, seconded by Council Member Gilbert, to approve the Agenda. ***The motion carried unanimously 6-0.***

III. INVOCATION

Vice Chair Goins led the invocation.

IV. ITEMS FOR DISCUSSION

A. Specific Items Concerning FY 2020-2021 Budget

Chairman Robinson stated administration needs a few clarifications from Council. Per Mr. Taylor, there are typically more budget work sessions than we had this year. Some clarifications are needed, and there were requests for further discussion on certain items. Mr. Taylor then turned the meeting over to Mrs. Bass.

Per Mrs. Bass, Council was interested in discussing the Sheriff's Department cars again. There are three currently budgeted. The cost per car is \$33,711 and around \$13,000 to equip. Currently, there is \$140,133 budgeted.

Council Member Pauley inquired if the items were in any particular order, and if not, suggested discussion begin concerning the last item in the event there will be more money added to the budget. Mrs. Bass stated a request was made to look into the savings if the outside agency allocations were reduced by 10%, 15% or 20%. Those numbers are provided. Some entities would not be a part of this because they are based on a formula. Per Mr. Taylor, the bottom line is how much the County would save with these cuts. Council Member Pauley made a motion to reduce by 15%. Chairman Robinson stated no motions are needed, and instead, this is for open discussion to get a more clear direction from Council. Council Member Douglas suggested 20%. Council Member Bell stated as he is looking at the ones who will not be cut, he feels this is a disaster. He feels today there are more people with drug problems, depression, alcoholism and other things, and we are discussing cutting an already tight budget. He questioned how Council Members could be satisfied with themselves doing these kinds of budget cuts. Council Member Douglas asked for Council Member Bell to further explain. Council Member Pauley inquired if there is a formula used for Midlands Tech. Per Mrs. Johnson, they charge Fairfield County students an in-county rate rather than an out-of-county rate. Council Member Pauley opined that when the Promise Program was approved, the Council agreed to pay the tuition anyway. Therefore, he does not see why the \$150,000 could not be subject to the reduction. Council Member Douglas stated this is what is needed to run the Fairfield campus. Mrs. Johnson stated in one section it stated for the operation of the campus and in another section it was the estimated number of students multiplied by the in-county rate. Council Member Bell stated last week he mentioned that 57% of the budget is salary and fringe, and some suggested it is not as bad as it looks. Chairman Robinson inquired if this is an accurate number. Council Member Bell stated the County is in the number 5 group for population, but in the number 3 group for budget. Mrs. Bass stated the number is correct; however, on the Association of Counties' website, they provide a lot of statistics. The number they have is only salaries. The salaries provided by Mrs. Bass include insurance, retirement, etc. Mr. Taylor stated when looking at the other counties, Fairfield is not out of line and, in fact, is a little on the low side as far as salaries. Per Mrs. Bass, also at the bottom of the chart, there is an asterisk stating some counties did not participate in the survey. Fairfield did not provide that information nor did the other counties. Council Member Pauley inquired if the reduction would be something that would be transitioned into. Per Mr. Taylor, as of July 1, their budgets would be reduced. Council Member Douglas stated there are more important things the County needs to fund, so he believes 20% would be fair. Mr. Taylor stated this idea came from requests to fund additional things, and in order to

do this, something has to be reduced somewhere in order to cover the cost. Council Member Bell stated he believes the budget consists of documents in disguise because the budget comes to Council with \$46M in the budget. Then, it comes back to Council with recommendations to be cut. Then, it comes back for Council to decide to cut services, and we are expected to go along with this. Council Member Gilbert stated if the budget has to be cut, he would go with 10%. He agrees the services are needed, but if something must be cut from the budget, he would not go more than 10%. Council Member Bell stated Council does not have to cut anything. There is \$27M in the fund balance. Chairman Robinson stated if it has to be cut, he is leaning toward 10%, and it was a good question concerning Midlands Tec. Per Mrs. Bass, Midlands Tec totals would be \$15,881 at 10%, \$23,821 at 15% and \$31,762 at 20%. Council Member Pauley stated he believes Midlands Tec should be added because the commitment was made to pay for students in Fairfield County to have free tuition from the Promise Program. Council Member Bell stated if he knew Council would come back to this, he would not have made the motion to do salaries beginning January 1. Chairman Robinson stated it is not an easy task, but if it needs to be done, he would recommend the 10%. Council Member Bell again stated it does not need to be done. Council Member Pauley inquired is this the largest amount of money that has had to be moved from the fund balance to cover the budget over the past five years. Mrs. Johnson stated this is correct, in the amount of \$5M. There were some revenue decreases. Council Member Bell inquired if there will be a \$1.3M shortfall in revenue and if \$1.3M is being added to the budget from last year. Mrs. Bass stated in last year's budget, there was also quite a bit budgeted that would potentially have to come from fund balance. Per Mrs. Johnson, each year fund balance is used for the budget; however, over the past couple of years, the County did not have to dip into fund balance because there was a surplus. The revenues are estimates on what is anticipated to come in, and over the last couple of years, there were some windfalls in certain areas. Any additional revenues that come in would offset having to use fund balance, but this is hard to predict. Council Member Bell stated looking at the data, the County should be able to expect the same thing this year. Mrs. Johnson disagreed because this is one year the revenues are actually going down. Per Mr. Taylor, looking at the trend lines with revenue continuing to decline, his guess is, if the pattern holds and with the best case scenario, about \$1M will have to be pulled. Vice Chair Goins stated if this is necessary, she would go with 10%. The consensus is 10% including Midlands Tech. Council Member Bell questioned the highlighted items again, and Chairman Robinson asked for Mrs. Bass to explain. Per Mrs. Bass, those that are highlighted are treated as fees or

based on a formula. Chairman Robinson stated Midlands Tech is getting two sources of funding, the Promise Program and the allocation.

Mrs. Bass stated the next item is the Sheriff's Department cars. Three are currently budgeted at a total of \$340,133. This was requested for further discussion. Council Member Douglas stated three cars need to be added. He also inquired what is done with the equipment from the old cars. Per Sheriff Montgomery, most have to be replaced. Some cars are unmarked cars and equipment must be replaced. Council Member Pauley inquired how many of the vehicles will be sold. Per Sheriff Montgomery, all will be "dead lined" and sent to sale. The amount the vehicles bring at auction is negligible.

The next item for discussion is the truck for solid waste. Per Mrs. Bass, originally there were two trucks in the budget for Community Development. One of the trucks from this department would be used in solid waste. The original quote for the vehicle was \$35,718.

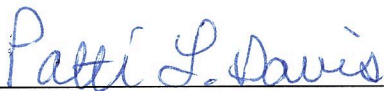
The next item for discussion is shifting the Economic Development Director from a County provided vehicle to a car allowance. Currently, the Director is assigned a County vehicle, and this would shift to include approximately \$750 per month. Per Mr. Taylor, Mr. Davenport has asked for \$1000 because once taxes, insurance, gas, etc. come out, he would be upside down. This would be in line with Kershaw County. He would also be losing his gas card. Council Member Bell inquired why the County needs pool cars. Per Mrs. Johnson, any County employee that will be going on an overnight trip or a day trip, instead of using their car, they can use a pool car. Council Member Bell inquired how much per year the County will gain by doing this. Discussion ensued concerning what the County is paying for now as opposed to the car allowance. Mrs. Bass discussed the issue of insurance with the Association of Counties, and they stated they only recommend doing this with certain positions such as Economic Development or administrators. They do not recommend doing this with other County positions because of insurance, etc. A policy would have to be followed. It would be the individual's insurance, but the County probably could be named in the event of a lawsuit.

The final item is the Deputy Coroner's Pay. Mrs. Bass stated this was discussed in the Work Session. It may have been requested to go on the motions list, but it did not. Currently, the Deputy Coroners are paid \$300 per month. The Coroner had requested this to be increased to \$550. He wanted them to net about \$500. The Administrator's recommendation was \$400 per month, and this is currently in the budget. Council Member Pauley

stated since cuts are being made to other departments, he would leave it at \$300. Council Member Douglas inquired how many hours they work. Per Mrs. Bass, they take call to respond with the Coroner and in the place of the Coroner. Chairman Robinson inquired how Fairfield County is compared to the other counties. Mr. Caulder stated in looking at surrounding counties, Fairfield is not at the bottom but is toward a lower average. The Deputy Coroners work 7 days on call and are responsible for covering evenings. Council Member Bell feels Council is giving people what they ask for, so it should be \$550. Council Member Douglas stated to split the difference and go with \$450. Council Member Gilbert inquired if taxes come out of this amount. Per Mrs. Bass, taxes do come out and if they so choose, they can have retirement come out. No further items to discuss.

V. ADJOURN

At 8:29 p.m., motion made by Council Member Bell, seconded by Vice Chair Goins, to adjourn. ***The motion carried 6-0.***



PATTI L. DAVIS
CLERK TO COUNCIL



CORNELIUS ROBINSON
CHAIRMAN