



**MINUTES
BUDGET WORK SESSION
FAIRFIELD COUNTY COUNCIL
APRIL 21, 2021**

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

Others Present: Anne Bass, Beverly Mozie, Brad Caulder.

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 one other individuals.

I. CALL TO ORDER

Chairman Bell called the Work Session to order at 6:08 p.m.

II. APPROVAL OF AGENDA

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

III. INVOCATION

Council Member Trapp led the invocation.

IV. ITEMS FOR DISCUSSION

A. FY 2021-2022 Budget

Chairman Bell stated he is hoping, by the end of the day, to be able to know what the budget will be and what will be needed from fund balance taking into consideration the cuts. Last year, the budget was presented to Council at \$46,757,741.00. After Council made cuts, it was \$46,446,959.00 for a total of \$310,000 in reductions. Instead of a \$5.5M request from fund balance, it was only \$5.2M. This year, the budget sent to Council from staff is \$44,597,454.00 which is a decrease of last year's budget of 3.98%. Originally, it was thought we might get to 10%, but this does not seem likely. The original start from fund balance is \$3,511,267.00. Chairman Bell then turned the

meeting over to Mrs. Bass. Mrs. Bass had distributed two sheets, the motions list and the sheet containing the budget reduction options. She prepared this list to keep Council on track. She is not in a position to make a motion; therefore, she will need clear guidance from Council as to what action is needed. The highlighted items will be transferred to the working motions list.

- There was discussion around the millage increase. Item A would be a recommendation of 5 mills, and Mrs. Bass believes this would be a reasonable recommendation. The average cost per \$100,000 house would be around \$32.00. The next option, the current year's CPI (Consumer Price Index) is 1.23% which would be 2.24 mills. This would generate about \$333,000 and is based on the average rate per mil for Fairfield County, which is around \$148,000. The Library has also requested a millage increase. They have a separate millage rate, and this would be an action item. One mil would get them to where they need to be. Vice Chair Greene inquired how much for the average house would the second option be, and Mrs. Bass stated the price for 1 mil for a \$100,000 house would be around \$4. If it is not a primary residence, it would be \$6. For 2.24 mills, this would be \$10 to \$12. Council Member Pauley inquired of the last time the County had a tax increase. Mrs. Bass believes it was in 2015 or 2016. Council Member Trapp inquired if Mrs. Bass could remember if a tax increase has been recommended to Council since 2015. Per Mrs. Bass, this has been discussed in work sessions; however, she does not remember if it has ever made it through to the motions list. Mrs. Bass further stated the CPI is the limit for each year without some special condition. Usually, a county can take their CPI in growth, but Fairfield County's growth is always negative. Therefore, our limit is always our CPI. There are reasons for counties to take more than this by taking unused millage. There is quite a bit on the table the County would be allowed to take, and Mrs. Bass does not feel we should do this. She does, however, feel that 5 mills would place the County back in the position it needs to be.
- Charging the Town of Winnsboro and the School District for trash and the Town of Winnsboro for use of the Detention Center.
- Reducing the agencies by 30% would need a vote. There was a discussion about restoring Behavioral Health back to their 2021 adopted, so this has been added. Council Member Robinson stated he feels all agencies should be reduced at 30% as it would not be fair not to do this across the board. Chairman Bell stated this item will be on the motions list, and if no one makes the motion to adopt, the motion will die.

- Sheriff's Department had requested an evidence officer. This would be a new position and would require Council approval.
- Newsletter in the amount of \$20,000. Travel was reduced in Council's budget to make this a budget neutral item. Since this is Council's departmental budget, it would need to be a Council vote. Council Member Pauley stated if this makes it to the motions list, we need to be specific on how it will be spent to the penny on a newsletter.
- Removal of furniture from the budget.
- Removal of vehicle allowance from the budget.

Vice Chair Greene inquired if Mrs. Bass had anymore clarity on the use of the Federal Coronavirus Funds. Per Mrs. Bass, some information was received this week concerning information that would be needed in order to apply for the funds. Our money will be coming from the State because our population is less than 50,000. She is still not sure if this will be on a reimbursement basis or future expenditures. She does feel some of the agencies may fall under this with the question being that the agencies may be able to apply for this on their own or through the County.

Reduction of Temporary Staff:

- Reduce recycling one day
- Set Recreation temporary budget back to 2021 adopted
- Set Fire Department temporary budget back to 2021 adopted
- Transit office assistant
- Temporary help in Tax Assessor's Office
- Temporary help in Building Maintenance
- Temporary help in Animal Control
- Reduce limb site hours
- Reduce Recycling Center hours based on seasonality and daylight savings time

Through discussion with the Sheriff's Department, Mrs. Bass stated they were able to freeze a position for this year. They do not want to dissolve the position, but they are willing to go 12 months without funding. This resulted in an additional reduction of \$66,000. Through further discussion, Mrs. Bass stated she did not believe the furlough would work as planned because departments of elected officials could not be required to participate. Chairman Bell stated he spoke with the Sheriff last week after the budget meeting, and the Sheriff stated he would look at the furlough to see what he could do. He then came back with the freeze on the position. Chairman Bell appreciates the Sheriff being willing to do this.

Chairman Bell inquired concerning the collection of debt, and he is wondering where the \$450,000 figure originated. Mrs. Bass stated this was through discussions concerning the amount of money they have at their disposal, and the County was requesting half of that to go toward the \$1.2M that is owed to the County. Chairman Bell further stated he believes their board is saying \$10,000 a month. Mr. Taylor stated there is a meeting on Monday to try to get some confirmation. Council Member Gilbert stated he has had a conversation with Mr. Mitchell in reference to this, and he was given the \$10,000 figure. He told Mr. Mitchell he did not think this would be satisfactory as far as Council is concerned, so another meeting is scheduled to try to pinpoint some numbers. Council Member Gilbert stated what is frustrating is trying to work with Mr. Mitchell and Mrs. Fantry to arrive at a place where both sides can be at a good point. At the same time, Council Members are going behind the negotiations. Council Member Gilbert does not know where Chairman Bell got the information of \$10,000, but as far as Mr. Mitchell is concerned, they are in a talking process. Council Member Gilbert, Mr. Taylor and Mrs. Bass are working on this, and he would appreciate Council not trying to intervene and cause problems. Chairman Bell stated he does not know who this is directed at, but he did have a call from a board member. Chairman Bell inquired of Council Member Gilbert if the vote was made for \$10,000. Council Member Gilbert did not talk with the board and instead has been discussing the matter with Mr. Mitchell. Mr. Mitchell stated what was originally proposed was \$10,000 for sixty months. Council Member Gilbert told Mr. Mitchell he did not believe this would be something Council would agree to.

Council Member Trapp also requested to put the north back lot merchant's parking lot on the motions list in addition to the sprinklers and kitchen upgrade for the Farmers' Market.

Chairman Bell inquired if Mrs. Bass knows, with the cuts, how much the budget is projected to be. Per Mrs. Bass, the general fund budget is \$38,015,689 as it came recommended. As it stood for the first reading, it was \$35,502,000 and had been reduced about \$2.5M. A big part of this is the use of fund balance. With the cuts that have been discussed, this would be at about \$631,000 use of fund balance down from \$3.5M. With the reduction of the two projects, this would be roughly around the \$431,000 mark use of fund balance. The changes are not made in the system until they are voted on.

Council Member Pauley stated on the Farmers' Market, the sheet states General Fund/Fairfield Forward Grant, so he inquired if some of this funding is coming from grants. Per Mr. Taylor, the kitchen appliances would be

coming from a grant. Council Member Pauley inquired if it would be a good idea to turn down a grant. Mr. Taylor does not know what the split is, but grant money will be turned down with the killing of this project. Council Member Trapp stated at this point, whether it is a grant or not, the County is in a position that it cannot even accept a grant. He further inquired if the County is in possession of the Farmers' Market. Mr. Taylor stated it is owned by the County. Chairman Bell inquired if the appliances are connected to the sprinkler system. Mr. Taylor stated one is needed in order to have the other. Chairman Bell inquired how much represents grant funds versus how much represents County funds. Mr. Taylor will need to pull this information. Council Member Trapp would also like the actual work order for the sprinkler system and the appliances.

Chairman Bell inquired if the recycling day listed on the sheet is the same item Council appears to be in agreement with concerning the recycle center being open for one less day. Mrs. Bass agreed that Council has discussed this and seems to be in agreement. Vice Chair Greene inquired how the tax sale of properties factors into the budget. Per Mrs. Bass, this amount is already budgeted in the revenue with the County's Forfeited Land Commission. Council Member Trapp inquired of the cost to operate the swimming pool. Mrs. Bass stated she would have to look back since it was not operational last year. The year before was the first year and included start-up costs. She will gather some information and forward to Council.

Chairman Bell stated any additional questions need to be voiced because Mrs. Bass will need to work on this for the upcoming second reading on Monday. Vice Chair Greene inquired if the grant match is for multiple grants. Mrs. Bass stated this is an amount that is usually budgeted in general. A majority of this is used for some of the large grants received with relation to economic development. It was determined that if an opportunity presents itself, it will be brought to Council as a request of action. Council Member Robinson inquired of the balance of the fund balance. Per Mr. Taylor, the last time he checked, this was in the neighborhood of \$19M. Council Member Roseborough inquired how much of this is restricted or unrestricted. Per Mrs. Bass, that balance is what is considered the general fund. A portion of this includes the Library and the hospital. The largest portion is the County's operating fund. Mrs. Bass sent the Fund Equity Changes report to Council a meeting or two ago. The very top three lines will be listed together. Chairman Bell stated the fund balance is a snapshot in time as has been discussed, and in 2019 it was \$26M, in 2020 it was \$23M and then for 2021 it is \$19M.

Again, Chairman Bell inquired if there were any further questions or any guidance for staff going forward. Some of the cuts may need to be revisited in the future. Mrs. Bass reviewed the items to be added to the motions list, and this will be given to the Clerk to send out with the agenda packet.

V. ADJOURN

At 6:46 p.m., motion made by Council Member Trapp, seconded by Council Member Roseborough, to adjourn. ***The motion carried 7-0.***



PATTI L. DAVIS
CLERK TO COUNCIL



MOSES BELL
CHAIRMAN