



**MINUTES
REGULAR MEETING
FAIRFIELD COUNTY COUNCIL
MARCH 14, 2022**

Present: Moses Bell, Shirley Greene, Cornelius Robinson, Mikel Trapp, Timothy Roseborough, Clarence Gilbert, Doug Pauley (Council Members); Malik Whitaker, County Administrator, Charles Boykin, County Attorney.

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 Councilman Roseborough, to approve the agenda. ***The motion carried 7-0.***

3. INVOCATION

Councilman Roseborough 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 February 28, 2022. ***The motion carried 7-0.***

5. PUBLIC PRESENTATIONS

Women's History Month Proclamation – Dr. Roberts read the proclamation in its entirety. Motion made by Councilman Trapp, seconded by Councilwoman Greene to approve the proclamation. ***The motion carried 7-0.***

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.

- Thomas Armstrong – Dominion settlement
- Randy Bright – Budget Calendar

7. PUBLIC HEARINGS

An Ordinance to appropriate an amount not to exceed \$1,000,000 from the General Fund, to be used to pay the expenses relating to the relocation of County Government Offices into the New County Administration Building and relating to the relocation of the Sheriff's Department into the New County Administration Building, to include furnishings, fixtures, equipment and moving costs. Chairman Bell opened the public hearing at 6:08pm. The following person signed up to speak: Randy Bright. Chairman Bell closed the public hearing at 6:12pm.

8. ORDINANCES, RESOLUTIONS AND ORDERS

- A. First Reading (By Title Only) Ordinance No. 790: An Ordinance to Name the Fairfield County Detention Center after Deceased Former Sheriff Herman Young, who served Fairfield County as Sheriff for Twenty-Two (22) Years; was Named Sheriff of the Year in 1996; served as the President of the Sheriff's Association from 2011-2012; and in 2015 was Awarded the S.C. Order of the Palmetto, the State's Highest Award for His Fifty-Two (52) Years of Service in Law Enforcement. Motion made by Councilwoman Greene, seconded by Councilman Robinson. ***The motion carried 7-0.***
- B. First Reading (By Title Only) Ordinance No. 791: An Ordinance to Approve the Sale of a Certain Parcel of Land Owned by Fairfield County which is a Vacant Lot that is Approximately .19 Acres, Located at 128 Sixth Street in the Mills District of Winnsboro (TMS: 145-02-02-012-000) to a Private Citizen whose Property is Contiguous with the Offeror's Property. Motion made by Councilwoman Greene, seconded by Councilman Robinson. ***The motion carried 7-0.***
- C. Third and Final Reading Ordinance No. 789: An Ordinance to appropriate an amount not to exceed \$1,000,000 from the General Fund, to be used to pay the expenses relating to the relocation of County Government Offices into the New County Administration Building and relating to the relocation of the Sheriff's Department into the New County Administration Building, to include furnishings, fixtures, equipment and moving costs. Motion made by Councilman Trapp, seconded by Vice Chair Greene. Mr. Bell asked Mr. Whitaker to give a description of what the money would be used for and a timeline. He also announced that going forward the building would no longer be called 'Mt. Zion' but would be named the 'Fairfield County Government Complex'. Mr. Whitaker said he would share some of the project issues that were found with the Fairfield County Government Complex and how the

money would be used effectively to meet the goals to move into the new complex. He said the redevelopment of the Mt. Zion Institute School into the new Fairfield County Government Complex was a very complex capital project, both in how it was financially structured and in the complexities of converting a very old building into a functioning modern multi-purpose facility, while maintaining the historical characteristics of the property. Let us not forget the former school buildings were up for demolition in 2006 because it was long abandoned, neglected and a blight, not only in the surrounding neighborhood, but our entire community. The costs, challenges and talent associated with turning something in that condition into a government office and complex were many. This property went from a facility designed as a school to offices and meeting spaces to serve all of the citizens of Fairfield County. Repurposing buildings that were built in the 1930's as a primary school for students into a 21st century government office complex that meets the needs of an emerging local government and houses administration staff, Sheriff office staff, County Council and staff, 911 emergency staff, recreation staff, afterschool programs, gymnasium, exhibit hall, and many other uses was a complex capital project that required highly skilled and talented project management and financial expertise. The team assembled to assist us through the concluding portion of this project would transition us from development and construction to operations utilizing our own resources. The original funds, \$1 million held in escrow, were allocated for repurposing the project above and beyond the original scope of work envisioned to improve the physical conditions of the Government Office Complex. Most notable was the relocation of 911. Omitted but certainly necessary to our operations were costs related to Information Technology and audio visual needs. Two lease payments totaling \$100,000 were also made from these funds. However, getting the buildings ready with adequate parking was only one part of the equation. There were no funds allocated to the second part of the project, which was moving into the facility in a way that took into account all the requirements needed to house and operate this government complex. They shared those needs previously for full disclosure and transparency. The additional resources were absolutely necessary to complete the relocation into the redeveloped site. Needs identification, construction management, cost negotiation, change order request management, procurement management, and overall intentional project management were all moving us to the completion of this project in a timely and cost-effective manner. We have saved hundreds of thousands of dollars on the back end of this project. Unfortunately, we could have also saved hundreds of thousands of dollars on the front end if appropriate project management had been implemented at that time. He respectfully recommended and requested their support of this third reading appropriation

of resources to complete the Fairfield County Government Complex construction and relocation. He referred to a slide with further analysis and explanation of key issues relating to the move and copies were issued to Council. Mr. Pauley asked Mr. Whitaker if he could list the number of violations found last week when the Fire Marshall's did their inspection, how serious in nature they were and how long it would take to get them corrected. Mr. Whitaker said he could not list them but that there were several code violations found and that project management was working on it. They hired a firm on State contract, after the resignation of their Community Development Director, to help them go from a temporary CO to a CO. During that process, code violations were found and they were in the process of remedying those violations now. Mr. Will Lowder, Project Manager, said they did not find any fire code violations. They found about five sprinkler heads that were determined to be too low – meaning they could be contacted and disabled. That was really the only fire issue that was on the list. Most everything else were building code violations, ADA handicap violations and they were still working with the developers on the list. The list shrunk greatly after their visit last week with KCI, the County's temporary inspection group, the developers, the architect, and the construction contractor. They had conversations from a historical standpoint of things that could not be done. For example, the Teacherage building that they had been calling the museum was built as an event center, which had a limitation of occupancy so calling it a museum made it a commercial property and it was not built to be a commercial property. Once that was recognized by the inspectors, basically the list of concerns regarding the Teacherage went away. Mr. Bell stated Mr. Pauley asked a legitimate question. He said a lot of the things that the new firm found were things that the previous person did not find. Mr. Lowder agreed. Mr. Bell said they told everyone that those building codes would be remedied, they would be done and they had to be done. Mr. Pauley said he heard there were over 100 violations and asked if that were true. Mr. Lowder said they were done by building so he did not add it up but one building had 58 so with the other three buildings it was probably close to 100. The numbers had significantly decreased since the inspection. He gave input early to the contractor because he worked with them on a daily basis, of the things the inspectors had found in their first walk thru (not the second walk thru) which was where the document came from (the second) and they had already fixed the majority of what he gave them. They were moving quickly to fix things - simple things like replacing sprinkler heads because when some of the walls were repainted, they got paint on them. They could not be cleaned, they had to be replaced. Mr. Bell said to further answer Mr. Pauley's question, they told Mr. Rory that these would be done – period. Mr. Pauley asked what would be done with the

current building once they moved out. Mr. Whitaker said it was on their project list. They understood that it was a huge issue and that they had to have an exit plan. They were putting together a work group to look at how to maintain the property, the financial and insurance implications, etc. Mr. Pauley said he believed it was stated in previous Council meetings that the Sheriff's office had concerns about sex offenders coming to the property with a daycare being on site. He wanted to know if that had been addressed so Fairfield County would not bear any liability for that. Mr. Bell asked Attorney Boykin if he wanted to address that. Mr. Boykin said he would wait for Mr. Lowder's response and if there was a legal implication, he would address the legal implication based on how he responded factually. Mr. Lowder stated they did an additional security assessment of the facility. The original assessment that was done more than a year ago by the past administration group that was no longer with the County, had their main focus on the Sheriff's Department on the bottom floor. There was no focus on the other four buildings or any of the other floors in the Administration building. They did a full assessment and found that in order to ensure that the children and employees were safe and the Sheriff's Department could keep control over those visitors, there was a need for additional cameras and door security where one could only pass thru those doors with badges, either with an employee badge or Sheriff's Department badge. They ensured proper fencing where the children would play and that there would be doors to get out of the gymnasium but one would not be able to get into those doors unless you were a County employee. All of those things were in the estimated costs of the up to \$1 million that was being discussed – to upgrade those doors beyond what had already been installed for the Sheriff. Mr. Bell said based on all of the questions, all could see the fallacy of the contract. There was nothing in the contract regarding what would be done with the current building. The code violations and all of the work to get them there, the contract itself and what they had to do when they go into the building – all of those things. As they all had heard him say, it was the most disastrous contract ever employed by this County. What they had done to make the building ready for use as our Fairfield County Government Complex was significant. All of the work to get them there was what they had to do. He thanked Mr. Whitaker and his team for their efforts to get them here because it was a mess. They were not for it but the previous Council voted for it so now they had clean up what they did. Mr. Pauley said he agreed with him but felt they should have a plan in place before they moved out of this building so it would not become what Mt. Zion was in that community. Mr. Bell said Mr. Whitaker and Mrs. Williams were already working on how they could do that. They had also talked to some people about buying the building and they understood the urgency regarding it. ***The motion carried 6-1.***

9. BOARD AND COMMISSION MINUTES

Library Board 8/31/21 for information.

10. BOARD AND COMMISSION APPOINTMENTS

A. Planning Commission – Mr. Pauley said recently Mr. William Peake was elected to the Planning Commission from District 5. Mr. Gilbert tried to locate someone from his district and could not locate anyone. He was made aware that Chrissy Moore from District 5 was willing to serve. She got in touch with Mr. Gilbert and that was how Ms. Moore's name came from District 5 to be on District 7. Mr. Bell asked Mr. Gilbert if he could not find anyone from District 7 to serve. Mr. Gilbert said he contacted several people but no. Mr. Bell said it was normally a courtesy for the person of the vacant district to appoint someone. He asked Mr. Pauley if he was okay with this appointment because he knew he had other people in his district that wanted to be appointed as well. Mr. Pauley said yes they did but since Mr. Gilbert already had Ms. Moore's application he was okay with moving Ms. Moore forward. Mr. Bell said okay. Motion made by Councilman Gilbert to appoint Chrissy Moore (District 5) to the Planning Commission to represent District 7, seconded by Councilman Robinson. Mrs. Greene said she wanted to make sure that they were following the recommendations as they had done in the past. The last time they talked about two people from one district being appointed, they selected one. If Mr. Pauley was okay with this appointment and she would be his representative as well then she thought it was okay. Mr. Pauley said he would agree that in the future, and he had always stated that anytime they had a board opening it should be represented by someone from that district. He agreed with Mrs. Greene 100%. Ms. Moore would actually represent Mr. Gilbert's district, even though she was from District 5. If he was okay with her representing his district as District 7 then he was okay with it. Mr. Roseborough asked Mr. Gilbert – out of the whole District 7 he could not find anyone. He asked him how many people he asked. Mr. Gilbert said he asked about five people. Mr. Roseborough asked him if he said he asked about five people. Mr. Gilbert said yes. Mr. Roseborough said that was the district he was born and raised in and it was kind of hard to believe that out of a whole district he could not find anybody to serve on a board from District 7. Mr. Gilbert asked if he knew the names of everyone in his district. He said he saw his point but then he failed to see his point. He said he was trying to bring up an argument. He asked several people and it was brought to his attention that this person wanted to do it. They called him and he was asking for

their application to be accepted. He said he was not going to argue about it. Mr. Roseborough said it was nothing to argue about. Mr. Bell said this conversation was very important for them going forward. They had tried to give the appointments from the district that was requesting it. They gave them common courtesy and they would all vote for it – that was how they had done it in the past. One of the reasons they had seven representatives was to have people from all over the County on these boards. Mr. Pauley made a motion to withdraw the appointment. He said it was actually Mr. Gilbert's appointment from District 7 but he made a motion to withdraw it – that his representative from District 5 was not in District 7, seconded by Mr. Gilbert. Mr. Bell asked Mr. Pauley if wanted to amend the motion previously made and withdraw the name from the appointment list and he said yes sir. ***The motion carried 7-0.*** Mr. Bell asked for a motion not to appoint anyone to the Planning Commission for District 7. Mr. Pauley made a motion not to appoint anyone to the Planning Commission for District 7, seconded by Mr. Gilbert. Attorney Boykin asked if the motion intended that the position remain vacant just for that night. Mr. Bell answered just for that night. Attorney Boykin said the motion should specify that. Mr. Bell said he would repeat the motion as to say they would not appoint anyone that night and they all agreed. ***The motion carried 7-0.***

11. OLD BUSINESS

None.

12. NEW BUSINESS

None.

13. COUNTY ADMINISTRATOR'S REPORT

A. Transit Award – Mr. Whitaker said the first four items would be addressed by Mrs. Williams. Mrs. Williams said the Fairfield County Transit employees were honored at the 2022 SCDOT Operation of the Year Association of SC Training. Transit Operator, Mr. Charles Turner, received the 2022 SCDOT Operation of the Year – Fixed Route Service. Council Chair, Mr. Moses Bell, received the 2022 Rural Board Member of the Year. Transit Operator, Mr. Colin Feaster, received 2nd place in the Van Competition and Transit Director, Ms. Diana White, was elected to the 2022-2023 TASC Board of Directors. They were all present and she congratulated them on representing Fairfield County so well. Mr. Bell asked them to come up front for a photo and they did so. He said he had the opportunity to be with them at the conference. He was very impressed with the respect Diana White received from her colleagues. Her professionalism and the work she did

within the body itself to ensure things went well and to see these men compete with a mindset to grow and develop was an awesome experience. He did not know where his award for Board Member of the Year came from. He felt undeserving but was thankful. Our transit system was significant and the work of the employees was recognized among all of their peers. He asked everyone to give them a round of applause. After the picture was taken, Ms. White spoke off mic about the conference and announced that the young lady that won first place in the van competition was disqualified and therefore Mr. Feaster was the first place winner. He would represent Fairfield County at the National conference in Kentucky. Mr. Bell thanked them all for what they did.

- B. Veteran's Expo** – Mrs. Williams informed the Council that they were invited to the 2022 Veteran's Expo on Saturday, March 19, 2022 from 10am-2pm at the Fairfield Recreation Center. Representatives from various County departments, church and community organizations would be attending. There was a flyer on the County's facebook page and she wanted to let them know and extend the invitation. There was a great list of vendors who would be participating.
- C. S.C. Supreme Court Appointed Courthouse Security Committee** – Mrs. Williams said on May 8, 2019, the Chief Justice of the S.C. Supreme Court, Chief Justice Donald Beatty, ordered that each county shall continue to maintain a standing Court Security Committee to address courthouse security concerns. The original order came in 2012. This update came in 2019 that said each county shall continue to maintain this committee. The Fairfield County Court Security Committee met on June 28, 2019 and July 2, 2019. At those two meetings, there were no representatives from County Administration but they invited them to attend future meetings. The Committee was comprised of the Fairfield County Clerk of Court, representatives from the Fairfield County Sheriff's Department, the Chief Magistrate, Sixth Circuit Solicitor, Public Defender, Emergency Management and Probate Court. The goal of the committee was to identify security concerns related to the Court system. The committee already identified some needs at the first two meetings, which were presented to the previous Administration and they had received a copy of those needs. Mr. Whitaker and herself would review those needs and bring them before County Council for review and consideration during the upcoming budget process. They wanted to make Council aware that the committee was active and County Administration would be working with them in the future.
- D. Budget Calendar** – Mrs. Williams referenced the screen, which showed the proposed 2023 budget calendar. They already had three budget prep meetings with the department heads and elected and appointed officials. At each meeting, they went over the anticipated revenues for the County,

how they would like them to tie in any budget requests to performance measures and mandated requirements and developing a 5-year Capital Improvement Project list to assist with long range planning and budgeting. They realized that it was a quick schedule, which was due to the new Administrator/Deputy Administrator coming in December and February. They had spoken to the department directors and gone over their expectations of how the budget process should work and let them see how much money would be coming in and letting them know that decisions would be made based on that. It had gone well so far and some of the directors were pleased that they were working on the 5-year long range planning list so they could show Council all of the County's needs – not just for the upcoming budget cycle – so that decisions could be made regarding what will happen in the next 3-5 years. They realized the calendar was a fluid document. They had the last meeting that day with the elected and appointed officials. The department deadline to have their budget proposals submitted to Administration was the upcoming Friday. They would then have meetings with the different departments to go over their budget requests - to make sure they tie to performance measures and that the budget presented to Council was a good working budget that was within the projected revenues. They would like to have the first reading by title only on Monday, April 11th and have three work sessions – one on Monday, April 18th with the Revenue and Budget departments, Tuesday, April 26th with agency presentations, and Monday, May 2nd (if needed) with follow up questions and discussion of Special Revenue funds. The goal was to have the second reading and Public Hearing on Monday, May 9th and the third and final reading on Monday, May 23rd. They created the calendar with consideration for possible time needed in June if it was necessary. They already had two regularly scheduled meetings in June and if any additional work sessions were needed there would be plenty of time to do so. They were trying to give time to get some work done before they (Council) got to the first reading so as not to bring an inflated budget. They wanted to go through the requests with the Directors to ensure they (Council) received a good working budget to start with at the first reading. Mr. Bell asked for questions. Mr. Pauley said since they had just received the schedule that night, they would need to look at it to see if there were any conflicts. Mrs. Williams said all of the readings (1st, 2nd, and 3rd) were for regularly scheduled Council meeting nights and the others were scheduled in between those weeks. They tried to schedule as much as they could for the nights Council would be here. If there were conflicts, she asked that they be notified before they finalize it.

- E. Project Update – Mr. Whitaker said these updates would probably become a regular part of his report and tonight he would highlight two of their

projects. On day one, they were handed a list of 57 transition items, most of which were capital projects in different stages of development and execution. Over the last several months, they had worked hard to understand the who, what, when, why and how of the work going on to improve the County and meet County goals. They had whittled that list down to 8 pages and established a weekly projects meeting and regularly scheduled one on one meetings with staff and vendors working on projects for the County. They would periodically update them (Council) on County projects, capital and otherwise. The latest assignment, from Councilman Gilbert, was a staff data collection project to focus on understanding staff morale issues. He thanked Mr. Gilbert for bringing this up and he reassured him that as a veteran leader and former quality improvement director, he fully understood the importance and need to address employee morale as a function of organizational health. Their vision was that they would collect data to fully understand and address improvements to our organization's culture and health, and then develop and execute an action plan that could include training, coaching and procedures that support good employee morale. Regarding an update on the survey, he and Mrs. Williams met with the leadership in the Human Resources Department to discuss the possibility of an online survey. They currently did not have the funding to support hiring an outside consultant, but there were plenty of free or low cost options to gauge employee morale. They were currently exploring the possibility of an online survey tool or distributing paper surveys to receive anonymous feedback from employees. They would use the information gathered to identify areas for future training related to leadership, communication, effective working relationships, team building and management. Efforts were already underway in this area. The Human Resources Department would bring in First Sun EAP or a frontline employee training on April 21st on Communication Strategies for Leaders. Mr. Gilbert asked since he said there were no funds for an outside agency, he wanted to know how much it would cost to hire an outside agency. Mr. Whitaker said he would get some quotes. He asked if doing the survey in this way would get good feedback from staff. He asked if he felt it was fair. Mr. Whitaker said he thought the idea of anonymous, old school paper surveys....Mr. Gilbert apologized for interrupting and said although it could be done anonymously, some responses could be taken out that may affect certain issues. With an outside agency, staff would be more likely to participate and they could analyze the responses and give a report back to all of them at the same time. He felt that an in-house study would leave space for things to be swept under the rug that needed to be taken care of. He felt they needed to find out how much it would cost before they move forward to an outside agency. They could find money for everything else

and he felt the welfare of the staff was very important and needed to be taken seriously – not haphazardly. Mr. Whitaker said they would research and bring back some cost estimates to have an outside firm conduct an anonymous staff survey. Mrs. Greene said in some of her experiences, Mentimeter and other sources had been used to develop the questions and those online sources would tabulate everything for you and list the concerns in order of priority – the concerns mentioned most often would be listed first and would continue in order. She suggested a firm to come up with the questions but online staff surveys were quite beneficial. Mr. Gilbert said he understood and agreed with her but his concerns were the need for a good survey from the staff and he did not want anything to be swept under the rug that needed to be brought out. If it was done in-house there was a possibility that some things would be disregarded. Mrs. Greene said she was speaking more to the process. He said he appreciated it and was just explaining his concerns. Mr. Whitaker said they would prepare to report on that. Mr. Roseborough asked if they voted on having the Administrator go out or could a Council member just arbitrarily ask the Administrator to spend money on issues. Mr. Gilbert said he did not ask him to spend money, he asked him to get a quote. Mr. Whitaker said they would research it and come back with information and they could decide from there.

Mr. Whitaker said the second update regarded parks and recreation. They understood the challenges to get citizens to fully utilize the parks. They understood that getting outside in the fresh air was good for citizens and the economic development of Fairfield County. Investments in improving a community's quality of life created a virtuous cycle: high quality of life, locations that attract workers, which attract employers, which in turn attract even more investments and jobs. High quality parks and recreation could play a pivotal role in attracting and retaining quality businesses. They were very aware of why parks and recreation was an essential public service. Just as water, sewer and public safety were considered essential public services, parks were vitally important to establishing and maintaining the quality of life in a community, ensuring the health of families and youth, and contributing to the economic and environmental well-being of a community and region. Parks and recreation programs provided an opportunity for families and neighbors to spend time together and build strong community bonds. Neighborhoods with parks in them tended to have higher property values and make areas a desirable place to live, work, visit and play. Fairfield County currently had 18 parks and recreation facilities, with two new facilities coming to the inventory: Ridgeway Community Center and Blackstone Park. These parks would require staff and support to be successful. It was obvious that supporting parks and recreation was an important public service of our County Council.

Their goal was to identify ways to support and manage these parks in a sustainable and equitable way. Mr. Pauley asked if he realized that they were short-staffed now at the recreation center. Mr. Whitaker said they talked to Mr. Lucas about staffing and what they were communicating in the budget meetings was the expansion of services. When you talk about the maintenance staff going into the new complex, we need more staff to support those new facilities. They were aware.

14. CLERK TO COUNCIL'S REPORT

None.

15. COUNTY COUNCIL TIME

Mr. Pauley stated that on Saturday morning he attended a mental illness and treatment seminar at Shiloh Church hosted by Love Never Fails organization and Pastor Derrick Hollis. It was a great event and they did a great job for the community of Fairfield County. He then referred to a statement made during the 'public comment' section by Mr. Armstrong. He heard several statements made in the community that the projects being done in Fairfield County from the SCANA settlement was not taxpayer money. He would disagree and stated that the money was the taxpayer's of Fairfield County. The taxpayer's were bearing the costs of the bonds and the increased utility rates. This was a settlement awarded to them. They received little relief in the settlement. The last thing he said was at the last Council meeting, Mrs. Greene asked him why he contacted the auditor's firm to find out about the audit. He felt at the time that Council was not being truthful and he was not getting the answers that the Council deserved. Since that date, a letter on November 19th, was sent to Mr. Moses Bell by the Comptroller of the State of South Carolina. He stated get ready, it's time for the audit. They would withhold funds if the audit was not completed. It would be prudent at that time for you to underscore to your Finance Director how critical it was for them to work as a team. That was on November 19th. Council never heard anything from November 19th. On January 4th, an email from the Comptroller stated that they were behind and they would give until January 21st to get it done. The Council did not hear anything on January 4th, January 21st and the Council was not notified until the first week of February. That was the reason he called the audit firm.

Mr. Bell said he received a letter dated November 19, 2021 from the office of the Comptroller General indicating that there were several weeks left and the office of the Comptroller General had not received the audit information from the County. He notified Brad Caulder of the letter received and asked if there were any issues preventing them from performing the audit on time. Along with several other questions, he assured him that the auditing firm had been hired, Elliott Davis (which was one of the questions). After assurance that it would be taken care of and since it was a staff function to complete the audit

would be taken care of and since it was a staff function to complete the audit and the staff had been in place for many years, it was his belief that it would be accomplished as required. However, on January 4, 2022, he received an email stating the audit was not done as mandated and they were giving us until January 21st to complete. At this time, Mr. Whitaker had assumed the role of County Administrator and so he forwarded him and the Finance Director the email to complete the audit as required. He also sent him an email requesting to be informed of the status. After getting his arms around the situation, he (Mr. Whitaker) discovered that the audit would not be complete by January 21, 2022 as required. Mr. Bell asked Mr. Whitaker to send the information to Council to inform them of these issues concerning the audit and the relating information. This letter was given to The Voice newspaper after Mr. Whitaker sent it by a member of Council in an effort to discredit mainly the Chair of Council – not realizing two important factors. The Council Chair does not do the audit and it would display the performance of their Finance Department leadership and have their performance placed in public view. This was a personnel issue and he felt it should not be in public.

Mrs. Greene said she questioned calling an auditor by a Councilperson and she would continue to question that. She had not seen anything from any financial person to challenge that statement so she said simply to the public again that it was not their (Council) role to call an auditor ever. We look for an independent evaluation of our finances and that should have been done through our Administrator. A Councilperson could sit down with our Administrator to make sure that all of those things were followed through. She was looking at governance and the way she thought it should be done. She also thanked Mr. Moss with the South Carolina Department of Transportation because within the last two weeks, the Old River Road had been paved and she was getting kudos from a lot of constituents that were very happy that it was completed. She said she would call him to extend thanks.

Mr. Bell said they had talked about the audit quite a bit and everyone knew that the Council Chair did not do the audit. It was something that people made up. He prepared a long speech regarding the subject but decided not to read it. Instead, he chose to talk about real news and opportunities. He was very excited that night to honor their Transit personnel. He appreciated their conscious decision to grow and develop greater capabilities for tomorrow's challenges. He congratulated all of them and said he enjoyed his time with them. He said for the last three weeks, they had been extremely busy, working with National and State leaders trying to forge partnerships to move this County forward. They believed today more than any time in Fairfield history they would be able to build out the infrastructure throughout the County as it related to rural water and broadband. They were initiating efforts to be shovel-ready. They had commitments and he asked the citizens to help in the effort.

For example, although he was not present that night, Pastor Ted Belton was in a meeting with Senator Tim Scott's office. Because he knew the direction of the County, he was able to discuss with them rural water and now they had a scheduled follow up meeting. Mr. Whitaker talked about parks, recreation, outdoor space and its importance. They were doing a lot work in this area and with communities left behind without the normal taxpayers dollars. Their hope was to do more as need and funding presented themselves. In the next few weeks, they would be working on the budget. The budget itself would prove to be challenging. They had noted that they must begin with the end in mind – to operate a budget based on the amount of revenue they received. In the past, the County had used appropriation from the fund balance to balance the budget. For all realistic purposes, it had been depleted. As a side note, Mr. Whitaker had been working with the finance team to understand all pockets of available funding not currently utilized. The Wateree Fire Station was gaining new life to erect that station and their hope was that it would be included in the proposed budget. Mrs. Greene was working tirelessly to make that happen. Their plans were to also set aside \$10,000 for funding to develop plans for an animal shelter. Again, he attended the Transportation conference, the SC Association of Counties conference and the Rural Summit – all within the last three weeks. While it demanded a lot of time of him, the planning and contacts had already proven to be valuable to the County. He would be sending the Council a request for time and availability for a retreat to discuss budgetary matters, ARP funding, Community Development Block Grants, and priorities and projects for the future as they look out years from now. They should not forget that the County lost 12.56% of its population from 2010-2020, indicating that the previous path could have been improved. As the poet Sterling Brown from Sumter said – the road you are traveling will not get you to where you must go. He always asked of them, the citizens, to give them a chance to make a difference. He believed they were on the way to an improved future. On a personal note, he thanked his family for attending this meeting and for always loving him. Sometimes they were all on the phone together. It was 11 of them and there were still eight. In the middle of all of this noise, their mom would be proud. They could remember when their mom would have to wash their clothes at night just to make sure they had clean clothes to wear to school the next morning. She never sent them out of the house dirty. For them to be so supportive, he loved them.

- 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.)**

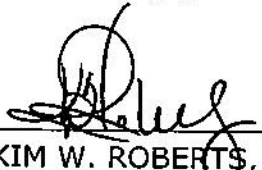
At 7:11 p.m., motion made by Councilman Trapp, seconded by Councilman Roseborough, to go into executive session concerning the below listed items. ***The motion carried unanimously 7-0.***

- A.** Receipt of Legal Advice – Relating to a Matter Covered by Attorney-Client Privilege Regarding Sales of County Real Property Pursuant to S.C. Code Ann. §30-4-70(a)(2).

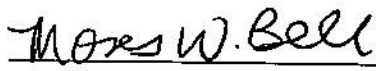
At 7:27 p.m., motion made by Councilman Trapp, seconded by Councilman Roseborough, to come out of executive session and return to regular session. Mr. Bell stated no action was taken in Executive Session. ***The motion carried 7-0.***

ADJOURN

At 7:27 p.m., motion made by Councilman Trapp, seconded by Councilman Roseborough, to adjourn. ***The motion carried 7-0.***



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



MOSES BELL
CHAIRMAN