



**MINUTES  
REGULAR MEETING  
FAIRFIELD COUNTY COUNCIL  
OCTOBER 9, 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.

Mr. Pauley responded to a question regarding the validity of the proper posting of the meeting. For the record, he said it was properly advertised. A 24-hour minimum notice of public meetings was required. The agenda was required to be posted at the location of the meeting, to be sent to any media outlets requesting the notice and on the County's website. Fairfield County, as a courtesy, also posted the agenda on the Fairfield County Facebook page. Although they tried to post on Facebook at the same time, the agenda was posted on the website and at the County building. The agenda might not always post to social media at the same time. Citizens who wish to receive the agenda by email could request to be added to the Clerk of Council's mailing list.

**3. APPROVAL OF THE AGENDA**

Motion made by Councilwoman Greene to amend the agenda to move Action Item B to after Item 17 Executive Session, seconded by Councilman Gilbert.

***The motion carried 7-0.***

Motion made by Councilman Ruff, seconded by Councilman Gilbert to approve the agenda as amended. ***The motion carried 7-0.***

**4. INVOCATION**

Councilman Robinson said he wanted to remember the Armstrong and Young families who were in his district. They each had death in their families within the past two weeks. He then led the invocation.

**5. APPROVAL OF MINUTES**

Motion made by Councilman Ruff, seconded by Councilwoman Greene to approve the minutes from Regular Meeting 9/25/23. ***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.

- Peter Gainey (declined)
- Jeff Schaffer
- Randy Bright

**8. PUBLIC HEARINGS**

- A.** An Ordinance By Fairfield County Council Authorizing the Purchase of Real Property that Meets the Necessary Requirements for Said Property to be Used as a Suitable Location for a Wastewater Treatment Site With Discharge Into the Broad River, and Other Matters Related Thereto. Mr. Pauley opened the public hearing at 6:10pm. Randy Bright signed up to speak. Mr. Pauley closed the public hearing at 6:13pm.

**9. ORDINANCES, RESOLUTIONS AND ORDERS**

- A. Third & Final Reading Ordinance No. 825:** An Ordinance by Fairfield County Council Authorizing the Purchase of Real Property that Meets the Necessary Requirements for Said Property to be Used as a Suitable Location for a Wastewater Treatment Site With Discharge Into the Broad River, and Other Matters Related Thereto. Motion made by Councilman Ruff, seconded by Councilman Gilbert. ***The motion carried 7-0.***
- B. Second Reading Ordinance No. 826:** An Ordinance by Fairfield County Council Authorizing the Execution and Delivery of an Amendment to Special Source Revenue Credit Agreement by and Between Fairfield County, South

Carolina and Healthcare SC, LLC Relating To, Without Limitation, the Provision of Special Source Revenue Credits; and Other Matters Relating Thereto. Motion made by Councilman Ruff, seconded by Councilwoman Greene. ***The motion carried 7-0.***

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

None.

**11. BOARD AND COMMISSION APPOINTMENTS**

**A. Zoning Board of Appeals – Kerry Matthews**

Motion made by Councilwoman Swearingen to appoint Kerry Matthews to the Zoning Board of Appeals for District 3, seconded by Councilman Ruff.

***The motion carried 7-0.***

**12. OLD BUSINESS**

**A. Old Administration Building Update –** Mrs. Johnson reminded Council that the old Administration building was held as collateral for 2013 IPR B bond (Installment Purchase Revenue Bond). The collateral would be moved to the DSS/DHEC building on Kincaid Bridge Road. She asked Council to delay the disposition of the old Administration building until they heard from the EDA Recompete grant. Mrs. Williams said a few meetings before, they requested and received approval from Council to submit a letter of support for the EDA Recompete grant, which the Catawba Regional Council of Governments and the Central Midlands Council of Governments were in cooperation with, to establish opportunity and workforce hubs in Union, Fairfield and Chester counties. The decision should be made within the next 3-4 months as to whether or not they would be awarded the grant. If awarded, they would like to offer the old Administration building as a potential site. Mr. Pauley asked if it would require a vote to transfer the collateral from one building to another one. Mr. Morgan said he needed to have a discussion with the bond counsel to see if that was necessary. If deemed necessary, he would bring it before Council. Mrs. Johnson said when the subject of the disposition of the property came up, Council would have to vote on whether to sell or keep it. Mrs. Swearingen asked if they were going to hold off on selling because someone might want to buy it. Mrs. Johnson said it would still be County property but it would be repurposed and the grant would help pay for the renovations.

**Mr. Robinson left the meeting at 6:18pm.**

**13. NEW BUSINESS**

**A. Cancellation of Council Meeting November 27, 2023 – ACTION ITEM**

Motion made by Councilman Gilbert, seconded by Councilman Ruff to cancel the November 27, 2023 Council meeting. ***The motion carried 6-0.***

Mr. Pauley said Mr. Robinson apologized. He had to step out of the meeting for a moment.

**Mr. Robinson re-entered the meeting at 6:22pm.**

#### **14. COUNTY ADMINISTRATOR'S REPORT**

- A.** Introduction of New Public Information Officer – Mrs. Johnson said Gene Stephens was selected as the County's Public Information Officer. He was with the Chamber of Commerce for over five years. He promoted tourism, managed 16 events per year and had a good working relationship with citizens, the media, municipalities and counties. She said a PIO was needed to disseminate accurate information about County business and how decisions affected their citizens. Mr. Stephens would be responsible for ribbon cutting ceremonies, managing the Facebook account and other social media outlets, interacting with the media, updating the website and handling the FOIA requests. He would also coordinate the release of information during disasters. Mr. Stephens said he had been in Fairfield County for 12 years and dedicated those years to making the county the best it could be and he was excited to continue in a different capacity.
- B.** Introduction of Interim Chamber of Commerce Director – Mrs. Johnson agreed to let Mr. Stephens introduce the Interim Chamber of Commerce Director, Dillion Pullen. Pastor Pullen worked for the Chamber for five years. He left at the age of 19 to start his own church and eventually came back to the Chamber as board Chair and now the Interim Director/President. Pastor Pullen said the Chamber had a long-standing legacy of being a vital part of the community and he was honored to continue the legacy in his new role. He said he looked forward to working with the Council and to improving the overall quality of life for those who called Fairfield County home. Mr. Pauley said he was grateful for the return of "Rock Around the Clock" (that past weekend). He thought it was great and he thanked the staff. Mr. Gilbert and Mrs. Greene welcomed both in their new positions.
- C.** Economic Development Committee Meeting – October 16, 2023 – Mrs. Williams said the meeting would be held in the auditorium at 3:00pm. She invited full Council, as they would be discussing the goals associated with the Economic Development Strategic Plan and subsequent action items. Even though they might not be on the committee, the committee Chair, Mr. Gilbert, could grant permission to speak. It was a way for them to participate before they brought the plan to full Council for a vote and adoption.
- D.** September 2023 Finance Report – Mrs. Johnson said the September 2023 finance report was available online and Council was also provided a hard copy. She said if they had questions, comments or needed additional information to let her know.

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

None.

**16. COUNTY COUNCIL TIME**

Mr. Gilbert said Mr. Randy Sims passed away that day and he wanted to send condolences to the family.

Mrs. Greene thanked all of the program participants and county departments that worked so diligently to make the ribbon cutting last week at the River Road Fire Station successful. Nearly 300 families in the southern part of River Road in Ridgeway would have an insurance standard office as ISO ratings decreased from 10 to 5. The rating was used to decrease the cost of homeowner's insurance and she believed the citizens in that area were pleased. She thanked the Chamber of Commerce, Rev. Fran Bragan of the Lake Wateree Presbyterian Church, Jimmy Ray Douglas (he started the project), the Clerk to Council, Council members, Administration, firefighters, emergency services, police officers, building maintenance, local town officials, school board officials and Public Works for all of their work. She thought it was a collaborative effort that showed what the community and Council working together could do to benefit the public.

Mr. Ruff asked the status of hiring a recruiting firm to search for an Administrator and Mr. Pauley said it should be within two weeks. Mr. Ruff asked the timeline after hiring the firm would the job be posted and Mr. Pauley said he would talk to the Procurement Director, Mrs. Washington and let him know. He also asked about the second public comment session on the agenda. Mr. Pauley said after consulting with Council members, he felt it was in the best interest of the Council and the county to remove it for the time being. If it was something that Council wanted to discuss, it could be placed on the agenda for the next meeting. Mr. Ruff said he was against removing it. He knew that an issue happened and that person apologized. He felt the concerns should be addressed and it was also the responsibility of Council and the staff to be respectful as well to the citizens. He wanted good interaction even though they would not always agree. When there was a problem, they needed to communicate and address it.

Mrs. Swearingen said last Tuesday she attended the Sheriff's Office Citizen's Academy. It was a very good class and she encouraged everyone to take it. She learned that a text could be sent to 911 in the event of an emergency. She announced that Kelly Miller Elementary School visited the library. They toured, received a library card, checked out their first book and had a picnic on the lawn. She thought they needed to encourage other grammar schools to start young creating an interest in books. Aside from the internet, children needed to know how important it was to visit the library otherwise they would have a lost

generation. She said some Council members toured the Luck Stone facility. They had approximately 80 acres that they planned to use for other businesses and Mrs. Johnson confirmed. Lastly, she said she attended an EV seminar in Charlotte last week (sponsored by the Co-op) and she knew the HR Director, Corey Epps. They talked about potential educational opportunities to offer at Midland Technical College or dual enrollment with the schools. There would be various job opportunities that would come along with EV stations - there were over 4 million electric vehicles sold over the past summer. She said Governor McMaster ordered a study of the EV ecosystem last October and the Eco Development staff was formed. Mr. Epps said there were currently 25 white collar employees at Scout - by December it would be 60 and 150 by next year and they should be at full capacity at the end of 2028 or beginning of 2029. She would like him to speak before Council to tell more about Scout.

Mr. Robinson said he wanted to remind Council that this was not the first time that the second public comment session was removed from the agenda and if he was not mistaken it was not illegal. He stood with it being removed for now.

**17. 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 advice and discussion regarding matters relating to the proposed location, expansion, or the provision of services encouraging expansion of industries in the area pursuant to S.C. Code Ann. § 30-4-70(a)(5).

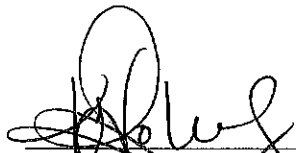
At 6:37pm, motion made by Councilman Ruff, seconded by Councilman Roseborough to go into executive session. ***The motion carried 7-0.***

At 6:52pm, motion made by Councilman Ruff, seconded by Councilwoman Greene to come out of executive session. ***The motion carried 7-0.***

Mr. Pauley said no action was taken during executive session.


**18. ADJOURN**

At 6:53pm, 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