



Clarendon County Budget Workshop
Tuesday, April 25, 2023
6:00 PM

Council Chambers, 411 Sunset Drive, Manning, SC 29102

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, Sr.
Councilman A.C. English
Deputy Administrator Ted Felder

Absent: Councilman John P. Coker

Press in attendance: None

Others in attendance included:

Lynden Anthony
Mike Streath
Meesha Witherspoon

Jacqueline Blackwell
Roger Jowers
And Other Clarendon County Residents

Patricia Pringle
Jose Calvo

Terry Streath
Maureen Calvo

Chairman Stewart called the Budget Workshop 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 English and Seconded by Councilman Richardson, Council voted Unanimous Approval to the Agenda for April 25, 2023.

2. Presentation – Mr. Lynden Anthony, Chief Financial Officer

Mr. Anthony began his presentation by thanking County Council for the opportunity to present the budget requests to Council and the citizens of Clarendon County.

He stated that he will start with the General Fund Expenses. At first reading, we reflected a deficit of \$174,700; however, several elected officials had not provided their requests prior to then. As a result, our deficit this evening is \$212,220. He stated that the budget process is still in play; we are waiting for information and cost estimates in several areas.

Mr. Anthony stated that he removed the budgetary impact of the compensation increases approved in January of this year, the 10% increase in health insurance costs expected January of 2024 and the 1% increase in retirement expense to the State, as well as the 1.6% salary step increase; He stated that those departments and functions that report through Administrator Epperson to County Council actually reduced their budget requirements from the current fiscal year by almost \$139K; however, we have an increase in new funds from elected officials and agencies of slightly more than \$196K.

- Councilman Richardson asked if the Step Increase included in the 212,000 deficit.
- Mr. Anthony responded by stating yes, the deficit includes everything.
- Councilman English asked why the Coroner's office needs a full-time position, when the part-time position was never filled. Coroner Blackwell responded by stating that she could not find anyone that

wants to work only 20 hours a week. She stated that the Coroner’s office needs someone in there from 8:30 am to 5:00 pm so that the office will be open to serve the public. She continued by stating that everything has to be done manually and the Coroner’s office represents Clarendon County, and we need to send out professional documents. She continued by stating that it’s hard playing. Ms. Blackwell concluded by stating that she requested some software every year with the exception of this year, and she still has not received it because all of the forms that she used have to be created by her office.

- Councilman English asked what is the estimated cost for the software.
- Coroner Blackwell replied by stating \$2400 plus the annual maintenance fee.

Mr. Anthony stated that he would like to address these requests for “new” funds first, starting with the largest and simply working down:

Santee Wateree RTA	\$ 50,000	Develop fixed route Summerton to Manning
Third Circuit Solicitor supplement	46,750	Expansion of investigative capabilities
Coroner	28,550	Convert PT to FT position
Public Defender supplement	25,450	Staff raises, ER insurance and retirement
	23,000	Equip., uniforms, supplies, and membership fees
Sheriff Office		
Auditor Office	11,230	Equip., contractual services, and travel/training
Probate Office	7,500	Travel/training, supplies and misc.
Clerk of Court	4,000	Travel & training across multiple offices
Treasurer	<u>3,890</u>	Travel/training, supplies, and membership dues
	\$200,370	

In terms of those departments reporting through Administration; while overall there was a significant decrease in non-salary related costs; there are some items I would like to mention:

A \$235M increase in anticipated costs for handling county waste was fully offset with the conclusion of the project to digitize records within the ROD office. An increase in our meal and medical care delivery within the Detention center was more than offset by reductions in our road repairs costs – these costs will be transferred, where appropriate, to our C-Program state funding.

General Fund Revenue

The General Fund budget before you reflect a zero increase in millage rate. We are assuming that we will experience continued growth in overall assessed values due to continued growth with R/E estimated at a robust 6%, vehicles and watercraft at a lower 2% assessed value growth. We have estimated that delinquent tax collections will continue to grow slightly into the next fiscal year.

Our collection of Local Option Sales Tax continues to grow; we are recommending that the LOST credit be increased \$4.M to \$4.1 million. Essentially, reducing our individual tax obligations.

The State General Assembly, in its budget process thus far, has fully funded the Local Government Fund, as we have reflected the increased state monies to the County to help offset State mandated services. I anticipate some minor modifications to revenue between now and second reading as information becomes available.

While the general Fund has numerous non-tax revenue sources; Fire & Rescue is funded primarily through ad valorem taxes and EMS collections. We are not anticipating much growth at all in Fire taxes because of the freeze in millage rate growth and muted assessed value growth. Of equal importance is a reduction in EMS collections anticipated from the current year’s budget to next year. We continue to work with our billing company and collection service to mitigate the negative trend.

- Chairman Stewart asked why EMS collection was down.
- Mr. Anthony responded by stating that the files were not downloaded but have since been taken care of.

- Brad Gerfin, Deputy Chief EMS, stated that the Turn Out Gears are outdated, and EMS/Fire Rescue cannot use outdated gear. He stated that there are 3 open positions on the EMS Staff and the volunteers are going down.

Mr. Anthony continued by stating that the compensation correction to market performed in January of this year had major impacts to our Public Safety areas, including law enforcement, the detention center and Fire & Rescue. As an example, the impact to Fire Rescue was about \$650K (salary, FICA, and retirement), compared to the Sheriff department at almost \$671K increase. The combination of health insurance costs going up and the compensation structure has created a deficit condition with the Fire Rescue fund. While Chief Johnson and his command staff cut operating expenses year over year of \$502K (primarily in the deferment of equipment acquisition); this did not offset the growth in salary and related personnel expenses and the lack of growth in anticipated revenue. At present, we are reflecting a Fire Rescue deficit of \$545,560.

- The Library Special Tax District, we have prepared a balanced budget with zero growth in millage rate.
- Weldon Auditorium and the Water System are submitting balanced budgets.

The additions or changes being requested to staffing levels -

Additions to Staff:

- Facilities Full-time Custodian for the move to new office
- Election Commission Part-time Clerk, “as needed”

Changes to Existing Positions:

- Coroner Part-time to Full-time Clerk II
- Elections Commission Full-time Clerk II promoted to Training Coordinator (new title)
- Auditor Full-time Deputy Auditor promoted to Senior Deputy Auditor (new title)
- Auditor Full-time Tax Clerk promoted to Admin. Assistant (new title)

The requests from the Auditor have not been analyzed or processed through HR to determine fiscal impact as of yet.

We have four (4) proposed issuance of debt that I described at First Reading:

- General County Lease Acquisition Series 2023A to close July of this year of \$350,000 to acquire and equip vehicles for law enforcement, a new transport van for the Detention center and a new pool vehicle.
- General County GO Series 2024B \$1,336,500 to close Feb. 2024 for the annual debt service requirements on the IPRB Series 2022.
- Also, in Feb 2024 a Capital Lease Acquisition Series 2024A in the amount of \$590,000 for new fire engine to be delivered in March of next year.
- In January of 2024 we are requesting to close on a GO Series 2023A of approximately \$800M over ten (10) years so as to replace 800Mgz radios that will no longer be functional with the proposed changes to the SC Palmetto platform.

Administrator Epperson thanked Mr. Anthony and his staff and all departments for their hard work and dedication.

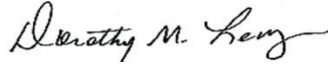
- Councilman English stated that we need to look at all travel requests.
- Chairman Stewart stated with the Home Rule Act, we are limited to what we can do

3. Adjourn

Chairman Stewart stated that we have exhausted our agenda and he declared that the Budget Workshop is over.

The Budget Workshop adjourned at 7:15 pm.

Respectfully Submitted,



Dorothy M. Levy
Clerk to Clarendon County Council, CCC

