



**MINUTES
REGULAR MEETING
FAIRFIELD COUNTY COUNCIL
JUNE 8, 2020**

Present: Moses Bell, Bertha Goins, Doug Pauley, 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: Jimmy Ray Douglas, 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.

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 6:00 p.m. Council Member Douglas and Council Member Trapp joined by phone.

2. APPROVAL OF AGENDA

Motion made by Council Member Pauley, seconded by Vice Chair Goins, to approve the Agenda. ***The motion carried 7-0.***

3. INVOCATION

Council Member Pauley led the invocation.

4. APPROVAL OF MINUTES

It was moved by Council Member Bell and seconded by Vice Chair Goins, to approve the Regular Meeting minutes of May 26, 2020, the Budget Work Session minutes of May 26, 2020, and the Special Meeting minutes of May 28, 2020. ***The motion carried unanimously 7-0.***

5. PUBLIC PRESENTATIONS

None.

6. PUBLIC HEARINGS

- A.** Schedule of Fees for Services Performed by the Fairfield County Fire Service to be Incorporated into the Ordinance to Establish Operating and Capital Budgets for the Operation of the County Government of Fairfield County for the Fiscal Year Commencing July 1, 2020; to Provide for the Levy of Taxes for Fairfield County for the Fiscal Year Commencing July 1, 2020; to Provide for the Expenditure of Tax Revenues and Other County Funds; to Provide for Other County Purposes; to Provide for Certain Fiscal and Other Matters Relating to County Government; and Other Matters Related Thereto as Required by S.C. Code Ann. Section 6-1-330. Chairman Robinson opened the public hearing at 6:03 p.m. The Clerk read a statement submitted by Mr. Randy Bright. Chairman Robinson then closed the public hearing at 6:04 p.m.

7. ORDINANCES, RESOLUTIONS AND ORDERS

- A.** Third and Final Reading Ordinance No. 712 – An Ordinance Authorizing the Execution and Delivery of a Lease Agreement Between Fairfield County and South Carolina ENT, Allergy & Sleep Medicine, P.A.; and Other Related Matters. Motion made by Vice Chair Goins, seconded by Council Member Gilbert, to approve Third and Final Reading of Ordinance No. 712. Per Mr. Taylor, this is part of the space associated with the hospital that the County purchased. Specifically, this is the space below Dr. Gaddy’s office to be covered with a three year lease for 2,000 square feet at \$540 per month. This is based on a similar calculation used for the other rental spaces. Council Member Douglas inquired who is paying the electricity bill. Per Mr. Morgan, according to section 8 of the lease, the utilities are to be paid by the tenant. ***Motion carried unanimously 7-0.***
- B.** Third and Final Reading Ordinance No. 741 - An Ordinance to Establish Operating and Capital Budgets for the Operation of the County Government of Fairfield County for the Fiscal Year Commencing July 1, 2020; to Provide for the Levy of Taxes for Fairfield County for the Fiscal Year Commencing July 1, 2020; to Provide for the Expenditure of Tax Revenues and Other County Funds; to Provide for Other County Purposes; to Provide for Certain Fiscal and Other Matters Relating to County Government; and Other Matters Related Thereto. Motion made by Vice Chair Goins, seconded by Council Member Gilbert, to approve Third and Final Reading of Ordinance No. 741. Council Member Pauley has some comments but can wait until after any amendments. Council Member Bell inquired if the items in question are already included in the budget. Per Mr. Taylor, the consensus was taken from the last Budget Work Session

and included in the budget. Now, an official vote is needed. The budget can be modified based on what Council votes on tonight. It is, however, prepared in anticipation based on the comments received during the Budget Work Session. Council Member Bell then questioned if these items are already in the budget, why is there a need to make amendments. Per Mrs. Bass, the five items on the list were discussed at the Work Session two weeks ago. Based on the consensus of that meeting, those items have been included in the budget. If there are no changes to these items, separate motions would not be needed, but if any of these were to change, a separate motion would be needed. Per Mr. Taylor, Council can vote on the budget as is. Council Member Douglas made a motion to vote on the budget as is. Council Member Pauley inquired if this would be without the additional motions. Per Mr. Taylor, all the motions are already included in the budget. If there is anything on the list Council does not wish to approve, action must be taken. Council Member Bell stated he disagrees with what is on the motions list, but he is only one person, and it appears he would not have the votes to get things done. He does not think the people services should be reduced by 10%, he does not feel the Economic Development Director should get a car allowance, and he believes the increase of \$550 for the Deputy Coroners' pay should be included. He wants the record to show that is where he stands. Council Member Gilbert seconded the motion to vote on the budget as is. Council Member Bell read from a prepared statement: As he reviewed the budget with hopes of supporting it, he found he could not. The proposed budget is \$46.4M. The Association of Counties has established a grouping by population but also references the budget. This County is in group 5 because population is around 22,000. The budget is in group 3 with counties that have populations around 50,000 to 100,000. Council Member Bell questioned why the disparity. He does not know, especially when there are no projects across the County to support a total County involvement and infrastructure. The salary and fringe are 57% of the budget. Administration says the percent is in line with other counties. This would be the case if the budget itself was representative of the population, but it is not. The budget is representative of a County with a population of 50,000 to 100,000 people. Council Member Bell feels something is extremely wrong with the budget. Over the last five years, the budget has increased approximately 30%. Looking at the County's rural areas, he questioned what can be seen for all this money. Attorney fees are increased in the budget by \$100,000. In the pandemic, the concerns are the needs and services of the people, especially in communities of color. Yet, the proposed budget cuts services by 10% to American Red Cross, Behavioral Health, Chameleon Inspirations Learning

Center, Clemson Extension, Columbia Area Mental Health, Council on Aging, Department of Social Services, Disabilities and Special Needs, Eau Claire Cooperative Health Center, Fairfield Health Department, Good Samaritan House, Palmetto Citizens Against Sex Offenders, Public Defender, Rescue Squad, SisterCare, Solicitor and Transitions, when other counties are proposing adding money to these services. Council Member Bell quote Gandhi "the measure of a civilization is how it treats its weakest members, which includes the elderly, the impoverished and the struggling". Former President Obama said "a budget is more than a series of numbers on a page, it is the embodiment of our values". It is ironic that the Animal Control budget is up by 14%, not including the proposed vehicle for purchase, while people services are cut by 10%. Administration has \$344,724 in the building contingency fund. It was never suggested to Council to cut from this fund. In the 2015-2016 budget, there was \$119,000 for the building contingency fund. Council Member Bell stated Administration hid the \$50,000 for the Kincaid Building to repair it in this fund, and this was never discussed. He feels the rural areas of the County get nothing, and Administration has not told Council the use for the building. Council Member Bell questioned what else is hidden in the budget. Temporary employees and recycling attendants were not able to get a .30 or .50 raise, and the stated reason from Council Member Pauley was that they were given a raise last year. Yet, employees with salaries greater than \$50,000 and \$100,000 a year are receiving raises twice in the same year. Lastly, Council Member Bell enjoys working with Mr. Davenport and feels he has done a good job for the County, but to give a car allowance of \$1,000 per month is unthinkable after the County has given him a 2018 Chevrolet Tahoe to drive. Council Member Bell feels this is unreasonable and, in essence, the County is legally buying the Director a personal car. This will cost the County \$84,000 in seven years and \$120,000 in ten years. In closing, the only time there is a discussion about budget amounts is when it involves giving a raise to the employees at the low end, building the communities in rural areas or helping to provide services to people in need. Council Member Pauley requested for Mr. Taylor to do a more thorough check into the amount of money provided to Midlands Tech that is different from the Promise Program. Further, he cannot vote in support of the budget. There is a considerable increase in spending in this budget over last year's budget, and this budget relies far too heavily on the fund balance, which should only be used in extraordinary circumstances or to cover existing expenditures. He feels this budget is like taking 20% of one's life savings to spend more money than the year before for no reason except that you want to and at the same time as taking a pay cut.

If the County continues this, sooner or later it will run out of money. The difference is the County can levy a tax to make more money. If we get into the habit of living on budgets like this one, soon property taxes will have to be raised. Council Member Pauley asked Mr. Taylor if property taxes will be raised this year to pay for this budget, and if not this year, how long it will take running at this rate before taxes would have to be raised. Vice Chair Goins requested for Mr. Taylor to again give an explanation for the change in fluctuation in the budget with things that have happened. She also understands that a budget is not definite but is approximate, and it always changes because circumstances change and are completely out of our control. Per Mr. Taylor, the County's budget is much higher than other counties of the same size and population because of the nuclear plant. This distorts our budget thankfully higher, but we also have to suffer with the fluctuations based on what goes on out there. The school district and the County are anticipating revenues to be lower based on the nuclear plant. As a result, Mr. Taylor believes the County will have a down year. He hopes taxes will not have to be raised and has no anticipation for this. However, more is being pulled from the fund balance than he is comfortable with. He does not feel the County can tax its way to prosperity nor does he think it can cut services to fix a budget. He believes we must grow our way to prosperity by investing in ourselves and the infrastructure that is needed to support growth. The budget issue will be reversed with new investors, new jobs and new infrastructure in the County. In the past, the County has almost always transferred \$3M over to make the budget balance. Even with pulling this amount, we usually still come out around \$500,000 for the better. He does not feel this will happen this year. Using M-Lily as an example, the County was receiving about \$250,000 per year in taxes on the empty building. It is now filled and creating jobs, but included in the economic development deal, we will be getting less this year because of the incentives that had to be put in place. However, next year it goes to \$300,000 and then goes to \$600,000 or \$700,000 for the future. This had to be done up front, which will cost us, but this will be a short term loss for long term gain and the jobs created. We find ourselves in the year of short term loss as we grow our way to a better budget. Vice Chair Goins stated we cannot remain stagnant, and we must invest in ourselves. Mr. Taylor stated there is also \$1.8M in the budget for sewer plant land purchase, and this has bumped the budget from almost \$3M to \$5M. This \$1.8M is not being squandered, but instead, it is an investment. Without this sewer plant, the County is dead in the water with economic development. Vice Chair Goins feels this is a long term necessary investment. The infrastructure is the foundation for a county,

a city or a town. If you don't have this in place, you get passed over. Council Member Bell stated we are looking to cut people services by 10% and Animal Control is increased by 14%. Then, we add the Kincaid Building in for \$50,000 along with a car allowance of \$12,000 for economic development. Council Member Bell has never voted against infrastructure for the County or industry, but why can services be cut for people with increase to Animal Control and adding \$50,000 for the Kincaid Building that we don't even know the purpose of. Vice Chair Goins requested for Mr. Taylor to explain once again the economic development car allowance and what Mr. Davenport's responsibility will now be. Per Mr. Taylor, car allowances are a reasonably common practice. Kershaw County was looked at specifically, and their allowance is \$1,000. The Economic Development vehicle will come back to the County and will be shuffled as usual. Right now, the pool vehicles are in almost unsafe condition. Mr. Davenport currently has \$300 a month in gas, which will now be paid by him. This will essentially come out to a wash as far as cost to the County. Mr. Davenport will be responsible for insurance, all maintenance, gas, etc. Council Member Pauley wished to thank Mrs. Johnson, Mrs. Bass and Mr. Taylor for working hard to prepare the budget and getting the books ready for Council. Even though Council Members may go different ways, all the hard work is appreciated. Council Member Bell inquired how much the gas is per month. Chairman Robinson stated we have moved passed this issue; however, Council Member Bell disagreed. Chairman Robinson stated Council Member Bell was out of order. Council Member Bell protested. Chairman Robinson called for the vote for Third and Final Reading on Ordinance No. 741. ***Motion carried 4-3 with Council Members Bell, Trapp and Pauley voting nay.***

8. BOARD AND COMMISSION MINUTES - Received as Information

A. Disabilities and Special Needs

9. BOARD AND COMMISSION APPOINTMENTS

None.

10. OLD BUSINESS

None.

11. NEW BUSINESS

None.

12. COUNTY ADMINISTRATOR'S REPORT

- A.** Census Update – Per Mr. Taylor, our area is not doing well with Census participation, and this is critical. Each person counted could represent \$15,000 over the next ten years, so roughly \$1,500 per person per year that the County would be losing out on in money flowing down from the federal government. It is critical that everyone is counted. The national average is 60%, South Carolina is below that at 55% and Fairfield County is at 46%, Winnsboro at 44%, Jenkinsville at 44% and Ridgeway at 39%. Our numbers are very low and lower than both the state average and the national average. The census can be done online at 2020census.gov. If citizens have any issues, please call the County. Chairman Robinson inquired if this is being advertised on the County website. Mr. Taylor stated he is currently working with the Mayor of Blythewood, as one of the census representatives. He will be providing some information that can be shared on the County Facebook page to get the word out.
- B.** Food Distribution Update – Per Mr. Taylor, another distribution will be done on June 23. There will be three different locations on the same day. Per Mrs. Johnson, the last distribution on May 30 at the Jenkinsville Fire Station went very well. People started lining up around 11:00 with three lanes of traffic going into the Fire Station. Everyone received the Fairfield County tote bag of nonperishables, a bag of potatoes, a bag of cucumbers and a bag of broccoli. A total of 100 cars were serviced supplying food to 232 people in the households. The County is now partnering with Fairfield Forward for the event on June 23 to bring another food distribution to local residents from 5 p.m. to 7 p.m. The fruits and vegetables will come in on the 23rd, and they must be quickly distributed. The food will need to be boxed, transported to three sites and then distributed. Volunteers will be needed.
- C.** COVID-19 Update - Per Mr. Taylor, cases are unfortunately increasing. The County is at 211 cases right now, 18 deaths. The state itself is seeing record numbers with 4 and 500 new cases per day.

Mr. Taylor also reported the Council on Aging received their \$350,000 grant for their facility, and Council had agreed to participate with the match. The WIOA grant was also awarded. This is a great benefit to the community. The County also received the Department of Justice grant to assist with COVID-19 expenses.

13. CLERK TO COUNCIL'S REPORT

None.

14. COUNTY COUNCIL TIME

Bell: Council Member Bell stated the Voice reported last week that a member of Council pitched a fit. He feels this is a degrading and derogatory term. He is not naive and feels this is an attempt to keep him from speaking. He does question why the County supports the paper. He had prepared tonight to discuss the budget retreat in 2019 and what had transpired and the mechanism afterward to prevent cohesiveness so we would not move forward together, but he changed his mind. He works extremely hard for the citizens of District 1 and the County. He has supported all industries and many times has been instrumental in the conversations regarding the path forward. Many things have been accomplished, and he will work to accomplish more in the years to come. Some do not want to bring forth any ideas unless it is to stop someone else. He has noticed something in addition that is very disturbing, a strange undercurrent to the process he and others have proposed. He is not okay with this because the communities suffer. For instance, a certain individual says the Ridgeway Library should be closed, and Council votes to close the library even as the Library Board voted to keep it open. This individual says no recreation center in Ridgeway, and Council voted not to build the recreation center in Ridgeway after they assured Council Member Bell they would vote for it. This individual says no hazard pay for first responders when all of Council had recognized the need to do so; however, it never got on the agenda. This individual says the County Administrator did not violate the procurement code because it was not a manual but a guideline; however, Elliott Davis, the County auditor, stated there were violations. This individual stated last week maybe the Council is getting too much money for their expenses, so let's see where that goes. A sad part of this commentary is when another citizen came before Council and said members of Council do not praise this certain individual enough, during Council time, they put forth the praises. Fairness and equality are ideal goals, and Council Member Bell seeks both. Council Member Bell was speaking with Council Member Douglas sometime in February. He asked Council Member Douglas about the recreation center in District 1, to which he replied it was not fair or right for District 1 not to have a recreation center. He also admitted that the money was turned back by Council Member Ruff. Council Member Bell inquired what he was willing to do about it since he felt it was not right and so unfair not to

have a recreation center in District 1. Council Member Bell stated his work is more difficult because he is trying to do the things to strengthen the community and help the poor and struggling, the ones who no one else cares about, the ones without a voice. His aim is to bring forth ideas to help these causes, such as the volleyball court in Ridgeway, community gardens for healthy eating, and yes, the citizens want a recreation center. He wants to help those who have never been helped and move forward those services and facilities that are without. All Council members took an oath to serve. Council Member Bell feels if we believe in the concept of service, then we will do what is right regardless of a personality, realizing that if we fail to support something that is right and good because of the Council Member, it does not hurt them, it hurts the citizens. He stands ready to work to improve the total County, not the concentration of one area. Mr. Douglas also walked out on Mrs. Workman when she got up to speak and nothing was said. Mrs. Goins talks as much as she wants and nothing is said. However, Council Member Bell feels that he cannot get an answer when it goes against the proposal to prevent the truth from coming out. Mrs. Johnson stated it is \$300 for gas, so \$300 from \$1000 is \$700.

Gilbert: Council Member Gilbert stated in light of the events going on throughout the Country, he would like to make a proposal that we as a local body look into a citizen review board for the County to view situations in our local law enforcement departments. Chairman Robinson agrees and feels this will take a proactive approach. Per Mr. Taylor, he had a meeting with the Sheriff earlier today to start this discussion. Sheriff Montgomery stated he had started reaching out to some people, and we are looking to develop that further. Council Member Gilbert inquired if the County will have a say of who will be on the board. Per Mr. Taylor, the Sheriff is elected and Council is elected, so we need to look to see how this can be put together. It would make sense if it were a joint committee. Council Member Gilbert states he believes the County and the citizens need to have a say as to who goes on this board.

Douglas: Council Member Douglas stated he never told Council Member Bell that he would be for a recreation center in Ridgeway. He told him it would be a good idea for one, and he did not understand why there was not one there. He stated he would look into what happened to the money and what it was used for. He found out it was used on a fire station instead of recreation. Council Member Douglas congratulated Mrs. Johnson for all three of her children being valedictorian.

Pauling: Council Member Pauley congratulated all the seniors in Fairfield County and congratulated Mrs. Johnson on her son graduating, the Chairman on his daughter graduating, and he also had a daughter who graduated as well.

Goins: Vice Chair Goins wished to elaborate on some of the things that have been said tonight. On the hazard pay, she made this suggestion to Chairman Robinson and asked that he talk with Administration. However, she got some repercussions that were not favorable. Rather than causing confusion, she dropped it. She apologized to first responders because she understands what they go through and that they are putting their life on the line for the citizens. On the citizen advisory board, this would be people to spearhead the conversation and take information. The citizens would be the actual participants with the board serving as liaison. She would suggest putting out a call for volunteers and go from there, knowing that we would not want agitators or instigators, but instead, people who are sincere in bringing unity and peace. In the past, she participated with the Sheriff's Citizens Academy. She stated it was a good time for citizens to be involved and to get to know what the Sheriff's Department was doing. Everyone also received a certificate at the end. They tried it again but could not get the participation. It is a great thing when someone asks if we can work on something and we can respond that we are already on it. Vice Chair Goins also wanted to give a shout out to Mrs. Johnson for her young people. They did great because they were committed to what they were doing. She also wanted to give a shout out to the western side of Fairfield County. No matter what we do, if other people are not involved and participate, it will not be successful. Thanks to Mrs. Johnson for being the coordinator for the food distribution program and the following volunteers: Mr. Ron Mull, Fairfield County Sheriff's Department; Lawrence Hodge, Fairfield County Sheriff's Department; Andy Robinson, Fairfield County EMS; Oren Gadson, Fairfield County Sheriff's Department; Francine Goins, Town of Winnsboro Public Safety; Tony Sawyer, Fairfield County Fire Services; Beverly Mozie, Fairfield County Community Development Grants; Betty Trapp, Jenkinsville volunteer/community worker; Viola Flood, Jenkinsville volunteer/community worker and Trinity Mull, volunteer/community worker. It was a grand turnout. It was hard work, but everyone had a good time doing it. She is excited for the next one and has asked that it be on 269 at the fire station. She is asking the community to start spreading the good news.

Bell: Council Member Bell stated the minutes on 10/12/2015 refer to when Mr. Ruff turned back the money. He is also sorry Mr. Douglas cannot remember, but he repeated everything he said. Early on, he spoke with Mrs. Johnson concerning the money for recreation versus other things. The bond money included \$3.5M for recreation. The money was not spent on recreation as was said, and he has data.

Robinson: Chairman Robinson stated we are not where we should be, but we are not where we used to be. He feels we are heading in the right direction. No one can predict whether a job is being done right and whether we have to go to court resulting in higher attorney fees. These instances are unforeseen. Mr. Taylor referred to the land purchase of \$1.8M, and this amount would not have been this high if council members had not broadcast information thereby making the cost rise. We are dead in the water with progress if we do not get this. There are many other projects in the County that we are thinking about working on, and again, he feels we are not where we should be, but we are not where we used to be. We are moving forward with progress in this County. COVID has us down, but Mr. Davenport is still working, Mr. Taylor is still working, Mrs. Johnson is still working full steam ahead with trying to get economic development here. Thanks to them for continuing to diligently work through COVID. Item #8 was missed on the agenda for receipt of the minutes from Disabilities and Special Needs. Council Member Douglas agreed with Chairman Robinson that the County Attorney is not making any more money; however, it is other things the County is involved in with lawsuits.

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

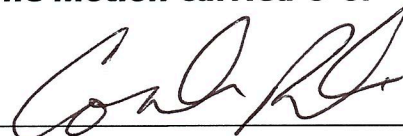
None.

16. ADJOURN

At 6:55 p.m., it was moved by Vice Chair Goins, seconded by Council Member Gilbert, to adjourn. Council Member Trapp exited the meeting at 6:55 prior to the vote being taken. **The motion carried 6-0.**



PATTI L. DAVIS
CLERK TO COUNCIL



CORNELIUS ROBINSON
CHAIRMAN