



**MINUTES
REGULAR MEETING
FAIRFIELD COUNTY COUNCIL
MAY 23, 2022**

Present: Moses Bell, Shirley Greene, Cornelius Robinson, Mikel Trapp, Timothy Roseborough, Clarence Gilbert, Doug Pauley (Council Members); Malik Whitaker (County Administrator), Kenneth Davis (County Attorney); Dr. Kimberly Roberts, Clerk to Council)

Absent: None

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 Bell called the Regular Meeting to order at 6:00 p.m.

2. APPROVAL OF AGENDA

Motion made by Councilman Trapp, seconded by Councilwoman Greene, to approve the agenda. ***The motion carried 7-0.***

3. INVOCATION

Councilman Trapp led the invocation.

4. APPROVAL OF MINUTES

Motion made by Councilman Trapp, seconded by Councilwoman Greene to approve the minutes from the Regular Meeting of May 9, 2022. ***The motion carried 7-0.***

5. PUBLIC PRESENTATIONS

None.

6. 1ST PUBLIC COMMENT (3 MINUTES): INPUT MUST PERTAIN TO ITEMS ON THE AGENDA, FOR WHICH NO PUBLIC HEARING IS REQUIRED OR HAS BEEN SCHEDULED. THE TOTAL TIME ALLOCATED TO THIS PUBLIC COMMENT SEGMENT IS 30 MINUTES.

Dr. Roberts read the following statement:

Fairfield County Government welcomes public input during appropriate times at County Council meetings. Such input will be allowed in the time, place and manner determined by the Chair of the County Council as the presiding officer. Persons wishing to speak must conduct themselves in the following manner:

Sign up at the appropriate time to speak, refrain from engaging in conduct or speech that seeks to disrupt or disturb the meeting, respect the time limit for the public comment, and refrain from personal attacks or personal statements about any individual(s). Such statements are disruptive because this part of our meeting is not conducive for such exchanges between individuals.

As stated, speakers are expected to express themselves within the time, place and manner previously described. Any violation will result in a warning from the Chair of County Council or the presiding officer. Any failure to heed the warning of the Chair or presiding officer will result in the violating speaker forfeiting their opportunity to finish speaking or to speak during the remainder of the meeting. Council welcomes the comments from members of the public and ask for the cooperation of everyone to allow for the orderly conduct of the people's business.

- Kimberly Boyd – Love Never Fails
- Kathy Faulk – Hoof & Paw
- Latasha Taste – Communités In Schools
- Porter Johnson – Communités In Schools
- Randy Bright – Employee Survey

7. PUBLIC HEARINGS

None.

8. ORDINANCES, RESOLUTIONS AND ORDERS

A. Second Reading Ordinance No. 794: An Ordinance to Establish the Millage Rate for Fairfield County for the Fiscal Year Beginning July 1, 2022. Motion made by Councilman Trapp, seconded by Councilwoman Greene. ***The motion carried 5-2 with Councilmen Pauley and Gilbert voting nay.***

B. Before the ordinance was read, Chairman Bell read the following statement: the South Carolina Constitution required the county to adopt a balanced budget. This requirement was repeated in the bylaws of Fairfield County. The budget presented for discussion tonight was balanced on its face as the expenses and revenues were equal. To maintain the requirements of law, each amendment proposed requiring an expenditure must identify the dollar amount proposed as well as a revenue source. Any such amendment which did not both identify a proposed dollar amount and a revenue source, would

be ruled out of order pursuant to the State Constitution and Council bylaws. Third and Final Reading Ordinance No. 793: To Establish Operating and Capital Budgets for the Operation of the County Government of Fairfield County for the Fiscal Year Commencing July 1, 2022; to Provide for the Levy of Taxes for Fairfield County for the Fiscal Year Commencing July 1, 2022; to Establish Fees and Service Charges for Fairfield County for the Fiscal Year Commencing July 1, 2022; to Provide for the Expenditure of Tax Revenues and Other County Related 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 Councilman Trapp, seconded by Vice Chair Greene. Councilman Trapp said he would like to amend the motion to add a position at the detention center as a Correctional Officer with the amount of \$55,000 coming from the fund balance, seconded by Councilman Robinson. ***The motion carried 5-2 with Councilmen Gilbert and Pauley voting nay.*** Councilman Trapp said he wanted to amend the budget to add a detention center Deputy Director/Major in the amount of \$90,000 coming from the fund balance, seconded by Vice Chair Greene. ***The motion carried 5-2 with Councilmen Gilbert and Pauley voting nay.*** Councilman Trapp said he would like to amend the motion to add one full-time custodian in the building maintenance department in the amount of \$50,000 coming from the fund balance, seconded by Councilman Roseborough. ***The motion carried 5-2 with Councilmen Gilbert and Pauley voting nay.*** Councilman Trapp said he would like to amend the motion to add the re-opening of the recycling centers on Mondays in the solid waste department with a total of \$75,000 coming from the fund balance, seconded by Councilman Roseborough. ***The motion carried 5-2 with Councilmen Gilbert and Pauley voting nay.*** Councilman Trapp said he would like to amend the motion to add a 2023 newsletter from the County Council department in the amount of \$15,000 coming from the fund balance (beginning July 1st), seconded by Councilman Roseborough. Mr. Pauley asked Mrs. Williams the cost of the current newsletter. She said it cost \$12,000 and some change – she did not have the exact number but it was less than \$13,000. That was the cost to print about 14,000 newsletters for residential properties along with the postage associated with mailing them first class. ***The motion carried 5-2 with Councilmen Gilbert and Pauley voting nay.*** Councilman Gilbert said he would like to make a motion that Council reduce their salaries by \$5,000, seconded by Councilman Pauley. Mr. Trapp said according to State law if salaries were reduced it would go into effect next budget year. He did not see how the motion would relate to this budget. Mr. Pauley said he talked to someone from the Association of Counties and was told that since they were having an election in November that the change would take place in January. They gave him a small section number to look at. Mr. Trapp asked if he had a copy of

that and he said he did not know if he had it with him. Attorney Davis was asked for input. Mr. Davis said he would concur with State law 4-9-100 that any reduction in salary of a Council member would take effect after the election. With the election coming in November, it would take effect beginning in January. It could not be retroactive – the salaries would stay the same through December and begin in January and be pro-rated for the rest of the fiscal year. Mr. Pauley said he wanted to put something else on the record. Mr. Bell asked if it pertained to the amended motion. Mr. Pauley said he (Trapp) amended it as to when it would go into effect but it would go into effect in January. Mr. Bell said his (Trapp) comments were discussion based. He said Mr. Gilbert made the motion and he (Pauley) seconded it – was it related to that. Mr. Pauley said yes sir – in a recent report published by the Association of Counties in November 2021, it showed Abbeville, Bamberg, Barnwell, Calhoun, Fairfield, Lee, McCormick and Saluda (counties their like size and less than 25,000 in population) had the highest paid Council members out of all of the other counties. He said if you took \$15,000 and divided it by 12 months it was \$1,250 per month. He was looking at three (or four) hours per month that they were there that was \$400.00/hour. He thought since their census reduced their population and that they were the higher paid county, they could reduce their salaries by \$5,000 to justify what the Association of Counties printed. Mr. Bell referred to an orange book from the Association of Counties and said looking at Fairfield County's budget – it was \$33 million and the highest in their group was \$13 million. He said that was not the discussion. Fairfield County Council's salary had been \$15,000 since 1998. He wanted the public to understand. It was good for the previous Councils for 24 years but it was not good for this Council. He asked what was the issue – it was not about them making too much money, there was something else afoot. They needed to call a spade a spade. Mr. Gilbert said the issue was that they asked every department to do a reduction. They (Council) obviously since 1998 they had not done anything as far as cutting their budget and doing their part and that was why he made the recommendation. Mr. Bell asked if he was suggesting that County employees to go to their 1998 salaries. Mr. Gilbert said he said County Council. Mr. Bell said so you want County Council to go beyond the 1998 salary but he was not asking the County employees to do the same. He asked what was it getting to. Mr. Gilbert asked what point was he was trying to make. All he did was make a suggestion that they cut their salaries by \$5,000. He (Bell) was going back pulling up something out of the archives – either yes or no, just vote against it if he was not for it. Mr. Pauley said to Mr. Bell that he (Bell) did not make \$15,000 he made \$19,000 and since he wanted to talk about it, let's go through his reimbursements that he submitted. Mr. Trapp said he did not think that had anything to do with the subject matter. Mr. Bell agreed that it had nothing to do with the amendment. Mr. Pauley said

he (Bell) was in it for the money. Mr. Bell thanked Mr. Pauley for his kind words. ***The motion failed 2-5 with Councilpersons Bell, Trapp, Roseborough, Robinson and Greene voting nay.*** Mr. Pauley asked if they were still talking about the budget and Mr. Bell said yes. Mr. Pauley said he had a statement he wanted to put on the record. Mr. Bell said they would go back to the main motion and asked for a motion to approve the budget with the amendments. Motion made by Councilman Trapp, seconded by Vice Chair Greene. Mr. Pauley said on a Monday evening they had their first budget meeting for the upcoming year. They heard from many department heads telling and explaining to them how hard it was for them to run their departments due to lack of equipment and personnel. About six months ago, some would say that Fairfield County hit the lottery for the \$99 million settlement from SCANA and maybe they did when it came to growth many years down the road but currently their daily operation expenses they did not. In that settlement, they had a chance to ask for things that could have helped them with daily operations – for example, bridges needing repairs, purchasing fire trucks, patrol cars, ambulances, air packs for fire fighters and he could go on. Days after the meeting, there was a groundbreaking for the Ridgeway Recreation Center. The next day he received an alert on this phone where bids were taking place through Clifton Construction. They had a fire station at Lake Wateree that was started four years ago and it had still not been built. That station could save lives and property. He said in closing he hoped this opened everyone's eyes, including Council. Were they really working for the taxpayers, who they represent, or were they working for themselves? ***The motion carried 5-2 with Councilmen Pauley and Gilbert voting nay.*** Mr. Bell said the budget had passed and the thanked Council for passing the budget.

9. BOARD AND COMMISSION MINUTES – (information only)

Chamber of Commerce – March 19, 2022

10. BOARD AND COMMISSION APPOINTMENTS

Disabilities & Special Needs – Christopher Turner, District 3. Motion made by Councilman Trapp, seconded by Councilman Roseborough. ***The motion carried 7-0.***

11. OLD BUSINESS

None.

12. NEW BUSINESS

None.

13. COUNTY ADMINISTRATOR'S REPORT

A. Project Updates – Mr. Whitaker asked Mrs. Williams if she had any updates. She said she did not have any updates at that time but she would answer any specific questions related to projects.

Mr. Whitaker said he had one update. He said they were working with their vendor to redesign their website. They were in the onboarding and discovery process. They were looking at other good State and County websites (York and Anderson) and in the next six months, they would see drastic improvements in the functionality and the beauty of the website. That project was ongoing and they were looking forward to an incredible Fairfield County website.

Mr. Pauley asked Mr. Whitaker if he agreed that the budget was tight and debatable as to how much money they needed to cut back for Fairfield County. Mr. Whitaker said he agreed that their team worked very well to put together the best possible budget based on the leadership received from Council, which was to bring the budget more in line with the things they were trying accomplish with the resources they had. Mr. Pauley said he appreciated the work his team did. He asked where the money was coming from all of a sudden to update the Mitford Recreation mini park. Mr. Whitaker asked Mrs. Williams to talk about the engineering account. Mrs. Williams said there was funding in the current year's budget in the engineering operations account. She believed that money was transferred into the account to purchase any equipment or provide updates. Mr. Pauley asked if Council was advised that the money was there so that all of them could make requests. She said no sir that was the same money they were looking at for Drawdy Park and then some requests came in separately about equipment needs at different parks as well as maintenance needs. Mr. Pauley said they could not buy a fire truck and other things. He asked how much money was spent at the mini park and exactly what upgrades were made. He said he was not aware until someone called him. She said she did not have that information – she did not order those parts. Mr. Whitaker said they made upgrades to the mulch and basketball court. Mr. Trapp said the reason the basketball courts were being upgraded was due to safety hazards. There were a lot of ruts and dips in it that could cause someone to twist an ankle or break a leg and if that happened the County would be liable. Mr. Pauley asked if there were any other updates being done at any other parks. Mrs. Williams said she was not aware of any other maintenance or equipment requests that had come through recently for any of the other parks. Mr. Pauley said thank you. Mr. Trapp said the Blair park was getting a walking trail and that money came from the stimulus money – they voted on that. Mr. Pauley said thank you.

Mr. Pauley asked Mr. Whitaker if he was aware of the Fairfield County comprehensive plan and survey. He said yes sir. Mr. Pauley asked when it was completed. Mr. Whitaker said he could not tell him the exact date but he

believed it was in February. Mr. Pauley asked if it was presented to Council or the public and what were the plans going forward. Mr. Whitaker said the plans were to do just that. They were working with the COG (Greg Sprouse and Mr. Steins). The findings of the survey would be presented to the public.

Mrs. Greene said she wanted to clarify something about the Ridgeway fire station. Mrs. Williams said it originally went out for bid under the previous building official and they did not receive any bids on the initial request. After she started, she met with the project engineer and the director of fire services to find out the status of the project. They have worked with the engineering group to update the building plans and they should be ready to go out for bid within the next few days. They hoped to get some bids on the project. There was movement on the project once she started and received an update.

Mr. Pauley said he was informed that the plans for the Ridgeway Recreation Center went through fire services and they were being asked to push through and rush through and fire services did not have the staff to get it done. He thought before they could bid out anything that the fire services had to approve the plans. Mrs. Williams said she would follow up with the director of fire services. She spoke with him briefly and he mentioned that they received the plans to go through and do some of the fire review but she did not have a date of when his group planned to complete the review. She said she could find out and report back. Mr. Pauley said thank you.

14. CLERK TO COUNCIL'S REPORT

None.

15. COUNTY COUNCIL TIME

Mrs. Greene said she wanted to make sure that staff and others made a correction. She thought Mrs. Williams sent a note to The Voice newspaper regarding the misstatement in the newspaper that Fairfield County was raising its taxes by 4.3 mills. Mrs. Williams said yes ma'am that was correct. She believed they notified Council at the start of the budget season that they had the opportunity to increase the millage by 4.7% based on the consumer price index but it was not written into the original budget request. She reached out to the local paper, and they had already updated that on the website and they said it would be a retraction in the printed version of their paper, which would be published the forthcoming Thursday. Mrs. Greene said that information was circulating throughout the community and she wanted to make sure that it was clarified.

She congratulated Ms. Yaghi, the Fairfield County Volunteer Rescue Coordinator for the Animal Shelter, for the accolades she received, the \$25,000 and the recognition as the unsung hero. She thought it was wonderful for their community.

She also thanked the Woodside Harbor Homeowner's Association. They invited her to speak to them recently and it went very well. The constituents were happy that Monday's were added to the recycling schedule. It was a big deal for a lot of homeowner's and they were really happy to hear that.

She highlighted the Memorial Day Boston butt sale by the Ridgeway Volunteer VFW Post 8346. She said if people were looking for food for Memorial Day, they could come out and spend \$35 and get a Boston butt from them at 74 Veterans Drive in Ridgeway.

She said she was working with United Fairfield and others to address a situation that was brought to their attention after the budget discussions – that was swim lessons for the children in Fairfield County. It was one of those things that people did not necessarily think about but the rescue personnel brought to their attention that about 65% of people who die from drowning were African-Americans. It became a huge problem and they would like to see it addressed. They did not want to discriminate so they went to a non-profit organization and asked them to donate at least 25 spaces for swim lessons for children in Fairfield County. They would be reaching out to people to ensure a number of African-American families participated. They had a lot things going on in Fairfield County – broadband and other things to be upgraded and she wanted to highlight some of the positive things that were going on in Fairfield County. She also thanked the public for staying engaged.

Mr. Bell thanked Mrs. Greene for the work she was doing and he asked all of Council to be mindful of anyone who may want to donate swimming lessons and to work it through Mrs. Greene since the efforts started with her.

Mr. Pauley said that The Love Never Fails organization did a lot of wonderful things for the children of Fairfield County. Their organization had dedicated members that hoped to see the children succeed. He thought it was definitely something they needed to look at to see if they could help them in some way. Mr. Bell thanked him and agreed with him. He thanked everyone for the presentations – Communities In Schools. He said Council was very proud to be able to fund it. He knew it was in a small way but he appreciated the efforts they made to help improve communities in schools. He also said thank you for the invitation to the meeting at the middle school – he was glad to be there. He said while they were at the end of the budget, budgets were normally contentious. He communicated to the staff it would be. He asked Mrs. Bass, Mrs. Mozie, Mrs. Williams and Mr. Whitaker to stand and thanked them and their staff for all of their work. They listened to him, going back and forth, trying to go through all of the numbers, trying to analyze and re-analyze them to make sure they had a budget that they could live with. He said the work was never-ending and he appreciated all of the work that was done. This year, the budget would have a few more thousand dollars added to it but the budget

was \$41,312,502. It was small but a little lower than last year. Again, he was thankful and appreciative.

- 16. EXECUTIVE SESSION:** (The following statement is provided in compliance with the South Carolina Freedom of Information Act: Subsequent to Executive Session, Council may take action on matters discussed in Executive Session.)

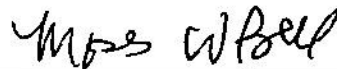
None.

ADJOURN

At 7:03 p.m., motion made by Councilman Trapp, seconded by Councilwoman Greene, to adjourn. ***The motion carried 7-0.***



KIM W. ROBERTS, Ed. D.
CLERK TO COUNCIL



MOSES BELL
CHAIRMAN