



**MINUTES
REGULAR MEETING
FAIRFIELD COUNTY COUNCIL
NOVEMBER 13, 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

Motion made by Councilman Robinson to amend the agenda to remove Item 9D, seconded by Councilwoman Greene. ***The motion carried 7-0.***

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

4. INVOCATION

Councilwoman Peggy Swearingen led the invocation.

5. APPROVAL OF MINUTES

Motion made by Councilman Ruff, seconded by Councilwoman Greene to approve the minutes from Public Service & Development 9/12/23, Economic Development 10/16/23, & Regular Meeting 10/23/23.

The motion carried 7-0.

6. PUBLIC PRESENTATIONS

A. A Proclamation Recognizing the Retirement of Judy George (Emergency Management) – Dr. Roberts read the proclamation in its entirety and pictures

were taken. Mr. Pauley, Mr. Robinson and Mr. Ruff thanked her for her service.

B. Britt Poole & Reginald Simmons (Central Midlands Council of Governments – COG))

Mr. Poole introduced himself as the new Director of the COG and said Mr. Simmons was running late. He said last year, Fairfield County paid about \$18,000 to be a member of the COG. Since then, the Fairfield County Council on Aging received over \$450,000 in food and transportation. They worked with the County and received over \$1.5 million in CDBG grants. He was asked by the COG board to create unity within the region that may have been lacking. He wanted to find new ways to work together and was open to ideas. Mr. Gilbert thanked him for his time.

- 7. 1st 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. 827: An Ordinance by Fairfield County Council Authorizing the Sale of Certain Real Property in Fairfield County, South Carolina; and Other Related Matters. Motion made by Councilman Gilbert, seconded by Councilwoman Greene. Mr. Ruff asked for an explanation. Mr. Morgan said the ordinance would authorize the county to sell certain property to an industry identified as Project Bedrock (a ready mix concrete manufacturing business). It was scheduled to create a taxable investment of at least \$8 million and 17 full time jobs. ***The motion carried 7-0.***

B. First Reading (By Title Only) No. 828: An Ordinance by Fairfield County Council to Amend Ordinance No. 737 To Establish the Rules and Regulations Pertaining To Animal Control in Fairfield County and Revise Chapter 4, Animals, of the Code of Ordinances, Fairfield County, South Carolina. Motion made by Councilman Ruff, seconded by Councilwoman Greene. ***The motion carried 7-0.***

C. First Reading (By Title Only) No. 829: An Ordinance by Fairfield County Council to Amend Ordinance No. 815 Establishing the Operating and Capital Budgets For the Operation of the County Government of Fairfield County For the Fiscal Year Commencing July 1, 2023, and Other Matters Related Thereto. Motion made by Councilman Ruff, seconded by Councilwoman Greene. ***The motion carried 7-0.***

D. Resolution No. 2023-05: A Resolution to Transfer Approved Dominion Settlement Agreement Funds from the Fairfield Commerce Center Parcel Nine Mass Grading Project and the Fairfield Megasite Mass Grading Project, Which are in Excess of the Funds Needed for Those Projects, to Provide \$1,500,000 in Additional Funding Needed for the Construction of the Speculative Building Located on Parcel Nine in the Fairfield Commerce Center and Other Matters Related Thereto.

THIS ITEM WAS REMOVED.

10. BOARD AND COMMISSION MINUTES (For information only)

A. Aeronautics Commission – August 15, 2023

11. BOARD AND COMMISSION APPOINTMENTS

A. Zoning Board of Appeals – Timothy Cullum (District 1)

Motion made by Councilman Ruff to appoint Timothy Cullum to the Zoning Board of Appeals for District 1, seconded by Councilman Gilbert. ***The motion carried 7-0.***

B. Library Commission – Janice McGriff (District 2)

Motion made by Councilwoman Greene, seconded by Councilman Gilbert to appoint Janice McGriff to the Library Commission for District 2. ***The motion carried 7-0.***

C. Library Commission – Rebecca Dodds (District 3)

Motion made by Councilwoman Swearingen, seconded by Councilwoman Greene to appoint Rebecca Dodds to the Library Commission for District 3. ***The motion carried 7-0.***

D. Aeronautics Commission – Creighton Taylor (District 3)

Motion made by Councilwoman Swearingen, seconded by Councilman Ruff to appoint Creighton Taylor to the Aeronautics Commission for District 3. ***The motion carried 7-0.***

E. Planning Commission – Ashley Mills (District 3)

Motion made by Councilwoman Swearingen, seconded by Councilman Ruff to appoint Ashley Mills to the Planning Commission for District 3. ***The motion carried 7-0.***

F. Council on Aging – Debra Broom (District 3)

Motion made by Councilwoman Swearingen, seconded by Councilman Gilbert to appoint Debra Broom to the Council on Aging Board for District 3. ***The motion carried 7-0.***

12. OLD BUSINESS

None.

13. NEW BUSINESS

None.

14. COUNTY ADMINISTRATOR'S REPORT

- A.** Council Virtual Workshop (Housing Study) – Mrs. Williams gave a reminder of the workshop. She said members of the MRB team would present the results of the citizen's survey, their analysis and the pressures the county faced related to housing. They would issue suggestions for the final study to include Council's feedback. Once it was finalized, it would come back to Council for review and adoption. The link was sent out to the public last week and would be posted to the website.
- B.** National Regulatory Meeting – 11/14/23 @ McCrory Liston 6p-8p – Mrs. Williams referred to a handout given to Council and reminded them of the meeting. The meeting was for the VC Summers license renewal. The Council was invited to attend but did not have to speak.
- C.** Blackstock Mini Park Ribbon Cutting – 11/16/23 @ 11a – Mrs. Williams announced the ribbon cutting ceremony in District 3.
- D.** Short-Term Rental Public Meeting – 11/29/23 – Mrs. Williams said the meeting would begin at 6p in the Government Complex. They would discuss the County's limitations, offer recommendations and get feedback from the public.
- E.** Gateway Signage – Mrs. Williams said last year, the Council approved seeking a group to assist with designing gateway signage for the County through Rural Stabilization Funds. The RFP was posted to the County's Procurement website and they hoped to find a good firm to assist with the project. They also included a request for way finding signage.
Mr. Pauley recognized Mr. Reginald Simmons' (Deputy Executive Director and Transportation Director for the COG) arrival to the meeting. Mr. Simmons said his job was to work with the team to identify the transportation needs in Fairfield County, study the needs and find a solution. He said they had about \$5 million per year to address the needs. He said he was available and willing to help make the roads safer in the County – it was a benefit for the region. Mr. Gilbert thanked him for attending.
- F.** Lobbyist RFQ – Mrs. Williams said they issued an RFQ for a lobbying consultant per the request of Vice Chair Gilbert. They did not have to act on

it – it was just to gather information. If Council decided they were interested in pursuing a lobbyist, they would already have some information.

G. Purchase of a Medium Rescue Truck Along with the Approved Ladder Truck Purchase – ACTION ITEM

Mrs. Johnson said there was \$250,000 approved during the budget for a ladder truck for the fire department. Chief Webb worked very hard and was able to get the ladder truck and a rescue truck under budget for \$220,000. It was on the agenda as an action item because the rescue truck was an additional asset. Mr. Webb said it was a good opportunity. Both trucks were well-maintained, local trucks from a trusted department and had great maintenance records. Mrs. Swearingen thanked him for his hard work and said she enjoyed the Volunteer Firefighter's Appreciation Dinner. Mr. Ruff asked if he was going to move one of the service trucks to another location once the new truck came in and he said yes. He said the medium rescue truck had the same equipment they carried on their service trucks so he would move a service truck to a station that did not have one. Mr. Ruff thanked him for his hard work. Motion made by Councilman Ruff, seconded by Councilman Gilbert to approve the purchase as stated. ***The motion carried 7-0.***

H. Economic Development Strategic Plan – ACTION ITEM

Mrs. Johnson stated the Economic Development Strategic Plan was presented to Council on October 16th. She said Holly West, Project Manager in Economic Development, would give a short presentation before the vote. Mrs. West presented a Power Point. **PLEASE SEE ATTACHED.** She also thanked those who attended their recent Existing Industry Appreciation Event the week before. Mrs. Swearingen said the plan did not have timelines in regards to when items in each area would be completed. Mrs. Johnson said the main goal was to get the approval and then they would meet with Council to set timelines. Motion made by Councilman Gilbert, seconded by Councilman Roseborough to approve the plan. ***The motion carried 7-0.***

- I. Audit Update** – Mrs. Johnson announced that the audit started last week – three auditors came and spent about three days. They would return the next day and had already received their trial balance. She would keep Council updated.
- J. October 2023 Finance Report** – Mrs. Johnson said Council received the report and if they had questions to let her know.
- K. Economic Development Institute Graduates** – Mrs. Johnson recognized Synithia Williams and Ann Broadwater as recent graduates of the EDI program. She said Mrs. Williams was voted "Most Studious".

Mr. Pauley said he was aware that she and the Finance team had worked some long hours and he thanked them.

15. CLERK TO COUNCIL'S REPORT

None.

16. COUNTY COUNCIL TIME

Mrs. Swearingen corrected a statement she made at the October 23rd Council meeting. She said she and Mr. Roseborough attended a Dominion meeting and they were about to start construction on two new gas powered turbines – not solar powered (as she stated in that meeting). It was \$180 million investment in the County. She said Mr. Roseborough was right. She also said The Weeping Mary Baptist Church in Shelton would have their first annual Christmas gala at the Chester War Memorial Building December 9th from 5p-10p. The tickets were \$50/couple or \$25/person. The information could be found on the Blair Coalition of Churches website.

Mr. Ruff congratulated Mrs. Williams and Mrs. Broadwater on completing the EDI program. He also thanked Mrs. Johnson, Mrs. Williams and all involved in getting the audit started. Lastly, he said he saw signs in the audience and he did not know if that was the best way to accomplish a mission and he felt it was inappropriate.

Mr. Gilbert said at the last meeting they had a board selection based on information given by staff, which showed that a board position expired. The information turned out to be incorrect. The error was made in 2022 and someone incorrectly documented the term expiration date. The issue was immediately investigated and corrected. He personally apologized to the board member for the mistake and accepted responsibility. It was his understanding that the person was told that he was removed due to his vote on a current issue. It was a lie. Another rumor was that he (Gilbert) said he was told to do that and that was also a lie. He said anyone who knew that to be true should please come see him and tell him to his face that he said it. There were those who insisted on keeping negativity going – to see a simple mistake plastered on the front page of the paper and on a particular Facebook page with the topic in caps "This is far from over" irked him to his core. Anyone who really knew him knew that he would not participate in anything like that. During that situation, he had things said about him when all he tried to do were things to care for his County. That was what he got for thinking people would appreciate his efforts. They were tried and sentenced before given the opportunity to get all of the information and address the mistake. The lack of willingness to get the truth instead of focusing on rumors and negativity made him want to say "what the heck, why try" and walk away but he would not back down. The error was identified and corrected and that was what was important. He would not be threatened, intimidated or bullied on what to do. Some people had lived through things that they refused to go through again – being threatened, intimidated or bullied to do something in the best interest of the County was

one of them. He said please be careful of the battles picked. Do not be like Russia attacking Ukraine thinking you had a weak victim. He did not take lightly anyone questioning his integrity. Remember, the people trying to be destroyed may be needed to help you. They had faults themselves when they looked at the faults of others. At the rate they were going, they would never move forward. There were some who did not want to see the County grow or become more prosperous. Growth and prosperity were coming whether they wanted it or not. It was best to work together to prepare for the changes rather than to fight them. To those who were pushing so hard for a new Administrator – yes, the position needed to be filled. The reason it had not was due to the work of everyone on the stage to address the challenges they faced from the start of the year – late audit, preparing the budget, addressing the lack of investment in their public safety needs, making progress on the water treatment project along with several other issues. He asked if anyone thought a new Administrator would have been able to come in and learn about the County's financial system and resolve many of the issues they had in less than a year. The current staff worked extremely hard and long hours to get them to a place of stability. The work was not over. They deserved a pat on the back and not a knife in the back. He said to the staff, if they did not appreciate them, he did. His next question was to those who said they did not have qualified staff – what made them qualified authorities on County government? Was it based on the work they did, the projects they completed or the success they made? Did they only measure qualifications on how much you liked them or their ability to be controlled? To his Council and staff associates, there was a saying, "People would start to hate you once they could no longer control you". He quoted two of his favorite scriptures – Isaiah 54:17 "No weapon formed against me shall prosper" and Romans 12:21 "Do not the evil get the best of you. Get the best of evil by doing good". He said to Mr. Pauley as his friend and fellow Councilman, he hoped he would lean on those scriptures in his walk during those turbulent times.

Mr. Robinson said Happy Veteran's Day to all veterans and mentioned the Veteran's Day celebration held the week before. He attended and although he had to leave early, it was a nice event. He received several text messages/phone calls saying a state representative chastised Council regarding the Veteran's Director being late. In his opinion, it was addressed publicly so it needed to be talked about publicly. He said he would take up for her because he knew what she went through and how hard she worked. As an advocate for Fairfield County, he felt it was the wrong time to chastise Council if that was what she chose to do. He said if anything needed to be said for Council, talk to the Chair, the Vice Chair or bring it to staff. The Director was late because she picked up a fellow veteran – that was her job. If a veteran knew a veteran, it was a rapport that was built among them. He thought they

were wrong for starting the program without her and they owed her an apology. Council and state representatives were guests. He thought the Director was doing a great job. She was the third one in the position and he knew all three. She had shown much love to the veteran's in the county. He and his wife were veterans and one could tell the difference when someone showed love for veterans. He thanked Ms. Woodard and said she was a phlebotomist and a Deputy Coroner. Those were a lot of hats to wear and he wanted to thank her publicly.

Mr. Pauley thanked the Economic Development team for the Industry Appreciation Event held the previous Thursday. He also acknowledged the Volunteer Firefighter's Appreciation dinner held on the same night. Both events were great and he appreciated the hard work that went into making them successful. He agreed with Mr. Robinson regarding the Veteran's Day luncheon being a great event. They recognized a 100-year old Fairfield County veteran. He agreed that Ms. Woodard did a great job and the event was well attended. He announced that meeting was the only one for the month of November and he wished all, especially law enforcement, a Happy Thanksgiving. He said he and his family attended church with Mr. Gilbert last Sunday. The Pastor gave a message about thrill seekers – people who want to show out to be seen. He thought that happened in everyday life – in church, Council meetings, where people were looking for a thrill to be seen and recognized. However, that Council would not entertain thrill seekers. They would do what was best for Fairfield County and they would move the County forward.

- A.** Receipt of Legal Advice Regarding the Lawsuit Town of Winnsboro vs. Fairfield County, C/A. No. 2022-CP-20-00105, and Other Matters Covered by the Attorney-Client Privilege Pursuant to S.C. Code Ann. § 30-4-70(a)(2).

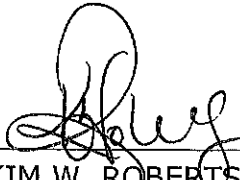
At 6:54pm, motion made by Councilman Roseborough, seconded by Councilman Ruff to go into executive session. **The motion carried 7-0.**

At 7:15pm, motion made by Councilman Ruff, seconded by Councilman Roseborough to come out of executive session. **The motion carried 7-0.**

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

17. ADJOURN

At 7:16pm, motion made by Councilman Ruff, seconded by Councilman Roseborough 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, appearing to read 'Douglas Pauley', written over a horizontal line.

DOUGLAS PAULEY
CHAIRMAN



PROGRAM OF WORK



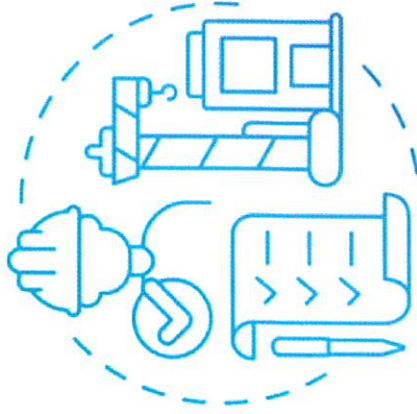
GOAL: QUALITY SITES AND
BUILDINGS TO ATTRACT AND RETAIN
BUSINESSES

STRATEGY: CREATE AN ONGOING FUNDING SOURCE FOR PRODUCT DEVELOPMENT



Action Steps:

- Develop a policy to re-invest proceeds from spec building sales in new spec buildings and/or site development.
- Develop a list of priority capital improvement projects to guide future budgeting.



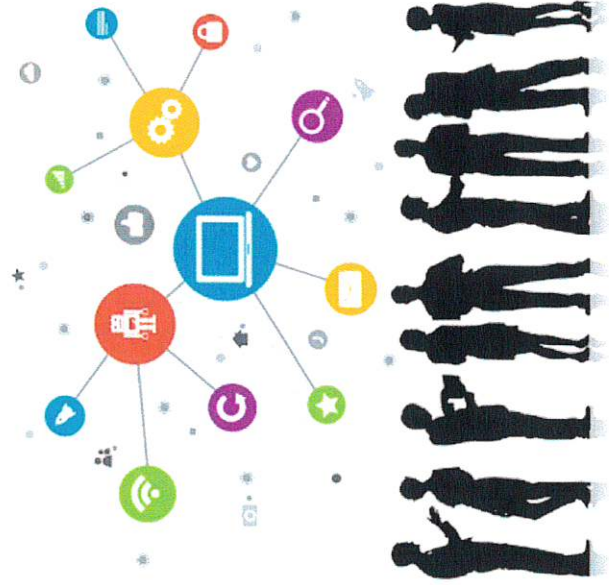
STRATEGY: INVEST IN INDUSTRIAL SITE DEVELOPMENT

Action Steps:

- Create and implement a site development plan and update for the mega site
- Preserve industrial zoned land and ensure the highest and best use of industrial sites.
- Complete bridge repair and road improvement projects that will enhance industrial locations.

GOAL: RETAIN AND SUPPORT THE
EXPANSION OF EXISTING BUSINESSES

STRATEGY: IMPLEMENT A PROACTIVE BRE PROGRAM



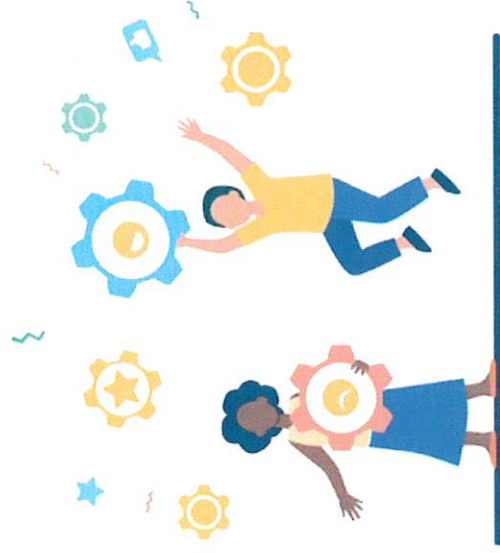
Action Steps:

- Conduct regular business visits to identify barriers to growth and assess expansion potential.
- Organize networking events for existing businesses to connect.
- Complete a resource guide for existing businesses.



GOAL: DEVELOP A STRONG TALENT
PIPELINE

STRATEGY: CONNECT BUSINESS AND EDUCATION TO COLLABORATE ON EDUCATION AND TRAINING

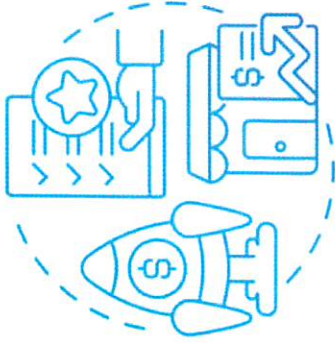


Action Steps:

- Conduct a feasibility study for a training/career center and/or center of industry excellence in Fairfield Commerce Center.
- Promote the “teacher’s village” as a significant investment in talent attraction and development.

GOAL: RAISE AWARENESS OF
FAIRFIELD COUNTY AS A CHOICE
BUSINESS LOCATION

STRATEGY: MARKET AND PROMOTE FAIRFIELD COUNTY TO ATTRACT INVESTMENT



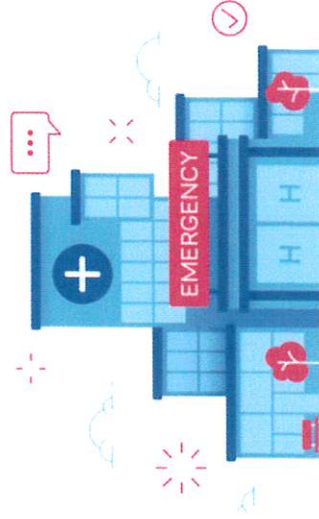
Action Steps:

- Implement the newly developed comprehensive marketing plan.
- Continue to participate in regional and state business attraction programs, events, missions, and sales trips.
- Maintain up-to-date marketing collaterals.

STRATEGY: INVEST IN AMENITIES AND PLACEMAKING ASSETS

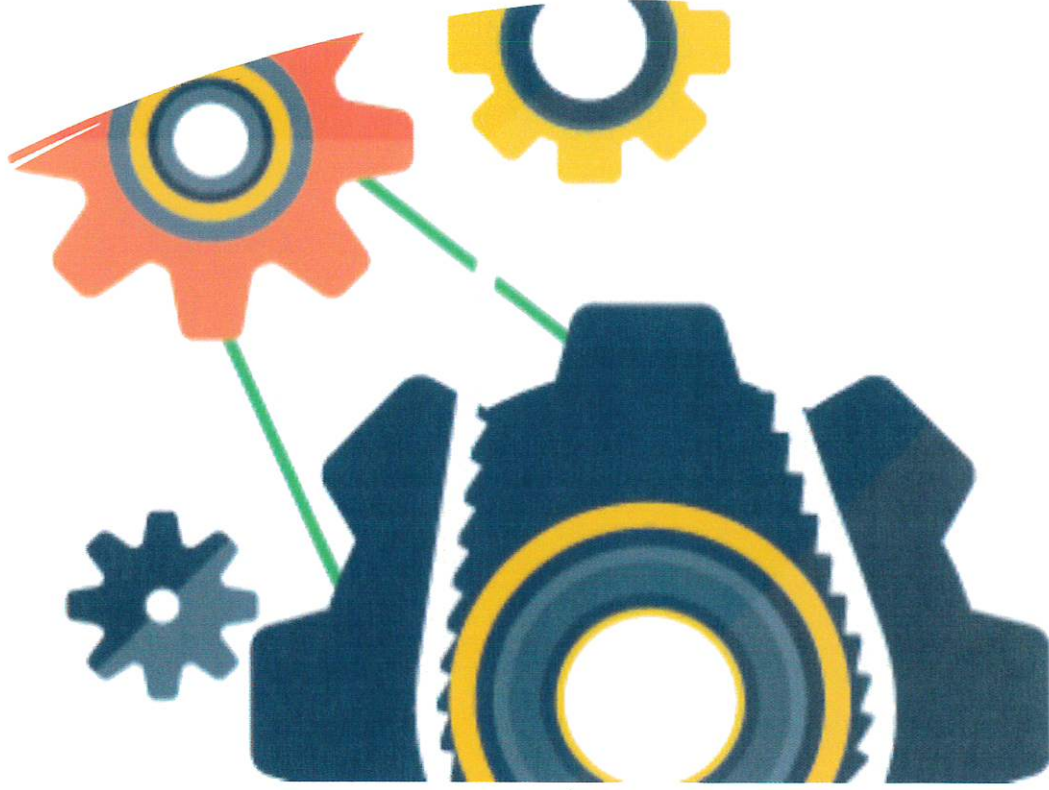
Action Steps:

- Issue a Request for Proposals for gateway and wayfinding signage design.
- Continue to seek partners to develop an urgent care facility and other health care services that will close access gaps.





GOAL: AN INNOVATIVE ECONOMIC
DEVELOPMENT ORGANIZATION



STRATEGY: INVEST FOR SUCCESS

Action Steps:

- Continue to explore the feasibility of a public-private nonprofit economic development organization to engage the private sector, be more responsive to business, and raise additional funds for economic development.

STRATEGY: STRENGTHEN PARTNERSHIPS

Action Step:

- Increase participation in regional economic development alliances and leverage their marketing outreach and support services.
- Strengthen connections with municipalities, adjoining counties, the region, and state to advance Fairfield County's economic development goals.



ADDITIONAL PRIORITIES OF FAIRFIELD COUNTY

Affordable Housing

- Complete the housing needs analysis.
- Invest in water and sewer and wastewater treatment plant.
- Make updates to the zoning ordinance to support housing development.

Downtown Development

- Utilize CDBG funds to assist downtown development.
- Implement the Recreation Economies for Rural Communities strategic plan.
- Invest in appearance and landscaping to improve areas connecting to downtowns.

Broadband

- Expand Wi-Fi to cover all county buildings.
- Review broadband needs to identify service gaps, customer needs, and funding opportunities.