

**NEWBERRY COUNTY COUNCIL  
BUDGET PLANNING WORKSHOP  
MINUTES  
FEBRUARY 3-4, 2022**

The Newberry County Council met on Thursday, February 3, 2022, at 3:00 p.m. in Council Chambers at the Courthouse Annex, 1309 College Street, Newberry, SC., for a Budget Planning Workshop.

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)  
Christopher Inglese, County Administrator  
A.J. Tothacer, Jr., County Attorney  
Karen Brehmer, Deputy County Administrator  
Debbie S. Cromer, Finance Director  
Susan C. Fellers,, Clerk to Council  
Crystal Waldrop, Procurement Director**

Mr. Johnson called the meeting to order at 3:00 p.m. and determined a quorum to be present.

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

**1. Additions, Deletions and Adoption of the Agenda**

There being no additions or deletions to the Agenda, Mr. Hipp moved to adopt the Agenda, as presented; seconded by Mr. Shealy. Vote was unanimous.

Mr. Inglese began the workshop with a short video by Simon Sinek.

The objectives for the Planning Session are as follows:

- Brief Council on several informational items
- Review and discuss questionnaires
- Presentation from SCAC publication on revenue options
- Review existing and proposed organizational structure
- Envision a 3-year plan for addressing operational needs of the County
- To provide direction to Administration for Administrator's recommended budget

The 4 P's of local government - Public Safety, Public Works, Planning, Parks and Recreation plus Facilities.

## **2. Presentations**

### **a. Public Safety**

**Sheriff Lee Foster** addressed Council regarding the following issues/needs of his department:

- salaries for deputies, corrections officers and communications. Non-competitive salaries are causing problems with hiring and retaining employees.
- The Detention Center is getting more and more inmates with health and mental issues. Food costs have increased tremendously. Food at the Detention Center is minimal but we have to meet the RDA requirements. We are asking for additional medical and food costs.
- As to technology, radio equipment has been requested for the past two years and has not yet been funded. The Department of Justice requires these upgrades. After 2025 the radios will not work on the current network. Money is also needed to maintain what we have now.
- Additional funding is needed for fuel costs.
- The Sheriff's Office does not have an attorney at their disposal.
- Ballistic vests need to be replaced because of their shelf life.

- Capital replacements.
- More personnel is needed. Annual calls for service have increased over the past years. DUI arrests have increased. Traffic fatalities have increased in Newberry County. We have one of the highest per capita death rates of any county.
- Computer upgrades.
- Furniture in the building needs to be replaced.
- A new correctional facility is needed. This process has been bogged down because of location, and grant money has been lost.

Mr. Inglese suggested the following as a way to pay for a new Detention Center:

● Overage from 2015 CPST	\$1,000,000	
● New CPST funds	\$6,000,000	
● ARP funds	\$3,000,000	
● Fee from municipal intakes	\$TBD	
● Federal/State grants	\$TBD	
● Increase Sheriff's Fees	\$TBD	
● Debt Service	\$TBD	
● Overage of 2022 CPST savings from pay as you go	\$TBD	-
● Reserves if needed	\$TBD	

Tommy Long addressed the issues faced by emergency services:

- Update on the fire fle
- Full time Fire Marshal - estimated base salary of \$50,000.
- Emergency Services Coordinator - estimated base salary of \$50,000.

The age of the fire fleet is a concern. Mr. Johnson requested that a study be made as to what equipment we have and where it is located.

Mr Long advised replacement of the fire fleet would be done gradually at a minimum of 2 per year. This has been submitted in the budget presented by Mr. Long.

A full time Fire Marshal would improve life safety concerns at industry locations and provide consistent fire inspections throughout the County.

The Emergency Services Coordinator would take some responsibility off Mr. Long. This person would respond to emergency calls in the County as needed and would assist Chief's with day to day operation.

#### **b. Public Works**

**Mike Pisano** advised his proposed budget has been submitted and thanked Council for their consideration and addressed the following needs:

- Currently 20% of the driver/operator positions are open, and he has interviewed several people from other agencies, who refused the position(s) after learning the salary.
- The costs of tonnage and tipping fees to the County. It is questionable as to whether the Transfer Station is designed for this tonnage. The mulching operation runs \$75,000 - \$90,000 per year. It is then given away. There is a \$25 per ton fee for commercial users.

Mr. Inglese advised that Mr. Pisano's areas of responsibility include the Airport, Animal Control, Collections/Convenience Centers, Mulch Processing, Transfer Station and Closed Landfill Monitoring. The County needs to consider some way to relieve some of these responsibilities from Public Works.

#### **c. Planning and Building**

**Katie Werts** discussed the following:

- Organizational chart of the Planning and Building Department
- Projected new construction permits for planned subdivisions
- Proposed unfilled positions - Director of Planning and Development Services, Building Inspector/CRS Floodplain Manager and Senior Planner.

#### **d. Parks and Recreation**

Jessie Long discussed the following:

- Lynch's Woods Park is a passive park with no programs. Public Works helps to maintain the park.
  - 7.5 miles of hiking and biking trails
  - 6.1 miles of equestrian trails
  - 3 mile section of Palmetto Trails - Lynch's Woods Passage
  - Open year round from dawn to dusk
  - No overnight camping permitted
- The only ballfield the County owns is in Maybinton.
  - Soccer has had the most growth. Fall participation in the age group of 3-13 consisted of 326 with 30 teams. The spring instructional clinic in conjunction with Newberry College consisted of 39 in 2020 and 94 in 2021. There are no true soccer fields in the County. Junior soccer was added last year for ages 12-17 with 80 participants.
  - Baseball and softball are falling behind.
  - Her department works closely with the coaches from the schools and colleges.
- She is requesting 2 full time employees consisting of a sports program coordinator and a marketing and special events coordinator. These employees would assist with camps and clinics in the summer.
- Master plan study is needed for Parks and Recreation.

#### **e. Facilities**

- **Mr. Inglese** provided Council with a list of insured county owned buildings. Currently maintenance has approximately 89 buildings, many of which are aging with expensive ongoing maintenance issues.
- A new administration office building is needed in which would be housed the following departments: Planning and Building, Administration, Treasurer, Auditor, Finance, Clerk to Council, Parks & Recreation and the County Attorney.

- Community Hall is in need of a new roof
- Newberry County Museum is in need of a new roof.

### **3. Presentation of Results from Internal Questionnaire**

Mr. Inglese sent these questionnaires to elected officials, county council, and department heads to get input. Copies of the responses were provided to Council for their review.

### **4. Public Comments**

No comments from the public.

### **5. Comments/Requests from County Administrator**

No additional comments.

### **6. Comments/Requests from Council Members**

All of Council appreciated the work put into compiling the information and felt it to be very informative.

### **7. Adjournment**

Mr. Reeder moved to adjourn; seconded by Mr. Hipp. Vote was unanimous.

Mr. Johnson declared the meeting adjourned at 5:15 p.m.

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The Newberry County Council met for day two of the Budget Planning Workshop on Friday, February 4, 2022, at 9:00 a.m. in Council Chambers.

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

All Council Members and staff listed on day one were present, except for Mr. Tothacer, County Attorney.

### **1. Additions, Deletions and Adoption of the Agenda**

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

### **2. Open Discussion - Discussion of Questionnaire responses**

Mr. Inglese opened this session with a video of Simon Sinek.

Issues resulting from the questionnaires were:

- Lack of technology and how to get there
  - County currently contracts for a lot of technology needs
  - No IT person on staff
    - IT Department should have a Director, Network Manager and Website/Audio Visual - estimated cost of \$170,000
- Lack of staff/open positions
  - Currently no HR Director or Clerk to Council. Filling of these positions is being worked on.
  - Need for 2 Assistant Administrators, 1 CPA and an operations/engineer
  - \$2.25 million unfunded salary needs
- Need for a general ledger
- Need for a timekeeping system

### **3. Organizational Chart/Future Organization Chart**

Mr. Hipp brought up the issue of Council directly hiring the County Attorney with the County Attorney reporting directly to Council. This would give Council another direct source of communication. The only change would be that the County Attorney reports directly to County Council. There would be no change in the day-to-day operation.

Mr. Inglese felt a down side to this would be the County Attorney taking direction from several different persons.

#### **4. Alternative Revenue Sources/SCAC Materials**

Zoom powerpoint presentation by Owen McBride, Assistant Director of Governmental Affairs, South Carolina Association of Counties, presented options including -

- Local Option Sales Tax
- Other County Revenue Sources
- Federal Broadband Loans/Grant Programs
- State Broadband Loans/Grant Program

A copy of the powerpoint presentation is on file in the County Administration Office.

#### **5. Break**

#### **6. Proposed 3 year Plan**

#### **7. Open Discussion 3 Year Plan**

Mr. Inglese provided the following summary of revenue sources based on a 3 year plan:

- Business License Taxes
- Accommodations Taxes
- Hospitality Taxes
- Development Impact Fee
- Residential Improvement District Act
- Local Options Sales Tax (LOST)
- CPST
- Personal Property Tax Exemptions Sales Tax Act
- LOST for Local Property Tax Act
- Optional methods for financing transportation facilities
- Tourism Infrastructure Admissions Tax Act



Mr. Inglese prepared a chart showing the reduction in millage since 2010. At some point that line has to go up.

### 3 Year Plan Revenue Increase:

- There is a need to raise \$3 million in operations revenue over the next 3 years to fund unmet personnel needs and implementation of a comp/class in order to stay competitive and continue to deliver high levels of customer service.
- Year 1 - a goal of raising \$750,000 in operations revenue.
- Year 2 - a goal of raising \$1,250,000 of operations revenue to fund a Fire Marshal, 4 deputies, long range Planner, etc.
- Year 3 - new FILOT revenues are expected - \$1 million.

Council discussed the benefits of having a full time grant writer on staff. Mr. Inglese advised that grants would increase work on the Finance Department.

We could increase taxes by 1.78% in this upcoming budget year.

### Technology Plan for next 3 years:

- Automated timekeeping system that works with payroll system (summer/fall 2022)
- Mandated direct deposit for all employees (March 2022)
- New general ledger software system (summer/fall 2022)
- New software system for Clerk to Council for agenda review, Board and Commission management, codification of ordinances and resolutions (fall/winter 2022-2023)
- Upgrade phone system (FY2023)
- Network upgrades and consistent utilization of licenses and software system (FY 2022/2023)
- Upgrade server system (FY2024)
- Work order system for facilities (FY24)
- Permitting software system (FY25)

## 8. Public Comments

No comments from the public.

**9. Comments/Requests from County Administrator**

Mr. Inglese stated there were many bright spots in the county and community. There are parts of county personnel that are fine but other areas are lacking in personnel and competitive salaries/wages.

**10. Comments/Requests from Council Members**

Council thanked staff for a good presentation and felt this was something that needed to be done to provide them with more information prior to budget workshops.

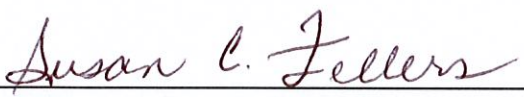
**11. Adjournment**

Mr. Shealy moved to adjourn; seconded by Mr. Hipp. Vote was unanimous.

Mr. Johnson declared the meeting adjourned at 11:35 a.m.

**NEWBERRY COUNTY COUNCIL**

  
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**Todd Johnson, Chairman**

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

**Minutes Approved:** 3-16-22