



**MINUTES
REGULAR MEETING
FAIRFIELD COUNTY COUNCIL
FEBRUARY 14, 2011**

Present: David L. Ferguson, Dwayne Perry, R. David Brown, Mary Lynn Kinley, Kamau Marcharia, Carolyn B. Robinson, Mikel R. Trapp, Council Members; Philip L. Hinely, County Administrator; Shryll M. Brown, Clerk to Council

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 Herald-Independent, The State, and Winnsboro Cablevision, and fifty individuals.

1. CALL TO ORDER

Chairman Ferguson called the meeting to order at 6:00 P.M.

2. INVOCATION

Council Member Kinley led in the invocation.

Chairman Ferguson asked for a motion to amend the agenda to add, as Item 5B, Ratification of Appointments To County Council Standing Committees and County Council Ex-Officio Appointments To Boards And Commissions. So moved by Council Member Brown; seconded by Council Member Kinley and unanimously approved by Council.

3. APPROVAL OF MINUTES

It was moved by Council Member Brown; seconded by Council Member Trapp to approve the minutes of the worksession of January 20, 2011; regular meeting of January 24, 2011 and special meeting of February 2, 2011. The motion carried unanimously.

4. COMMITTEE REPORTS

None

5. PUBLIC COMMENT

Mr. Jeremy Catoe, Operations Manager of Winnsboro One Stop, addressed Council on a tax filing service being offered through the Transition Center Office.

It moved by Council Member Brown; seconded by Council Member Trapp to ratify the Appointments to County Council Standing Commissions and County Council Ex-Officio Appointments to Board And Commissions. The motion carried unanimously.

6. OLD BUSINESS

A. Third And Final Reading: Ordinance No. 582 – Approval Of The Update To The Fairfield County Comprehensive Plan 2010 – 2021. *It was moved by Council Member Brown; seconded by Council Members Kinley and Robinson to approve Third and Final Reading of Ordinance No. 582. The motion carried unanimously.*

7. NEW BUSINESS**A. Appointments/Reappointments To Fairfield County Boards And Commissions**

It was moved by Council Member Trapp; seconded by Council Member Perry to approve the Appointment/Reappointment listing of February 14, 2011, as presented by the Clerk. The motion carried unanimously.

8. COUNTY ADMINISTRATOR'S REPORT AND CORRESPONDENCE

a. Contacted Mr. Vismor to ascertain if he would extend the contract to perform the study on the Zoning Ordinance and Land Development Regulations. Council was asked to give their comments on the ordinance aspect of the Comprehensive Plan.

b. *Mr. Mike Williams approached him about cash flow issues at the hospital; forcing them to hold off on making some accounts payable (i.e., retirement system) and requested an advance from the county of approximately \$400,000.00. For discussion, it was moved by Council Member Brown and seconded by Council Member Trapp.*

- What is the expected future cuts, percentage-wise (as far as reimbursements)? If they are having a hard time going 100% reimbursement, are they going to be able to stay afloat with a 30% or 35% cut.
- Hospital is trying to recover from some decisions that should have been made a couple of years ago. A cut may not impact them as much. They are trying to recover from 2-3 years ago, more so that what is going to happen in the future. With Blue Granite on board, bringing a new surgeon and with Dr. McElmurray's practice, the stream is managing the hospital better. The Hospital Administrator and his team are on the right track. Believe it is a matter of cleaning up issues that should have been addressed years ago.
- Coming to the Council on short notice, would like for the County Administrator to secure hard facts and information because the future of small, rural hospitals are looking bleak.
- It has been a difficult time overall for the hospital. The county would not be giving the hospital these funds; it is a loan and the hospital would be paying it back.
- Agree that this hospital needs to be kept up and running.
- When the hospital borrowed before, they paid back before time or on time. Do we have an allocation for the hospital?
- The hospital is a necessity; glad it is there. Noticed during the crunch, there has not been any buckling down at the hospital; no tightening of the belt. Would like a full report on what they have done since this financial crunch to deal with these matters. Noted in the hospital minutes there is a always a loss (sometimes better than others). In the January 5th minutes, it was finally pointed out about the cost of employee benefits. All of that has changed some. Have to pay additional money to try to build back up the unemployment fund. Advertising is a big line item that could have been cut. What does a quarter page cost each week? It is time to seriously look at what they are actually spending. In these times, there are other ways to help cut some of the funding. Told the hospital 7 or 8 years ago when they came and asked for a loan that they needed to tighten their belt. They managed without the county having to give money at that point. State employees had to take a furlough without pay. What are we doing in all agencies that we send money to in this regard?

Think the hospital needs to bring to the Council some definitive numbers and responses before Council gives them the loan. Glad the hospital is there, but think it can be operated a little more efficiently.

- Think those are fair comments. To be fair to Mr. Williams, believe he has done a good job. The hospital is an old one, where chillers and the such go out and have to be maintained. Proper air flow has to be in the hospital, which are things that are not planned and very costly for an old hospital. It is a not-for-profit hospital; it is a county hospital. Certain things have to be maintained. Think they have done a good job over the last few years. As far as cutting back, don't know how much more can be cut from them. The board has talked about making some of the changes Council has made, i.e., how insurance was done. Those of some of the things being discussed now to try to not only increase revenue but also to cut back on expenses. Certain things the hospital is doing in seeing the need to make those changes to make sure it is financially sound. Commend the board; they are finally seeing some things that need to be done. The February minutes should reflect discussion of cutting some of the expenses.
- Mr. Williams did indicate they were going to do some structural changes.
- With all the cuts, want to make sure if they pay this money back, is that going to put them in the hole next year? That's a lot of money. Want to make sure the hospital has a good bank record.
- With working with some of the physicians that were referred to the hospital are going to be helping with the Blue Granite opening. That is going to be a revenue stream for the hospital. Changing critical access a couple of years ago and changing how funding is coming into the hospital, sometimes an immediate gain is not seen, but in the long term, putting practices in place will pay off.
- The difference in the intake of funds, if a physician works for himself, it is a different cost if they are associated with the hospital like the clinic that is opening up. A good place to start would be to ask Mr. Williams what the anticipated stream was. The hospital is serving the whole gamut of population and is meeting its obligation as far as the hospital is concerned. Need to make sure that the proposals are monitored. Suggest meeting with the board to ascertain what their plans are.
- If this passes, the next step would be to go the hospital board to let them know how strongly the Council feels about this and are expecting them to make some changes.
- *Robinson: Would like to amend the motion to wait on the report that Mr. Hinely will bring to the Council before a vote is taken.*
- *Marcharia: Second. Have not had the chance to look into it. Think that if a vote is being considered, then it should be negotiated to find out the terms and come back; be very specific about what the Council is voting on.*
- Mr. Williams gave the impression that the Council was the last resort. It has become problematic for them to go to a bank. As an alternative, would like to give them half; go meet with them and come back to make a report. Every day is critical for them. If we give them half, the county allocates more than that to them quarterly, so if the county is not satisfied, can hold it out of the next quarterly payment. This would be an advance on their next quarterly payment. Would like to offer to give them an advance; then get back with the Council; if Council is not satisfied, the hospital will have to live with that advance. They are in a situation where they are getting calls from creditors, and that is not a good situation in to be in. The hospital indicated they were holding off on the employer's retirement (they have not been paying that). That is the most crucial one. Can work out giving them an advance on their next allocation. If that is not satisfied, the county would not give them the loan, meaning they received the allocation a month early.
- *Perry: Would like to amend the amendment {that Council Member Robinson made} and make a motion that the Council give Mr. Hinely the authority to move forward to give the hospital the \$200,000 advance and the Council will come back and discuss this after the hospital's next meeting {the first meeting in March}.*
- *Marcharia: Second.*
- Is this an emergency that if they don't get this loan right away, that there would be dire consequences?

- The hospital has held off paying their share of the retirement for their employees. They have let this bill slide and are paying some others, which they can't continue to do. Since they don't meet again until the first of next month, if the County can advance them half so they can make a payment to the retirement system and be in good faith. If the negotiations don't materialize, it can always be withheld from their next payment. Expressed to the hospital that the Council was going to want to see some results; not just giving a loan, but what will the hospital do to make sure this does not reoccur.
- The Council may need to have a worksession after the hospital board meets the first of next month. The Council needs to know where the hospital is and where they are going.
- Robinson: Is the motion indicating that Council is going to issue the advance at this time; not the entire amount of the loan?
- *The motion carried 6-1. {Council Member Kinley abstained from voting}.*
- *{Second to the amendment and amendment to the original motion rescinded; second to the original motion and original motion rescinded}.*

9. CLERK TO COUNCIL'S REPORT

a. Worksession scheduled for Tuesday, February 22, 2011, 6:00 PM, at MTC/Fairfield Hall, with the CTC and Dennis Corporation to discuss the 2010 Road Inventory.

10. BOARD AND COMMISSION MINUTES

Provided as Information.

11. INFORMATIONAL ITEMS

Provided as Information.

12. COUNTY COUNCIL TIME

Members of Council presented past Chairman David Brown with a plaque which read: "Mr. R. David Brown, February 14, 2011, In Grateful Appreciation For Loyal And Dedicated Service As Chairman Of Fairfield County Council 2009-2010."

Marcharia: Thanked everyone for their expressions of sympathy during the loss of his brother. Inquired about the bill that is proposed to make all EMS special purpose districts.

Robinson: Expressed condolences to Ron Stowers and his family, as he lost his mother-in-law.

Kinley: Voiced that it is incumbent upon Council to attend the boards and commissions meetings to which assigned.

13. EXECUTIVE SESSION: LEGAL MATTER

At 6:55 p.m., it was moved by Council Member Brown; seconded by Council Member Marcharia to go in executive session to discuss a legal matter. The motion carried unanimously.

It was moved by Council Member Robinson; seconded by Council Member Trapp to come out of executive session and return to regular session. The motion carried unanimously.

Chairman Ferguson indicated no votes were taken in executive session. Mr. Hinely and Mr. James were asked to keep Council apprised of the status of the airport.

14. ADJOURN

The meeting was adjourned at 8:23 p.m., upon the unanimous approval of Council.

SHRYLL M. BROWN
CLERK TO COUNCIL

DAVID L. FERGUSON, SR.
CHAIRMAN