



**MINUTES  
SPECIAL MEETING  
FAIRFIELD COUNTY COUNCIL  
FEBRUARY 10, 2021**

**Present:** Moses Bell, Shirley Greene, Mikel Trapp, Timothy Roseborough, Doug Pauley, Clarence Gilbert, Cornelius Robinson, Council Members; Jason Taylor, County Administrator; Laura Johnson, Assistant County Administrator; Patti L. Davis, Clerk to Council.

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

**2. APPROVAL OF AGENDA**

Motion made by Council Member Trapp, seconded by Vice Chair Greene, to approve the Agenda. ***The motion carried unanimously 7-0.***

**3. INVOCATION**

Council Member Roseborough led the invocation.

**4. SELECTION PROCESS FOR COUNTY ATTORNEY**

Chairman Bell stated one thing Council learned from Monday night's meeting is that Council can decide to hire the attorney. He is hoping this will be done. Council Member Trapp made a motion for Council to hire the attorney, seconded by Council Member Roseborough. Council Member Pauley inquired if there will be a list of attorneys to choose from for interviews to be done by Council. Chairman Bell's thoughts are to appoint a committee to look at this. He is thinking that the committee will be comprised of himself and Council Member Trapp along with Mr. Taylor in an advisory role. Council Member Gilbert had the same question. Council Member Robinson inquired how many attorneys will be in the selection process. Chairman Bell does not know at this point, but at least three or four, and Mr. Taylor agreed this would be good at a minimum. Council Member Gilbert inquired if the committee will select the attorneys or will the attorneys be allowed to apply. Chairman Bell stated the three on the committee will look at the names, interview the candidates and

then come back to Council with a recommendation. Council Member Gilbert inquired if attorneys will be allowed to put their name forward or if Chairman Bell will reach out to a number of attorneys. Per Chairman Bell, right now the thought is to reach out to attorneys with the help of some of the attorneys the County already knows. Council Member Pauley stated Council never had to hire an attorney, so he does not know what the payroll is and questioned if Procurement would need to be in the process with this coming before Council to make a decision. Per Mr. Taylor, attorneys are exempt with Council's vote from Procurement. There are certain professional services, attorneys being one of them, which are specifically listed and are exempt. The County does budget for legal fees, and this includes more than just the County Attorney. This amount is voted on in the budget. In interviewing the attorneys, it will have to be determined if they will be on a retained or an hourly basis, which will require a proposal from the attorney. Council Member Pauley feels this should be an administration decision. Council Member Trapp inquired if the past attorney was hourly or retainer. Mr. Taylor stated the past attorney was hourly, and the previous attorney prior to this was actually an employee. He was on the payroll and received insurance. Chairman Bell reiterated this committee team will consist of himself, Council Member Trapp and Mr. Taylor serving as advisory. ***The motion passed 4-3 with Council Members Gilbert, Pauley and Robinson voting nay.***

## **5. APPOINTMENT OF AD HOC COMMITTEES**

**A. New Administration Building Review of Existing Contract.** Chairman Bell would like to appoint a committee to review the Mt. Zion contract to determine the cost to the County from the beginning to the end based on the contract. They will be tasked with looking at the contract, reviewing the contract and determining what it is costing the County from the beginning to the end of the contract. This will be the scope of this Committee, and there may be another Committee later on. Chairman Bell stated this committee will be led by Vice Chair Greene along with Council Member Roseborough and Council Member Robinson. Council Member Robinson understands the creation of the Ad Hoc Committee, but questioned if this is primarily for Council Members to get an understanding or to make it public. Chairman Bell stated we do want to make it public, but it will help us understand as we continue to get the question of how much it is costing the County. Chairman Bell questioned the auditor concerning the \$4,200,000 figure for the cost of the contract. He has gotten some information stating \$8.9M and other information stating \$11M. There are some other questions concerning over \$100,000 being spent in the beginning to prepare for the project. The purpose of this committee is

to see how much it will cost the County from the time of inception until now and then to review the contract itself. This team will bring this information back to full Council, to include what is in the contract and what Council needs to do going forward. A committee will also be appointed at a later date to review the cost to enter the building, because it is not known what this will look like. Chairman Bell has started an initial conversation with Mr. Taylor concerning this. Council Member Robinson questioned if this could be something staff could look at. Chairman Bell stated he is hoping they are looking at this. Council Member Pauley inquired if there has been any initial cost to the County up to this point. Per Mr. Taylor, there are a fair amount of costs associated with just the exploration of the different options when we were looking at either Mt. Zion or building something freestanding or maintenance on the current building. In looking at these options, there were upfront costs. However, there have been no lease payments to date. Council Member Gilbert opined we should be looking forward instead of looking backward. The County should be working toward the wastewater treatment plant, the Mega Site and other projects such as this to make the County go forward, not backward. He feels it does not make sense. We will spend our time on trying to figure out what a contract is, set a couple of people to do this, but we as a Council and Administrator and staff should be moving Fairfield County forward. Vice Chair Greene stated in order to move Fairfield County forward, Council is responsible for making sure the money is spent judiciously. This cannot be done unless all the information is known. We will be working on the budget soon, and it must be correct and able to be forecast correctly. Council Member Trapp inquired if the County spent \$175,000 at the start of the lease contract. Mrs. Johnson stated there was \$175,000 included as part of the contract. Council Member Gilbert is baffled that this one issue will keep Council from concentrating on something else. Vice Chair Greene stated we simply need the information. Council Member Robinson stated something was said before the new Council took office that the first thing on the agenda was to tear down old projects, and it seems like we are following suit with that. If the ultimate goal of this Ad Hoc Committee is to terminate this project, the County will be looking at a \$13M lawsuit that we cannot afford, our bond rating will go down and we would have no other plan to go forward to house employees. He has no problem with the Ad Hoc Committee, but he is concerned if the whole purpose of it is to tear down a project that we have no other solution for. Chairman Bell reiterated that there are several questions, as stated above, concerning financial numbers in connection with this project. He wants to help settle all the questions. This will be helpful to us going forward in that it will help identify what we have spent and have a look at the contract. There are many that say the contract itself

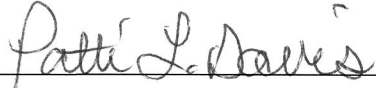
is not valid because there was only one bid. Chairman Bell, Council Member Robinson and Mr. Taylor have been through this, and now we have an opportunity to make sure we understand the contract itself, look at how much money the County has spent and how much money, for the length of the contract, this will cost the County. Council Member Robinson understands this, and if we are going to spend Chairman Bell's two years digging up old stuff to make sure it is correct, Council will never get anything done. Chairman Bell stated the new administration building should be ready to move in this year, and Mr. Taylor agreed. Therefore, this will be settled this year. Council Member Pauley stated it is amazing to him, except for Mrs. Greene and Mr. Roseborough who have recently been elected, that all five of the remaining Council Members were here when the Mt. Zion contract was done. Now, we get to this point, and there is no clue what was spent and what was discussed. If anybody should know, the five of us who were already on Council should have already asked these questions before getting to this point. If you want to know, the best thing to do is listen to the Town Hall recording which includes all the answers. Also, Council Member Gilbert stated any cost is probably a lot less than the \$13M minimum we will have to pay if we end this contract. Chairman Bell stated the Ad Hoc Committee will need to be ready to report back in 60 days to Council. Again, the committee consists of Vice Chair Greene, Council Member Roseborough and Council Member Robinson. Council Member Robinson asked if the committee will have no citizens and just the three Council Members, and Chairman Bell stated this is correct.

- B. Review of Census Data.** Chairman Bell stated the data is not completed enough at this point to review and get all the information that is needed from it. At this time, he will not be appointing this Ad Hoc Committee.

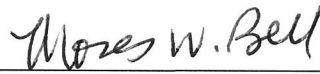
Chairman Bell stated we see a lot of things going on, and he met with someone who told him to be sure Council Members are being careful. One of the things talked about is that we need to be careful because they believe this thing about Mr. Taylor is growing to a fever. He is asking everyone to do this. It was laid out and told to him what the plan was, and he had planned to talk about this tonight, but he changed his mind. The reason is because he knows what is going on, and he will talk to a few people about this. He was told the things that we see are just a strategy. Council Member Pauley stated if Chairman Bell had the opportunity to speak, he would like to also speak. Chairman Bell stated he changed his mind, but the Chair does have some privileges.

**6. ADJOURN**

At 6:18 p.m., it was moved by Council Member Trapp, seconded by Council Member Roseborough, to adjourn. ***The motion carried unanimously 7-0.***



PATTI L. DAVIS  
CLERK TO COUNCIL



MOSES BELL  
CHAIRMAN