



**MINUTES  
REGULAR MEETING  
FAIRFIELD COUNTY COUNCIL  
MAY 8, 2023**

**Present:** Shirley Greene, Dan Ruff, Clarence Gilbert, Tim Roseborough, Doug Pauley, Peggy Swearingen, Cornelius Robinson (Council Members); Laura Johnson (Interim County Administrator); Synithia Williams (Deputy County Administrator); Tommy Morgan (County Attorney); Dr. Kimberly Roberts (Clerk to Council)

**Absent:** None.

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 Pauley called the Regular Meeting to order at 6:00pm.

**2. PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE**

Chairman Pauley called for the recitation of the Pledge of Allegiance.

**3. APPROVAL OF THE AGENDA**

Motion made by Councilman Ruff, seconded by Councilman Gilbert. ***The motion carried 7-0.***

**4. INVOCATION**

Pastor Leonard Simmons (Bethlehem AME Church) led the invocation.

**5. APPROVAL OF MINUTES**

Motion made by Councilman Gilbert, seconded by Councilwoman Greene to approve the minutes from Budget Work Session I April 3, 2023 & Regular Meeting April 24, 2023. ***The motion carried 7-0.***

**6. PUBLIC PRESENTATIONS**

None.

- 7. 1<sup>st</sup> PUBLIC COMMENT SESSION:** All public comments made during this session must pertain to items on the agenda for which no Public Hearing is scheduled. Each speaker is allocated three (3) minutes for comment. The total time allocated for the public comment portion of the meeting is thirty (30)

minutes. Those wishing to make public comment must sign to do so prior to the Council Chair calling the meeting to order. The Clerk to Council will make a public comment sign-up sheet available at least fifteen (15) minutes prior to the scheduled start time of the meeting.

- Randy Bright

## 8. PUBLIC HEARINGS

None.

## 9. ORDINANCES, RESOLUTIONS AND ORDERS

**A. Second Reading Ordinance No. 811:** An Ordinance Authorizing the Execution and Delivery of a Revised and Restated Multi-County Industrial Park Agreement Between Fairfield County, South Carolina, and Kershaw County, South Carolina; Ratifying the Existing Park Boundaries; and Other Related Matters. Motion made by Councilman Ruff, seconded by Councilman Gilbert. Mrs. Swearingen asked for an explanation. Mr. Morgan said it was a renewal of the multi-county industrial agreement that Fairfield County had with Kershaw County since 1996. It would continue for 20 years. The statute required that they be updated periodically. The multi-county industrial parks were statute created. It was a means by which the county could designate certain parcels of land for economic development and industrial use and allowed those projects to receive benefits (fee in lieu of tax agreement, a special source revenue credit agreement, etc.). Of the properties within the multi-county industrial parks (if they had a fee in lieu tax agreement) Fairfield would receive one percent of the revenues for those projects located in Kershaw County and the opposite was true. Basically, it was a 99 to 1 split, which was what the statute allowed. Mrs. Swearingen asked if both counties benefited. Mr. Morgan said yes ma'am – both counties had certain designated properties within the parks and both would receive revenue. Fairfield had multiple agreements of that type. Mr. Ruff asked if it was similar to the agreement with Richland County. Mr. Morgan said yes – it was the exact same terms. Mr. Ruff asked if it was the deal where they would receive \$1 million. Mr. Morgan said the agreement with Richland County was related to the redevelopment of the old Richland Fashion Mall. Ms. Luther was assisting the county and the preliminary figures indicated that over the life of the agreement there would be an additional \$1 million in revenue for Fairfield County. ***The motion carried 7-0.***

**B. First Reading (By Title Only) Ordinance No. 813:** An Ordinance of Fairfield County Council So As to Provide for the Creation of the County Road Maintenance Fund, the Recurring Imposition of a Road Maintenance Fee and the Use of the Revenues Collected From the Road Maintenance Fee

and Other Matters Related Thereto. Motion made by Vice Chair Gilbert, seconded by Councilman Ruff. ***The motion carried 7-0.***

- C. First Reading (By Title Only) Ordinance No. 814:** An Ordinance By Fairfield County Council to Amend and Restate Ordinance No. 674 Roads, Highways, and Bridges; and Other Matters Related Thereto. Motion made by Councilman Robinson, seconded by Councilwoman Greene. ***The motion carried 7-0.***

**10. BOARD AND COMMISSION MINUTES (For information only)**

- A.** Aeronautics Commission – March 21, 2023

**11. BOARD AND COMMISSION APPOINTMENTS**

None.

**12. OLD BUSINESS**

None.

**13. NEW BUSINESS**

None.

**14. COUNTY ADMINISTRATOR'S REPORT**

- A. Signage at Recycling Centers** – Mrs. Johnson said there was new signage at the recycling centers that read “No Concealed Weapons Allowed”. The reason was due to concerns raised by some attendants regarding citizens entering the recycling sites making sure their weapons were visible in an intimidating manner. The signs were placed in an effort to protect their attendants and have them feel as safe as possible. It had been an issue several times at three of their sites at a minimum.

- B. Release of State Funds** – Mrs. Johnson said on April 26, 2023, she received an email from the Office of Comptroller General stating that they knew holding their funds could likely cause severe challenges in funding along with inflationary pressures. As a result, they released their funds and their County Treasurer had already begun receiving funds. The amount that was being withheld was approximately \$4.9 million.

**15. CLERK TO COUNCIL'S REPORT**

None.

- 16. 2<sup>nd</sup> PUBLIC COMMENT SESSION:** All public comments made during this session must pertain to items not on the agenda or under Council's consideration. Each speaker is allocated three (3) minutes for comment. The total time allocated for the public comment portion of the meeting is thirty (30)

minutes. Those wishing to make public comment must sign to do so prior to the Council Chair calling the meeting to order. The Clerk to Council will make a public comment sign-up sheet available at least fifteen (15) minutes prior to the scheduled start time of the meeting.

- Randy Bright

## **17. COUNTY COUNCIL TIME**

Mr. Ruff asked Mrs. Johnson for an audit update. Mrs. Johnson said they had submitted all of the requested documentation and was told the past Friday that she could possibly have a draft. She was waiting on the draft and was in contact with the assigned auditor. Once they received the draft, they would review it against what was in their general ledger system to ensure all parties were in agreement. He said he knew she told him that but he wanted it to go on public record. On another note, he said he received a lot of compliments on litter pickup throughout the county. He referred to the SCDOT grant and she said one of the grants was from Palmetto Pride and DOT entered into a contract to have litter picked up as well. She said their building maintenance department had a crew that picked up litter on the weekends also. He asked if they were using inmates and she said yes. He said he also wanted to thank her for helping with the Town of Ridgeway's public bathrooms – it was a good way to show all working together. He announced the cancelation of the Public Service & Development Committee meeting that was scheduled for the next day. Mrs. Johnson said it was due to the Joint Water Sewer meeting being scheduled for the same night and their committee meeting would be rescheduled and announced. Mr. Ruff said Mr. Bright asked the question "what about Fairfield" and he thought a big part was due to the lack of infrastructure. He agreed with Mr. Robinson that Scout should have and could have been theirs had they been ready.

Mrs. Swearingen said she shared the same sentiment with Mr. Ruff regarding the litter pickup. She asked if the billboard in front of Nationwide could be used to run positive ads about Fairfield County. Mrs. Johnson said they were in the process of getting quotes. Mr. Robinson asked if they would have to pay for it since they no longer owned the land and she said that was correct. There was no charge when they owned the land but once it was sold, they were informed they would have to pay for ads.

Mr. Ruff said he was thankful for the speaker on the dais because it made the sound better. Mrs. Johnson thanked the IT department.

Mr. Roseborough said regarding the Joint Water and Sewer, Fairfield was paying 75% of the cost and they only had about 20% of say-so. Each party had two representatives. He did not think it was fair for Fairfield to pay 75% of the cost but only have about 20% say-so. Mrs. Johnson said it was under a cost-

sharing agreement and the committee members at that time voted on that percentage. She said they could go back and revisit it.

Mr. Gilbert said he wanted to correct a misstatement from the public comment session – they had a new auditing company and was not using the former company. He said he read a devotional book called “The Daily Bread”. He recently read an article that read something like this - “the newspaper declared that Pep had taken the life of a cat belonging to the governor’s wife. Pep was a rambunctious young Labrador Retriever owned by the Pennsylvania Governor in 1920. The dog was sent to East State penitentiary, where he was mug shot and given a prisoner ID number. When a newspaper reporter heard about it, he made up a cat story. Because the story appeared in the newspaper, many people believed Pep was a cat killer. Sometimes their human nature caused them to believe everything about others that were not true, yet even when others believed untruths about them, God still used them for good. The governor actually sent Pep to prison so he could befriend the inmates and he served for many years as a pioneer therapy dog. God’s purpose for their lives still stood regardless of what others said or thought. When others gossiped about them, remember that His opinion and His love for them was what mattered most”. Recently, an article came out about Mrs. Swearingen and his statement at the last meeting. He could honestly say that they were not aware of what the other was going to say. Sometimes what one stood for and believed must be addressed. They did not blast the complaints directed at them. They were simply asking those criticizing to be more encouraging and less judgmental. He said in reference to them not being transparent, at the last meeting Mr. Pauley addressed the search for an Administrator. He stated the process had begun. He said he was probably the dumbest person on the dais – please answer the question. Did it make sense to bring a new Administrator in at that point and drop him/her in a chaotic situation (present audit and financial problems) to correct them or to bring him/her into a less chaotic situation? He said some made it seem as though the present Council and Administrator created the audit and financial problems – news flash, they did not. They were only trying to correct it. He had another dumb question – if the state or federal government was auditing you, would you tell them to hurry up or just tell them to forget it? When you refer to residents in your comments or you say that the vast number of citizen were complaining, is it really just a handful? Sometimes silence was a sign of consent – he could not just say nothing. Thank you and God bless you.

Mr. Robinson said he agreed with Mr. Gilbert. He did not know they were going to speak at the last meeting. A said outlet decided to play word games with Council and it had not just started – it had been going on for a while. His question was, were they going to let it continue by financing it? Were they

going to continue to finance something that continued to bash them – that was his problem.

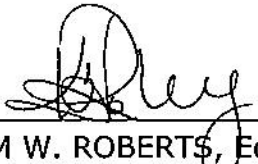
Mr. Pauley thanked the Council for their comments. He announced that on May 13<sup>th</sup>, 2023, the Airport would host a "Wings and Wheels" festival from 10a-3p and he encouraged all to attend. He said Sunday was Mother's Day and he wished all mothers a Happy Mother's Day.


**18. 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.

**19. ADJOURN**

At 6:30pm, motion made by Councilman Ruff, seconded by Councilman Roseborough to adjourn. ***The motion carried 7-0.***

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

  
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DOUGLAS PAULEY  
CHAIRMAN