

**Clarendon County Regular Council Meeting
Monday, May 9, 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	Larry Johnson, Sr.	Moye Graham
Charlotte Johnston	Bobby Ridgeway	Robert Pegram	Arlene Ham
James A. London	April Conyers	Brad Gerfin	Fawn Pedalino
Pat Coker	Billy Ward	Betty Phillips	Jerimy Baker
Josh Baker	Kay Rogers	Steve W. Smith	Robert B. Gibbons, Jr.
Jason Dennis	Sampson Pearson	Blake Johnson	Jamie Welch
Louis Griffith	Mable Miller	Robert McFadden	Monica Johnson
Angel Reed	Jacqueline Blackwell	Kelvin Lemon	Ira Witherspoon
Michael A. Johnson, Jr	George E. Frierson	Patricia Pringle	Tammy Rodvansky
Linda Lemon	David Hilton	Tabitha Hanna	Maria Rose
Angela Williams	And Other Clarendon County Residents		

Chairman Stewart called the meeting to order at 6:00 pm. Councilman Richardson 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 May 9, 2022.

2. Approval of Minutes

On motion by Vice Chairman Frierson and Seconded by Councilman Richardson, Council voted Unanimous Approval to the minutes for the Regular Council meeting, which was held on April 11, 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 5 employees with service awards.

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|-----------------------------|---------|----------------|----------|
| • Laura Weir | 5 Years | Vida McFadden | 10 Years |
| • Damian Miller | 5 Years | Lynden Anthony | 20 Years |
| • Judge Monica Reed-Johnson | 5 Years | | |

4. Presentations

- Chairman Stewart presented an appreciation plaque to Mr. Ira Witherspoon who served as a member of the Clarendon County Planning Commission for 30 years.
 - Mr. Witherspoon began by thanking God for allowing him to service Clarendon County. He also thanked everyone, and he said that he will cherish the plaque.
- Mr. George Frierson presented Mr. Baynard Woods to County Council.
 - Mr. Woods began his presentation by stating that his family is from New Zion, South Carolina. Mr. Woods continued by stating that he is an investigative reporter from Baltimore, Maryland. He stated that Mr. Peter Lemon was assassinated in 1871 traveling from Manning to Santee which is 151 years ago. He stated that there is a lot of history about Mr. Peter Lemon that he wants to share with County Council and the citizens of Clarendon County. Mr. Woods concluded his presentation by stating that Mr. Peter Lemon won his county seat on County Council in 1968, three years before he was assassinated. He stated that he submitted information on Mr. Peter Lemon to the Clarendon County Archive for anyone that wants to read more about Mr. Peter Lemon.

5. Request – Clarendon County Fire Rescue

Chief Michael A. Johnson, Fire Chief, presented Council with a request to donate one of the out of service ambulances to the South Carolina Fire Academy. He stated that some of Clarendon County Fire Rescue workers graduated from the SC Fire Academy. Chief Johnson stated that Clarendon County Fire Rescue has four ambulances to use though out the county.

- Councilman Blakely stated that we are proud of what you do.
- Vice Chairman Frierson stated that Clarendon County fire rescue system has one of the best systems he has ever seen.

On motion by Councilman Blakely and Seconded by Vice Chairman Frierson, Council voted Unanimous Approval to the request that was made by Chief Michael A. Johnson to donate one of Clarendon County out of service ambulances to the South Carolina Fire Academy.

6. Proclamation – Administrator David Epperson

Administrator Epperson presented Council with a Proclamation in Recognition of May 15 through May 21 as Emergency Medical Services Week.

On motion by Vice Chairman Frierson and Seconded by Councilman Blakely, Council voted Unanimous Approval to the Proclamation in Recognition of May 15-21, as Emergency Medical Services Week.

7. Americans with Disabilities Act Policy – Mr. Ted Felder

Mr. Ted Felder presented Ms. Vickie Williams, Grants Coordinator. Ms. Williams presented Council with the Americans with Disabilities Act Policy. She stated that all policies have been updated to reflect Sect 504 Compliance which consists of the Reasonable Accommodation Policy.

On motion by Councilman Richardson and Seconded by Vice Chairman Frierson, Council voted Unanimous Approval to the Americans with Disabilities Act Policy that was presented by Ms. Vickie Williams.

8. Ordinance 2022-02

Administrator Epperson stated that this Ordinance is to authorize a Referendum According to South Carolina Code to determine whether the County should maintain or change its present county council election districts.

- Mr. Robert McFadden asked how are you getting this information out to the public. The public needs to know what this means, and we need to do a better job of letting the citizens know what is going on. We need to put out signs or a billboard.
- Administrator Epperson stated that Citizens can stop by the Administrator's office to see the maps, but the County cannot use taxpayers' dollars to support a referendum and we cannot put up a billboard. The entity that wants the change have to put up signs.
- Ms. Patricia Pringle stated that they will go out as a group to let citizens know what is going on and what will be on the ballot.
- A visitor said that she can read but will not understand what she's reading.
- Mr. Moye stated that they are going to advertise what will be on the ballot.

On motion by Vice Chairman Frierson and Seconded by Councilman Richardson, Council voted Unanimous Approval to the Third and Final Reading of 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.

9. Public Hearing – Ordinance 2022-07

Chairman Stewart stated that the public hearing is open for 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 mils 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 effective July 1, 2022. He continued by stating that the County received a gift to construct a new library in the town of Turbeville and a Library in the Town of Summerton.

Chairman Stewart stated that the public hearing is now open. The Public Hearing opened at 6:48 pm.

- Mr. Robert McFadden asked what is the time frame because citizens are struggling for a library in Summerton.
- Administrator Epperson replied by stating that this will happen within the new two to three years if approved.
- Mr. Moye asked will this be a 1% tax.
- Administrator Epperson stated that the mils would be moved from the General Funds to a Special tax district just like we did with Fire Rescue.
- Mr. George Frierson asked who will name the library since it's taxpayers' dollars.
- Administrator Epperson replied by stating that the funding is grant money and some of it comes from the state and they would like the facility to be named after a specific individual.
- Ms. Patricia Pringle stated that since this will be a special tax district, how would it be funded, and we will need more than 5 mils.
- Administrator Epperson replied by stating that the Library gets money from the state as well.

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 6:56 pm.

10. Ordinance 2022-07

On motion by Councilman Blakely, and Seconded by Councilman Richardson, Council voted Unanimous Approval to the Second 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.

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

Mr. Lynden Anthony, Controller, began his presentation by stating that 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 in a similar fashion to how we started or funded the initial Emergency Services Tax District two years ago. In doing so, the appropriation to the Library has also been removed from General Fund expenses; essentially making the process revenue and expense neutral.

Mr. Anthony continued by stating that 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 Second Reading contains the State allowed millage increase of 4.7% for County operations. 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.

He stated that as a result of these 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 [less than a 1% increase]. 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 over 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 in the upcoming year.

Mr. Anthony further stated that we have made no change to the Road User fee as a result of pending legislation and outstanding legal issues currently being experienced in other Counties. Our hope is that this issue will be resolved quickly. In summary, we expect that General Fund revenues will total \$24,085,635.

General Fund expenditures, the budget package submitted includes a 3% COLA for our employees, this equals an increased investment in our staff of \$586,000 between the General fund and Fire Rescue. Most of the budgeted increases (at the department level) are a result of current staffing levels, the COLA, and an increase in health insurance premiums of 14% effective January, 2023. An example of non-salary related increases would include an improvement to our cyber-security capabilities, increased efforts within our Solid Waste department and disposal fees, a multi-year project to digitize all of our records within the Register of Deeds office, increased fuel costs and anticipated election commission expenses. The General Fund budget, at this reading, reflects a deficit of \$372,545.

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.

The same COLA is included in the Fire Rescue budget as well as \$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 \$8,125,970; we are out of balance about \$351,000.

Water and Sewer System:

Continued system expansion is being funded through a remaining USDA grant, State rural infrastructure 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 look forward to an increase in facility utilization, particularly over the last 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 Second 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 we are looking at a preliminary General Fund budget that is out of balance by \$372,545, bringing it into balance will be somewhat problematic given the impact of the road user fee situation touched on earlier. Just as we have a deficit in our Fire Rescue operating budget as well.

12. Public Hearing – Ordinance 2022-06

Chairman Stewart stated that the public hearing for Ordinance 2022-06 – An Ordinance to provide for a Levy of taxes for County purposes of Clarendon County, SC, for the Fiscal Year Beginning July 1, 2022 and Ending June 30, 2023, to Direct the Expenditures of said taxes and other funds for Clarendon County, and to Provide for Other Matters Related Thereto Including the Administrative Accountability Procedures to be followed during Implementation of the Budget (Operating and Capital) for Clarendon County for the Fiscal Year Beginning July 1, 2022 and Ending June 30, 2023.

The Public Hearing began at 7:12 pm.

- Mr. Robert McFadden – Who is in charge of Re-Districting?
- Administrator Epperson responded by stating that Re-Districting is being handled by the Legislative Delegation.
- Chairman Stewart stated that Re-Districting is a challenge, and we will have to work through it.
- Ms. Patricia Pringle – The Road User Fee Law Suite, if the Legislation passes, will we go back to the \$35 or stay at \$15.00?
- Mr. Ted Felder stated that it will then come back to County Council to decide.
- Chairman Stewart stated that Clarendon County will do what the law states.
- Ms. Patricia Pringle – with the Salary Study, will that happen this budget year?
- Administrator Epperson – we have funds sets aside for that and our plans are to use the funds that we have budgeted from that point going forward and the Study should be back in August.
- Citizen – where is the money going that we pay for trash pickup?
- Administrator Epperson replied by stating that the money is used to off-set cost of disposing of solid waste.
- Mr. George Frierson – why can't we fix some of these roads.

Chairman Stewart asked if there were any other comments. Hearing none, he stated that the Public Hearing will close. The Public Hearing closed at 7:34 pm.

13. Ordinance 2022-06

On motion by Councilman Richardson and Seconded by Vice Chairman Frierson, Council voted Unanimous Approval to the Second Reading of Ordinance 2022-06 – An Ordinance to provide for a Levy of taxes for County purposes of Clarendon County, SC, for the Fiscal Year Beginning July 1, 2022 and Ending June 30, 2023, to Direct the Expenditures of said taxes and other funds for Clarendon County, and to Provide for Other Matters Related Thereto Including the Administrative Accountability Procedures to be followed during Implementation of the Budget (Operating and Capital) for Clarendon County for the Fiscal Year Beginning July 1, 2022 and Ending June 30, 2023.

14. Financial Report

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

- **The General Fund** had Expenditures of \$20,595,746 and Revenue figures were not available as of April 30, 2022.
- **Weldon Auditorium** had income of \$11,629 for the month ending April 2022 and total Expenses were \$172,143. He stated that the Weldon Auditorium ended the month of April, 2022 after transfers with a Net Deficit of \$100,514.
- **Water and Sewer Department** – had total Revenue of \$1,156,417 for the month ending April 30, 2022 and total Expenses were \$673,673. After Depreciation, Bond Interest Expense, Interest income and USDA Phase II, the Water and Sewer Department ended the month ending April 30, 2022 with a Net Utility Income of \$466,464.
- **The C-Fund Program** - for the month ending April 30, 2022, The C-Fund program had a Cash Balance of \$3,469,276 of which \$2,820,909 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 \$648,367 as of the end of April 2022.

15. Administrator's Report

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

- **Hwy 260 Sewer Expansion** – awaiting permits from DHEC to begin bidding. Once approval from DHEC is granted, the solicitation process should begin shortly thereafter. (ARPA Funds)
- **Public Outreach Efforts** – We continue to push out information regarding the ways the public can protect itself and their families.
- **County Operation** – All employees continue to operate on normal schedules.
All County facilities remain open to the public during normal operating hours.
- **Miscellaneous** -
 - Baseball/Softball games are at the mid-season point, with the season moving along well.
 - County Offices will be closed in observance of Memorial Day on May 30, 2022.
- **Salary Study** – The group assisting us with this study came last week and met with all Department Heads and employees about the study and the process being implemented to review each position. The Department Head meeting was well attended, and the employee meetings were also well attended.
- **COVID-19**
For the week of April 24 – April 30, there were 12 active cases.
 - Councilman Richardson asked about the paving of Pearson Road.
 - Administrator Epperson replied by stating that we are working with engineering to get the road scheduled for paving.

14. Chairman's Report

Chairman Stewart began his report by asking County Council did they have any questions or comments.

- Councilman Blakely stated that he wants to thank the Public Works Department.

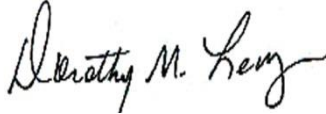
15. Adjourn

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

The Council Meeting adjourned at 7:52 pm.

Respectfully Submitted,



Dorothy M. Levy
Clerk to Clarendon County Council, CCC

