



**MINUTES  
FAIRFIELD COUNTY COUNCIL  
BUDGET WORKSESSION  
MAY 2, 2011**

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

**Absent:** Carolyn B. Robinson

**Staff:** Laura Johnson, Alex Torr, Sheila Pickett

In accordance with the South Carolina Code of Laws, 1976, Section 30-4-80 (e), as amended, the following persons and/or organizations have been notified of the time, date, and location of this meeting: The Herald-Independent, The State, and Winnsboro Cablevision, and fifty other individuals.

**1. CALL TO ORDER**

Chairman Ferguson called the meeting to order at 7:00 P.M.

**2. INVOCATION**

Council Member Kinley led in the invocation.

**3. ITEMS FOR DISCUSSION**

**A. FY 2011-2012 Budget Presentation**

OPERATIONAL ITEMS

- In the area of operations, we are moving forward with updating the zoning and land development regulations to be in compliance with the comprehensive plan for the County. Funds are also included for a position to assist in the enforcement of any new ordinances arising as a result of the comprehensive plan.
- To mitigate the impact of escalating personnel costs, we are streamlining our personnel policies and to more accurately reflect the current economic times, such as the elimination of longevity and inclement weather pay and more realistic use of bereavement leave.
- The times demand we make these changes, resulting in savings to the County. If these changes are made beginning this new fiscal year, the negative impact on the employees will be minimal; however, postponing these cost saving measures to a future date will require greater sacrifices at that time to achieve the same results.
- During these difficult times, the County was financially unable to make any salary adjustments for the past two (2) years; however, our employees have remained loyal to the County. The financial resources are still not available for the annual cost of living adjustments to which everyone was accustomed; however, this budget does fund a one-time allocation of \$300.00 for every full time permanent employee or a \$150.00 one-time allocation for all other permanent part time employees. The eligibility date for these items is the first full pay period in July, 2011.
- Elections are the cornerstone of good government. It is becoming increasingly more difficult to attract and retain poll workers. They put in long, hard days. To recognize their efforts, this budget allocates funds for a bagged lunch on Election Day for each worker and makes a modest increase in their pay.

- Hopefully, by this time next year, we will have relocated the elections office into their new offices. Once the transition to their new offices has been made, our intention is to raze their current building as it has outlived any useful life.
- Maintenance of county buildings and properties is still a high priority in this budget. We must respect and maintain these buildings which are owned by the public.
- Funds are included for the first full year of operating expenses for the long anticipated QuickJobs Center. The State is responsible for the instructional portion of the QuickJobs Center; however, the County is responsible for all of the operational costs.
- The animal shelter has created an expectation of a higher level of service, and our donated feline barracks (aka cat house) will also be in its first full year of operation.
- Safety continues to be a high priority and we will be expanding our safety efforts to encompass the fire service.
- Historically, every county has done a poor job of collecting delinquent taxes on personal property such as vehicle and mobile homes. The poor collections rate is more a function of the mobility and relatively low value of the items being taxed rather than the lack of effort on the part of staff. During this past year, our auditors reviewed our collections process and found us to be in compliance with the law. However, we have carried that one step further and placed funding in this budget for additional temporary assistance in the delinquent tax office to address the high delinquency rate in these types of property. Not only is it a source of revenue, it is a matter of fairness to those who have already paid their taxes.

#### CAPITAL ITEMS

- The Board of Disabilities and Special Needs is in the process of building a new facility. In an effort to reduce their estimated construction costs, they have eliminated energy saving items from their building plans. This budget includes a one-time allocation of \$100,000 to be used for energy efficiency items in their building rather than eliminate these cost saving items from their plans.
- Routine maintenance at the Library has been ignored for too many years. Also, necessary improvements to the electrical system have not been made to accommodate such things as fax machines and computers. This budget includes a one-time allocation of \$350,000 to address these and other deficiencies at the library.
- This budget continues the funding of water line extensions for qualifying water purveyors. These funds extend potable water to individuals and typically result in a reduction of fire insurance premiums as great as 50% due to the increased water availability and pressure.
- This budget continues the County's policy of replacing one piece of equipment for the fire service and one EMS ambulance annually.
- Several years ago the County developed a highly ambitious project of building one recreation facility per district. Two items have slowed progress in that endeavor:
  - The construction cost of the facility plus the cost of maintaining and operating these facilities are too much, given the current millage cap.
  - The other item was simply the lack of available land in each district.
- To address these issues, we have regrouped and begun to concentrate on purchasing approximately 50 acres of land in each district with the ultimate goal of a major park (similar to Lake Monticello) in each district. Once all parcels are secured, which will take several years, our finances will be more predictable and the development of the parks can begin.
- We are continuing our endeavors regarding economic development. After several years of work, the necessary easements have been secured for the County to be eligible for a \$3,000,000 airport improvement grant with only a 5% or \$150,000 match.
- Work continues on the Fairfield Commerce Center. While there is a 10 year complete build out plan, Phase 1 will be ready by spring of 2012 in time to be operational once the economy improves.

- Upgrades for the Blair and Lake Wateree recycling centers are in the current budget; and, due to the popularity of the Winnsboro facility, upgrades are included in this budget.
- We received very favorable bids on the construction of the wood chipping facility on Old Airport Road. That facility is planned to be operational by the end of the calendar year. That facility will save the County dollars by avoiding the cost of hauling those materials at \$50.00 per ton to the proper facility in Columbia; and, as a bonus, our citizens will receive free wood chips.
- Many interdependent factors are involved in economic development:
  - Land,
  - Trained employees,
  - Access to transportation,
  - Fire protection,
  - Access to health care for employees,
  - Water and sewer.

The County is moving in the right direction for all of these items except water and sewer. Currently, we are applying for a grant from the EDA (Economic Development Administration) to assist us in evaluating all water and sewer options available to the County and prioritize those options. While these grants are highly competitive, we are optimistic that we will be successful in our request.

- Several years ago, the County began to work collaboratively with the County Transportation Committee (CTC) in addressing the huge number of unpaved roads in Fairfield County. Much progress has been made but much still needs to be done. \$25,000 is allocated to each district to be accumulated for at least a two year period to be used to supplement the CTC's district paving plan.

#### FUTURE CONSIDERATIONS

- With the collaborative efforts of the CTC, some of the roads paved by the CTC will begin needing maintenance within the next few years. We do not anticipate maintaining any of these roads in this year's budget; however, please note funds will be required on an annual basis beginning next year.
- Over the past few years, the County has assumed operational responsibility for EMS, Recreation, the Museum, and the Volunteer Fire Service. These are all areas which have many grant opportunities, and we are exploiting these opportunities to the extent we can. Our Grants Coordinator is doing an excellent job of seeking and administering these grants but there is no free lunch. These grants come with onerous recordkeeping responsibilities. While I haven't added funds for an additional grant person in this budget, I recommend the Council be cognizant of this need and consider the possibility of funding it in the near future.

Under the millage cap law, Fairfield County is restricted to an increase this year of 1.64%. This budget accommodated that increase. The current millage rate is 181.7 mills. The new rate will be 184.91 or an increase of approximately 3 mills. This will be the first millage increase since 2009.

{Council recessed from 7:30 P.M. until 7:40 P.M.}

#### **B. Executive Session: Economic Development Matter**

*At 7:40 P.M., it was moved by Council Member Marcharia; seconded by Council Member Kinley to go in executive session to discuss an economic development matter. The motion carried unanimously.*

*At 9:30 P.M., it was moved by Council Member Brown; seconded by Council Member Kinley to come out of executive session and return to regular session. The motion carried unanimously.*

*Chairman Ferguson reported the Council received information in executive session and no motions to bring forward.*

**4. ADJOURN**

The budget worksession was adjourned at 9:35 P.M., upon unanimous approval by Council.

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SHRYLL M. BROWN  
CLERK TO COUNCIL

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DAVID L. FERGUSON, SR.  
CHAIRMAN