



**MINUTES
BUDGET WORK SESSION II
FAIRFIELD COUNTY COUNCIL
APRIL 26, 2022**

Present: Moses Bell, Shirley Greene, Mikel Trapp, Timothy Roseborough, Cornelius Robinson, Doug Pauley, Clarence Gilbert, Council Members; Malik Whitaker, County Administrator; Synithia Williams, Deputy County Administrator; Dr. Kim W. Roberts, Clerk to Council.

Absent: None

Others Present: Anne Bass, Beverly Mozie, Brad Caulder.

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.

I. CALL TO ORDER

Chairman Bell called the Work Session to order at 6:00 p.m.

II. APPROVAL OF AGENDA

Motion made by Councilman Trapp, seconded by Councilwoman Greene, to approve the agenda. ***The motion carried unanimously 6-0. (Councilman Robinson not present).***

III. INVOCATION

Councilman Roseborough led the invocation. **(Councilman Robinson arrived at 6:02pm).**

IV. ITEMS FOR DISCUSSION

A. FY 2022-2023 Budget

Mr. Whitaker referenced a memo given to Council that contained the questions from Council from the previous work session and the prepared responses.

- 1. What were the costs associated with re-opening the recycling centers?** The County operated eleven sites. The cost to pay attendants to open all eleven sites every Monday for 12 hours per day would be \$58,344. Re-opening on Monday's would result in the need to go back to the

requirement of roll-off drivers to work overtime on Saturday's, which would result in an additional cost in overtime pay and fuel estimated at an additional \$75,000. **(Councilman Robinson entered the meeting).**

- 2. What was the list of the total number of County employee's vacant and frozen positions?** The County currently had 311 full-time positions, 23 part-time positions, 19 vacant positions and 14 were frozen. He referred to an attachment with the frozen positions in their memo.
- 3. What was the trend associated with the increase in County attorney fees?** The County currently had contracts with several legal teams to assist with various matters. They expected to continue to use those services in the upcoming fiscal year. Boykin and Davis were their general legal counsel; Bruner, Powell, Wall and Mullins, LLC were for Fairfield County versus Wiley Eaton; Gignilliat, Savitz, and Bettis, LLP were their Human Resources attorneys; Pope Flynn LLC were the County representation for Fairfield Joint Water and Sewer; Willoughby and Hoffer PA were special representation for the Fairfield Joint Water and Sewer.
- 4. Were County employees covered by the County's insurance when doing County work while driving their personal vehicles?** (This was related to the question regarding Deputy Coroners). The County's property liability coverage did not provide coverage for driving personal vehicles.
- 5. What were the costs breakdown associated with the Drawdy Park fitness center?** The fitness center started with a park grant of \$48,000 and a \$12,000 County match. County Council approved an additional \$30,000 via request for action. An additional \$62,160 was transferred from the building contingency fund in fiscal year 2020 and \$45,285 from the general fund in fiscal year 2021. The grand total for the project was \$197,445.

Mr. Bell said with 308 employees according to the documentation in the orange book from the Association of Counties, they were an outlier with too many employees. The memo showed 311 employees with 19 vacant positions making it 330. They would have 330 employees, which was a complete outlier for a County their size. Mr. Pauley apologized for the interruption and said as he said in the last Council meeting - those were things they could discuss at another time so as not involve department heads and outside agencies. They were there to present their department budgets - let them do what they needed to do and the Council could discuss their issues at a later time. Mr. Bell told Mr. Pauley that he brought those thing up. Mr. Pauley asked him to repeat himself. Mr. Bell asked him if these were the questions he asked at the last budget session. Mr. Pauley said absolutely. He was asking that they be discussed at a later time - it made no sense to have them waiting to listen to things could be discussed by Council at a later time. Mr. Bell said again that was 330 employees versus 308

as an outlier from the Association of Counties. He said his next question was did they get any money from Fairfield Forward for the Drawdy Park project. Mrs. Bass said yes sir they bought fitness equipment and some of the furnishings for the programs inside the building. This was just for the construction in the building – not related to what they purchased to put in the building in terms of fitness equipment. Mr. Bell asked if that amount of money was showing on their memo. Mrs. Bass said no she thought he wanted to know the cost of the actual building facility. She said she could get the cost of the equipment. Mr. Bell said ok thank you.

Mr. Whitaker turned it over to Mrs. Bass to continue the meeting. She said they would go through the agencies. She said everyone could not come and she would go through in alphabetical order. Mr. Bell asked Mr. Whitaker if they were going through the entire list. Mrs. Bass said she thought the plan was for everyone to have a quick overview (maybe 3-5 minutes) to tell what their agency did for the County and then they could discuss any additional questions. Mr. Bell said ok thank you.

American Red Cross – Mrs. Bass the representative was sick and could attend.

Behavioral Health Services – Vernon Kennedy, Sr. (Executive Director) gave handouts to Council and said he had to leave after his presentation for a graduation for their Strengthening Families Program but he would make himself available to answer any questions. He said Behavioral Health Services was a non-profit organization and designated as the substance abuse authority in Fairfield County about 42 years ago from Fairfield County Council. They took pride in providing all of the substance abuse services in Fairfield County. They provided confidential services for adolescents and adults – primarily treatment services, those who might have an alcohol or drug issue. They were strictly an outpatient treatment facility but they had connections with 31 other organizations in the State. They were all a part of one system under the umbrella of the Department of Alcohol and other drug abuse services. If someone came to them and needed more than outpatient services, they could make referrals within their system as well as outside of their systems. In the 42 years of their existence, they had evolved particularly in the number of clients being served, the continuum of services offered to the community and the various partnerships they maintained. They increased the highly trained staff, maintained the diversity of funds (ensuring they look for funding opportunities) and they moved several times over the years and were currently in their new facility for which he was appreciative. The changes were for the betterment of their clients and allowed them to address substance abuse prevention, treatment and recovery services all because of the support of Council and Administration. Although they were very successful securing many

grants over the years, a lot of them were primarily for specific services or specific drugs abused or specific targeted populations. They often times did not cover some of the needed programmatic and administrative services or expensed incurred. This was where County Council support was needed. The funding they received from Council allowed them to provide some of the support services they would not normally get some grants (lawn care, overhead costs, repairs, inspections, etc.), which were things that Council once provided. They relied heavily on data – some of which was provided in the document he gave them. Data continued to impact their work in the community, schools and churches. He used as an example, contrary to popular belief data showed that a lot of young people reported never using drugs. They conducted a survey every two years (they just completed one with all of the schools in Fairfield County) and they were looking forward to that data. They had seen consistently that 90% or more of their kids had never used drugs. Some may have and that was why they continued to do their work. According to the data, the County still ranked high in DUI crashes, alcohol related hospitalizations, clients with smoking issues, nicotine-related hospitalizations and opioid overdoses and reversals. Over the years, the State had been in an opioid epidemic and Fairfield County formed a response team to address those issues. Some of the data points to our situation worsening in Fairfield County and at times, they ranked highest in the State. Over the years, they have proven to be great stewards of the funds they received and have maintained compliance with their governing entities (licensing and accreditations) to maintain credentials. He respectfully asked Council to provide them the \$62,944 so they could continue to provide the services without hesitation or worry. He also asked to be forgiven of the 25-year no-sale facility loan that was in place since they built their new facility. It was a no-sale facility and with the organization's tenure of 42 years, they had no anticipation of closing their doors or dissolving their organization. Mr. Bell asked Mr. Whitaker how much was recommended. Mrs. Bass said she did not have her book but all of the agencies were set at the 2022 funding level. Mr. Bell asked Mr. Kennedy if he was aware of a lawsuit from the State concerning opioids. He said yes with the open settlement and they were following that. Mr. Bell said Mr. Whitaker had information on the subject if he wanted to talk to him because there may be some funding available. He said thank you very much.

Central Midlands Council on Government – No representative.

Central South Carolina Alliance – No representative.

Chamber of Commerce – Gene Stephens, President, provided handouts to Council. He said he wanted to tell them the difference between their chamber and others. The Chamber of Commerce of most communities focused on small

business development and sometimes tourism or community development. Their chamber was involved in almost everything – small business development, tourism, and community development. One of the programs came from the school district in the form of a workforce development program – getting kids ready for interviews with the help of an HR representative, preparing resumes, and teaching soft skills. They brought in companies last year to do all senior hiring events - it started at Fairfield Central and was moving to the Stem school. They hosted 12 major events throughout the year that brought in close to 45,000 people with a rough estimate of about 25,000 people from out of town. He said the pandemic caused South Carolina to lose a lot of revenue for tourism. Some of the bigger areas lost over 30% of their tourism revenue and employees. Fairfield County was one of the only counties in the State of South Carolina to see an increase in every category of tourism in 2020. When everyone else was struggling, losing businesses, employees, and funding, Fairfield County had actual increases across the board. They were one of the organizations that touched almost all 20,000 lives in the county through various operations, initiatives and programs they offered. They also had a reach outside of the county. Some of their partners included the Railroad Museum and they promote the lakes, parks, Carolina Venture World, which was under new ownership and had increased their activities. With the increased activity, the goal was to get those people into the towns to visit their restaurants, shops and farmer's market. They also wanted to get food trucks, farmer's markets, etc. to the site as a way of creating a pathway between Carolina Adventure World and their towns Ridgeway, Winnsboro, Lake Monticello and Jenkinsville. They worked closely with every agency that did tourism and every business in the county. When he started, he asked the large businesses how they could help and they all said they needed employees. Currently, South Carolina and the country were struggling for employees. They were doing their part through workforce development and getting jobs lined up for the young people to make an easy transition for a path to employment. There was a lot of poverty in certain areas with no pathway to employment and they were working towards bridging that gap. Midlands Tech did a great job with their new free classes. He said the handout before them basically listed everything they did. They expanded their advertising into the Rock Hill and Charlotte area. Carolina Adventure World was going to start tracking where people came from. They would share that data with them so they could start target marketing in those areas. They had two employees and felt they were a positive light in the County. They faced challenges but promoted what they had. Mr. Bell asked Mrs. Bass how they funded the Chamber of Commerce – was it done through tourism. She said yes it was funded through their accommodations tax that came from the State. There were two components – tourism related and tourism promotion. He asked if the total before them was funded through that and she said yes it was. Mr.

Bell said if you went to Molly Creek it was really busy but they were hoping they could do something. Mr. Stephens said during COVID they hosted a movie on the lake and people loved it. He thought it was a good idea to do the same at Molly Creek to give it more exposure. He also talked to WLTX about doing a special spotlight for that. The local television stations did an excellent job of giving them free publicity. They kept things positive and talk about things that bring a bright light to Fairfield County and they do a great job of supporting that.

Chameleon Inspiration Learning Center – No representative.

Clemson University Cooperative Extension – Marlene Walker, County Agent/Coordinator, acknowledged their 4-H youth development agent (Stephanie Icks) and said they recently hired a nutrition educator for their expanded food and nutrition program. She said Clemson University Cooperative Extension Service provided information to individuals, groups and communities and help them to apply the information to improve their quality of life. They had five targeted areas: food safety and nutrition, forestry, natural resources, commercial and consumer horticulture, livestock 4-H, youth development 4-H. She said along with their budget request, they included their agency Clemson Public Service and Agriculture report for Fairfield County. It included their impact of engagement with the citizens to improve economical development and the quality of life by delivering research-based information. The citizens learned from the information provided from their program and were able to lead more productive, healthy lives that contributed to the economic development of the county. The number of people participating in the education program was 119. The number of education programs and workshops conducted was 22 and other educational contact, (phone, office visit or 1:1), was 35. During COVID 19, they had to be creative in reaching their clientele with zoom classes. The budget request was for their 4-H and youth development program. The staff mentioned earlier as well as herself were based in Fairfield County and they were in the process of hiring a County Administrator. They also have area agents that support the programs in the county. She thanked them for their support of the Fairfield County Clemson Extension. Mr. Bell thank them for their work.

Columbia Area Mental Health – Allison Ferrell, Executive Director, said they provided their public health services to Richland and Fairfield Counties. She announced that Greg Oates, who had been with DMH for about 30 years, had retired. His replacement was Shanita Lee. She said DMH was about 200 years old – a long-standing agency and proud to be in Fairfield County. They had seven staff at the Fairfield location including adult and child psychiatrists. Their services included individual family and group therapy and mobile crisis services.

If there were a psychiatric emergency out in the community then two clinicians would go out with law enforcement with the goal of diverting from emergency rooms and detention centers where people would not get the mental health services needed. They offered school-based services and they had one school-based clinician that provided services in two of the County's public schools. For fiscal year 2021, they served 306 residents, providing 3,063 services to adults, children and their families. Their community partners included probate court, behavioral health (they were collaborating on the creation of a drug court), the detention center (they had their own psychiatric staff but they consulted and provided services as needed), the school district, and MUSC law enforcement. She said referrals to mental health come from schools, walk-ins (people could walk in and receive an assessment and be connected to the services needed), law enforcement, behavioral health, probate court, hospitals, emergency rooms and family/friends. No one was turned away for the inability to pay. Some of the benefits of DMH and the services they provided were their access to entitlement specialists, housing specialists, mobile crisis and employment services. She asked them to consider their \$75,000 budget request. She said she did not think they were going to see a decrease in mental health needs/services. Mr. Bell asked who the rental lease was from. Mrs. Bass the allocation went to the Department of Mental Health directly and they paid their own vendor. Ms. Ferrell said she would have to get the leasing information but the County's contribution offset their total operating costs as well as State dollars, revenue and some small grants.

Council on Aging – Angi Connor, Executive Director, said they were the focal point for senior services in Fairfield County as designated by the State Department on Aging and through the Central Midlands Area on Aging. They provided meals on wheels to all of Fairfield County, lunch at their senior center, and activities and transportation for their senior center participants. They also provided in-town transportation for grocery shopping and other essentials. Prior to the pandemic, they had a home care program and they were working to reinstate that. It was a very needed service in the County. These services were considered core services under the Federal Older Americans Act and they were required to be provided in every State. The majority of their funding came through the Federal Older Americans Act and their Federal dollars and they were allocated to local service providers (like them) through a request for proposal process through Central Midlands. They were awarded ever since the inception. The counseling agent delivered meals to approximately 200 seniors seven days per week, which was about 1,400 meals weekly. They go to every corner of the County – no one was denied services because of where they lived. They used a combination of staff and volunteers. The year 2022 marked the 50th year of nutrition services for the County. The newly renovated senior center had seen

an increase in traffic since it opened in November 2021. Prior to the pandemic, they saw 30-35 people per day for lunch and currently they saw about 13-14 people per day to eat lunch. Although the numbers were lower, the traffic was increasing – people were feeling more comfortable coming to the senior center. They were excited to be among people – isolation was a big deal in the senior population and the more socialization the better quality of life. They offer more than lunch – they have exercise classes, bingo, crochet, arts, crafts and some technology classes. They also allowed use of their facility by different civic clubs and organizations – currently the Winnsboro Rotary and the American Legions Women's Auxiliary group meet on a monthly basis. They averaged about 60 people per week coming thru the center and using some type of service. The seniors Fairfield County were no different than anywhere else – they faced specific struggles when it came to aging and staying in their own homes and communities. The cost of living continued to rise yet their income remained stagnant. While many seniors had health problems and medical bills that eat away at their retirement, others had found they were outliving their savings. People planned for retirement but the cost had gone up and they were unable to live comfortably. It was a daily struggle to choose between medicine, utility bills and proper nutrition. Their agency was facing the same types of struggles – the price of doing business was skyrocketing. There were higher labor and material costs and it was taking a toll on their services. They were doing their best to maintain. Their raw food costs since July 1st increased up to \$1 just to provide meals. They were trying to absorb those costs and keep people in the programs. The programs administered by the Council on Aging were extremely important to the citizens because they were designed to enhance the senior's quality of life. They did not have resources to help them with financial problems but they could help them with their basic needs. They did not charge fees for their services, they did accept donations and they did not turn anyone away if they could not pay. The citizens of Fairfield County deserved to have these services in place and they contributed greatly to their communities. Fairfield County government had been very supportive of their agency and they were extremely grateful and they hope that the support would continue for the seniors in the community. Mr. Bell thanked them for their work.

Mr. Robinson asked if going forward they could listen to the staff recommendation since they did not have it front of them. Mr. Bell agreed and asked Mrs. Bass if they could hear the staff recommendations after each speaker. Mrs. Bass suggested they turn to page 42 in their notebook and they would see the Council on Aging. She said everyone was basically set at the funding level for 2022 and for Council on Aging it was \$93,969. Mr. Whitaker said they would like to keep the presentations to 3-5 minutes.

Department of Social Services – No representative.

Board of Disabilities & Special Needs – Laura Collins, Director, provided agency brochures. She said the board served some of the most vulnerable individuals in the County. They served people with life-long, developmental disabilities including mental retardation, autism and they had a head and spinal cord injury division. They provided residential, job coaching and vocational services. Fairfield County was extremely supportive of the people they served. They had a recycling site that they operated for Fairfield County for several years – the Jenkinsville recycling site – solely with employees from their agency. They had a group that went out Monday-Friday from 7am to 1pm. It was an enclave – a staff with about six consumers that performed the job duties necessary. They had job coaches who could work independently operate the evening hours and weekends. She issued a challenge to Council to look at other available recycling positions because they may be able to handle some of the operations, especially on weekends, at a reduced cost as opposed to having employees and paying insurance and other benefits. They would love the opportunity to discuss that and give a quote. She talked about services outside of the vocational program but the vocational program was the program for which they requested funding. The funding was to support the transportation cost. She said the Fairfield Diversified Services Program transported service recipients living in the community to and from the workshop and to and from their jobs. The operation of the program was important to the families and those they served. It allowed families and caregivers to work Monday-Friday knowing that their loved one was gainfully employed or taken care of in one of their vocational type facilities. It also gave that person a feeling of satisfaction that were able to complete a task and they earn a paycheck every other Friday just as the other employees. They dine and shop in Winnsboro – putting money back into the economy. They had 10 residential houses in Winnsboro called community training homes and when they were fully staffed, they employed about 125 people. They were currently down about 18% of their workforce and recruitment and maintaining employees was a huge struggle. They had long-time employees but the newer staff tended to come and go. When they can make more money at McDonald's than providing hands-on care to someone with disabilities, a lot of the younger people choose that route. The requested funding of \$55,000 would cover the day program transportation with \$35,000 of that was for supplies (fuel) for the fleet of vehicles, \$12,000 for repairs and \$8,000 for insurance. She said that was not the total cost for operations of the vehicles – last year the cost was about \$70,000 but they received funding from the South Carolina Department of Disabilities and Special Needs. They also had fundraisers throughout the year to help generate the additional funds needed. She hoped Council would continue to support them and they appreciated the support already given. Mrs. Bass said

the funding level was set at \$49,500. She reminded everyone of the five-minute limit. They knew how important it was and wanted to allow everyone the opportunity to speak.

Eau Claire Cooperative Health – No representative.

Fairfield Health Department – No representative.

Good Samaritan House – No representative.

Midlands Technical College – Ron Rhames, President, introduced Debbie Walker (Vice President of Business Affairs) and Barry Kirk (Provost). He thanked Council for their support of the college. He said during the current academic year in Fairfield County, they offered 20 academic courses, and 8 corporate and continuing education courses to the citizens of Fairfield County. Between the Fairfield High School location and the campus, 250 students took classes in the county. It included students from Fairfield Central and Richard Wynn (those students took classes at MTC). The expected to award 25 high school students an associate degree or a certificate from the college during the graduation ceremony the following week. He repeated that statement. Mr. Bell said that was outstanding. Mr. Rhames said it meant that those students had a head start and their investment allowed those students to save their parents a tremendous amount of money and reduce the cost of their education. They were in a position to take on less debt to get an education due to their (Council) investment in the college. The number they were expecting this year was very similar to what they did last year in terms of high school students getting a college award. He pointed out that the award would be given to them before they got their high school diploma. He had the pleasure of being a part of the high school graduation at Fairfield Central and honoring those students a second time. He said overall, enrollment for Fairfield County residents was about 275 FTE students and that did not include the dual enrolled students that he just spoke about. For the first time they were offering "Community Interest" courses. It was very successful and was started in the spring of 2022. The courses included organizing computer files (10 enrolled), computer basics for seniors (8 enrolled), first aid (15 enrolled) and this summer they would offer a class called "Using the Internet Safely". They would be offered as community interest and there would be no charge to the community. He said another exciting thing they were engaged in the county was through apprenticeships. This program was a way for organizations to build their own workforce. They were working with Bomag for their industrial mechanical technicians, with Fairfield Medical Association for patient care technicians, medical coding and billing and with the paramedic program. They expected the activities for the 2022-2023 year to be similar to what they had that year. They working to, hopefully, offer an EMT

program. Their budget request was \$155,100 and he believed last year their funding was \$142,929. Mr. Bell said they previously asked him to increase his presence and the campus in Fairfield County and he did that. They talked about the free community courses and they were successful in the County. He thanked him for his work in the County. He asked to talk about the training the school offered for new jobs – it would be a big plus moving forward. Dr. Rhames said it was two different levels – one was the aforementioned corporate and continuing education courses (most were designed specifically for employers that were looking for employees) and their quick jobs programs (citizens could come to MTC and in some cases about four weeks get a skill set that would lead to a job. It was very successful for those that took advantage of it in their college service area. Mr. Pauley said he had been on Council for six years and every year he (Rhames) submitted a request that was not detailed – it always stated building maintenance. He asked if he was familiar with how many academic classes they offered in the spring at the Fairfield campus. He said on the website, they offered one class for the academic spring class at the Fairfield campus. Dr. Rhames said they had two spring classes – English 102 and History 202. Mr. Pauley said the website had one and he called the campus and was told they were offering one class in the spring. He said also in the upcoming fall they were offering two academic classes – History 101 and History 201. He (Rhames) referenced offering a CNA training class six times, one phlebotomy class and one pipe welding – so two academic courses and three trainings. Dr. Rhames said right. Mr. Pauley asked if the \$150,000 that he described as building maintenance went to building maintenance. Dr. Rhames said the monies from Fairfield, as well as Richland and Lexington, went towards the college's physical plant operations – the monies supported the college's facilities. The county did not have a direct millage as the other two counties that funded them so they looked at the tuition rate (remembering almost 300 students come to the Richland and Lexington County campuses) and funded the difference between what they would charge an out of county student and an in county student and that was where the \$155,000 came from. Mr. Pauley asked if he was saying that the \$155,000 that Fairfield County gave was not used for the Fairfield campus but for all three campuses. Dr. Rhames said it was used for all of their physical plant operations. Mr. Pauley asked for the in county rate versus the out of county rate. Mr. Bell said it was on page 2 of their handout. Ms. Walker said the out of county rate was \$2,820 and the in county rate was \$2,256 and the difference was \$564. Mr. Pauley asked if in the spring semester Midlands Tech students attended for free. Dr. Rhames said he knew he was asking about the zero tuition and students could have attended the college for free but the money provided by the State represented about 20-25% of the monies that were needed. For those students who were able and were qualified for it, the institution made the difference in order to honor the commitment the

Governor made. Mr. Pauley said he felt that with the amount of money that Fairfield County gave, they were not getting their best bang for their buck with Midlands Tech. He said they could offer a whole lot more in Fairfield County – two academic classes he felt were not enough nor were six of the same classes and two other training classes. Dr. Rhames said they understood and they had over the years offered more courses. They worked with the advisory board trying to decide and figure out the right mix of courses. They were educating folks in Fairfield County through the high schools as well as Richard Wynn. Mr. Pauley asked for a printout of how many students attended in the spring. When he presented something, it was all about building maintenance and Fairfield County did the building maintenance on that property and Dr. Rhames said that was true. Mr. Pauley said he had a list for shrubbery around the building that needed trimming, bird nests that needed to be removed from the front of the building and he was pretty sure it did not take \$150,000 to do those things. Dr. Rhames said that might have been correct but money they (Council) provided helped lower the costs for students who attended the college when they came to one of the campuses in Richland or Lexington and they had a number of Fairfield residents who took those courses. The funds from Richland and Lexington counties helped support students from Fairfield County. Mr. Pauley said thank you. Mr. Bell thanked Dr. Rhames for his presence in the county and said the college supported Fairfield County. Mrs. Bass said that funding level was set at the 2022 adopted, which was \$142,929.

Palmetto Citizens Against Sexual Assault – No representative.

Olde English District – Lynn Montgomery Moore said the Executive Director, Jenny Parrish was unable to attend. She said the Olde English District was created by the State Legislature to promote tourism in Fairfield County and six other counties. Their mission was not only to get visitors to Fairfield County and the other counties but to ask them to stay longer and spend more money. They wanted them to come to Fairfield County and spend money in the restaurants, stores, gas stations and attractions. Generating accommodations sales tax, sales tax, and gas taxes all contributed to that economy, thus benefiting the residents. By promoting all seven counties, it gave the visitor more reasons to those counties. As visitors, they did not see the County line – when you visit the beach you do not care if you in Horry County or Georgetown County. They worked closely with the Chamber – not to duplicate their efforts but to enhance them. They acted on promotions and did a lot of advertising whereas the Chamber did a lot of local stuff – almost product development. Working with the Chamber allowed them to properly promote Fairfield County. They had a marketing plan that marketed all of their counties. It was put together by State research as well as conversion study. The marketing plan included brochures,

their visitors guide and other brochures that included Fairfield County. They recently did the Bassmaster Classic in Greenville and they were able to meet with fishermen, their families and other consumers to talk about going to Lake Wateree. Not only going there, but stopping in other places like Ridgeway and the South Carolina Railroad Museum - there was so much to do in Fairfield County that visitors needed to know about. They also had a great presence on social media with Facebook and Instagram and she encouraged them to visit. They did digital and print media - ads in Southern Living, South Carolina Living, Columbia Metro, and North Carolina Our State magazines. They recently had a two-page ad encouraging people to visit their State parks with offerings of things to do. They recently revamped their website and they were updating content. In May, they were bringing people from all of the South Carolina Welcome Center's (there was nine) to the Olde English District and into Fairfield County. It would be an advantage because they would be able to promote Fairfield County throughout the State. Most of their promotions may be the only regional and national promotion of the counties. She thanked them and appreciated their continued support. Mr. Bell thanked her. Mrs. Bass said they were funded out of the county's accommodations tax under tourism promotion, similar to one of the components of the Chamber and was set at \$21,809 - the same as last year. Mr. Bell asked for the amount again and it was given. He said they only asked for \$19 so they should go back and Mrs. Bass said right, correct.

Public Defender - William Frick, the Circuit Public Defender for the Sixth Judicial Circuit for Fairfield, Chester, and Lancaster counties. He thanked Dr. Rhames for his cooperation with the school district. His daughter was graduating from the Governor's School in Greenville in May and would be attending the University of South Carolina with several classes taken through the partnership with the school district because she was cohort five at Fairfield Central High School. He said their office was located in the Fairfield County courthouse and he appreciated them moving forward with the expansion at the courthouse. They were hoping to provide better service. They had two full-time seasoned attorneys in the Fairfield office. In other offices, he had trouble recruiting and maintaining attorneys. There was a lot of money out there for lawyers so they did not want to work for the Public Defender's office with a starting salary of \$49,000, which was what he had to offer them. With the talk of loan forgiveness, which was great, but it undercut them because one of the incentives they were able to provide was loan forgiveness if they worked for them for 10 years. If their loan would be forgiven anyway, why would they want to make \$49,000 a year for 10 years when you can make more money and still have the loan forgiven. It was why he was asking for a salary increase. He had two seasoned attorneys, meaning he had two lawyers that he could let run court

in Fairfield County and he did not have to worry about what was happening. They took care of the clients, they did their jobs and they had been with them for a while and one was a resident of the county. He was trying to keep folks – one was moving up on the salary level, they implemented the salary ladder some years ago. They, along with the Solicitor's office, did so in an attempt to keep good, qualified attorneys in the public sector. One attorney was moving up to Deputy Public Defender (the highest level) and he was asking for a COLA increase. They were a unique character and did not belong to anybody. Their administering county was Chester – they wrote the checks. The money came to them from the State and their local counties. He said every dime of the money he was asking for was spent in the Fairfield County office but it did not fully fund the Fairfield County office. They paid the paralegal, the two attorneys, a contract attorney (who handled magistrate court) and outside of that, they had an attorney who went around the circuit handling juvenile cases. There was an increase in violent crimes – crimes overall had not really increased but real violent offenses had and they were hit tremendously hard in Fairfield County. The year before last they had the most murders they ever had in Fairfield County. Those were their cases and those people had to stay in jail for a long time. Trying to keep his staff and maintaining good salaries was his ask. He asked for an investigator travel – they were fortunate to receive recurring money from the Legislature so he could have a full-time investigator. He said the State was good for giving things but fully funding them. For the investigator position, they gave him enough to pay the salary but he could not afford a car or mileage and he was asking for assistance on mileage. They were all licensed attorneys and they had to be members of the South Carolina Bar. They were also members of the Fairfield Bar and another professional organization and they had to get continual legal education hours. That was why he asked for funding for professional services and training. There were no questions and Mr. Bell thanked him for his work. Mrs. Bass said the funding level was the adopted 2022 at \$95,204.

Railroad Museum – Henry Nechemias, Director, thanked the Council for their years of support. They had a wonderful relationship with the County and they had been solidly behind them. He said they were all volunteers – they had no full-time or part-time employees. He referenced his colleague, Pat Walker (who was present) as one of the local volunteers. Their goal was tourism. They attracted people from all over the State and Country – New York, Florida, Chicago, California and one of the reasons was they were the only tourist railroad that actually ran trains. There were other railroad museums, like Aiken, Branchville, and Spartanburg but they did not run trains – just displays. They were there since 1983 and they continued to operate and improve. They were open Wednesday thru Saturday. They ran trains on the schedule posted on their

website, every Saturday during the summer and special events like the Easter Bunny, the Pumpkin Patch and the visitor from the North Pole in December. They also ran a lot of charters and special trains – they had over 10 special trains running between April and May. He heard that Fairfield County was not affected as much by COVID. They normally had between 9-10,000 riders per year and in 2020 they had 3,000 – a third of their ridership. In 2021, they doubled it – well over 6,000 riders and they were hoping to get up back to the 9 and 10,000 bracket that year. They try to do things that attracted people and keep them in the county. The money they requested would pay for a portion of their maintenance – what it cost to keep the locomotives working, to repair the track, and to keep the rail cars functioning. According to his quarterly reports, the County grant last year paid for about a quarter of the maintenance expenses. Their ticket prices paid for the difference and everything that went into keeping the place open. They were trying to gather money for some of their big projects. They were working hard to improve their image and they had a marketing program done just before the pandemic. He referenced the brochure he gave them to see the results. They had a new logo and catch line “y’all aboard” and new t-shirts (he held up one for demonstration). They were trying to use some the marketing – they won a contest and had the marketing done for free. He hoped they would continue their funding. Mr. Pauley asked how to get a t-shirt. Mr. Nechemias said to come by between 10-4 Wednesday thru Saturday and bring \$20. Mr. Pauley said Fairfield County was having a Wings and Wheels festival and asked if he would be selling shirts. He said he had not thought about that but they would be there advertising and it was a good idea. Mr. Bell asked how they were funded and Mrs. Bass said through tourism, which came through their State accommodations tax and the funding level was at \$28,000 – the same as last year.

Rescue Squad – Mrs. Bass said Mr. Ramsey sent a message that he would not be able to attend. If there were any questions, they could be directed to him.

The Association of Counties and the I-77 Alliance – Mrs. Bass said those were generally membership fees and there were no representatives. Mr. Bell said to please note that the South Carolina Association of Counties returned their fee last year or the year before. Mrs. Bass said she could not remember the fiscal year it fell in but it was one of the COVID years.

Sister Care – Melva Rogers (Rural Advocate for Fairfield County) referenced the Executive Director who was present, Ann Keita. Their mission was to provide services and to advocate for women who were abused and their children. They also promoted the prevention of domestic violence through community awareness and training. They served women in five counties – Fairfield, Kershaw, Newberry, Richland, and Lexington. In Fairfield County, they provided

a variety of services. She was the primary worker in Fairfield so she did it all – community services, court advocacy, assisting with orders of protection, divorces, etc. Through community services, they offered supportive housing, children's counseling, individual counseling, and emergency shelter. She offered a handout of their services. All services were free of charge – they were funded by grants and monies from different counties. They received referrals from Fairfield County DSS, the Sheriff's Department, the Magistrate's Court thru domestic violence court and self-referrals. The office was located at the Fairfield DSS building, in a safe and neutral location where women were able to come in and receive services. Another services offered was their 24/7 service line women can receive assistance no matter the day or the hour and still all services were free. There were no questions and Mr. Bell thanked them for their work. He said their work was important to everyone. He knew it could be tough work and it bothered them to see what some people go through but he appreciated what they did. Mrs. Bass said their funding level was set at \$7,200 – the same as the 2022 request.

Solicitor – Randy Newman (Solicitor for the Sixth Circuit – Lancaster, Chester, and Fairfield Counties) said they worked closely with Mr. Frick and the Public Defender's office as an arm of public safety. While he was tasked with defending the accused, they were tasked with prosecuting those cases. They prosecute not only for the Fairfield County's Sheriff's Office and Winnsboro Public Safety but also some agencies they might think of – DNR (game wardens), DHEC, DSS, Highway Patrol, SLED and the Department of Juvenile Justice. They prosecuted for any agency that could create a warrant. They were also tasked with maintaining diversion programs mainly for low-level and first-time offenders. They ran a juvenile arbitration, juvenile drug court, alcohol education program, traffic education program, pre-trial intervention, worthless check unit, adult drug court, veteran's court and record expungements. His current level was \$114,000 and he requested an increase. Like the Public Defender said, they worked together to create a career ladder several years ago so when folks started at \$49,000, they knew they would not stay at \$49,000. He had an employee who was due on the career ladder and that was what he was asking for – \$4,949 on the career ladder. As for a cost of living, traditionally with each county when they gave a cost of living they would only include the folks who worked in this county in his office. They get State funding as well as from each county. All of his employees were Chester County employees because of payroll but several worked full-time in Fairfield County and he asked they be covered should there be a cost of living increase for the county. They had IT needs. They were getting discovery through electronic means (email, downloading) and the download speeds were horrendous. Last year, it was bumped up a notch and it needed to go up again. They were getting a lot of body cam footage and videos

that they did not always get electronically and downloading it took forever. The met with TruVista and it would cost an extra \$350 per month or \$4,200 per year for the upgrade. He also had to upgrade the case management system. The State was funding the upfront costs of \$75,000 and there was a monthly maintenance fee of \$4,500 per month. He was asking each county in his circuit to fund one third of that, which came to \$18,000 per year. Lastly, he said DUI's were increasing in Fairfield County. They had a DUI prosecutor that specialized in prosecuting DUI's. He was grant funded and worked throughout the circuit in each county. His grant would end towards the end of the year and he asked each county to fund one third of his salary. During COVID, he and the Public Defender with their Clerks of Court and Judges and they were number one in the State on moving percentage of cases. There were no questions. Mr. Bell thanked him for working with the citizens in their area on expungements and other things and said the work he did to help people become full citizens was commendable. Mr. Newman said he would be happy to attend any Town Hall meetings held by Council to explain the process to the constituents. Mrs. Bass said currently the funding level was set at \$114,929, which was the same as fiscal 2022.

Transitions – Craig Curry (CEO of Transitions Homeless Center) said they were located in downtown Columbia. They had folks from Fairfield County that stayed with them all the time. He thanked the Council for their past support. He said they were a 260-bed facility and they targeted the entire Midlands area. Lexington and Richland counties were the largest but all of the outlying counties (including Fairfield) came to Transitions including men and women. They receive support without question. They housed 3,207 people since they opened almost 11 years ago. Last year, they touched 3,110 folks during COVID and they did not decrease any services during that time – they never closed their doors and continued to operate. They served 188,000 meals last year, three meals a day, seven day a week – Christmas, Thanksgiving, Sunday, it did not matter. They had 20 folks that they put into shelter last year from Fairfield County. They received services from job services, housing searches, and medical, psychiatric and addiction care. Currently, they had an elderly person from Winnsboro who moved to Columbia to stay with his sister. The sister for whatever reason put him out and he came to Transitions. He wanted to come back to Winnsboro so they secured an emergency housing voucher and they will place him in a week or two. The county lines were very permeable and people travel between the counties. Often people from Fairfield County would go to Richland County to get help across the boards to get access to services and non-profits located in the capital city. They were grateful for the support the Council had given. He was a proud resident of District 2 and he enjoyed coming every year and watching them in action. He did not mind sitting for a long period because he was able to

see who they were and what they were doing and he was grateful for their willingness to serve. There were no questions and Mr. Bell thanked him for his work. Mrs. Bass said their fiscal year 2022 level was \$3,600. She said she thought that was everybody.

Mr. Whitaker said they wanted to go over the revenue budget and talk about the motions list. Mr. Bell said after the second reading, they normally put together the motion's list because the motion's list happened on the third reading. Mr. Whitaker asked the will of Council. Mr. Gilbert said they were going to talk about the capital expense. Mr. Bell said ok they could do that and asked if there were any questions about the second reading and the motion's list. Mrs. Bass in their discussions about the motion's list, they would like to get it developed and get more guidance as to the changes for the second reading. Although it would not be final, it might be more reflective of what the final would be. She said they could do it either way but that was their thought behind trying to get it closer to what the final might be. Mr. Bell said he wanted to see the money added back to recycling but he did not know if the other Council members wanted to see that. They all had to decide that and he could not say put it in the budget. The recommendation from Mr. Whitaker was this would be option 2 (with the 10%) as the ordinance was being prepared. From that, they would work on the motion's list to add those things that Council members wanted to add to that list. He thought he was right and he saw Councilman Robinson shaking his head. If they did it any other way, he did not know how to say what they all agreed to. Mr. Bell asked Mrs. Bass her thoughts and she said it sounded perfect. She said the thought over the last couple of years, some their work sessions were shifted around with regards to zoom meetings – they had a lot of different moving parts. She did know if it had been the same for the last couple of years. Mr. Bell said this time it did not look like there would be many things on the motion's list. It was closer to where they needed to be and it had to be that way because of the money. They did not have the revenue to talk about doing much more than that. He asked if any other Council members saw it differently. Mr. Pauley asked if they were going to submit a motion's list. Mr. Bell said yes they would have second reading and once completed (to include the public hearing) and they could talk about what they wanted on the motion's list. They had two more work sessions scheduled but he asked if they could go back to one – they could do second reading and a work session. Mrs. Williams said that was one of the questions on the agenda. They currently had another budget work session scheduled for the following Monday just in case they needed to come back with any other questions. She asked if Council wanted to have that work session or move it to May 16th, which would be after the second reading and public hearing. Mr. Bell said that was what they did. It gave them the opportunity to do second reading and come

back for the work session so they could develop the motion's list. He said it sounded like they had consensus. Mr. Robinson asked for the date and Mrs. Williams said Monday, May 16th. She also asked Council if they could discuss the capital at that time. She did not have the capital spreadsheet – it was not on that night's agenda and she could not log in to the internet to pull it up. She said from the memo in the book and the recommendations, they could not allocate federal funding in that budget process. When they asked the departments to submit their capital needs for the next five years, they prioritized that and recommended that some projects be potentially funded from monies left over from the DSS roof project and the second allocation of ARPA. They thought if they could identify that, then at the end of those projects and when the ARPA monies came down they would already know how they would like to allocate those funds. They would do the same thing with any other projects that came forward. Mr. Davenport said last night that one of the economic development projects – the mega site grading – came in under budget so they may be able to look at some of that funding as well in the future to potentially fund some capital projects. She and Mrs. Bass were looking at some other opportunities that different counties fund their capital needs and they would bring that back for future discussion. They not have it all fleshed out by the next work session but they were trying to look long-term because they realized that with the revenue and operational expenses they would have to look at all sorts of options to fund the County's capital needs to maintain health and safety in Fairfield County. Mr. Bell said thank you and he was good with doing that. Mrs. Williams said if anyone had questions before May 16th about capital specifically to let her know. Mr. Bell told Mr. Gilbert that they had the capital in their books and those things he wanted considered could be given to them. Mr. Robinson asked if the departments requesting capital would be there. Mr. Bell said all of the departments presented their capital that night. It was all put on the spreadsheet before them. He told them how much the capital cost (about five million). He wrote it all down and they already gave them their capital. Mrs. Williams said if there was a specific department that they wanted further information about to let her know and they would try to have that person there or have the information available. Mrs. Bass asked if they wanted to talk about the revenue. Mr. Bell said to go ahead. As Mrs. Bass gave them handouts, Mr. Bell said they may not be prepared to talk about it since they were just receiving the handouts. Mrs. Bass said that was their general fund revenue and most of their special revenue funds were grants or other special sources of revenue. Those were the main categories and the details were in their books. She took the last several years the actual amount so they could see where some of the revenue estimates came from. The 2022 actual was not the full year yet. One of the main ones under taxes she broke it out in detail because she wanted them to see that. She asked if they had questions about the summary sheet.

Mr. Bell asked if the grand total for revenues for 2023 was \$35 million and she said yes sir. He said on their sheet it was \$33 million. She said it would include any transfers in from fund balance. If they looked right up that number six, that would include that. Mr. Bell asked if she included the fund balance and she said it was included in the total number there, yes sir. He said ok – it was the same thing but she included the funding and she said yes. She referred to the big sheet and said she wanted to break the taxes out. A lot of the other things like the fees, State aid that they got did not represent the amount of the budget that the taxes did. She wanted them to be able to see the trends for the last several years and what they collected. They could see how it went up and then back down in some cases. The first line was utilities (what they got from the nuclear plant) which was the bulk of that budget. It went down a little for 2022 it went back up and she was hopeful that they would see that trend go back up. One of the biggest decreases (line 4108 – the State business personal) back in 2018 and 2019 it was well over \$1 million. For 2021, they only collected \$334,000. It took a big nosedive. It was one of the main things when they talked about the revenue they lost at the nuclear plant. When they were under construction, they had a construction city on the ground. When that construction stopped, (they were paying taxes on the equipment) they packed up and moved out. That was what caused the nosedive on the State business personal – their taxes on their personal property, their plant equipment. They talked about it in multiple conversations but she wanted them to be able to see that trend. They eased up real property tax a little bit. She talked to the tax assessor and with the housing market and home selling – prices exceeded what they were on the tax rolls for – the new selling price would become the new value and that would help the assessments go up on real property. Otherwise, things would be pretty stable. Mr. Bell asked if they stayed at the \$220,000 versus the \$250-\$280,000 with the \$333,000. She said yes sir it was still in there as the \$220,000.

Mr. Bell asked if there were any questions and there were none. He thanked everyone for being there and for all of the work to get there.

V. ADJOURN

At 7:49 p.m., motion made by Councilman Trapp, seconded by Councilwoman Greene, to adjourn. ***The motion carried 7-0.***

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Kim W. Roberts', written over a horizontal line.

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

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Moses Bell', written over a horizontal line.

MOSES BELL
CHAIRMAN