



**MINUTES  
REGULAR MEETING  
FAIRFIELD COUNTY COUNCIL  
NOVEMBER 9, 2020**

**Present:** Moses Bell, Jimmy Ray Douglas, Bertha Goins, Cornelius Robinson, Clarence Gilbert, Council Members; Jason Taylor, County Administrator; Laura Johnson, Assistant County Administrator; Tommy Morgan, County Attorney; Patti L. Davis, Clerk to Council.

**By Phone:** Mikel Trapp, Doug Pauley

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 two other individuals.

Due to COVID-19 (Coronavirus), the meeting is being live-streamed through the County's YouTube page in order to keep citizens informed.

**1. CALL TO ORDER**

Chairman Robinson called the Regular Meeting to order at 6:01 p.m.

**2. APPROVAL OF AGENDA**

It was moved by Council Member Douglas and Vice Chair Goins, seconded by Council Member Bell, to approve the agenda. ***The motion carried unanimously 7-0.***

**3. INVOCATION**

Council Member Bell led the invocation.

**4. APPROVAL OF MINUTES**

It was moved by Vice Chair Goins, seconded by Council Member Gilbert, to approve the minutes from the Regular Meeting of October 12, 2020, and the Special Meeting of October 26, 2020. ***The motion carried unanimously 7-0.***

**5. PUBLIC PRESENTATIONS**

None.

## 6. PUBLIC HEARINGS

- A. An Ordinance to Amend the Fairfield County Land Management Ordinance (No. 599) to Provide for the Zoning Reclassification from I-1 (Industrial District) to B-2 (General Business District) of 8.38 Acres Owned by Edgardo and Wanda Huertas (Applicants). This is Tax Map No. 184-00-00-111-000. Property is Located at 3103 East Peach Road, Ridgeway, SC 29130. Chairman Robinson opened the public hearing at 6:03 p.m. No one signed to speak, and Chairman Robinson then closed the public hearing at 6:03 p.m.
- B. An Ordinance Setting the Millage Rate for Fairfield County for the Fiscal Year Beginning July 1, 2020. Chairman Robinson opened the public hearing at 6:04 p.m. No one signed to speak, and Chairman Robinson then closed the public hearing at 6:04 p.m.

## 7. ORDINANCES, RESOLUTIONS AND ORDERS

- A. Third and Final Reading Ordinance No. 758: An Ordinance to Amend the Fairfield County Land Management Ordinance (No. 599) to Provide for the Zoning Reclassification from I-1 (Industrial District) to B-2 (General Business District) of 8.38 Acres Owned by Edgardo and Wanda Huertas (Applicants). This is Tax Map No. 184-00-00-111-000. Property is Located at 3103 East Peach Road, Ridgeway, SC 29130. Motion made by Council Member Douglas, seconded by Vice Chair Goins, to approve Third and Final Reading of Ordinance No. 758. Chairman Robinson asked for Mr. Clauson to give further information on this item. Per Mr. Clauson, this rezoning request was brought by Mr. and Mrs. Huertas because their property was zoned I-1, and an industrial district does not allow for a residential dwelling. B-2 is allowed by the Comprehensive Plan, and it will allow for residential dwellings. Mr. Taylor asked Mr. Clauson if this has been brought before the Planning Commission. Per Mr. Clauson, this application was brought before the Planning Commission with six members present, and six members voted in favor. ***The motion carried unanimously 7-0.***
- B. Third and Final Reading Ordinance No. 759: An Ordinance Setting the Millage Rate for Fairfield County for the Fiscal Year Beginning July 1, 2020. Motion made by Council Member Bell, seconded by Vice Chair Goins, to approve Third and Final Reading of Ordinance No. 759. Per Mr. Taylor, the mil is being set at 181.8 which will generate \$26,239,922 and will be sufficient to cover the budget as previously passed by Council. Council Member Pauley wished to encourage every Council Member to vote in favor

of leaving the millage the same to look out for the citizens, especially with what everyone is going through with the pandemic and other issues. Per Mr. Taylor, the millage is remaining the same and has not increased in a number of years. Council Member Robinson stated it has been six years since an increase. ***The motion carried unanimously 7-0.***

- C.** Emergency Ordinance No. 760: An Emergency Ordinance to Declare a Local State of Emergency in Fairfield County and Providing for Conducting Electronic Meetings for Fairfield County Council and All Fairfield County Boards and Commissions. Motion made by Council Member Gilbert, seconded by Vice Chair Goins and Council Member Douglas, to approve Emergency Ordinance No. 760. Per Mr. Morgan, Council has before it an emergency ordinance that the Council has passed previously as the pandemic continues. The State of Emergency still exists according to the Governor, so this ordinance extends another 60 days and provides for digital attendance for meetings. Council Member Bell stated there will be a need to bring in some additional people because of the election. He inquired if Council would meet prior to its first meeting in January. The Clerk stated the first meeting of the new year will be held on January 11, 2021, and Council Member Bell stated this would be beyond the 61<sup>st</sup> day of this ordinance. The new members can take the oath of office on January 1, but what will be done if this is not performed and they look to come to the meeting. Mr. Morgan inquired if Council Member Bell is concerned that by the time of the first meeting for the new Council on January 11, 2021, that the emergency ordinance will have expired prior to then. Mr. Morgan stated he will double check the math; however, at the next meeting in December, this Council could extend the Emergency Ordinance, which would keep it in place and cover the first meeting on January 11. Mr. Morgan believes this would be the easiest way to handle this issue and provide for continuity for the new Council to come in and make any changes they deem necessary. ***The motion carried unanimously 7-0.***

## **8. BOARD AND COMMISSION MINUTES - Received as Information**

- A.** Chamber of Commerce – Council Member Bell stated these minutes include verbiage that states the County would ultimately pay for the services of Retail Systems, and he does not remember voting to do this. Chairman Robinson stated this is correct. Council Member Bell stated the minutes need to be corrected. However, Chairman Robinson stated we cannot request for their minutes to be changed, and just because it was stated in their meeting does not make it true. In addition, Council Member Bell stated the minutes also reflect the strategy to advocate for the penny sales

the difference not covered by the grant would be \$7,156 to cover the purchase of the truck. The old truck has transmission issues as well as other problems. It will, however, be kept in the fleet until it can no longer be used. ***Motion carried unanimously 7-0.***

**13. CLERK TO COUNCIL'S REPORT**

None.

**14. COUNTY COUNCIL TIME**

Douglas: Council Member Douglas wished to further elaborate on Council Member Bell's questions at the last Council meeting concerning the millage. Council Member Bell stated he was not confused. Council Member Douglas stated the mil value has nothing to do with the millage rate of the taxes. The mil value shows that the County is in good shape. Last year the mil value was around 162, but because Dominion has cut down the amount of money received from V.C. Summer, it is now down in the 150s. The millage rate on taxes has been the same for the last six years. The taxes this year should be almost like the taxes from last year. The only difference would be the amount of credit received on the one cent sales tax. If this is lower, it is because not as much money was received on the sales tax; however, if it is higher, we did. Council Member Douglas opined that next year, with the appraisals being recently done, taxes could increase based on improvements.

Gilbert: Council Member Gilbert wished to thank the Election Commission for their work during the election, as this was a little more involved this year than years past. They did a fantastic job.

Goins: Vice Chair Goins thanked God for the opportunity she has had for the past four years in serving the County and being able to work with an awesome team with such spirit and work ethic. She is in awe of the accomplishments in four years. She has been around Fairfield County for quite a while, and she has not seen such economic growth ever. She is not saying that past Council members did not perform during their terms, but the movement in this four year term was awesome. In addition to Council Member Bell's prayer, she also wished to thank God for the current President because the word tells us to pray for all people. She also prays for those who have worked against the will of God to fan the fires of hate and vision, not only in the County, but nationwide. Also, the current President is not the reason for division in the nation as division is a personal decision for each of us. God must be the one to heal the nation, but we

have to allow him to do this. Again, she thanked everyone and promises to remain active and vocal in the years to come. She has met so many wonderful people in this journey, and she is as excited going out as she was going in.

**15. EXECUTIVE SESSION (SUBSEQUENT TO EXECUTIVE SESSION, COUNCIL MAY TAKE ACTION ON MATTERS DISCUSSED IN EXECUTIVE SESSION).**

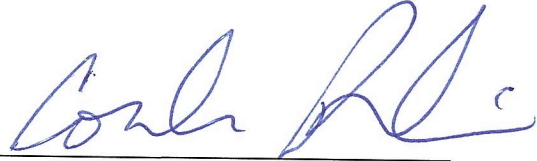
None.

**16. ADJOURN**

At 6:35 p.m., it was moved by Council Member Bell, seconded by Vice Chair Goins, to adjourn. ***The motion carried unanimously 7-0.***



PATTI L. DAVIS  
CLERK TO COUNCIL



CORNELIUS ROBINSON  
CHAIRMAN

tax referendum. Apparently, a consultant firm was hired to advocate for the penny sales tax. He feels there is nothing we can do about it, but the Chamber stated they did this. Council Member Bell stated when you get a consulting firm, one of the first things looked at is vulnerabilities. He has worked with firms such as this many times. They will look into how to penetrate to get the message across. He does not feel this was a good thing if this was done to the citizens of the County.

**B. Library Board**

**C. Disabilities and Special Needs**

**9. BOARD AND COMMISSION APPOINTMENTS**

None.

**10. OLD BUSINESS**

**A.** Discussion and Approval of Sales Listing Agreement for County Properties at the Former Fairfield Memorial Hospital Site. Motion made by Council Member Douglas and Vice Chair Goins, seconded by Council Member Bell, to approve the Sales Listing Agreement for County Properties as discussed above. Mr. Taylor stated this is simply an extension of an existing agreement the County has with ROI Commercial. When the properties were purchased at the hospital, it was never our intent to go into the real estate business long term or lease those long term, but instead, to essentially stabilize the hospital until the period of time that Providence would open. ROI Commercial also has a contract on the portions of the property at the hospital site the County did not purchase. Therefore, it made sense as they were trying to market the old portion of the hospital to also market in conjunction the parts the County purchased. The contract allows for an automatic extension of another year, so the contract is being extended to October 30, 2021. **The motion carried *unanimously 7-0.***

**B.** Jason Pope, Fairfield Fire Service – Request for Supplemental Appropriation Pertaining to Lake Wateree Fire Station. Motion made by Vice Chair Goins, seconded by Council Member Douglas, to approve the request for supplemental appropriation. Per Mr. Pope, this project originally started sometime in 2017 and was funded at \$175,000. There had been several issues getting land, and the project really started this year. However, in starting the project, it was quickly realized that \$175,000 would not be enough to cover the price of the project. Mr.

Pope worked with the previous Public Works Director and tried to keep the site under one acre in attempts to try to make the funding work. If the site disturbance could have been kept to 1 acre, the cost would have been less on engineering fees and environmental studies, drainage plans, etc. One acre was cleared and stakes were set. However, it was quickly determined that this plan would not work. The full 2 acres were then used, which meant the costs increased. An Additional \$200,000 is being requested to get a 4-bay fire station with bathrooms and showers with living quarters for future potential 24/7 employees. Once living quarters are installed, fire sprinkler systems are required. Mr. Pope stated he would be glad to answer any questions Council may have. Council Member Bell inquired why there was no recommendation from Administration or the Administration and Finance Committee on this item. Chairman Robinson stated the decision was made to bring this item directly to full Council for discussion. Council Member Bell inquired how administration feels about the request. Per Mr. Taylor, when Mr. Pope brought this to Administration stating it could not be done for \$175,000, a number of different options were discussed. We did attempt to try to keep it at \$175,000 and doing the bare minimum, but our thoughts were, if this were done, no one would be happy with the result. Mr. Taylor then asked Mr. Pope to prepare some options. When some of the recreation centers were built, no one was satisfied with the half court style, so we did not want this to be the case with the fire station. Mr. Pope then prepared information for Council to determine what it could support and what Council would be happy with as far as an end product. Some of the other fire stations are being fitted with living quarters, and this is attempting to be scheduled on a yearly basis to take these fire departments to the next level and have good service and good buildings for our firefighters in the hopes of eventually having more paid fire staff. Administration is recommending that we do something more than the bare bones. If Council wants to stick with the \$175,000, this can be done, but we would end up spending money on the tail end to fix things, and Council would probably not be happy with the product. Council Member Bell stated in preparing to make this decision, he inquired how much money was in the fund balance. He was told tonight that this would not come out of the normal fund balance, but instead, would come out of the project fund balance. This balance has about \$800,000. He did find out the alarming fact that we are at \$4,643,549 in the regular fund balance when during the budget time the balance was around \$24M. Mr. Taylor will defer to finance for the complete explanation, but basically when taxes come in, the County floats high. At the end of the tax cycle year, the bottom is scrubbed.

In addition, the \$3.5M is still in escrow for the hospital, which makes it look even lower. Council Member Bell stated we are currently below the three month threshold. Per Mr. Taylor, the county and municipal associations all say there should be three months' reserves. Council Member Bell has had discussions with Mr. Pope on several occasions, and we are attempting to get the fire stations up in such a way to have firefighters to be able to stay there, and he does understand the plan. Chairman Robinson quoted Council Member Trapp in saying, "if you want nice things, it costs money." Council Member Trapp agreed. Vice Chair Goins stated this is no comparison to the recreation centers as this is a necessity; therefore, it must be the best quality. We have a need for volunteer firemen now and in the future, and we have to be assured that we are doing what is best because this is something that will affect everyone. Council Member Bell agreed that we must plan for the future. Chairman Robinson inquired about the area that will be served by the new station. Per Mr. Pope, the station would be near River Road and Windmill Road, which is the southern end of Lake Wateree that abuts up near the southeastern area. Vice Chair Goins took this further in that the station is located in this area, but whatever happens in the County, this station will also assist. Council Member Douglas stated there is an area of Lake Wateree that is not covered by fire service, and this fire station will cover this area like everybody else. Mr. Taylor stated this will also reduce these homeowners' insurance rates. Council Member Pauley agrees fire service is a number one priority in Fairfield County. ***The motion carried unanimously 7-0.*** Mr. Pope also reported that the fire service office has relocated from the Voter Registration building on Main Street to the Fairfield Medical Associates building on Moultrie Street. The office is located on the ground level near the street. He invited Council to stop by to see the new office.

## **11. NEW BUSINESS**

None.

## **12. COUNTY ADMINISTRATOR'S REPORT**

- A.** Request of Action: Solid Waste Department Purchase of 2020 Ford F250. Administration and Finance Committee Recommends Approval. Motion made by Council Member Bell, seconded by Vice Chair Goins, to approve the Request of Action. Per Mr. Taylor, staff recommends that Council approve this request for a 2020 Ford F250. There is grant money that will cover the majority of this purchase. Per Mr. Burroughs,