



**MINUTES  
REGULAR MEETING  
FAIRFIELD COUNTY COUNCIL  
AUGUST 28, 2023**

**Present:** Clarence Gilbert, Cornelius Robinson, Dan Ruff, Shirley Greene, Tim Roseborough, Doug Pauley, Peggy Swearingen, (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**

Councilman Ruff made a motion to amend the agenda to add the discussion of reimbursement to non-profits, including the Farmer's Market for the current calendar year. The motion died for the lack of a second.

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

**4. INVOCATION**

Vice-Chair Gilbert led the invocation.

**5. APPROVAL OF MINUTES**

Motion made by Councilwoman Greene, seconded by Councilman Gilbert to approve the minutes from Regular Meeting August 14, 2023. ***The motion carried 6-0.***

**Mrs. Swearingen entered the meeting at 6:03pm.**

**6. PUBLIC PRESENTATIONS**

**A.** A Proclamation Recognizing the Retirement of John Robertson (Public Works Department) – Dr. Roberts read the proclamation in its entirety. It was presented to Mr. Robertson and pictures were taken.

**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.

- John Jones
- Jeff Schaffer

**8. PUBLIC HEARINGS**

None.

**9. ORDINANCES, RESOLUTIONS AND ORDERS**

**A. Second Reading Ordinance No. 821:** An Ordinance by Fairfield County Council to Establishing the Millage Rate for Fairfield County for the Fiscal Year Beginning July 1, 2023. Motion made by Councilman Gilbert, seconded by Councilman Ruff. ***The motion carried 5-2 with Councilwoman Greene and Councilman Roseborough voting in the negative.***

**B. First Reading (By Title Only) Ordinance No. 822:** An Ordinance Providing for the Purchase and Acquisition of Security Systems, Motor Vehicles, and Related Equipment to be Used for Public Safety and Public Works and Other Equipment; Authorizing the County Administrator to Prescribe the Form and Details of the Lease Purchase Financing of the Equipment; Providing for the Payment of the Lease Purchase Financing; and Other Related Matters. Motion made by Councilman Gilbert, seconded by Councilman Ruff. ***The motion carried 7-0.***

**C. First Reading (By Title Only) Ordinance No. 823:** An Ordinance By Fairfield County Council Approving the Conveyance of Property by Fairfield County to the Fairfield County Forfeited Land Commission, and Other Matters Related Thereto. Motion made by Councilwoman Greene, seconded by Councilman Gilbert. ***The motion carried 7-0.***

**D. First Reading (By Title Only) Ordinance No. 824:** An Ordinance of Fairfield County Council Authorizing An Amendment to the Agreement for Development of Joint County Industrial Park By and Between Fairfield County, South Carolina and Kershaw County, South Carolina, Providing for the



Inclusion of Additional Property in Kershaw County as Part of the Joint County Industrial Park, and Other Related Matters. Motion made by Councilman Ruff, seconded by Councilman Roseborough. ***The motion carried 7-0.***

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

**A.** Aeronautics Commission – April 18, 2023

**11. BOARD AND COMMISSION APPOINTMENTS**

**A.** First Steps Board Appointment (**ACTION ITEM**) – Mrs. Johnson said it was an appointment made by the Council. The SC Code of Laws mandated that a library staff had to be appointed to this board. The recommendation was for Eric Robinson (Library Director) to be re-appointed. Mr. Pauley said he believed the library employees had to recommend Mr. Robinson and he asked if they did. Mrs. Johnson said they received a request from Mr. Robinson to ask Council for re-appointment and state law said the appointment had to come from Council. ***The consensus was 7-0 to re-appoint Eric Robinson to the First Steps Board.***

**12. OLD BUSINESS**

None.

**13. NEW BUSINESS**

None.

**14. COUNTY ADMINISTRATOR'S REPORT**

**A.** Human Resources Update – Mrs. Johnson introduced HR Director, Mary Smyrl to give updates on the personnel manual, the Class and Comp Study, which started that day, and the employee survey. Ms Smyrl said Steve Foster from Management Advisory Group was with them that week conducting orientation sessions for all employees, including elected officials. The purpose of the sessions was to coach everyone on how to properly complete the survey online regarding their position. It would have impact on their responsibilities and the type of work they did in addition to the data in phase one that they sent on all permanent employees – full-time and part-time. It included their classification, their minimum and maximum salary range, dates of initial employment, and promotion dates. The surveys would be completed online, supervisors/department heads would review/approve them and she hoped to get results of the study in November. That day they had 79 employees attend the orientation sessions as well as 32 department heads, directors and elected officials. She said they were nearing completion of the handbook. They had to update and revise many of the policies due to their age. They needed to be more specific. The more specific and clear they

were to employees the more clear it would be to them whenever disciplinary action was needed. She drafted four new policies and she was working on two more. She would like to have the handbook in its entirety in front of Council by the end of September. Regarding the Talent Keepers survey conducted last year, she said it was good data but also high-level data and was not department specific. The category that interested her the most was job dissatisfaction. She wanted to know why – salary, working conditions, etc. There were so many details that were not included in the survey. Her recommendation was to develop an internally designed survey to get more specific information and roll it out through Survey Monkey. It was not expensive and was something that her team and Administration could sit down and look at those things that were not included in the original survey. Mr. Pauley asked if the survey she recommended was paper or computer driven and she said it was online. He said a lot of employees did not take the time to complete the survey. He did not know if it was limited access to a computer but wanted to know if there was another way to accommodate those who might not want to take the online survey. She said they could provide a printed version of the survey for them to complete and return to them. Mrs. Greene asked if it was an employee's survey that the 79 employees took earlier that day. Ms. Smyrl said it was orientation session for the Classification and Compensation Study. Mrs. Greene asked if the approval of the survey by the department heads was confidential and she said it was not confidential. The staff would be providing information about their job duties – they would be ranking their tasks and providing information about the complexity of each task. Mr. Ruff agreed with giving the employees a choice as to how to take the survey. Ms. Smyrl said she believed if they engaged and communicated with employees the importance of the survey, they would get a good response. She could visit different sites and had already developed relationships within the County. She needed more specific information than what was provided in the Talent Keepers survey – it was very, very high level.

- B. Ridgeway Recreation Center Update – ACTION ITEM** – Mrs. Williams said they presented Council with two potential change orders – upgrading the gym floors and installing a privacy fence between the recreation center and the neighboring property owner. They looked at the budget for the project and because of the change order that Council approved in September 2022 (Resolution 2022-08, which included a transfer of an additional \$400,000 to the project), there were enough funds within the project budget to cover those two change orders. Due to the amount, they wanted to inform Council that they would approve those orders for the upgrade and installation. The action item regarded a request from ICE Infrastructure Consulting Engineering. In order to complete the walking trail at the recreation center,



they needed an additional \$27,000 for asphalt and gravel. ICE offered to donate the asphalt and gravel in exchange for the dedication of the walking trail to their late project manager William Bill Coleman who passed away recently. He worked on the Ridgeway Recreation project as well as the fire station and Black Stock projects and he did their C Fund program. They were asking Council to approve the donation from ICE and the dedication of the walking trail. Councilman Gilbert made a motion to approve the donation and dedication, seconded by Councilman Ruff. Mr. Pauley asked for verification that the only action item was regarding the walking trail. Mrs. Williams said he was correct. Due to the resolution approved in September 2022, there was enough money to fund the gym floors and the privacy fence installation so there was no action needed regarding that. Mr. Pauley said for the record, as of that day, they spent \$2,193,273 on the Ridgeway Recreation Center. County Council approved a \$400,000 transfer in September 2022, which created a contingency for the project. The proposed change orders could be absorbed by the contingency and would not require the transfer of additional funds. Mr. Robinson asked if they were taking action on the naming or the money. Mrs. Williams said the vote was requested for the \$27,000 donation from ICE for the walking trail and the name dedication of the walking trail. Mrs. Greene said she thought there was a motion on the floor and Mr. Pauley called for the vote. ***The motion carried 7-0.***

- C. Former Administration Building Update – Mrs. Johnson said the old administration building was collateral for a 2013 bond. They could not do anything with that building unless that collateral was transferred to another building(s). The building values for all County buildings was requested and they hoped to hear that week that they had approval to transfer the collateral. Once they received the approval, they would come back to Council for a decision – keep, sell or tear down the building, etc.
- D. Accommodations/Hospitality Tax Application – Mrs. Williams said the tax application process would open on Friday, September 1, 2023. The information and guidelines were available on the County's website in two locations – Community Development and Finance Department. Those who qualified were free to apply.

## 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.

- Ann Corrao
- Bruce McDonald
- Valerie Clowney
- John Jones
- Jimmie Myers
- Jeff Schaffer

## **17. COUNTY COUNCIL TIME**

Mr. Gilbert said one thing they heard repeatedly was that Scout Motors was locating close to them and Fairfield needed to be ready. The other thing they heard often was that Fairfield was not always represented when it came to discussions related to funding and investments in the County's growth and development. It was time for Fairfield County to have a seat at the table and let their voices and needs be heard. Therefore, he requested the County Administrator to begin a search for a lobbying firm to advocate for the needs of Fairfield County and assist with identifying additional funding opportunities at the state and federal level to support the wastewater treatment project and other infrastructure needed to support anticipated growth.

Mrs. Greene said last week she participated with the I-77 Alliance and Ann Broadwater (Economic Development Director) in a meeting with the International Group sponsored by the Commerce Department. They had great discussions regarding opportunities that would come as a result of Scout and had the opportunity to meet with representatives from Japan and England. She said on Wednesday of the past week, she attended another meeting with the I-77 Alliance, a marketing group that represented five counties in the Midlands, to discuss strategies to recruit more businesses to their area. At that meeting, they highlighted electric vehicles and other opportunities to attract businesses and grow Fairfield County. She understood the importance of trying to get ahead of the game and ensuring Fairfield County was included in the growth opportunities afforded with the arrival of Scout Motors and the businesses that would come with them. She also mentioned that they had five people attend sessions on grant writing – Rev. Sam Ladda (Fairfield High School graduate), Jeronda Brown and Jasmine Furman (Elite Ladies of Fairfield County), and Cecil Davis and Kimberly Boyd (Love Never Fails). It was sponsored by Columbia Gives and their goal was to give Fairfield County the opportunity to participate in the one-day giving program and to talk about grant opportunities. Lastly, she announced that Ms. Eula Wilson celebrated her 103<sup>rd</sup> birthday last week and was featured on WIS TV.



Mr. Ruff thanked everyone for attending the meeting and said it may seem as though they did not listen but they did. They did not always agree –sometimes they agreed to disagree. He hoped they would continue to work together. He also thanked Administration for the improvement of the sound quality in the auditorium. He said he grew up farming – his dad was a farmer. He thought the Farmer’s Market was an asset to Fairfield County and brought people in from all over and the volunteers did not make any money. He felt they needed to support it and he appreciated those involved. He referred to The Market Bulletin, which highlighted the first week of August as National Farmer’s Market Week. The market improved the quality of life for so many people and those folks worked very hard with very little money. He felt they should support them more.

Mrs. Swearingen said there was a comment made at the last meeting during the public comment section regarding the logs on Clark’s Bridge Road. It was stated that it had been months since the citizen came to Council with the issue and nothing was done. She said the matter was investigated and a nuisance violation was issued by the Community Development Department. A letter was received from the Forestry Association notifying them that it was a forestry operation and the operation was delayed due to site conditions. Administration had since reached out for an update on that situation. It was also stated during the public comment section that there was equipment on their property near the Jenkinsville monument wall. It was not their equipment, it was not on County property and they were not paying for it. It was on private property and the equipment belonged to the owner of said property. She addressed the question of where the tax monies would go regarding the recently passed tax increase. She said one of the goals was to increase full-time firefighters (she thought they hired at least one full-time firefighter already) and she hoped he would be in Feasterville. They would hire more paramedics and according to the acting EMS Director, there were more staff at Salem Crossroads. They did not have full-time staff there yet but they did have more coverage than before. She met with the Sheriff and talked about possibilities of cutting corners. They were working although it might look like they were not. She also said she was the Council representative for the library and made the following announcements on their behalf: they had an opening for a bookmobile librarian, the children’s librarian was working on the Fall Story Hour schedule, the Friends of the Library were planning a book sale at the beginning of October, they would host a Susan Beckham Zurenda book signing on November 12<sup>th</sup> at 3:00pm, the annual trunk or treat would be on October 31<sup>st</sup>, and Santa at the Library night would be December 14<sup>th</sup>.

Mr. Pauley said (on behalf of Council) that they established ordinances and fees for a reason. At times, one might not like the ordinance but still had to adhere to what was established. Regarding the Farmer’s Market, there was a situation

last week, not relating to the Farmer's Market, that he was not in favor of but it was an ordinance. Even though he disapproved, it was put in place three years ago and he had to let it go forward. In relation to the Farmer's Market, to give them back half of what they paid would go against County policy. There was an ordinance that established fees for the rental use of County buildings. County Council voted at its last meeting to reduce the rental rate for all non-profits to \$25/hour. Giving back half of what the Farmer's Market paid opened the County up to refund any non-profit who used a County facility within the last year. During their meeting with the Farmer's Market representatives on July 27<sup>th</sup>, they learned that the Fairfield Chamber of Commerce paid the market's first month rent. Refunding the market would mean refunding the Chamber of Commerce and any other organization or individual who may have paid on the market's behalf. The Council agreed to the reduced rate for non-profits, therefore, he believed they did what they could to work with the Farmer's Market. He said they should move on from it and focus instead on how to upfit the market building so it could be of best use to all of the community and not just one organization.

Mr. Ruff said he contacted Administration and there were no other non-profits that rented a County building in that calendar year. In his opinion, they would have for any non-profit but there were no others. He believed the amount was \$2,300 and half of that was \$1,150. It was not much money – just a gesture of goodwill

**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.)**

- A.** Receipt of Legal relating to pending legal claims against the County and the possible settlement of said claims and the receipt of attorney-client privileged communications Pursuant to S.C. Code Ann. § 30-4-70(a)(2).
- B.** Discussion of employment and other personnel matters pertaining to an employee of Fairfield County pursuant to S.C. Code Ann. § 30-4-70(a)(1).

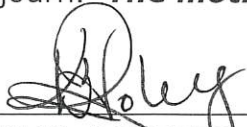
At 7:03pm, Motion made by Councilman Ruff, seconded by Councilman Roseborough to go into executive session. ***The motion carried 7-0.***

At 8:04pm, motion made by Councilwoman Ruff, seconded by Councilman Robinson to come out of executive session. ***The motion carried 7-0.*** Mr. Pauley said no action was taken during executive session.

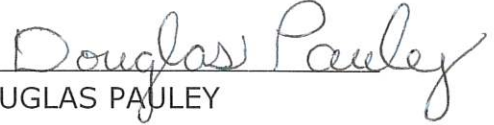


**19. ADJOURN**

At 8:04pm, motion made by Councilman Robinson, seconded by Councilman Ruff to adjourn. ***The motion carried 7-0.***

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'K. Roberts', written over a horizontal line.

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

A handwritten signature in black ink, reading 'Douglas Pauley', written over a horizontal line.

DOUGLAS PAULEY  
CHAIRMAN