

**NEWBERRY COUNTY COUNCIL
MINUTES
JANUARY 21, 2009
7:00 P.M.**

PRESENT: Henry H. Livingston, Chairman
William D. Waldrop, Vice-Chairman
Kirksey Koon, Councilman
John E. Caldwell, Councilman
W. Edgar Baker, Councilman
Leslie (Les) Hipp, Councilman
Steven Stockman, Councilman
Wayne Adams, County Administrator
A.J. Tothacer, Jr., County Attorney
Laurie Renwick, Clerk To Council
Debbie Cromer, Finance Director

PRESS: Heather Hawkins, WKDK
Cindy Pitts, Newberry Observer

The meeting was duly advertised as required by law.

Chairman Livingston called the meeting to order and determined a quorum present.

Mr. Edgar Baker led the invocation followed by the Pledge of Allegiance.

1. Presentation of Newberry County Service Awards

Chairman Livingston recognized the following employees for their loyal and dedicated service to Newberry County. He stated the following eight employees have a combined total of 130 years of service to Newberry County. He said Newberry has certainly benefited from their experience and expertise and their service is deeply appreciated. Chairman Livingston asked the following to come forward and receive their awards and o remain standing for a group picture afterward. The recipients were: Rebecca Adams, Sheriff's Office – 5 years of service; Ron Abrams, Sheriff's Office – 10 years of service; Sheila Bannister, Sheriff's Office – 10 years of service; Benji Chapman, Sheriff's Office – 10 years of service; Sheriff Lee Foster – 20 years of service; Jerry Wright, Sheriff's Office – 20 years of service; John Caldwell, Councilman – 25 years of service; and Donna Lominack, Auditor's Office – 30 years of service

2. Personal Appearances

a. Dr. Ray Brooks, President of Piedmont Technical College – Newberry County Center update and future plans.

Dr. Brooks shared with Council that they have had eight different construction projects since they began. They have over 30,000 sq. ft. of space they are presently using. They started off with only a front office and four classrooms. Dr. Brooks said the newest program for students is the offering of the Vet Tech lab which is one only three offered in the State of South Carolina. The program has a lot of interest not only to Newberry residents but for students outside of the county. They have a CAN, LPN, Biology and Chemistry Lab at the Newberry Center. Many of the two year graduates from Piedmont Tech are transitioning to Newberry College and getting credit for what they have taken which shortens the amount of time and saves them money. It increases enrollment at Newberry College which is a win, win situation. Just as it is for us leasing your building for the Piedmont Tech Newberry Center, which provides synergy that we would not be able to do otherwise. The Newberry Center is a joint effort and without Council's cooperation and support over the years we would not be able to do the things we do. Dr. Books stated that 1.3 million has been spent by Piedmont in remodeling the Newberry Center. Over \$200,000 has been spent on furniture and \$750,000 in equipment to make sure that the students have the latest in instructional equipment. Dr. Brooks said they are planning for the future and he and Pat McGehee, Director of the Newberry Center, have talked about ways to make the center more viable, increase enrollment, and increase the value of the center to the community. He feels the centers should be developed to offer the students everything they need in the local community without driving to the Greenwood Campus. He said the Newberry Center has tremendous potential and they have moved it up to their second priority for capital construction projects. He hoped the State passes a bond bill so they will receive funding to establish a larger center for the programs that are based here. They are tightening their belts during this time of cutbacks as everyone is. and stated this too shall pass. Good times will come again and they want to be ready to jump out of the gate to make these things happen. Dr. Brooks stated the road to economic success is an educated work force and Piedmont wants to be in a position to provide the services to make Newberry a destination for companies who want to expand or locate here to help us, help you, help your citizens. Dr. Brooks introduced Mr. Jerry Allewine, the new Dean of the Allied Health Department; Ms. Misty West, Piedmont Tech Foundation Board Member; and his wife Pam Brooks. He expressed his appreciation to the Chairman and members of Council for their past and future support.

b. Ms. Misty West, Agricultural Expo Committee – Request for use of fairgrounds for the Newberry County Agricultural Expo 2009.

Ms. West stated she was speaking on behalf of an enthusiastic group of Newberrians who would like to revive the Newberry County Agricultural Fair. The package provided to Council was also shared with the Fairgrounds Commission for their approval. Over the past several months the group has involved the 4-H, Clemson Extension, FAA, Young Farmers, Historical Society and many other agricultural businesses. The group feels this

will be a terrific community event to revive the County's fairground facilities and establish an annual event highlighting Newberry's agricultural and historic strengths. They would like to request the use of the fairgrounds for a two week period in September at no cost. Ms. West stated if the event made a profit they would divert a portion of the proceeds to the fairground facilities and retain a portion for future events.

Mr. Waldrop stated he thought this was a great idea and thank them for bringing this back to Newberry.

Mr. Baker told Ms. West he thought they put together a good program and had put a lot of thought into it. He asked Ms. West who would be responsible for the liability insurance.

Ms. West stated they had budgeted for event insurance.

Mr. Baker said he noticed the budget was plus or minus \$300.00 within balance. He understood what would happen if they made a profit but asked who would eat the loss if there was one.

Ms. West said their budget covered administration of the fair and there are several other aspects that are not budgeted. They plan to have a sanctioned horse show, cow show and goat show to allow for a stronger income base. Civic organizations will also help staff the gates which will save some money too. There is some built in income.

Mr. Hipp commended Ms. West on the excellent package they put together with all the planning and budget numbers. You have covered every aspect.

Mr. Waldrop moved to approve the use of the fairground facilities for two weeks in September at no charge; second by Mr. Koon. Vote was unanimous.

Mr. Livingston thanked Ms. West for a well prepared document.

c. Mr. Gene Workman and Ms. Tqila Werts – Request for use of the Helena Community Center at no charge for Outreach Ministry on January 31, 2009.

Mr. Workman stated that on January 10th, Ms. Werts came to the meeting of the Involved Citizens of the Helena Community and asked for the use the Helena Community Center free of charge on January 31st. Ms. Werts shared with the group and Mr. Waldrop her plans for the use of the center. The Involved Citizens of Helena would like to ask County Council to grant Ms. Werts the use of the center free of charge on January 31, 2009.

Ms. Werts said she has a vision for ministering to young teens. She was born and raised in the Helena Community of Newberry County. She stated the teenagers she has seen around Newberry County are disrespectful, have no goals, no morals, and the dropout rate is skyrocketing. She wanted to do something about it and decided to go ahead with

this ministry. Ms. Werts shared with Council her inspiration from the book, A Purpose Driven Life, and the message that you are not a mistake. A lot of teens have fallen off the wrong tract. We are loosing our teens to drugs, unwanted pregnancies, violence and HIV. Ms. Werts plans to help the teens through reading and sharing information. She asked Council for the use of the Helena Center for all young teens, not just those in this community. She said we need to pick ourselves up, brush ourselves off and do what we need to do for these teenagers.

Mr. Waldrop stated he did meet with Ms. Werts and the Involved Citizen of Helena on Saturday a week ago. He feels this would be a good program for the people in Helena and the surrounding areas and would make a motion to Council that she is allowed to use the building to bring these young people together on January 31, 2009.

Mr. Caldwell said that at this stage in the game, if we don't realize the problems our future leaders are having, something is badly wrong with us. Anytime someone is willing to volunteer their time to help with these issues, should do all we can to support this and help make it a success. Mr. Caldwell said if no one has anymore question, he will gladly second the motion that we allow them to do this. It is about time we help our own rather than putting money away and not knowing were it is going.

Mr. Waldrop said that there will be a dedication for the new Helena Center on the first Saturday in February at 3:00 p.m. and it should be advertised in the paper.

Mr. Hipp told Ms. Werts what she was doing is wonderful. It is very commendable and he thanked her.

Ms. Werts stated that she had prayed about this and asked God to lead her heart. She said she knew she would not be able to help everyone but if she could change only one person's life, it would be worth it.

Mr. Livingston thanked Ms. Werts and said he sees and experiences this on a daily basis. He asked Ms. Werts to get a copy of the rules and regulations for the center from the county.

Mr. Baker commended Ms. Werts and asked how much she could do in one day. She was only asking for one day's use of the building.

Ms. Werts responded that she would like to do this once a month if she could.

Mr. Waldrop said that when they met, the Involved Citizens volunteered to share the facility with Ms. Werts the first Saturday of each month, letting her use it until 5:00 p.m., and then they would use it after that.

Mr. Waldrop moved to amend his original motion to allow Ms. Werts to use the building once a month (1st Saturday) along with the Involved Citizens; seconded by Mr. Hipp.

Mr. Livingston asked if there would be an annual or bi-annual renewal.

Mr. Waldrop stated that the Involved Citizens of Helena said that if the program worked for a period of time, they would come back to Council and renegotiate.

Mr. Waldrop moved to amend the motion to allow Ms. Werts to use the building on the 1st Saturday of each month for 6 months then come back to Council to request a renewal; second by Mr. Caldwell. Vote was unanimous

3. Adoption of Consent Agenda

Mr. Baker moved to adopt Consent Agenda; second by Mr. Hipp. Vote was unanimous

4. Additions, Deletions, and Adoption of Agenda

Mr. Adams asked if Mr. Dave Mottel from SCANA could present Resolution #02-09 for Council's consideration as Agenda item #8.1

Mr. Baker moved to approve agenda as amended; second by Mr. Caldwell. Vote was unanimous

5. Ordinance # 09-32-08: An ordinance amending section 91.33 of the Newberry County Code of Ordinances, commonly known as the criteria for acceptance of new roads into the County Road System.

Mr. Livingston declared this the Public Hearing and asked if there were any comments.

Mr. Livingston asked Mr. Tommy Whitehead to the podium.

Mr. Whitehead introduced himself and stated he was speaking against the approval of this ordinance. He stated he had checked with bordering counties about three months ago and only Saluda County accepts gravel roads into their system. More and more counties are not accepting gravel roads. Mr. Whitehead said in passing this, you would be placing a burden on the taxpayers of this county to bring this road up to standard. You would also have a liability of roads that were paved under the old ordinance that fell within the timeframe of the ordinance before you. He asked if any member of Council was aware of another road, other than Glade Springs, that met the criteria. He said it would be hard to separate this ordinance from the following one. Glade Springs Road seemed to be the driving force behind this ordinance. He asked that Council heed the advice of the County Road Committee's recommendation not to accept this road into the county system.

Mr. Livingston asked Mr. Patrick Meetze to the podium.

Mr. Meetze introduced himself and stated that Mr. Whitehead had addressed some of the same issues he was concerned about. He wanted to know how many roads would be affected between the July of 2003 – July 31, 2007 timeframe. He said there was some

language put in the ordinance that was questionable. He said since no one was aware of any other road that would fall in this timeframe, he requested that Council vote this down.

Having received no other comments, Mr. Livingston declared the Public Hearing closed.

Mr. Livingston stated that before a vote would be taken on Ordinance #09-32-08, the Public Hearing for Ordinance #09-33-08 would take place.

6. Ordinance #09-33-08: An Ordinance to accept Glade Springs Road into the County Public Road System, to be maintained as are all other county maintained roads, and matters relating thereto.

Mr. Livingston declared this the Public Hearing for Ordinance #09-33-08

Mr. Livingston asked Mr. Tommy Whitehead to the podium.

Mr. Whitehead stated he had looked at Glade Springs Road with a very thorough eye and it did not meet County standards. The road needs ditching, pipe, out fall, and easements. There is a pond that the road drains into and he did not know what kind of liability that would be. He asked that Council act in the best interest of the county by not approving this road and taking it into the county system.

Mr. Livingston asked Mr. Patrick Meetze to the podium

Mr. Meetze asked how many Council Members had been down to view this road. Mr. Meetze said the Code of Ordinance, under accepting roads into the county road system, states that a road should have a turn around every 2,000 feet. This road is 4,224 feet long and should have at least 2 turn arounds, which is a strike against this road. Another strike against this road is it has no signs such as curves or hills. The size of the pipe used on this road was not the proper size either. Mr. Meetze said that with all the liabilities on this road, it should not be accepted into the county system.

Mr. Baker said that he did not sign up to speak on this road but as a member of the County Road Committee, he did go look at this road. The road is washing, the ditches have never been pulled, and water is coming down the banks and running down the road. This road does not meet any county specs and he would be voting no on this road.

Having received no other comments, Mr. Livingston declared the Public Hearing closed.

Mr. Livingston said we would go back to vote on Agenda Item #5, Ordinance #09-32-08.

Mr. Waldrop moved that this be third reading, second by Mr. Baker.

Mr. Livingston asked the County Administrator if he had any recommendations.

Mr. Adams said staff would like for Council to entertain three amendments to third reading. The first amendment staff request is to delete the language that would allow dirt roads into the county system which reads as follows: or (iii) where a right-of-way of appropriate width, as determined solely in the discretion of County Council, can be deeded to the County and it can be shown that the unpaved graded aggregate base roadway was constructed with the intent that it would become a County maintained road during the calendar period from July 2, 2003 until July 31, 2007.

Mr. Hipp moved to approve amendment; second by Mr. Waldrop. Vote was unanimous

Mr. Adams said the second amendment would be to approve adding the following language to the ordinance: No road shall be accepted until any and all outstanding liens, including ad valorem taxes, have been paid. The offeror of any road must also clearly establish full legal and legitimate authority to execute the transfer documents to the satisfaction of the County Attorney prior to consideration and acceptance by the County

Mr. Waldrop moved to approve adding the new language; second by Mr. Hipp. Vote was unanimous.

Mr. Adams said the third amendment clarifies conflicting language in the ordinance for the acceptance of graded aggregate road. The new language should read: BE IT FURTHER ORDAINED THAT NEWBERRY COUNTY COUNCIL DOES HEREBY MODIFY AND AMEND SECTION 91.29 OF THE NEWBERRY COUNTY CODE OF ORDINANCES AS FOLLOWS:

Paragraph (A) is modified to read as follows:

(A) The final acceptance of a road by the County does not imply the road will be widened, improved or stabilized at any time. The types of road accepted by the County shall be:

(1) Triple treatment;

(2) Asphalt.

Mr. Koon moved to approve adding the new language; second by Mr. Hipp. Vote was unanimous

Mr. Livingston called for the question on the main motion as amended.

All were in favor of approving staff recommended amendments to third reading. Vote was unanimous.

Mr. Livingston said we would go back to vote on Agenda Item #6, Ordinance #09-33-08.

All were in favor of not accepting Glade Springs Road into the county system. Vote was unanimous.

7. Ordinance #12-36-08: An Ordinance for the purpose of leasing County property for a Skeet Range.

Mr. Livingston declared this the Public Hearing.

Having received no comments, Mr. Livingston declared the Public Hearing closed.

Mr. Waldrop moved to approve second reading; second by Mr. Baker.

Mr. Hipp excused himself from voting.

All in favor of second reading were; Mr. Livingston, Mr. Waldrop, Mr. Koon, Mr. Caldwell, Mr. Baker, Mr. Stockman. Mr. Hipp abstained.

8. Ordinance #12-37-08: Ordinance acting on a request to amend the Official Zoning Map established pursuant to Zoning Ordinance No. 12-24-01, Codified in Chapter 153 of the Newberry County Code of Ordinances, so as to rezone a one and sixty-two hundredths (1.62) acre tract designated as TMS Parcel No. 741-60, from Single Family Residential (RS1) to General Commercial (GC).

Mr. Livingston asked Mrs. Anne Peters to the Podium.

Mr. Peters stated this was a very small tract near Chapin that is adjacent to two other parcels that are zoned general commercial. It is presently undeveloped and the property owners would like to sell it as general commercial

Mr. Livingston declared this the Public Hearing

Having received no comments, Mr. Livingston declared the public hearing closed.

Mr. Baker moved to approve second reading; second by Mr. Stockman. Vote was unanimous.

8.1 Resolution #02-09: A Resolution by Newberry County, South Carolina in support of nuclear energy for South Carolina.

Mr. Livingston asked Mr. David Mottel with SCANA to the podium.

Mr. Mottel stated the SCANA Corporation and Santee Cooper were undertaking a monumental project at the V.C. Summer site. The Nuclear Regulator Commission will be visiting in a couple of weeks looking for comments from the public. Mr. Mottel said they would like Newberry to propose a Resolution in favor of the expansion.

Mr. Hipp said he was looking at a copy of the Resolution and some wording needed to be revised.

Mr. Livingston asked the County Administrator to read the corrected version aloud.

Mr. Baker moved to approve the Resolution as read; second by Mr. Hipp.

Mr. Livingston asked if there was any discussion.

Mr. Hipp stated this was an area where he had a little knowledge. He was not speaking as an employee of SCANA and SCE&G but as a Council Member representing the citizens of Newberry. This new generation of nuclear power is much safer than the current generation of nuclear power that V.C. Summer uses. He stated V.C. Summer has an excellent safety record, are well-known in the industry, and rank at the top of the Institute of Nuclear Power for safety and operation reliability. There are approximately 130 people from Newberry County employed at the V.C. Summer station and the lowest salary exceeds the County's per capita income. Mr. Hipp said there are two phases in nuclear power; the construction phase and the operating phase. The operating phase brings in a lot of people who will take up residence in Newberry County. It brings the incomes back into the county and they pay property taxes. These are good things. During the construction phases of a nuclear plant, there are additional strains on our infrastructure. There are a lot of transient workers who have rental property which puts a strain on our law enforcement and emergency services infrastructure, etc. He said he thought we should support this Resolution but down the road, renegotiations should be made to compensate the County for some of the additional strain on the infrastructure. Mr. Hipp stated he would like to see Newberry County have the opportunity to market some of our unemployed residents in these positions at SCANA.

Mr. Waldrop said he was proud that they have located the plant in Fairfield County and the possibilities of hiring some 900 hundred more employees. This is a good tax paying company.

Mr. Livingston stated there would be a strain on the educational system also. If there was anything that could be done help offset that cost, would be greatly appreciated.

All were in favor of approving the Resolution. Vote was unanimous

9. Committee Reports

Mr. Livingston announced his appointments to the following County Council Committees: Personnel Committee: John E. Caldwell, Kirksey Koon & Henry H. Livingston, III; Roads Committee: William Waldrop, Edgar Baker & Steven Stockman; Nursing Home Committee: Kirksey Koon, William Waldrop & Henry H. Livingston, III; Piedmont Technical College Committee: Leslie Hipp, John E.

Caldwell & William Waldrop; Economic Development Committee: Steven Stockman, Leslie Hipp & Henry H. Livingston, III

10. Appointments

Mr. Caldwell nominated Mr. Reggie Wicker of 902 Cline Street to the NCMH Board to replace the vacant term of Mrs. Gloria Scott.

Mr. Waldrop moved to approve the nomination of Mr. Reggie Wicker; second by Mr. Koon. Vote was unanimous.

11. Consideration of acceptance of bid for four (4) new ambulances for Newberry County EMS, Crystal Waldrop, Purchasing Director

Mrs. Waldrop researched and reported back to Council that the price to purchase two ambulances would be the same as if they purchased four. At the present, they do not know how much insurance will be collected from the wrecked ambulance, but the amount could be up to \$44,000.00

Mr. Grisby said purchasing four ambulances would start a rotation and allow them to give two to the rescue squads each year. They would continue to purchase ambulances as they go through, which would put them on a 6 year rotation, purchasing one new vehicle every 6 years. He checked with 12 counties throughout the state and no county uses vehicles with more than \$150,000.00 miles on their front line. Purchasing just two ambulances will not allow them to give extras to the rescue squads. He checked the records to verify that their ambulances had broken down 7 times due to transmission and alternator issues.

Mr. Hipp asked Mr. Grisby to identify which vehicles broke down and if they were a transport type or more expensive ambulance.

Mr. Grisby said the ambulance involved in the accident was a van type ambulance and was his oldest vehicle with 200,000 miles. It had broken down in the past. He said there have been multiple issues with the vehicles. As of last week, he had 2 vehicles that had been in County maintenance for the whole week.

Mr. Hipp commented that he questioned whether or not the break-downs could have been prevented through good preventive maintenance or whether they were age related or random failures.

Mr. Grisby said it has been challenging rotating the vehicles in for maintenance. For example, last week they had a belt break on a vehicle with only 89,000 miles and it took out several other items.

Mr. Waldrop asked Mr. Grisby if they called on the Rescue Squad to haul people out of the county after a certain time each night.

Mr. Grisby said absolutely. They will use any resource available to them if 911 is not available.

Mr. Waldrop stated he felt it was their responsibility to transport patients because they have more training and are being paid to do so. The rescue squad is primarily staffed by volunteers.

Mr. Caldwell asked Mr. Grisby what the maximum mileage was on these vehicles before they were replaced, and the period of time it would take to accumulate these miles.

Mr. Grisby said 250,000 miles and then it needs to be replaced. He said they average between 40-45,000 miles per year on the vehicles.

Mr. Caldwell asked if they granted this, when they would be requesting more.

Mr. Grisby said if they proceeded by the rotation schedule, it would be yearly.

Mr. Waldrop asked Mr. Tommy Long, Emergency Services Coordinator, to the podium.

Mr. Long said if the County did not purchase the four new ambulances there is no way two can be passed down to the rescue squads, which they are in dire need of. They have two older units; one is a 1991 model and the other is a 1994 model. He stated these two units need to be swapped out because of their age.

Mr. Waldrop shared his concerns that if we purchased the four new ambulances, would they continue using the older vehicles at the rescue squads after 8:00 p.m.

Mr. Long said that was the policy of the hospital not the policy of the rescue squad.

Mr. Grisby said he did know if this was policy. They are just trying to utilize the best resources they have. He stressed they are taking care of 911 calls and all calls that need to go to a higher level of care are handled automatically.

Mr. Hipp asked Mr. Grisby if he understood him to say from the last meeting that they were going to replace the wrecked ambulance with one of the four new ones they were requesting.

Mr. Grisby said he thought they would use the insurance money to help secure another van type ambulance which will be more economical to use for transporting purposes.

Mr. Hipp confirmed that they wanted a van type ambulance in addition to the four larger ones they were requesting.

Mr. Baker stated he heard we were waiting on insurance to come through and asked who's insurance is coming. He asked was this the county's fault the vehicle was wrecked or someone else's fault

Mr. Grisby said there was a third vehicle involved which Highway Patrol could not locate. No one received a citation and apparently it was ruled a no fault accident. The county's insurance would be paying.

Mr. Baker said we are going to have to start looking out for the taxpayers in this county and start cutting somewhere because we are getting cuts left and right from the state. Mr. Baker said he would love to give them four, but right now he would have to hold at two.

Mr. Koon asked what kind of shape and condition the rescue squad ambulances were in.

Mr. Long stated they currently have a 1991 model in Little Mountain and a 1994 model in Pomaria which are pretty ragged. There have been various electrical issues with the Lt. Mountain vehicle.

Mr. Waldrop stated he did not want the county to get into the same shape it was in several years ago by cutting equipment purchases that are really needed. We have a contract with First Vehicle to pull preventative maintenance on these vehicles and he did not understand the incident with the belt coming off. This should have been checked and replaced after 50,000 mile anyway. First Vehicle should be called on this and should have to pay for it.

Mr. Stockman said with the current economic conditions, it scares him to approve ½ million dollars for these vehicles, but feels this is an aspect of county government that we owe the people. He feels if it is a need and a necessity, he has to stand up for it and he votes to approve four of them.

Mr. Livingston stated he had been cursed by a gentleman several years ago for expenditures Council approves for the rescue squads. Shortly after this encounter, this gentleman's granddaughter was in an automobile accident and some of the County rescue equipment failed, and he cursed him again for the county not having decent equipment. He said he agreed with Mr. Stockman that these core services need to be provided to our community.

Mr. Caldwell said that we could sit around and talk about this all night but until you are in the position where you need this aid, only then will you think about it. He said we owe these employees the finest facilities and equipment to do their jobs and we, as elected officials, should provide this for them.

Mr. Hipp commended Mr. Grisby on the good job that he does and stated it was his job to come before Council and ask for what he needs to make medical response in Newberry County the best that it can be. However, Mr. Hipp shared his concerns about the cumulative financial effect this could have. He felt this issue was another reason we

needed a committee within County Council to understand emergency services and their interaction with the rescue squad and the hospital, and to help better grasp the big picture and the impact of our decisions. With that being said, he supports purchasing two ambulances now and revisiting this same issue in 6 months, after the emergency services committee has had the opportunity to look into this objectively, assessing our needs and working with the different folks from the rescue squads.

Mr. Waldrop informed Mr. Hipp that there was already an Emergency Services Board. He said Mr. Grisby and Mr. Long are on the Board. Mr. Waldrop asked Mr. Andrews, Chairman of the Board of Rescue, who is also on the Emergency Services Board to come to the podium. He asked Mr. Andrews if he thought Council should approve the purchase of 4 new ambulances at this time.

Mr. Andrews said he understood the financial situation of the County but the rotation system for these ambulances is the first time he has seen the county preparing for the future with a plan to equip both the rescue squad and EMS. He said the rescue squad would rather have new vehicles but if the rotation was the best they could do, he wished they would consider approving it.

Mr. Livingston asked, after hearing Mr. Hipp's recommendation, if he felt this could be brought before the whole body of Council at a work session.

Mr. Hipp said he thought that would be good. He stated there were too many questions for Council to vote on this issue.

Mr. Livingston asked what were the wishes of Council.

Mr. Waldrop moved to approve purchasing four new ambulances; second by Mr. Stockman. Voting in favor were; Mr. Waldrop, Mr. Livingston, Mr. Stockman, and Mr. Koon. Opposed were; Mr. Caldwell, Mr. Baker, and Mr. Hipp. Vote passes with a vote of 4 to 3.

12. Consideration of acceptance of proposal for Communication Study – Sheriff Lee Foster

Sheriff Foster said he had been selected to be the spokesperson for this project because the Sheriff's Office manages communications for the County. This project will affect the Sheriff's Office minimally with greater impact and benefit to the fire departments and ambulance service. Sheriff Foster introduced Chief Rodney Bedenbaugh from Fairview and Mr. Tony Johnson from Chappells and said these two gentlemen brought this situation to light. Sheriff Foster stated this is primarily a fire department and EMS communications problem. The fire department and EMS radio system operates off of a 155 band DHS system. This radio system is 1950's technology working in the 21st century. One problem they are experiencing is they can only transmit off of one repeater. If you try to transmit off of more than one repeater, you get a systems block similar to the grinding and whining sound you would hear if you placed two walkie-talkies side by

side. This has happened because they have added remote repeaters over the years in the Little Mountain and Whitmire areas of the county. Another problem they are going to experience and deal with is actually a part of the digital television craze in which they are re-banding and narrow banding all radio transmissions. This conversion will allow more radio frequencies for public safety, cell phone communications, and other communication devices. He said technology has allowed you to digitalize the systems, which narrows the band to open more frequencies. Sheriff Foster said the current system has been improved over the years. We have a repeater in Little Mountain, Whitmire, and one in the City of Newberry. Each time they have tried to improve the system it has been based on the recommendation of a vendor or a user who thinks they can solve the problem. With each improvement, it helped some areas but hurt other areas around the county. An example of this was when the tornado hit Newberry last March. When the tornado was announced, it did not reach the Lake Murray area. In cases such as this, the dispatcher has to make the announcement four different times. In the case of a house fire or tornado, the dispatcher may not have time to do it four different times. The EMS system only has one repeater which is located on top of the hospital and is the worse radio system in the county. The state would recommend that the county go with the Palmetto 800 system which will cost approximately \$3,000.00 per radio plus the recurring cost of \$50.00 per month for each radio. Sheriff Foster contacted an associate of his at the National Institute of Justice and asked them to look at the County's system and make some recommendations. They came in and did a quick study for free and determined the system was lacking in many areas of the county. They recommended that we hire a consulting service to come in and make a non-bias recommendation on what to do. As a result of this study they interviewed consulting services, who had no connection with any vendors, to tell us exactly what we needed to do to make it work so the public safety volunteers would have adequate communications and the public would have adequate notification. They qualified three firms and narrowed it down to two and the lowest bid of \$88,786.00 was from Tusa Consulting Services.

Chairman Livingston asked Chief Tony Johnson of Chappells Fire and Rescue to the podium.

Mr. Johnson introduced himself and stated that their radio system is terrible. Even the deputies who come to our area also have trouble. If they are in a low spot, they have to drive to the top of a hill to get out. Their Assistant Chief applied and was awarded a grant for new walkie-talkies for their people and new radios for some of their trucks. They were also awarded \$20,000.00 included in the grant towards the purchase of a repeater for the Chappells area. Mr. Johnson said he hoped this communication study would be done quickly because they might loose their grant money.

Mr. Adams asked if the consultant would be responsible for the design, bidding, and installation and testing of the new system

Sheriff Foster said the first thing they would do is study the equipment they currently have. They would then determine what would be the best way to fix the system. Once

this has been established, they will design the system and assist them with the bidding and also help with the implementation of the system.

Mr. Adams clarified that this does not include the system itself.

Sheriff Foster stated that was correct. This was just for the engineering and design.

Mr. Hipp asked who will be managing this project for the county.

Mr. Adams said ultimately on a day to day basis he would be, but in close consultation with Tommy Long, Sheriff Foster, Bill Grisby and the folks in emergency services.

Chairman Livingston asked what the ongoing yearly cost would be.

Sheriff Foster said there will be no yearly cost other than maintenance cost which they already pay every year. There might be a slight increase in maintenance cost depending on what they do to the system. This cost is similar to a service contract/extended warranty, that if something happens to the system, the engineers will come fix the system at no charge.

Mr. Hipp moved to approve the low bid; second by Mr. Baker. Vote was unanimous.

13 Consideration for approval to purchase Emergency Services Equipment – Tommy Long, Emergency Services Coordinator.

Mr. Long presented a list of equipment they would like Council to approve with funds already appropriated to Emergency Services. (See attached) Mr. Long briefed Council on the requested items and asked if there were any questions.

Mr. Hipp moved to approve purchases; second by Mr. Baker.

Mr. Livingston asked is there was any discussion.

Mr. Hipp asked members of County Council on the Emergency Services Board for their input on these purchases.

Mr. Livingston said last year at budget time Council decided to require this process instead of going out and randomly purchasing. This creates the transparency to the public that we are purchasing needed items and feels this equipment list is justified.

Having received no further discussion, all were in favor of approving the purchases. Vote was unanimous.

14. Request by Councilmen

No Request

15. Public Comments (by those who signed up at the meeting)

No Comments

16. Vote for Executive Session, When Necessary

Mr. Adams stated Council requests an Executive Session for discussion of negotiations incident to a proposed contract dealing with the removal of tree obstructions in the airport approach at the Newberry County Airport.

Mr. Baker moved to go into Executive Session; second by Mr. Waldrop. Vote was unanimous.

17. Executive Session [9:25 p.m. – 9:45 p.m.]

Mr. Waldrop moved to return to Open Session; second by Mr. Baker. Vote was unanimous

18. Necessary Action on Matters Discussed in Executive Session

Mr. Tothacer, County Attorney, stated Council went into Executive Session for discussion of negotiations incident to a contractual matter dealing with the removal of trees and obstructions to the airport approach. No action was taken in that session.

Mr. Tothacer recommended that Council authorize the County Administrator to enter into a contract with the Newberry Country Club and DS Utilities.

Mr. Baker moved to approve authorization of contract; second by Mr. Waldrop. Vote was unanimous

19. Comments from County Administrator

No Comments

20. Comments from Council Members

No Comments

21. Future Meetings

- a. February 4, 2009
- b. February 18, 2009

22. Vote to Adjourn

Mr. Waldrop move to adjourn; second by Mr. Baker. Vote was unanimous

23. Adjournment

The meeting was adjourned at 9:55 p.m.

NEWBERRY COUNTY COUNCIL

Henry H. Livingston, III, Chairman

APPROVED:

Laurie N. Renwick, Clerk to Council