



**MINUTES  
SPECIAL MEETING  
FAIRFIELD COUNTY COUNCIL  
MARCH 18, 2020**

**Present:** Moses Bell, Jimmy Ray Douglas, Mikel Trapp, Doug Pauley, Cornelius Robinson, Clarence Gilbert, Council Members; Jason Taylor, County Administrator; Laura Johnson, Interim Deputy County Administrator; Tommy Morgan, County Attorney; Patti L. Davis, Clerk to Council.

**Absent:** Bertha Goins.

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.

**1. CALL TO ORDER**

Chairman Robinson called the Special Meeting to order at 5:00 p.m.

**2. APPROVAL OF AGENDA**

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

**3. INVOCATION**

Council Member Pauley led the invocation.

**4. ORDINANCES, RESOLUTIONS AND ORDERS**

- A.** Ordinance No. 744: An Emergency Ordinance to Declare a Local State of Emergency in Fairfield County. Motion made by Council Member Douglas, seconded by Council Member Gilbert and Council Member Pauley. Per Mr. Taylor, the ordinance is to declare a state of local emergency. This has been done on the national level and the state level. This gives Fairfield County Council some leeway in immediately acting in the best interest of the citizens if need be to direct resources, staff or be exempt from certain requirements needed for quick action in this crisis situation. Council Member Douglas inquired of the immediate impact to the County employees. Per Mr. Taylor, a statement will be released shortly on how the County Administration will be adjusting schedules, public access to County buildings and other measures being taken. Council Member Douglas inquired how the pay will be structured, and Chairman Robinson believes the federal government will take care of this in the end. Per Mr. Taylor, County staff will be keeping up with all the expenses that the


County incurs in relation to this crisis to hopefully get reimbursed for some of the things that are being discussed at the federal and state level. Right now, accommodations are being made because of schools being closed and employees working from home if need be. We are trying to understand the situation, make accommodations such as making payments electronically, lock boxes for drop offs, posting numbers and emails, etc. We will try to conduct business as normally as possible. Council Member Douglas inquired concerning signatures being obtained for petitions for upcoming elections. This is not something Mr. Taylor is looking at internally. Council Member Bell inquired if any consideration has been given to allow EMTs to function if medical staff is needed. Mr. Taylor stated he has reached out to the Council on Aging, but he has not reached out to any of the nursing facilities. Council Member Bell inquired if there has been a discussion concerning the food bank, medicines and offering anything to the local pharmacy in case people cannot afford medicine. Per Mr. Taylor, the County has not gone this far yet. Council Member Douglas stated Christ Central makes a trip to Columbia every month to pick up food to distribute, and they also pick up food from BI-LO on Fridays. Council Member Bell stated he does not know if some of these things are under the County's control, but he would like them to be considered. Council Member Bell also inquired concerning inmate labor as they are one of the most vulnerable. Per Mr. Taylor, one of the first things the County did was to immediately stop visitation to the inmates at the Detention Center. The County is stressed for labor and will still be utilizing the inmate labor. One of the biggest concrete things the County is doing is to close down some of the offices on a rotation in order to deep clean the work areas. The inmate labor will be utilized at a time when no one else is in the building. We do not want to put anyone at risk, especially a captive population. Council Member Bell inquired if the Sheriff's Department will continue doing the check on the elderly. Per Mr. Taylor, he and the Chairman have already spoken with the Sheriff concerning this. Council Member Bell would also like #7 in the ordinance to be explained to him. Per Mr. Taylor, should we need to allocate resources or redirect some resources for an emergency need, this does allow us to invoke emergency procurement. Per Mr. Morgan, because of the state of emergency that has been declared by the Governor and Council moving forward to declare a similar ordinance, it would provide for the state and county rules to be set aside for government to have that flexibility to immediately address a particular issue without having to obtain bids and so forth. Council Member Bell questioned if we are only talking about emergencies. Per Mr. Morgan, it would be during this emergency time frame. Council Member Gilbert inquired how it will work

for citizens to pay property taxes and other things of this nature. Mr. Taylor stated late fees will be waived and consideration will be made on some late fees to waive convenience fees. We are encouraging citizens to pay electronically. The state has requested and is encouraging this also. Chairman Robinson inquired when the cleaning list will be available. Per Mrs. Johnson, Mr. Branham has completed the list, and it is now being revised. Administration met with all department heads yesterday and started trying to formulate the schedule. Council Member Gilbert also inquired if the County is working with the Town Councils. Mr. Taylor has reached out but has not fully engaged yet. Council Member Bell believes the Ridgeway Town Council has cancelled their meetings. Council Member Gilbert believes we should be working together in this situation. Council Member Bell further inquired when employees are off, will they be taking their annual leave time or is the County giving the time off. Mr. Taylor stated Mrs. Johnson and Mr. Caulder have been working closely to get this policy prepared. Per Mrs. Johnson, she hopes to have the policy by the end of the day. People should not be penalized if they are sick or high risk, so codes are being set up so the sick leave and vacation of the employee will not be exhausted or used. Council Member Bell inquired if someone is quarantined for the 14 days, will they automatically be paid. Per Mrs. Johnson, they should not be penalized because they are sick and there is an ongoing pandemic. Council Member Bell inquired how it would be handled if someone is staying home based on their children, and Mrs. Johnson stated there is a provision in the policy for the same thing so they will not have to use their sick time or vacation. Council Member Bell inquired if the County will be giving everyone time off. Chairman Robinson stated the employee cannot be penalized because the schools are out. Council Member Bell further inquired what portion of annual leave time would be taken. Mrs. Johnson stated the policy is not final yet and she did not know this would be discussed tonight, but some of provisions allow for the employee to use either annual leave or up to 10 days of their sick leave. If they are high risk or have a positive test result for the Coronavirus, they are not using annual leave or sick leave. Per Mr. Morgan, there is currently pending before Congress House Bill #6201, which would change a lot of provisions of the Family Medical Leave Act (FMLA) as it relates to covered employees, days accrued, who gets paid for what, etc. This has not passed yet, so the provisions are not law. However, there may be some provisions that could come down eventually from the U.S. Congress that would directly impact any of the policies and procedures that are being discussed here tonight. At this point, anything that is said should not be construed as the final position of the County because there may be a

federal law that supersedes it. There will be language directly related to the COVID-19 issues. Mrs. Johnson stated these provisions are subject to change based on federal and state laws that are coming down, but the County had to quickly get something in place. Council Member Bell again inquired if the County would support the two weeks' leave being proposed by Congress. Chairman Robinson stated this is a pandemic and is not something that has been planned for. Therefore, employees should not be penalized for staying home with their kids. Mr. Taylor stated he also does not want anyone to be in fear of losing their job or losing their paycheck and come to work sick. Council Member Douglas inquired if any of the County workers have been sick yet and are the tests available. Mrs. Johnson stated that no County employees have been sick yet, and if a test is needed, they would go to their medical doctor. Mr. Taylor believes no tests are being done at the local Providence branch and, instead, they are being taken to Columbia. Council Member Bell inquired if Council would see the policy when it is finished. Mrs. Johnson stated it can be sent to Council. **Motion carried unanimously 6-0.**

#### 5. ADJOURN

At 5:20 p.m., it was moved by Council Member Bell and seconded by Council Member Gilbert to adjourn. **The motion carried unanimously 6-0.**

  
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PATTI L. DAVIS  
CLERK TO COUNCIL

  
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CORNELIUS ROBINSON  
CHAIRMAN