



**MINUTES
BUDGET WORKSESSION
FAIRFIELD COUNTY COUNCIL
JUNE 1, 2015**

Present: Carolyn B. Robinson, Mary Lynn Kinley, Kamau Marcharia, Marion B. Robinson, Dan W. Ruff, Billy Smith, Walter Larry Stewart, Council Members; J. Milton Pope, County Administrator; Davis Anderson, Deputy County Administrator; Shryll M. Brown, Clerk to Council

Staff: Laura Johnson, Anne Bass, 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 one hundred other individuals.

1. CALL TO ORDER

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

2. INVOCATION

Council Member Stewart led in the Invocation.

3. ITEMS FOR DISCUSSION

A. FY 2015-2016 Budget

Mr. Pope set forth that Administration sent out a series of emails to Council, and one of the remaining or outstanding issues from the last work session was discussion regarding the road maintenance fee. Council had asked staff to come up with recommendations regarding the amount of revenue that was plugged in the budget for the road maintenance fee. That estimate was \$123,570.00, which was a combination of residential vehicles assessed a \$5.00 road maintenance fee and commercial vehicles a rate of \$10.00. Those numbers used to provide that estimates were obtained from the Auditor's Office based upon the number of registered vehicles in Fairfield County. Before Council is an option for Council to consider to supplant the road maintenance fee to fund it in a different manner. The categories are self-explanatory, as Council has gone line-by-line in previous work sessions.

- Gasoline/Diesel. For the past year and a half, have enjoyed the luxury of petroleum going down. Had a spike three or four years ago, then a leveling out and then a dramatic decrease in the fuel prices. That has allowed the County to be flat in the budgetary items, which is why this category was used, but also this depends on what happens across the shores.
- County Allocations. Included those in and moving them back to this year's budgeted amounts. Did not include the ones the Council had addressed by consensus in the work session process (i.e., Solicitor, Sistercare). For the remaining five of those, if Council were to use this as an option, would go back to the FY 2014-2015 funding level.

Questions and Comments:

- I see nothing wrong with this, with the understanding as we go through the year, if we have to go back and relook at things, then we will do it. As it stands here, this looks good to me.

- If we went with this, I am really concerned about the gasoline and diesel prices. The prices went up today ten cents a gallon. The oil well rigs are shutting down production because the usage is so low, which means gas prices will go up. This is almost \$40,000.00 worth of gasoline and diesel fuel. If we came up during the year, and this is spiked, where will that money come from?
- These reductions that are being made in County operations are not going to be a reduction in the bottom line to the budget. The reason is the road maintenance fee is pretty much a wash. It is a revenue based upon the estimate and expenditures. Staff has gone to existing internal departments and reduced those to come up with the pot of money. Don't want anyone to have the impression that the budget is being reduced by this. Have cut County operations further by being able to have those funds, presumably, for the use of road maintenance needs.
- Unemployment Insurance. With it already having been reduced by \$25,000.00 from the current budget to the new budget, and then it's being cut another \$10,000.00. What does that do to us? Where does this leave us vulnerable?
- What was the number that had been cut from the budget already? So, this would be an addition on top of that?
- My understanding is by cutting these social program and adding that to the road maintenance fee, is that what you are saying, which I think are very crucial services for citizens. When it comes down to the road maintenance or the fee or tax, whatever verbiage used, all across the State there is a very serious debate going on about that. I think it is crucial to fix our roads in Fairfield County.
- When we were going down this list, the Good Samaritan House is the only one in Town that gives money to folks who need it for their utilities. There are a lot of good services. The Board of Disabilities runs a very tight budget. We have just increased their budget last year for the first time in a long time. I hate for us to cut these services and disturb this many accounts in this County. I have asked anywhere from 35 to 45 people; not one objected to the \$5.00 charge on their car. Everybody that has a car and is driving a car, they deserve to pay equal share to repair our roads. There is no harm done in a \$5.00 or \$10.00 fee. I think 90% of our citizens would go with that same thing.
- Didn't you say that all of these County allocations are based on this year, so we are really not cutting; we just cut what we added? I like this; I like this way of doing it; I'm in favor of it, and I would also be in favor of not funding the cell phones for the County Council at all. It's not a lot, but it would be \$5,250.00 more.
- I'm not charging the County for phone or internet. I already had a phone and internet with unlimited before I got elected. Going back to the Good Samaritan House, Disabilities, Transitions, American Red Cross and Chameleon Center, we are not cutting their budget. All we are doing is freezing it at the 2015 level. We are letting it stay the same as it was, if I am reading your sheet correctly?
- There were some other entities and services in that County allocations budget that we didn't account for--one that we were going to give to we never had before was Boys and Girls Club for \$5,000.00; one was Harvest Hope for \$5,000.00; one was extra \$5,000.00 for Eau Claire Health Cooperative. I just wonder why that was done with them and not with the few others that we are going to be getting new or more money for?
- I am not so sure that we shouldn't go and do the same for all of them to make it fair.
- I would agree with that and say maybe we could take the money with the three I just listed and put that back in some of this gasoline and diesel. Another question I

- had was the sanitary supplies at the Detention Center. There was \$5,000.00 had appropriated in 2015 and again in 2016, and then that has been taken out. How are we going to maintain sanitary standards at the Detention Center? What was the \$5,000.00 for if that is all covered, we never would have needed it in the first place. But, we are taking the \$5,000.00 out here, that's just not changing the code. We didn't look at that until we got ready to discuss figuring out how to do this road thing?
- In the line item that is going to be used, is there enough to cover what was there plus this \$5,000.00?
- There is a problem nationwide with County roads. Many bridges are out in the County that can't be repaired because there is no money from the State. From what the State sends the County, there is a difference of \$2.9 million dollars that is coming out of this budget to take care of the 2012 unfunded mandates. CTC monies are controlled by the Delegation, because they appoint the CTC members. Everyone who drives a car in the State has a tag on their car and a sticker has to be paid for every year. Council and the citizens had no say when the sticker fee went from \$15.00 to \$24.00. Taxes are paid by those who own real estate; fees are paid by those who use the services.
- Sense of Council regarding keeping the road maintenance fee in the budget as it stands as of Second Reading: *Yes - Marcharia, M. Robinson, Kinley, C. Robinson; No - Ruff, Stewart, Smith*
- As the Budget Ordinance stands, the road maintenance fee is actually in the document on Second Reading, as directed by Council. Therefore, whatever the wish of the Council is, if it is different from that, Council would have to make a motion to actually do otherwise. The information included on the reductions, those would be the same way.
- At the June 8, 2015 meeting, there would have to be motions to that effect. Staff can prepare the motions; but, as the budget Ordinance stands, everything that is in at Second Reading is officially in the document.
- This document that Council received tonight is not currently something that is considered in the budget as well, so Council would have to make a motion in regard to that if Council wanted to do it that way?
- The 2016 County Council column on the document is what is in at Second Reading. Motions would have to be made to do the new budget recommendations.
- If Council Members have individual recommendations (such as the three that Council Member Smith mentioned), to send to the Administrator to that effect if that is a motion that is to be proposed.
- This fee is for County-improved roads (those roads that are funded through the CTC funds) and will not be for staff or salaries.
- The No-Tax-Increase budget recommendation is based upon numbers provided by the Auditor.
- This past fiscal year, in preparation of the budget, EMS millage was rolled into the General Fund millage. This year, in the recommendation, the same is to occur with the Fire Board. If there are any legal ramifications, they will be brought back to the attention of County Council.

Chairman Robinson asked Council if there were any other comments.

4. ADJOURN

The meeting was adjourned at 6:40 P.M., upon unanimous approval of County Council.

SHRYLL M. BROWN
CLERK TO COUNCIL

CAROLYN B. ROBINSON
CHAIRMAN