# MINUTES
# BUDGET WORK SESSION I
# FAIRFIELD COUNTY COUNCIL
# APRIL 30, 2025

**Present:** Oren Gadson, Peggy Swearingen, Carl E. Bell, Don Goldbach, Clarence Gilbert, Dan Ruff (Council Members); Vic Carpenter, County Administrator; Dr. Kimberly Roberts, Clerk to Council.

**Absent:** Doug Pauley

**Others Present:** Beverly Mozie

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

Mr. Gilbert called the Work Session to order at 3:30 p.m.

## II. APPROVAL OF AGENDA

Motion made by Mr. Gadson, seconded by Mr. Ruff, to approve the agenda. ***The motion carried 5-0.***

## III. INVOCATION

Mr. Goldbach led the invocation.

**Mrs. Swearingen entered the meeting at 3:35pm.**

## IV. DEPARTMENTAL BUDGET UPDATES

Mr. Carpenter said although Council heard presentations from department heads in February (2025), they would hear from some of the larger departments with critical focuses on their needs. They were also the biggest part of the budget. Council had in front of them the requests (capital and personnel) from the departments - not recommendations from Administration. The total funding requested was about $44 million. His priority list at the beginning of the budget process was, as explained to them during his interview, was to take care of the employees and to provide the necessary dependable equipment for the employees.

**PARKS & RECREATION**

Director Lucas Vance asked for increases in utilities/electric/gas and professional services (heating/air unit upkeep, ice refrigeration machines, dance instructors, reconditioning youth helmets) and liability insurance. Non-capital items were door ornaments for the community fitness center and a pool pump. The capital requests were for resurfacing courts, painting lines and installing nets, two tennis courts and pickle ball courts. They would like to install four new courts to address the increase in pickle ball players.

Mr. Carpenter encouraged Council, in consideration of time, to write down their questions and he would ensure answers after the meeting.

**ROAD MAINTENANCE/SOLID WASTE/PUBLIC WORKS**

Director Jonathan Burroughs requested an increase in rentals to acquire a hot box for road repairs. The company also had a rent to own program. For solid waste, the request was due to the yearly increase. Mr. Carpenter said he wanted Council to consider other options like solid waste fees for households/businesses, pay as you throw (those who use the most pay the most) or hauling their own. They needed to prepare for future growth.

**FIRE SERVICES**

Chief Jamie Webb requested an increase in utilities of about $2,300, vehicle services $150,000, the clothing line $40,000, motor vehicle supply $54,000, tire replacement $100,000, communication supplies (batteries for hand held radios, mics, etc,) $8,100, and non-capitalized supplies & equipment $20,000. His capital requests were $25,000 to replace eight radios, $180,000 for three 4-wheel drive staff pickup trucks to replace three vehicles in current inventory, $1.8 million to replace three fire engines (the last engine replaced by the County was 2018), two 2,000-gallon tankers at just over $1 million and $500,000 to finish the work at the River Road fire station (day room, kitchen, showers, bunk rooms). There were different payment options for fire trucks, depending on the manufacturer and he was not aware of a lease program.

**EMS**

Director Tim Martin requested $15,000 for office/station furniture. He said they were able to decrease their budget in the areas of billing services (by $5,000) and their communication equipment decreased as well. He asked for a $25,000 increase in ambulance supplies. Mr. Goldbach asked if he was granted his requests, would he be able to staff all six stations and he said no – they were not asking for additional personnel. Since he became Director, they went from 19 openings to 2. His capital requests were for two replacement administrative vehicles at approximately $150,000-$160,000, seven new computers at about

$25,000 each and replacement funds ($333,031) for an ambulance purchased last year. The ambulance was ordered and would have to be paid for. The total of his requests was a little over $600,000.

Mr. Carpenter informed Council that there were department heads present that would not present but if Council had questions, he would ensure they were answered. He presented them with a questionnaire regarding their budget priorities and asked them to return them to him at their earliest convenience.

Mr. Goldbach said public safety/health was top priority and an emergency services capital improvement plan. He also said planning for a new animal shelter should be considered.

Mr. Gilbert agreed with Mr. Goldbach and added the bridge at the industrial park to the list in order to bring in new industry.

Mr. Goldbach said the roads were also a priority and asked where funding came from for resurfacing. Mr. Carpenter said the state stopped making new roads some years ago and had since become the responsibility of its county. They were owned and maintained by that county. Some funding came through the CTC and the road maintenance fee, which he would include in the budget. The question was would they use the funds for the department, for resurfacing, etc.

**BEHAVIORAL HEALTH**

Director Vernon Kennedy provided documents with information about the organization. He requested to be funded at the same level as last year - $56,650, which was much needed due to grant and federal funding cuts. He also requested forgiveness for the no-sale loan of $500,000 issued by the county for their new facility.

**MAGISTRATES OFFICE**

Judge Hollins requested the repaving of the parking lot. Two judges had slight injuries from falls/near falls and with the traffic at their office, they did not want serious injuries due to the condition of the parking lot. She received quotes ranging from $75,000 - $186,525. Mr. Gadson asked, if approved, how long would it take and Mr. Carpenter said about one year.

Mr. Carpenter announced the next meeting would be at Midlands Technical College with elected officials and outside agencies.

Mr. Ruff said emergency services, road maintenance, the animal shelter and the joint water/sewer system were his priorities. He also hoped for industry at the mega site and reactors at the VC Summers Nuclear Plant.

At 5:19pm, motion made by Mr. Ruff, seconded by Mr. Gadson to adjourn. ***The motion carried 6-0.***

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

CLARENCE GILBERT
CHAIRMAN