



**MINUTES
SPECIAL CALLED MEETING
JUNE 29, 2023
6:00PM**

Present: Shirley Greene, Cornelius Robinson, Timothy Roseborough, Peggy Swearingen, Douglas Pauley, Clarence Gilbert, Dan Ruff (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.

1. CALL TO ORDER

Chairman Pauley called the Special Meeting to order at 6:00 p.m.

2. APPROVAL OF AGENDA

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

3. INVOCATION

Councilman Robinson led the invocation.

4. PUBLIC HEARINGS

A. An Ordinance To Establish Operating and Capital Budgets for the Operation of the County Government of Fairfield County for the Fiscal Year Commencing July 1, 2023; to Provide for the Levy of Taxes for Fairfield County for the Fiscal Year Commencing July 1, 2023; to Establish Fees and Service Charges for Fairfield County for the Fiscal Year Commencing July 1, 2023; to Provide for the Expenditure of Tax Revenues and Other County Related Funds; and to Provide for Certain Fiscal Matters and Other Matters Related to County Government. Mr. Pauley opened the public hearing at 6:02pm. Don Goldbach, Jeff Schaffer, and Randy Bright signed up to speak. Mr. Pauley closed the public hearing at 6:12pm.

B. 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. Mr. Pauley opened the public hearing at 6:12pm. Jeff Schaffer and Randy Bright signed up to speak. Mr. Pauley closed the public hearing at 6:19pm.

5. ORDINANCES, RESOLUTION AND ORDERS

- A. Third & Final Reading Ordinance No. 815:** An Ordinance To Establish Operating and Capital Budgets for the Operation of the County Government of Fairfield County for the Fiscal Year Commencing July 1, 2023; to Provide for the Levy of Taxes for Fairfield County for the Fiscal Year Commencing July 1, 2023; to Establish Fees and Service Charges for Fairfield County for the Fiscal Year Commencing July 1, 2023; to Provide for the Expenditure of Tax Revenues and Other County Related Funds; and to Provide for Certain Fiscal Matters and Other Matters Related to County Government. Motion made by Vice Chair Gilbert, seconded by Councilman Robinson to approve. Mr. Pauley said it was a very difficult decision. He was on Council for six years and never voted for a tax increase but he thought it was the right thing to do for the future of Fairfield County. Council, along with Administration, studied the budget and had multiple work sessions to prevent a tax increase. He felt without the increase, it would have a big impact on the operations of the county. ***The motion carried 4-3 with Gilbert, Ruff, Pauley & Swearingen voting in the affirmative and Greene, Roseborough & Robinson voting in the negative.***
- B. Third & Final Reading Ordinance No. 816:** 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 Councilman Robinson, seconded by Councilman Ruff to approve. Mr. Ruff restated this was a fee they had been collecting since 2016 (he believed). He said hopefully through some creativity from the attorney they could continue to support it. ***The motion carried 7-0.***

6. COUNTY COUNCIL TIME

Mr. Gilbert said the legality of the notice of the meeting was questioned during the public hearing. He asked the attorney for an explanation. Mr. Morgan referenced the Council meeting held on June 12th when the budget failed on second reading. He explained the process that needed to be implemented at that time related to three readings, a public hearing and the 15-day requirement of the public notice. The Council would only have the opportunity to have third reading on that night or the following night. They were able to get the notice published in the State newspaper on June 14th

(he held up his phone that showed a copy of the affidavit of publication) that verified that it was properly run and noticed in a newspaper of general circulation. Therefore, the meeting was proper and duly noted.

Mr. Ruff said they were committed to completing the upcoming budget by the end of the year.

Mrs. Swearingen apologized to the volunteers on the other end of the County. At the last meeting, she said they did not have anybody and they did have volunteers and she thanked them. Her comments were regarding the fact that they did not have any paid firemen. She wanted to clarify that and apologize if she offended any of the volunteers. She said regarding the Interim Administrator's salary of \$150,000/year, she had only been there for six months, which equaled \$75,000. It was a straight salary and did not include insurance, retirement, or FICA. The previous acting Administrator's salary was \$125,000/year, was there for six months and with that there were two consultants that were paid \$200/hour. They served from September 21st to June 22nd and they paid them at least \$306,000 so with the last acting, they paid about \$368,500 and with the current \$75,000. She said Mrs. Johnson did not need a consultant. With the two administrators before, one made \$137,000/year and the other \$141,000/year – that included benefits, a take home car, fuel, and maintenance. Mrs. Johnson and her staff got them through the audit. In regards to finding a new administrator, they needed one but she asked if anyone thought that someone would have applied with their finances in the shape they were in? At the end of the day, \$75,000 was a small price to pay to have someone straighten the county out.

Mr. Robinson said regardless of his vote, he appreciated their help. He was aware that it was not an easy task – almost as if they wore two hats. He was hopeful for the 2023 audit and he appreciated their work.

Mrs. Greene shared Mr. Robinson's comments. They knew how much work was put into it and they appreciated every bit of it. They knew the County would be in much better standing based on the work that was done.


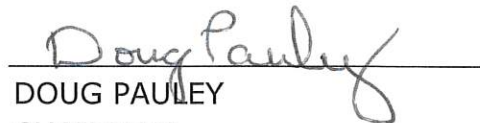
Mr. Pauley said regarding the comment made by the citizen during the public hearing relating to monthly reporting, he thought that already started about two-three months ago. He said although Mrs. Johnson, Mrs. Williams and the finance department would like a short break, he hoped the next audit would begin soon so it could be completed by December. He said in reference to employees, they were not responsible for employees - they were responsible for the Administrator. He thought the Administrator understood the importance of getting the audit completed in a timely manner and the importance of training employees. It was mentioned in the meeting that ~~employees would receive more training and would be cross-trained so other employees could do the same job.~~

Mr. Robinson said it was mentioned that the budget was rushed but if the citizens knew the steps the Administrator, Deputy Administrator and finance department took to talk to each department, it was a lot of work. Speaking from his experience as a former Chair sitting in with the Administration, it was a lot of work. He thanked them again for their work.

Mr. Pauley thanked the Council for their work and said regardless of their vote, they were focused on moving Fairfield County forward.

7. ADJOURN

At 6:33pm, it was motioned by Councilman Ruff, seconded by Councilman Roseborough to adjourn. ***The motion carried unanimously 7-0.***


KIM W. ROBERTS, Ed. D.
CLERK TO COUNCIL
DOUG PAULEY
CHAIRMAN