



**MINUTES
REGULAR MEETING
FAIRFIELD COUNTY COUNCIL
SEPTEMBER 26, 2022**

Present: Moses Bell, Shirley Greene, Tim Roseborough, Clarence Gilbert, Doug Pauley (Council Members); Malik Whitaker (County Administrator), Charles Boykin (County Attorney); Gwendolyn Ashford (Executive Asst. to County Administrator)

Absent: Cornelius Robinson

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 6:00pm.

2. APPROVAL OF THE AGENDA

Motion made by Councilman Trapp, seconded by Vice Chair Greene to approve the agenda. ***The motion carried 6-0.***

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 September 12, 2022. ***The motion carried 6-0.***

5. PUBLIC PRESENTATIONS

None.

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.

Ms. Ashford read the following statement:

Fairfield County Government welcomes public input during appropriate times at County Council meetings. Such input will be allowed in the time, place and manner determined by the Chair of the County Council as the presiding officer. Persons wishing to speak must conduct themselves in the following manner:

Sign up at the appropriate time to speak, refrain from engaging in conduct or speech that seeks to disrupt or disturb the meeting, respect the time limit for the public comment, and refrain from personal attacks or personal statements about any individual(s). Such statements are disruptive because this part of our meeting is not conducive for such exchanges between individuals.

As stated, speakers were expected to express themselves within the time, place and manner previously described. Any violation will result in a warning from the Chair of County Council or the presiding officer. Any failure to heed the warning of the Chair or presiding officer will result in the violating speaker forfeiting their opportunity to finish speaking or to speak during the remainder of the meeting. Council welcomes the comments from members of the public and ask for the cooperation of everyone to allow for the orderly conduct of the people's business.

- Roberta Gay
- Randy Bright – Ordinances

7. PUBLIC HEARINGS

None.

8. ORDINANCES, RESOLUTIONS AND ORDERS

A. First Reading (By Title Only) Ordinance No. 801: An Ordinance to Prohibit, With Support of the State Traffic Engineer, Large Trucks from Traveling on Patrick Road (S-20-44), From US 321 to SC 200. Motion made by Vice Chair Greene, seconded by Councilman Roseborough. ***The motion carried 5-1.***

B. Resolution No. 2022-07: A Resolution of Fairfield County Supporting the South Carolina American Revolution Sestercentennial Commission and Recognizing and Approving the Fairfield County 250 Committee. Motion made by Councilman Trapp, seconded by Vice Chair Greene. Mr. Whitaker said the South Carolina 250 year American Revolution Commission was created to celebrate and educate citizens within each county about the State's role in the American Revolution. South Carolina and the American Revolution Sestercentennial Commission was encouraging each South Carolina County to create their own 250 Committee. South Carolina 250 had the grants to provide the seed money to support the development of a

County 250 Committee. The Fairfield County 250 Committee would organize Revolutionary War activities to promote tourism, to create and local museum interpretive panels to focus on Fairfield County's part during the war. In order to apply for the grants, the County had to pass an official resolution dedicating the committee. They were asking Council to approve the resolution dedicating the committee. Mrs. Greene called for a point of order and said it was by title only. Mr. Whitaker said it was a resolution. Molly Fortune (Executive Director of SC 250) said they wanted to give a clear voice to all participants in the revolution. It was not just the winners – it was the Loyalists, the children, the women, and the free and enslaved who helped pass messages and attend homes. It was also the Native Americans – it had to be a complete story. It was complicated and ugly at times but it was their story. It was one that was happening all across the nation – all 50 states had a 250 Commission. In South Carolina, it was about bringing economic development and tourism to the back country – the rural areas. She was from Newberry and she knew it was very important to economic development. It did not necessarily show up on the bottom line but it showed up in a very strong school system, shops and great roads. They were excited and wanted them to remember that in Ninety Six (which was hard to find) in the height of the pandemic, for economic development and tourism they bought in 95,000 people at \$5.1 million. They were very dedicated as well as the Legislature (she thanked Senator Fanning) and grateful that they were given \$9 million to give away in grants specific to economic development. Mr. Bell said they talked about it at the Association of Counties and wanted everyone to be aware so they could take advantage of the grants. ***The motion carried 6-0.***

C. First Reading (By Title Only) No. 799: An Ordinance to Appropriate General Fund Revenues for the Creation of Three (3) New Officer Positions for the Fairfield County Detention Center and to Increase the Bonus for Newly Certified Detention Center Officers from One Thousand Dollars (\$1,000) to One Thousand Five Hundred Dollars (\$1,500). Motion made by Councilman Trapp, seconded by Vice Chair Greene. ***The motion carried 6-0.***

D. First Reading (By Title Only) Ordinance No. 800: An Ordinance to Appropriate General Fund Revenues in the Amount of \$486,535.79 to Provide Cost of Living Increases of Two Percent (2%), Three Percent (3%), or Four Percent (4%), as Applicable, to the Base Salaries for All County Employees; \$100,000 to Increase the Operating Budget of the Sheriff's Department for the Purpose of Additional Salary Adjustments Within the Department; and \$20,000 to Provide Incentive Bonuses to Volunteer Firefighters Who Meet the Requirements of the Volunteer Incentive Program Administered by the Office of State Fire Marshal. Motion made by Vice Chair Greene, seconded by Councilman Trapp. ***The motion carried 6-0.***

E. First Reading (By Title Only) Ordinance No. 802: An Ordinance to Appropriate General Fund Revenues in the Amount of \$363,000 to Provide Supplemental Funding the River Road Fire Station Project. Motion made by Councilman Trapp, seconded by Vice Chair Greene. ***The motion carried 6-0.***

F. Resolution No. 2022-08: A Resolution to Transfer Dominion Settlement Agreement Funds from the Fairfield Commerce Center Parcel 9 Mass Grading Project Which are in Excess of the Funds Needed for that Project, to Provide \$400,000 in Additional Funding Needed for the Construction of the Ridgeway Community Center Because of Post COVID Construction Cost Inflation. Motion made by Councilman Trapp, seconded by Vice Chair Greene. Mr. Gilbert asked if they received any bids on the project and Mr. Bell said yes. Mr. Gilbert asked if the property was approved by DHEC and Mr. Bell said yes. Mr. Gilbert asked if he could have the names of the bidders the next day and Mr. Whitaker said yes. Mr. Bell said they knew there were people going behind the Administrator asking different questions and they would give the information but to please stay within the confines of what was normal practices for the Council. Mr. Gilbert said he always did and asked if he (Bell) felt the money could be better used in the Sheriff's Department, the Fire Department or EMS or towards the wastewater treatment plant. Mr. Bell said he knew he (Gilbert) led the effort to close the library in Ridgeway and he was hoping he would not lead the effort to stop the realization of a recreation center in the Ridgeway area. He asked why did he (Gilbert) not believe that the people of Ridgeway should have the same opportunities as others in the County. Mr. Gilbert said his question only needed a yes or no answer. Mr. Bell said they allocated money based on the consent of Council. Mr. Gilbert said he hoped to God that the building did not replace the Sheriff's Department, EMS or Fire Department services because it would surely not come to his aid if there was an emergency. Mr. Bell said at age 21, he joined the volunteer fire service. He worked in rural fire service all of his adult life and he was currently 68 years old. He held every office in the rural fire service. He was one of the founding members of the Southeastern volunteer fire department and served as the Chairman of the Rural Fire Board in Fairfield County. He said he and Mrs. Greene met with the Sheriff (and staff) three times and they worked out an agreement that they believed was best for the county to grow. The Sheriff's budget (although he did not think he was concerned with it) was \$5,094,824. The budget for the Newberry Sheriff's Department was \$4,406,579 and Chester County was \$4,612,719, which indicated that their Sheriff's Department's budget was much more than Newberry and Chester. He said Mr. Gilbert said something for political reasons when they were trying to make sure they did the right thing for their public safety staff. Mr. Gilbert said he appreciated his service but what about

EMS and the Fire Department. Mr. Bell said he was glad he asked. He said Mr. Sloan did a full-scale analysis on EMS. They came out in better shape and the raise would be conducive to the department and added to them. They came out about \$10,000 less because of the work he (Sloan) did. The County employees were doing the necessary work to cause the county to grow and prosper. He said regarding Fire Services, he and Mr. Pope were on a fire ground recently (house fire) and they talked about the VIP, an incentive provided by the State. They believed they needed to provide an incentive for volunteers to answer fire calls. That's what they were doing. All of public safety was addressed and not because of political reasons but because they did an analysis based on budgets and needs. They not only did the analysis, but had help from Central Midlands. Mr. Gilbert said he was entitled to his opinion and he felt the money needed to go elsewhere other than the recreation center. Mr. Bell said he was on the executive committee for Central Midlands and he read the following: the Central Midlands Council of Government staff request approval to amend 2020-2027 rural tip to add \$1,000,000 in additional guide share funds for the Longtown Road service and project. Longtown Road was a federal and secondary road located near the town of Ridgeway. It was approximately 12 miles long from US 21 to the Kershaw County line. The corridor was identified by SCDOT but they were not going to pave it so Central Midlands gave them money to pave it. Because of inflation, the project since last year has increased to \$1,000,000. ***The motion carried 4-2.***

9. BOARD AND COMMISSION MINUTES (For information only)

None.

10. BOARD AND COMMISSION APPOINTMENTS

None.

11. OLD BUSINESS

None.

12. NEW BUSINESS

None.

13. COUNTY ADMINISTRATOR'S REPORT

- A.** Blue Ribbon School Recognition – Mr. Whitaker said Fairfield County was proud to celebrate excellence. In the midst of all the noise, the school community had a vision, set a goal, empowered leadership and achieved outstanding results. As a County, it was their job to make Fairfield a place where these bright, young people would want to live, play and work. To

celebrate this accomplishment, they wanted to read a proclamation into public record.

Proclamation for 2022 U.S. Department of Education National Blue Ribbon Award Recipient Fairfield Magnet School for Math and Science:

Whereas, the National Blue Ribbon School Program honors public and private elementary, middle, and high schools based on a school's overall academic performance or progress in closing achievement gaps among student subgroups, the coveted National Blue Ribbon Schools Award affirms the hard work of educators, families, communities and creating safe and welcoming schools where students master challenging and engaging content. The Blue Ribbon Award affirms the hard work of this Fairfield County School community in creating high standards and expectations for all students, a clear and shared focus and a supportive learning environment. The Fairfield Magnet School for Science and Math is recognized by the U.S. Department of Education as a 2022 National Blue Ribbon School. Fairfield Magnet for Math and Science is recognized as an exemplary high performing school. Exemplary high performing schools are recognized among their State's highest performing schools as measured by State assessments and nationally norm tests. They extend their most sincere congratulations to Dr. Gail Whitfield, Dr. J.R. Green, the teachers and the Fairfield Magnet for Math and Science students and families on this outstanding achievement. Therefore, the Fairfield County government does hereby congratulate and commend Fairfield Magnet for Math and Science on this great accomplishment of being a 2022 National Blue Ribbon School. Mr. Bell said Fairfield County – getting better every day. They wanted to celebrate with all of them – staff, teachers and all. They were excited and could not say enough. He said Councilman Cornelius Robinson could not attend the meeting but sent his thoughts to be read. Prior to, Mr. Bell said the School Board of Trustees member, Sylvia Harrison could not attend the meeting but said how important this recognition was. Councilman Robinson's statement: Although I am not present, I would like to congratulate the Fairfield County School District on its continued success and accomplishments. To be acknowledged as a Blue Ribbon recipient is by far no easy task. On a personal note, Dr. Green, Dr. Whitfield, and the Fairfield County School Board of Trustees, I believe you are making great leaps and bounds that will assist this County and our children for the betterment of the future. Congratulations again and I look forward to what we can accomplish all together.

Dr. Whitfield asked the staff and district representatives to stand. She thanked the Council for the proclamation. She said the award was for the County as well because they were teaching children who would someday give back to the County. She thanked them again.

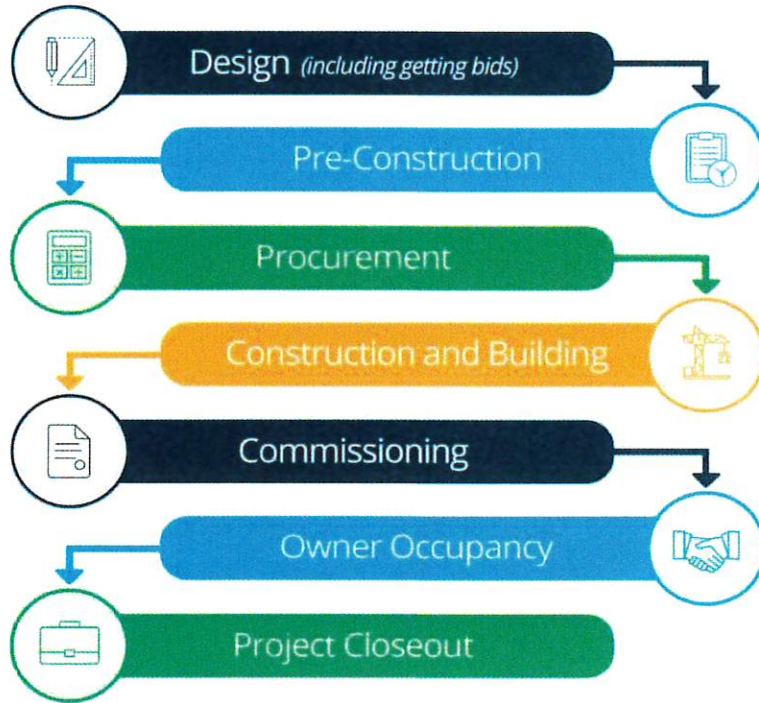
Dr. Greene said on behalf of the Fairfield County School District Board of Trustees, the faculty and staff, their outstanding students, wonderful parents and supportive community, they appreciated them acknowledging what was an absolute monumental recognition. He worked in schools for nearly 30 years and most schools in their history did not receive a National Blue Ribbon School of Excellence. To put it in context, there were over 130,000 schools in the country (public and private). Some think this award was restricted to public schools but it was for public and private schools. Out of those 130,000, only 297 were selected – 24 private schools and the rest public. This was something that started during the Reagan Administration in 1982 to recognize high performing schools – schools that could be a model for others to follow. He had been there for 11 years and he heard a lot of people say a lot of things. Some people major in negativity – they would absolutely ignore anything positive – it simply did not occur. But one would have a hard time ignoring the National Blue Ribbon School of Excellence no matter how hard one would try. They were going to celebrate this not just the Fairfield County School District or the Fairfield Magnet School but the entire community should celebrate. Regardless to whether one was affiliated with the Fairfield County School District or the Magnet School, it was something that lifted them up. As he, Dr. Whitfield and at least one of her staff travel to Washington, DC (November 3-4) they would be there with the other 297 schools across the country. They would be highlighted – the things going on in little old Fairfield County. When people thought about great things, they would think about Fairfield County schools. An award like that only happened with the efforts of a lot of people. Dr. Whitfield was an outstanding leader and the staff was remarkable. They has an excellent School Board of Trustees (when he started, he had questions about the board) – they had the best school board in the world. They also had an excellent district office staff, students, parents and community members. There was a concept in the education field called “Community Schooling”, which said it was everybody’s responsibility to ensure that every single child maximizes his/her potential. When you speak about a Blue Ribbon Award, yes the people who worked in schools were responsible but so were they (moms, dads, uncles, aunts, deacons, neighbors, policemen, business people) all have to accept responsibility for the trajectory of the young people that they were there to serve. They wanted to equip them with the skills to go out and conquer the world and potentially come back and make roots in Fairfield County. He thanked the Council for their acknowledgement and encouraged them to celebrate with them. They were not perfect – they had things they would be working on that day and tomorrow. They would try to be a little bit better tomorrow

than they were that day but in that respect, they were going to celebrate. Mr. Bell requested a photo.

- B. Logo & Vision Statement – Action Item –** Mr. Whitaker said they were requesting approval for the updated County logo and vision statement for the website (shown on screen) “Fairfield County – Getting Better Every Day”. He wanted to share a few ways they were getting better every day and the power and importance of a vision statement. Since they had been there, they worked on building a skilled and effective leadership team. They moved the County government operations to a new government complex. They completed an annual financial audit with only one area needing improvement and began a new relationship with a new audit firm. They were streamlining the role of the County public information office and its function to focus on promoting County projects and activities. They submitted a budget with anticipated revenues. They were hosting monthly leadership meetings. They gathered valuable data about County processes, practices and attitudes. They were organizing, prioritizing and project managing 12 capital projects. They were working with the Towns of Ridgeway and Winnsboro to develop an agreement to address wastewater needs in the County. They were making physical improvements to County parks and recreation centers and they were currently updating the County logo and website. They believed it was important to have a vision statement because they had the ability to inspire and motivate others around a concept and an idea. The concept was Fairfield County, getting better every day and they were doing the work to get better. They could establish benchmarks that provide a line of sight, direction and where the organization wants to be in a number of years. It was to create a long-term strategy for where they were going and it was meant to align everyone around their direction. It was where they were heading in the future – Fairfield County, getting better every day. They worked with the developer to develop the website and they should be launching it around Thanksgiving. They wanted to give Council the first look and get possible approval. Motion made by Councilman Trapp, seconded by Vice Chair Greene. ***The motion carried 6-0.***

- C. COVID-19 & Cost Inflation –** Mr. Whitaker said he wanted to talk about some of the challenges around construction cost inflation. His PowerPoint presentation was as follows:

Fairfield County Construction Projects:



These are the typical stages in any construction project. Good planning at the beginning and anticipation of contingencies will help the entire process go much more smoothly.

How many projects with construction cost: 12 projects

Construction Cost:

Undoubtedly, the COVID-19 pandemic disrupted nearly every aspect of people’s lives, including businesses and jobs.

The pandemic adversely impacted the construction industry (classified as an essential industry) and as a result, many construction firms experienced and are still experiencing significant financial challenges.

Inflation Impact:

Inflation in construction is having a huge impact on some very big-ticket items...whether it’s a home or a commercial project. When you’re trying to finish construction on time and within budget, inflation only makes everything more difficult.

Cost Inflation:

Ask project owners what keeps them up at night, and they’re likely to talk about construction cost inflation. They have a good reason to feel anxious. Between August 2020 and August 2021, the cost of material inputs for nonresidential construction rose by more than 20% . Meanwhile, lead times for those material inputs continue to grow as the manufacturing sector struggles to keep up with demand. These factors put immense pressure on project teams expected to move fast without overspending.

Contractors:

Contractors continue to experience the after-effects of the pandemic, including a **shortage of construction materials** and a sharp increase in construction costs that can lead to decreased profits.

The cost of construction materials normally increases annually due to inflation (an issue that contractors faced even prior to the pandemic). However, the inflation that accompanied the pandemic has been **significantly different and has largely impacted construction costs.**

Foreign Construction Materials:

The U.S. construction industry is heavily dependent on foreign construction materials such as steel and stone. Because COVID-19 is a global pandemic, it caused closures and delays at international factories that produce these materials. As a result, the supply of construction materials dramatically decreased in the U.S, and what remained became much more expensive.

Time:

Generally, there is a significant amount of time between when a contract is signed and when contractors deliver final products to customers. But unlike manufacturing or retail companies, it is not easy to increase cost after the contract is signed. The cost of a project is estimated beforehand and the bid for the estimated costs is made. As a result, it has always been a challenge for contractors to deal with unforeseen additional costs. The emergence of the COVID-19 pandemic negatively affected many contractors since was something they couldn't anticipate.

County projects with likely construction costs increase when you compare the price per unit to pre-pandemic unit pricing:

- Peach Road Water Line
- FCC Mass Grading
- Mega site Grading
- Spec Building
- Valencia Bridge
- Sewer Plant/Lines
- River Road Fire Station
- Ridgeway Community Center
- Blackstock Park

He said a lot of work was being done – how to effectively complete these projects. They have to be completed and they were making real efforts to ensure they were being wise stewards while building what needed to be built.

- D.** Mid County Water Company SCIIP Grant – Action Item – Mr. Whitaker said they received a request from Herbert Rentz, manager for Mid County Water Company, asking for support from Fairfield County regarding applying for ARPA funding from the South Carolina Infrastructure Program. Their

proposed project was to install approximately 1,100 new automatic meters in Mid-County service District 2. The project would continue the work they already started to replace water meters in the Mid-County service district. Installing the new meters throughout their district would have a positive benefit for their customers in Fairfield County. As a non-profit utility, they were eligible for the funding but because they were not a public entity, they were unable to apply. Therefore, they were requesting Fairfield County to submit the application on their behalf. It was their understanding the application would be judged on its own merit and would not adversely impact any other application Fairfield County might submit for the same funding opportunity. Mr. Whitaker said due to the timeframe, they did the letter but they would only move forward if Council voted to approve the project. He read the content of the letter – "Fairfield County was pleased to submit the grant application on behalf of Mid County Water and would be the physical sponsor. Please note their willingness to serve as the grant recipient on behalf of Mid County Water was conditional upon County Council approval". They were basically serving as a physical sponsor for their project. Mr. Bell said it did not impact their project at all and Mr. Whitaker said right. Mr. Bell said the project was done by Central Midlands on behalf of Mid County Water. Mr. Whitaker said Fairfield County was not providing any funding towards the project and all local commitments would be provided by Mid County Water Company. Motion made by Vice Chair Greene, seconded by Councilman Pauley. ***The motion carried 6-0.***

14. COUNTY COUNCIL TIME

Mr. Pauley thanked Council for voting on the raises for the employees. He thought the paid firefighters were not included unless they were included in the two, three and four percent increases. Mr. Bell said yes sir and they had all of the agencies represented that night. They talked to everybody and they were in support of it. It was four, three and two and leaned more towards the people – under \$40,000 was 4%, under \$60,000 was 3% (except from 40-63) and over \$60,000 was 2%. Mr. Pauley said he wanted to add that part-time firefighters had not had a raise in almost 10 years and he did not know if the part-time employees were considered. Regarding the bonus for the Detention Center officers, moving from \$1,000 to \$1,500, he asked if they could do the same thing for the Sheriff's Deputies when they graduate from the police academy – raising it to \$1,500. Mr. Bell said the Sheriff received \$100,000 additional to their raise. Mr. Pauley said ok. Mr. Bell said they everyone looked at that and did analysis based on where they were. It was believed that they could afford that at that time because of certain sales they had. That was how the money was accounted for – they were in

inflationary times and it was done thoroughly. He thanked the staff for working with everyone and for engaging their Central Midlands partners. Vice Chair Greene congratulated the school district for their recognition. It was wonderful to sit and hear about all of the successes of their magnet school. She wanted them to know they were proud of the work they did and wanted to congratulate them. She thought it was something extraordinary for their community and she hoped they would continue to excel. She said while looking at their high school graduates, they were graduating with academic courses that propelled them to enter college probably at the second year or more and to finish college in two years. She thought that in and of itself was something they should cheer about in the community. She thought they were doing a wonderful job and she encouraged them to continue the Teacher Village, which would be another feather in their cap, to ensure they had teachers who were dedicated and lived in the community. They had a great opportunity to continue to do a great job. She also wanted to mention the Sheriff's Department's Citizen's Academy. They were looking to start a new cohort. They were looking to hold classes every Tuesday from 6:30p-8:30p beginning in late October and finishing in early December. She encouraged the citizens to get involved and become a part of the Citizen's Academy. She thanked the Sheriff's Department for that. She also announced that the Midford area would have a meeting on October 6th to discuss the fire service and EMS. She said all who were interested should come to the Midford Recreation center at 6p.

Mr. Bell announced that the Fairfield County Fire Services would host an open house on Thursday, September 29th at 6p there at the Fairfield County Government Complex. Attendees would hear from the current county volunteers and Chiefs about training, community engagement and growth opportunities. It was a chance for those interested in becoming volunteer firefighters to ask questions and learn what it took to be a part of the program that gave back to the community. They oftentimes talked about public service and their first responders – there was an opportunity to join the first responders and firefighters. They desperately needed volunteer firefighters in their county and they were looking for those interested. He encouraged all to come out and to tell others they knew who may be interested. He also said he wanted to read something from Central Midlands because he received a lot of calls and many people had asked him about it. He read: Central Midlands Council of Governments is coordinating in corporation with the City of Newberry and the Towns of Little Mountain, Prosperity, Pomaria, Pillion, Gaston, Gilbert, Summit, Jenkinsville, Ridgeway, Winnsboro, the Lugoff-Elgin area in Kershaw County and the South Carolina Department of Transportation to develop a series of bike and pedestrian master plans. The purpose of each project is to create a pedestrian and bicycle master plan that

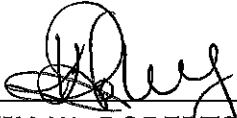
will identify goals, improvement needs and project priorities that will create safety and accessibility and connect a multimodal transportation system within each of these communities. The citizens asked for that and Central Midlands agreed to help. He wanted to acknowledge the work being done and thanked them for their help. He said Mr. Whitaker – your model – Fairfield County, getting better every day.

15.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.)

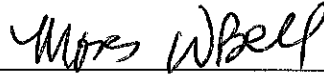
None.

ADJOURN

At 6:58 p.m., motion made by Councilman Trapp, seconded by Councilman Roseborough, to adjourn. ***The motion carried 6-0.***



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



MOSES BELL
CHAIRMAN