

**NEWBERRY COUNTY COUNCIL
BUDGET WORK SESSION
APRIL 26, 2022
MINUTES**

Newberry County Council met on Tuesday, April 26, 2022, at 6:00 p.m. in Council Chambers at the Courthouse Annex, 1309 College Street, Newberry, SC, for a budget work session.

Notice of the meeting was duly advertised, as required by law.

PRESENT: Todd Johnson, Chairman (District 1)
Les Hipp, Vice Chairman (District 5)
Mary Arrowood, Council Member (District 2)
Henry H. Livingston, III, Council Member (District 3)
Robert N. Shealy, Council Member (District 4)
Johnny Mack Scurry, Council Member (District 6)
Travis Reeder, Council Member (District 7) - via ZOOM
Christopher Inglese, County Administrator
A.J. Tothacer, Jr., County Attorney
Karen Brehmer, Deputy County Administrator
Debbie S. Cromer, Finance Director
Crystal Waldrop, Procurement Director
Susan C. Fellers, Clerk to Council

OTHERS PRESENT: Ron Powell, Building Inspector
Katie Werts, Zoning Administrator
Tommy Long, Public Safety Director
Karen Lindler Smith, Treasurer
Liz McDonald, Assessor
Rick Farmer, Economic Development Director
Laura Kneece, Coroner
Mike Pisano, Public Works Director
Beth Folk, Clerk of Court
Donna Lominick, Auditor
Jessie Long, Parks and Recreation Director

Ben Chapman, Sheriff's Office
Sheriff Lee Foster

MEDIA: Andrew Wigger, Newberry Observer

Mr. Johnson called the meeting to order and determined a quorum to be present.

Mr. Scurry had the invocation followed by the Pledge of Allegiance.

1. Additions, Deletions and Adoption of the Agenda

Mr. Hipp moved to adopt the Agenda, as presented; seconded by Mrs. Arrowood. Vote was unanimous.

2. Discussion of the FY 2022-2023 Budget

Mr. Inglese asked that Theo DuBose be allowed to speak first regarding Council's inquiries as to any legal issues related to operating Parks and Recreation as a Special Fund.

Theo DuBose, advised he saw no legal impediments if Council should choose to operate Parks and Recreation as a Special Fund. There are agreements in place now with the municipalities located in Newberry County. South Carolina law requires the County to seek consent from the municipalities to charge taxes for services prior to March 1973. The purpose of these agreements is to consent for the County to impose taxes for recreational purposes. These agreements merely fostered the cooperation between the county and the municipalities that had been ongoing for a number of years.

The amount of funds received by the municipalities is formula driven based on the population and taxes brought in by each municipality. .

If the County starts cutting up its share of FILOT for recreational purposes, it would be moving that money into the municipalities when it isn't in the municipality.

Mr. Inglese requested that Council decide between the following options as to Parks and Recreation:

1. If the current funding levels and arrangements with the municipalities are satisfactory, an amendment to eliminate the Special Fund for Parks and Recreation and move it back to the General Fund would be appropriate.

2. If Council desires to set up a vehicle by which future investments can be made to deliver recreation services to rural parts of the County, then keep the Special Fund. Future investments will not be disincentivized by added payouts to municipalities at the detriment of investment to recreation in rural areas.

The consensus of Council was to go with option #1 above for the 2022-2023 fiscal year budget. Mr. Inglese was directed to prepare an amendment to remove the Special Fund for Parks and Recreation from the proposed budget.

Mr. Inglese then presented other potential amendments to Council as follows:

1. Commit to I.T. Director

It was the consensus of Council to reduce the contract services by \$39,000 and approve an I.T. Director position.

2. Commit to CPA/CFO

The final consensus of Council was to reduce this proposed budget by half, thereby funding this position for half the budget year.

3. Grants Writer

The consensus of Council was to hire a Grants Writer for one year and review during the FY24-25 budget year.

4. Other - remove yard container (Seibert Road)

Council agreed that the yard container at the Seibert Road site should be removed, which would save the county \$16,031.

Other matters discussed during budget considerations:

- Council requested that the Clerk to Council salary be moved from the Administrator's budget to the Council budget.
- Council did not feel Economic Development was a place for interns and requested that the current personnel positions in that department be maintained.
- Council felt ARP funds should be used to support EMS, law enforcement and county employees with a \$3,000 bonus to all employees to cover the gap of cost of living.
- ARP funds in the amount of \$1,500 each should be given to any volunteers (fire and rescue) who qualify.
- As to the assistant to County administrator position, maintain funding the proposed budget.
- Council agreed to a one time \$70,000 expenditure to the Solicitor's Office and a \$70,000 expenditure to the Public Defender's Office to assist with moving the backlog of cases due to Covid closure of the courts. This \$140,000 expenditure will come from the ARP funding.
- Council inquired as to the amendment to the Purchase Ordinance increasing the \$25,000 limit to \$50,000 before approval is needed from Council.

3. Public Comments

Chris Johnson spoke regarding the need to replace ambulances.

4. Comments/Requests from County Administrator

No comments.

5. Comments/Requests from County Council

Mr. Livingston mentioned possibly taking money out of the ARP funding for an ambulance.

6. Adjournment

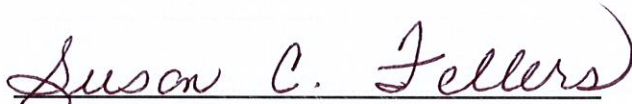
There being no further discussion, Mr. Shealy moved to adjourn; seconded by Mr. Livingston. Vote was unanimous.

Mr. Johnson declared the meeting adjourned at 8:05 p.m.

NEWBERRY COUNTY COUNCIL



Todd Johnson
Todd Johnson, Chairman



Susan C. Fellers
Susan C. Fellers, Clerk to Council

Minutes Approved: 5-18-22