

Clarendon County Regular Council Meeting

Monday, April 11, 2022

6:00 PM

Council Chambers, 411 Sunset Drive, Manning, SC

Those in attendance:

Chairman Dwight L. Stewart, Jr.
Councilman Billy G. Richardson
Administrator David W. Epperson
Clerk to Council, Dorothy M. Levy

Vice Chairman W.J. Frierson
Councilman Benton Blakely

Absent: Councilman A.C. English

Press in attendance: None

Others in attendance included:

Lynden Anthony	Ted Felder	Roger Jowers	Arlene Ham	Moye Graham
Sumter Graham	Diane Georgia	Charlotte Johnston	Bobby Ridgeway	Robert Pegram
Michael A. Johnson, Jr	Bea Simon	Jason Dennis	Michael Streatt	Carly Spivey
Edgar Donnald	Pat Coker	Else Fulton	Richard Wise	Connie Wise
Tim Baxley	Carrie Myers	Jamie Welch	Fawn Pedalino	Linda Jackson
George E. Frierson	Beulah G. Roberts	Ernest A. Finney	Sonya Mellerson	Thomasena Hall
Jacqueline Blackwell	Patricia Pringle	And Other Clarendon County Residents		

Chairman Stewart called the meeting to order at 6:00 pm. Vice Chairman Frierson led the invocation. The Pledge of Allegiance was recited in unison.

1. Approval of the Agenda

On motion by Councilman Blakely and Seconded by Vice Chairman Frierson, Council voted Unanimous Approval to the Agenda for April 11, 2022.

2. Approval of Minutes

On motion by Councilman Richardson and Seconded by Councilman Blakely, Council voted Unanimous Approval to the minutes for the Regular Council meeting, which was held on March 14, 2022.

On motion by Vice Chairman Frierson and Seconded by Councilman Richardson, Council voted Unanimous Approval to the minutes for the Special Council Meeting, which was held on Tuesday, March 29, 2022.

3. Service Awards Recognition

Prior to the business session of the Regular Council Meeting, Linda Lemon, HR Director, Chairman Stewart, and Administrator Epperson presented 9 employees with service awards.

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|-------------------|---------|---------------------|----------|---------------|----------|
| • Patrick Ballard | 5 Years | Yoshabel Davis | 5 Years | James Braxton | 20 Years |
| • Lindsay Allen | 5 Years | Jason English | 5 Years | | |
| • Ronnie Feagin | 5 Years | Margaret Lyons | 5 Years | | |
| • Robert Shearer | 5 Years | Judge Eleese Fulton | 10 Years | | |

4. Proclamations

Chairman Stewart read into the Minutes, a Proclamation Declaring the month of April as Fair Housing Month in Clarendon County.

On motion by Councilman Blakley and Seconded by Councilman Richardson, Council voted Unanimous Approval to the Proclamation Declaring the month of April as Fair Housing Month in Clarendon County.

5. Clarendon County Transportation Committee (CTC)

Chairman Stewart stated that the Clarendon County Transportation Committee is now in session. The CTC began at 6:10 pm.

Mr. Ted Felder, Deputy Administrator, presented the CTC with a request to purchase road signs material for the Public Works department in an amount not to exceed \$20,000.

- Chairman Stewart gave comments about signs being stolen
- Councilman Blakley stated that we need to set up cameras so we can catch people stealing signs and punish those people.

On motion by Councilman Blakely and Seconded by Vice Chairman Frierson, Council voted Unanimous Approval to the request by Mr. Ted Felder, to purchase road signs material for the Public Works Department in an amount not exceed \$20,000.

The Clarendon County Transportation Committee Meeting closed at 6:13 pm.

6. Requests

- Ms. Patricia Pringle, Clarendon County Auditor, present Council with a Memorandum of Understanding between Clarendon County, and the South Carolina Department of Revenue (SCDOR). She stated that this Memorandum of Understanding is in reference to an integrated tax system called MyDORWAY from SCDOR which can be used for all Business Personal Property Tax filers in Clarendon County. Ms. Pringle continued by stating that there are currently 18 counties using the electronic filing system and there are 9 additional counties that are eligible to use the Electronic Filing System with SCDOR and Clarendon County is one of them.
 - Administrator Epperson stated that he has no problems with this agreement.
 - Vice Chairman Frierson asked if there is a fee to us this electronic system
 - Ms. Pringle replied by stating no, no fee.

On motion by Councilman Richardson and Seconded by Councilman Blakely, Council voted Unanimous Approval to the Memorandum of Understanding between Clarendon County and the South Carolina Department of Revenue which was presented by Ms. Patricia Pringle, Auditor, to transition to the integrated tax system called MyDORWAY, from SCDOR.

- Councilman Richardson presented a request to Council from the Clarendon County Branch – N.A.A.C.P. He stated that the Branch is request funding to help host the Annual Briggs vs. Elliott’s Cultural event to be held on May 13-16, 2022, in downtown Summerton, SC.
 - Administrator Epperson stated that some of the items requested are not qualified to be funded from the Hospitality Fund.

On motion by Councilman Richardson and Seconded by Councilman Blakely, Council voted Unanimous Approval to donate \$2,500 to the Clarendon Branch N.A.A.C.P. to assist with hosting of the Annual Briggs vs. Elliott’s Cultural Event to be held on May 13-16, 2022 in downtown Summerton, SC.

7. Presentation – Ms. Mary Ava Baker, Solid Waste Department

Ms. Mary Ava Baker, Solid Waste Coordinator, began her presentation by stating that the Solid Waste Department provide residents a way of disposing of solid waste. She continued by stating that the primary areas are the recycling centers, landfill, and educating the community. Ms. Baker continued by stating that there is a noticeable improvement at the recycling centers.

Ms. Baker stated that she suggested to Waste Management that they hire a full-time person to oversee the 12 recycling centers. She continued by stating that we published brochures about waste management and distributed throughout the county. She concluded her presentation by stating that the employees are utilizing the landfill software that was purchased.

- Councilman Blakely asked what can be done with tree limbs and can we grind them
- Administrator Epperson stated that DHEC regulates where things are dumped, and we will have to work through DHEC. He stated that it is very expensive to dispose of solid waste.

Chairman Stewart thanked Ms. Baker for her presentation.

8. Ordinance 2022-01

On motion by Councilman Richardson and Seconded by Vice Chairman Frierson, Council voted Unanimous Approval to the Third and Final Reading of Ordinance 2022-01 – An Ordinance of the County Council of Clarendon County, South Carolina to Amend the County’s Official Zoning Map Designation for Tax Map Parcel # 126-00-00-118-00, 126-00-00-119-00, 126-00-00-120-00, 126-00-00-121-0; Rom Single Family Residential (SFR) to General Commercial (GC) and Providing an Effective Date.

9. Public Hearing for Ordinance 2022-02

Chairman Stewart stated that the Public Hearing is not open for Ordinance 2022-02 – An Ordinance Authorizing a Referendum According to South Carolina Code Annotated Section 4-9-10 To Determine Whether the County should maintain or Change its Present County Council Election Districts and Composition; and Providing for Related Matters.

The Public Hearing opened at 6:40 pm.

Administrator Epperson stated that this Ordinance is to address some questions from concerned citizens about the current form of government. He stated that the form of government in Clarendon County was adopted in 1972 by state stature. He continued by stating that this will allow the citizens to vote to keep the current form of government or change it.

- Vice Chairman Frierson stated that he is the senior councilman and why wasn’t he given the opportunity to go into District 2 or District 4. Why isn’t his name included on the map?
- Mr. Moye Graham, Chairman of the Republican Party, stated that these maps were drawn fair and that a county seat does not belong to the Councilman, it belongs to the citizens. He stated that the map was approved by the Republican Party, the Democratic Party, and the NAACP.
- Ms. Patricia Pringle, Chairman of the Democratic Party, stated that she wants to apologize to Vice Chairman Frierson because his name was omitted from the map, she stated that his name was shown before the map was printed.
- Vice Chairman Frierson asked how would it appear on the ballot.
- Administrator Epperson stated that there will not be any maps on the ballot, just the question.
- Ms. Pringle stated that we can get another map printed before 3rd reading if we need to.

Chairman Stewart asked if there were any comments in reference to this Ordinance. Hearing none, he stated that the Public Hearing will close. The Public Hearing closed at 6:55 pm.

11. Public Hearing for Ordinance 2022-05

Chairman Stewart stated that the Public Hearing for Ordinance 2022-05 – An Ordinance of the County

Council of Clarendon County, South Carolina to Repeal the 2011-05 Unified Development Code Ordinance, Subsequent Amendments Thereto and the 2011 Zoning Classification Map and to Adopt the 2022 Unified Development Code and 2022 Zoning District Classification Map in Conformance with the requirements of sections 6-29 et. Seq., Code of Laws of South Carolina; Providing for Severability and an Effective Date.

The Public Hearing opened at 6:56 pm.

- Ms. Maria Rose, Deputy Planning Director, stated that the Comprehensive Plan must be updated every ten years and the Unified Development Code (UDC) is used to enforce the laws. She continued by stating that the items that were added are: An Emergency Placement of RVs and Campers.
- Ms. Rose stated that this change would allow campers to be used in an emergency situation and to change the performance zone. She also stated that the list of all campers that are parked in the county, must be submitted to the County in January.
 - Chairman Stewart stated that he received calls about campers and asked what the planning commission would recommend.
 - Administrator Epperson stated that we can send it back to the Planning Commission to be amended.
 - Ms. Rose stated that the Planning Commission cannot issue a permit for a camper because campers do not meet the building codes.
 - Citizen – it should not be up to the citizens to provide a list of campers to the County, that would be forcing business owners to enforce the County rules.
 - Ms. Patricia Pringle stated that this is a state law, not a county rule.

Chairman Stewart asked if there were any other comments on the Public Hearing. Hearing none, he stated that the Public Hearing will close. The Public hearing closed at 7:14 pm.

Administrator Epperson made a recommendation to postpone the second reading of Ordinance 2022-05 until the June 13, 2022, which would give the Planning Commission time to revisit the Ordinances and make changes.

- Vice Chairman Frierson stated that if there is a need to amend the Ordinance, shouldn't we go that way.
- Administrator Epperson stated that it would be more effective to delay and sent back to Council in June.
- Vice Chairman Frierson stated that it's not like we have this happen every day.
- Administrator Epperson stated that the County is changing and over the last 2 years, there are a lot of people camping out and we need to regulate areas that are not regulated.
- Councilman Richardson stated that if we tabled it, will it be pushed back a week.
- Administrator Epperson stated that it needs to be enough time for the Planning commission to check into it.

On motion by Councilman Richardson and Seconded by Councilman Blakely, Council voted Unanimous Approval to table the Second Reading on Ordinance 2022-05 until June 13, 2022 and send this Ordinance back to the Planning Commission which is An Ordinance of the County Council of Clarendon County, South Carolina to Repeal the 2011-05 Unified Development Code Ordinance, Subsequent Amendments Thereto and the 2011 Zoning Classification Map and to Adopt the 2022 Unified Development Code and 2022 Zoning District Classification Map in Conformance with the requirements of sections 6-29 et. Seq., Code of Laws of South Carolina; Providing for Severability and an Effective Date.

12. Ordinance 2022-07

Consideration was given to the First Reading of Ordinance 2022-07 – an Ordinance to Create and Establish a Special Tax District in Clarendon County, South Carolina, To Be known as Clarendon County Library Services Special Tax District; To Define District's Area and Boundaries; to Authorize the Annual Levy and Collection of Taxes and the Imposition and Collection of Fees for District's Operation and Maintenance and Repayment of Any Bonds; To Authorize the Issuance and Delivery of General Obligation Bonds by Clarendon County, South Carolina,

or Revenue Bonds Payable from the Imposition of Collection of Fees Related to the District, the Proceeds of Which will be used to Purchase Equipment and Facilities for District; and other related Matters.

Administrator Epperson stated that the Library Board is requesting that the County Appropriation of 5.5 mills move out of the General Fund to create a Special Tax District for the Library and all Library employees will then be employees of Clarendon County.

- Councilman Blakely stated that there will be a library built in Turbeville and Summerton, and the Turbeville Library will be built in honor of Dr. Kate Smith and Clarendon County would not have to use funds to build that library so he would like to see the funds used to build a civic center of something for citizens to use.

On motion by Vice Chairman Frierson, and Seconded by Councilman Blakely, Council voted Unanimous - Approval to the First Reading of Ordinance 2022-07 – an Ordinance to Create and Establish a Special Tax District in Clarendon County, South Carolina, To Be known as Clarendon County Library Services Special Tax District; To Define District’s Area and Boundaries; to Authorize the Annual Levy and Collection of Taxes and the Imposition and Collection of Fees for District’s Operation and Maintenance and Repayment of Any Bonds; To Authorize the Issuance and Delivery of General Obligation Bonds by Clarendon County, South Carolina, or Revenue Bonds Payable from the Imposition of Collection of Fees Related to the District, the Proceeds of Which will be used to Purchase Equipment and Facilities for District; and other related Matters.

13. Presentation of Proposed FY2022-2023 Budget – Mr. Lynden Anthony

Mr. Anthony, CFO, began his presentation by thanking the staff of the Finance department, department managers and our elected officials.

Budgeting is an ongoing and dynamic process that is typically broken down into five phases:

- County Council, other elected officials and administration estimate available resources, perform an assessment of needs, and then set priorities. Essentially, we determine how much in revenue we’ll have access to and ask stakeholders what their funding needs are.
- These priorities are then reflected in a budget through an allocation of resources.
- Council, through these deliberations and in communication with our citizens, approve a budget.
- Elected officials and administration then implement these priorities through service delivery and project development; lastly,
- We monitor our on-going results for any changes or modifications, if needed.

General Fund:

You will recall that the General Assembly has capped the amount of increase allowed in millage rates at the local level. The budget that we are submitting for First Reading tonight contains the State allowed millage increase of 4.7% for County operations.

We have reduced the General Fund millage by 5.5 mills and used these to start the Library Services Special Tax District just discussed. This is a similar fashion to how we started or funded the initial Emergency Services Tax District in fiscal year 2021. Additionally, the appropriation to the Library has also been removed from General Fund expenses.

We are continuing to see our collections of LOST revenue increase over what we have received in prior years. We are recommending a further increase of \$500,000 to the Local Option Sales Tax credit given back to our taxpayers; the credit would then become \$3.7 million.

As a result of these three items, and expected reductions in the collection of delinquent taxes, we anticipate that General Fund ad valorem revenue will remain about the same as the current year.

We have seen a rebounding in our local economy as it relates to our collection of local accommodation taxes, building permit fees and activity in our Register of Deeds office. Also, the State’s General Assembly has fully funded the Local Government Fund in the upcoming year, resulting in an additional \$116,000 year.

We have been housing federal inmates under contract with the US Marshal's Service locally. The anticipated revenues associated with this contract has also been included the upcoming year.

We have made no change to the Road User fee as a result of pending legislation and outstanding legal issues experienced in other Counties and we expect that General Fund revenues will total \$24,572,740. Regarding General Fund expenditures; the budget package submitted includes a 3% COLA for our employees. Most of the budgeted increases (at the department level) are a result of current staffing levels, the COLA, an increase in health insurance premiums of 14% effective January, 2023 and a 1% increase in employer paid retirement expense, as mandated by the General Assembly.

An example of non-salary related increases would include an improvement to our cyber-security capabilities, increased efforts within our Solid Waste department and a multi-year project to digitize all of our records within the Register of Deeds office.

Fire Rescue:

There are two major components to anticipated revenue for Fire Rescue services within the County:

- We are budgeting the same 4.7% mil increase for Fire Rescue operations and the new Emergency Services tax district; and,
- Billable collections of \$1.6 million (net) for EMS services.

Included in the Fire Rescue budget is \$482,000 in capital asset requests; that include rescue systems upgrades, vehicle replacements and additional bunker gear.

With total Fire Rescue revenue of \$7,774,820 and budgeted expenditures thus far of \$8,293,880; we are out of balance \$519,060.

Water and Sewer System:

Continued system expansion is being funded through a remaining USDA grant and ARPA funds. After non-cash depreciation expenses of about \$550,000, we are anticipating that the utility will break even with no surplus or deficit. The budget submission from the Water System indicates that there is sufficient cash flow from operations to make debt service requirements on its USDA bonds in the upcoming year.

Weldon Auditorium:

We anticipate an increase in facility utilization over the next two years as our local economy opens back up. While we are not requesting a transfer from the General Fund to support operations this year, we are requesting that the Hospitality fee fund transfer \$95,000 in support of its operations.

Other:

We would also like to include in the First Reading our request that a \$2.0 million TAN be approved in the event it becomes necessary in the fall for cash flow purposes. While we do not anticipate that it will be needed, we would like to have the public's comments and your authorization to act quickly if needed. Included again this year is our request to borrow an amount not to exceed \$1.5 million in the form of a five-year Capital lease (or leases) for the purchase of additional heavy equipment for use within our Solid Waste area at the landfill, and the acquisition of a new fire engine. [compactor at \$550,000 and the \$860,000 engine plus COI]

Mr. Anthony Concluded his presentation by stating that as of first reading, we have a preliminary General Fund budget that reflects a deficit of nearly \$630,705.

Ms. Patricia Pringle, Clarendon County Auditor, gave Council an overview on the calculation of the mills for Clarendon County. Ms. Pringle concluded her presentation by requesting a 1.7% increase in the overall budget for the Auditor's Office.

Ms. Jacqueline Blackwell, Clarendon County Coroner, began her presentation by stating that the Coroner's office is requesting additional manpower. She stated that the Coroner's office needs a full-time Administrative/Record's Clerk, Chief Deputy Coroner, Transportation Officer, and a Deputy Coroner in order to be able to meet the needs of the Citizens. Ms. Blackwell is also requesting an increase in the Coroner's salary.

Ms. Beulah G. Roberts, Clarendon County Clerk of Court. Ms. Roberts stated that her budget has not changed but she is requesting a \$5,000 to increase three of her staff members salary.

Mr. Russell Miller, Voters Registration /Election Commission Board Chairman, stated that they are requesting an increase in the allocation for Office Supplies, Maintenance Contracts, Absentee Ballot Work, and Advertising.

Mr. Edgar Donald, Jr. Third Circuit public Defender, began his presentation by requesting an increase of \$10,500 increase in salary and to change the part-time position to a full-time.

Mr. Chip Finney, Third Circuit Solicitor, began his presentation by stating that he has some good staff members and finding new people are a task. He continued by stating that he is requesting a 7% increase in salary for the full-time Investigator to take the salary from \$35,000 to 48,000 which will also include benefits.

14. Financial Report

Mr. Lynden Anthony, CFO, began his report by stating the following:

- **The General Fund** had Expenditures of \$18,412,925 and Revenue figures were not available as of March 31, 2022.
- **Weldon Auditorium** had income of \$11,615 for the month ending March 2022 and total Expenses were \$162,945. He stated that the Weldon Auditorium ended the month of March, 2022 after transfers with a Net Deficit of \$91,330.
- **Water and Sewer Department** – had total Revenue of \$1,001,376 for the month ending March 31, 2022 and total Expenses were \$592,361. After Depreciation, Bond Interest Expense, Interest income and USDA Phase II, the Water and Sewer Department ended the month ending March 31, 2022 with a Net Utility Income of \$406,460.
- **The C-Fund Program** - for the month ending March 31, 2022, The C-Fund program had a Cash Balance of \$3,602,686 of which \$2,808,539 has been committed to remaining local paving projects, State Construction Projects in Progress and State Proviso Funds. He stated that the C-Fund Program had an Uncommitted Balance of \$794,146 as of the end of March 2022.

13. Administrator's Report

Administrator Epperson began his report by giving Council the following updates:

- **Recreation** –Baseball/Softball kicked off last week.
- **Shelter Rentals** – We are seeing heavy shelter rentals that means that people are getting out more.
- **National Correctional Officers Week** – May 1st through May 7th is reserved for National Correctional Officers Week.
- **National Disaster** – We had a EF2 tornado last week and 4 businesses were damaged with an estimate repair cost of 1.6 million, 1 family dwelling estimated repair cost of 1.69 million for 25 other family dwellings had damages with an estimated repair cost of 1.5 million. The state is working to see if Clarendon County qualifies for a national disaster from the storm.
- **Trash Pickup** - We had trash pick-up this pass Saturday; we had a lot of staff volunteered and John Hardy cooked for us.
- **County Holiday** – County Offices will be closed in Observance of Good Friday, On April 15, 2022.

14. Chairman's Report

Chairman Stewart began his report by stating that He will be presenting a Proclamation in honor of Child Abuse Awareness month on the steps of the Weldon Auditorium on April 14, 2022 at 6:30 pm.

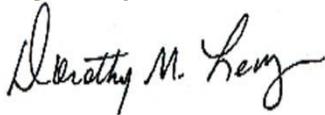
15. Adjourn

Chairman Stewart stated that we have exhausted our agenda and he asked for a motion to adjourn the Regular County Council meeting.

On motion by Councilman Blakely and Seconded by Vice Chairman Frierson, Council voted Unanimous Approval to adjourn the Regular Scheduled Council Meeting.

The Council Meeting adjourned at 8:49 pm.

Respectfully Submitted,



Dorothy M. Levy
Clerk to Clarendon County Council, CCC

