

PUBLIC HEARING & REGULAR MEETING
DARLINGTON COUNTY COUNCIL
DARLINGTON, SC

May 2, 2022

A Public Hearing and Regular Meeting of the County Council of Darlington County was held this 2nd day of May 2022, at 6 p.m., at the Courthouse Annex/EMS Building, 1625 Harry Byrd Highway (Highway 151), Darlington, South Carolina.

NOTICE OF MEETING

In compliance with the Freedom of Information Act, a copy of the agenda providing the date, time, and place of the meeting was emailed to the local newspapers, persons requesting notification, and posted on the county's website, on the bulletin board in the lobby of the courthouse, and at the entrance of the Courthouse Annex/EMS Building.

NOTICE OF PUBLIC HEARING

A Notice Of Public Hearing for Ordinance No. 22-01, Ordinance No. 22-02, Ordinance No. 22-03, and Ordinance No. 22-04 was published in the News and Press on March 9, 2022, and in the Hartsville Messenger on March 16, 2022.

A Notice of Public Hearing for Ordinance No. 22-06 and Ordinance No. 22-07 was published in the News and Press on April 20, 2022, and in the Hartsville Messenger on April 13, 2022.

In compliance with Section 4-9-130 of the SC Code of Laws, as amended, the FY22/23 County Budget was published in the News and Press on April 20, 2022, and April 6, 2022, and in the Hartsville Messenger on April 13, 2022.

COUNCIL MEMBERS PRESENT

Chairman Bobby Hudson, Vice Chairman Marvin Le Flowers, Chaplain Dannie Douglas, Jr., Mr. M. Kirk Askins, Mr. David Coker, Mr. Albert Davis, III, Mrs. Angie Stone Godbold, and Ms. Joyce W. Thomas.

ALSO PRESENT

County Administrator Marion Charles Stewart, III, County Attorney James C. Cox, Jr., Clerk to Council J. JaNet Bishop, Central Communications Center Director Michelle Hall, Emergency Management Director Molly Odom, Environmental Services Director Gary White, Finance Director Sherman Dibble, Human Resources Manager Ginger Winburn, and Library Director Jimmie Epling.

REPORTERS PRESENT

None.

PUBLIC HEARINGS

Ordinance No. 22-01, An Ordinance Authorizing Pursuant To Title 12, Chapter 44 Of The Code Of Laws Of South Carolina 1976, As Amended, The Execution And Delivery Of A Fee-In-Lieu Of Ad Valorem Taxes Agreement, By And Between Darlington County, South Carolina And A Company Known To The County As Project Scarlet II, As Sponsor, And One Or More Sponsor Affiliates To Provide For A Fee-In-Lieu Of Ad Valorem Taxes Incentive And Certain Special Source Revenue Credits For The Benefit Of A Project In The County; And Other Related Matters - THIRD READING

Chairman Hudson relinquished the gavel to Vice Chairman Flowers who declared the public hearing open at 6 p.m. to receive comments on Ordinance No. 22-01. There being no comments, the public hearing was closed.

Ordinance No. 22-02, An Ordinance Authorizing Pursuant To Title 12, Chapter 44 Of The Code Of Laws Of South Carolina 1976, As Amended, The Execution And Delivery Of A Fee-In-Lieu Of Ad Valorem Taxes Agreement, By And Between Darlington County, South Carolina And A Company Known To The County As Project Jefferson II, As Sponsor, And One Or More Sponsor Affiliates To Provide For A Fee-In-Lieu Of Ad Valorem Taxes Incentive And Certain Special Source Revenue Credits For The Benefit Of A Project In The County; And Other Related Matters - THIRD READING

Mr. Flowers declared the public hearing open to receive comments on Ordinance No. 22-02. There being no comments, the public hearing was closed.

Ordinance No. 22-03, An Ordinance Authorizing Pursuant To Title 12, Chapter 44 Of The Code Of Laws Of South Carolina 1976, As Amended, The Execution And Delivery Of A Fee-In-Lieu Of Ad Valorem Taxes Agreement, By And Between Darlington County, South Carolina And A Company Known To The County As Project Fairfield II, As Sponsor, And One Or More Sponsor Affiliates To Provide For A Fee-In-Lieu Of Ad Valorem Taxes Incentive And Certain Special Source Revenue Credits For The Benefit Of A Project In The County; And Other Related Matters - THIRD READING

Mr. Flowers declared the public hearing open to receive comments on Ordinance No. 22-03. There being no comments, the public hearing was closed.

Ordinance No. 22-04, An Ordinance Authorizing Pursuant To Title 12, Chapter 44 Of The Code Of Laws Of South Carolina 1976, As Amended, The Execution And Delivery Of A Fee-In-Lieu Of Ad Valorem Taxes Agreement, By And Between Darlington County, South Carolina And A Company Known To The County As Project Bell II, As Sponsor, And One Or More Sponsor Affiliates To Provide For A Fee-In-Lieu Of Ad Valorem Taxes Incentive And Certain Special Source Revenue Credits For The Benefit Of A Project In The County; And Other Related Matters - THIRD READING

Mr. Flowers declared the public hearing open to receive comments on Ordinance No. 22-04. There being no comments, the public hearing was closed.

Ordinance No. 22-06, An Ordinance To Designate That Agency In The County For Alcohol And Drug Abuse Planning For Programs And To Make Appropriations Pursuant To Sections 6-27-40(B) And 12-33-245(B) And (C) Of The 1976 Code Of Laws Of South Carolina, As Amended, For Darlington County For The Fiscal Year Beginning July 1, 2022, And Ending June 30, 2023 - SECOND READING

Mr. Flowers declared the public hearing open to receive comments on Ordinance No. 22-06. There being no comments, the public hearing was closed.

Ordinance No. 22-07, An Ordinance To Make Appropriations For Ordinary County Purposes For Darlington County For The Fiscal Year Beginning July 1, 2022, And Ending June 30, 2023; To Provide For The Expenditures Thereof; And To Provide For Revenues For The Payment Thereof - SECOND READING

Mr. Flowers declared the public hearing open to receive comments on Ordinance No. 22-07. There being no comments, the public hearing was closed.

REGULAR MEETING

Call To Order / Invocation / Pledge Of Allegiance

Mr. Flowers called the meeting to order at 6:05 p.m. Mr. Douglas presented the invocation and Mr. Askins led the Pledge of Allegiance.

Citizens' Comments

Ms. Joyce Franklin talked about our home being the environment that we live in, and we must take care of our home by developing ways for water to drain so that it does not damage our living space. She reported that some of the trenches that drain water in her neighborhood were not being maintained. Ms. Franklin reported that all her neighbors had signed a release for the county to clear/drain the ditches. In the process of the county clearing/drainage the ditches, one neighbor decided against this. Therefore, the process was stopped, and the water is not draining. When there is a lot of rain, the water creates a problem for everyone in the community. Their biggest concern is that one person stopped the process of getting the water to drain off their property.

Ms. Judy Alexander, on behalf of the residents of Sunrise Acres, reported that their problem stems from drainage that is causing multiple septic tank problems and costly repairs. She also expressed the need for streetlights for the safety of the community.

Personal Appearances - Mr. Don Strickland, Executive Director, Pee Dee Regional Transportation Authority - Service Update

Mr. Strickland was not present at the meeting.

Consent Agenda (Receive As Information)

Included in the Consent Agenda were the following:

- 6.A. *Beaver Management Program Report, March 2022*
- 6.B. *Animal Shelter Quarterly Report, January - March 2022*
- 6.C. *Historical Commission Board Minutes, Stats and Updates, April 7, 2022*
- 6.D. *Pee Dee Workforce Development Board Quarterly Report, Period Ended March 31, 2022*

MOTION made by Mr. Hudson and seconded by Mr. Douglas to receive the Consent Agenda items as information.

The motion carried unanimously.

Approval Of Minutes - Minutes Of Regular Meeting, April 4, 2022

MOTION made by Mr. Douglas and seconded by Mr. Hudson to approve the minutes of the regular meeting held on April 4, 2022.

The motion carried unanimously.

Approval Of Minutes - Minutes Of Budget Worksession, April 6, 2022

MOTION made by Mr. Hudson and seconded by Mr. Davis to approve minutes of the Budget Worksession held on April 6, 2022.

The motion carried unanimously.

Ordinances

Ordinance No. 22-01, An Ordinance Authorizing Pursuant To Title 12, Chapter 44 Of The Code Of Laws Of South Carolina 1976, As Amended, The Execution And Delivery Of A Fee-In-Lieu Of Ad Valorem Taxes Agreement, By And Between Darlington County, South Carolina And A Company Known To The County As Project Scarlet II, As Sponsor, And One Or More Sponsor Affiliates To Provide For A Fee-In-Lieu Of Ad Valorem Taxes Incentive And Certain Special Source Revenue Credits For The Benefit Of A Project In The County; And Other Related Matters - THIRD READING

Ordinance No. 22-02, An Ordinance Authorizing Pursuant To Title 12, Chapter 44 Of The Code Of Laws Of South Carolina 1976, As Amended, The Execution And Delivery Of A Fee-In-Lieu Of Ad Valorem Taxes Agreement, By And Between Darlington County, South Carolina And A Company Known To The County As Project Jefferson II, As Sponsor, And One Or More Sponsor Affiliates To Provide For A Fee-In-Lieu Of Ad Valorem Taxes Incentive And Certain Special Source Revenue Credits For The Benefit Of A Project In The County; And Other Related Matters - THIRD READING

Mr. Flowers stated that since Ordinance No. 22-01 through 22-04 contained the same language, except for the project name, he would read the title of one ordinance and say the ordinance number and project name for the others.

Attorney Cox confirmed that this could be done.

Mr. Flowers requested Council's consideration of Ordinance No. 22-01 which he read the title, Ordinance No. 22-02 (Project Jefferson II), Ordinance No. 22-03 (Project Fairfield II), and Ordinance No. 22-4 (project Bell II).

MOTION made by Mr. Hudson and seconded by Mr. Davis to approve third reading of Ordinance Nos. 22-01, 22-02, 22-03, and 22-04.

The motion carried with Ms. Thomas opposing.

Ordinance No. 22-03, An Ordinance Authorizing Pursuant To Title 12, Chapter 44 Of The Code Of Laws Of South Carolina 1976, As Amended, The Execution And Delivery Of A Fee-In-Lieu Of Ad Valorem Taxes Agreement, By And Between Darlington County, South Carolina And A Company Known To The County As Project Fairfield II, As Sponsor, And One Or More Sponsor Affiliates To Provide For A Fee-In-Lieu Of Ad Valorem Taxes Incentive And Certain Special Source Revenue Credits For The Benefit Of A Project In The County; And Other Related Matters - THIRD READING

Ordinance No. 22-04, An Ordinance Authorizing Pursuant To Title 12, Chapter 44 Of The Code Of Laws Of South Carolina 1976, As Amended, The Execution And Delivery Of A Fee-In-Lieu Of Ad Valorem Taxes Agreement, By And Between Darlington County, South Carolina And A Company Known To The County As Project Bell II, As Sponsor, And One Or More Sponsor Affiliates To Provide For A Fee-In-Lieu Of Ad Valorem Taxes Incentive And Certain Special Source Revenue Credits For The Benefit Of A Project In The County; And Other Related Matters - THIRD READING

Ordinance No. 22-05, An Ordinance Authorizing Pursuant To Chapter 44 Of Title 12, South Carolina Code Of Laws, 1976, As Amended, The Execution And Delivery Of A Fee Agreement Between Darlington County, South Carolina And Cedar Lake SS, LLC And Certain Affiliates, Thereby Replacing The 2018 Ashley Solar Fee Agreement And The 2019 Luz Solar Fee Agreement; And Authorizing Other Related Matters - ~~SECOND~~THIRD READING

MOTION made by Mr. Hudson and seconded by Mr. Douglas to approve third reading of Ordinance No. 22-05.

The motion carried with Ms. Thomas opposing.

Ordinance No. 22-06, An Ordinance To Designate That Agency In The County For Alcohol And Drug Abuse Planning For Programs And To Make Appropriations Pursuant To Sections 6-27-40(B) And 12-33-245(B) And (C) Of The 1976 Code Of Laws Of South Carolina, As Amended, For Darlington County For The Fiscal Year Beginning July 1, 2022, And Ending June 30, 2023 - SECOND READING

MOTION made by Mr. Hudson and seconded by Mr. Douglas to approve second reading of Ordinance No. 22-06.

The motion carried unanimously.

Ordinance No. 22-07, An Ordinance To Make Appropriations For Ordinary County Purposes For Darlington County For The Fiscal Year Beginning July 1, 2022, And Ending June 30, 2023; To Provide For The Expenditures Thereof; And To Provide For Revenues For The Payment Thereof - SECOND READING

MOTION made by Mr. Hudson and seconded by Mr. Douglas to approve second reading of Ordinance No. 22-07.

Mr. Davis stated that if the county could not pay 100% of the cost for retiree health insurance, he proposed that the county pay the cost as if the employee (retiree) was still working.

Mr. Stewart responded that Council members had received information obtained from several other counties regarding their contribution towards the cost of health insurance for their retirees. If Council accepts Mr. Davis' proposal, Council will have to allot funds for this cost and amend the budget. The actual cost would be a "best guess" because there are retirees who are not currently enrolled in health insurance, but if the county pays more of the cost, they may elect to enroll. The staff could calculate the cost using those who are currently enrolled in retiree health insurance and several options where the county would pay a certain amount for a certain number of service years. Mr. Stewart confirmed that the staff would calculate 100% of what the county currently pays for health insurance as if the retirees were still employed. They would get the same payment amount for insurance paid for when they retire. This calculation would be based upon the number of employees already in the retiree health insurance system.

Mr. Davis stated that he would again request a 5% raise for employees without increasing the millage.

Mr. Stewart stated that he did not know of any way of doing this based on the fact that there was already a millage increase for a 3% raise. Therefore, something else would have to be cut.

Mr. Askins asked about the cost of a 3% raise.

Mr. Stewart's response was approximately \$718,000 gross before any plus, plus (retirement, etc.).

In reference to the charts presented at the Budget Worksession, Mr. Askins stated that the charts show that the county had about a \$2 million surplus over the last five years. This was phenomenal and showed that the staff did a great job in managing. Therefore, it was hard for him to understand how the county can operate with a surplus and still increase the millage. This would be profit in a private business. However, in this case, the surplus belongs to the taxpayers.

Mr. Stewart responded that the percentage of increase had decreased significantly over the years.

Mr. Askins stated that the increase was holding steady at about \$2 million. He questioned whether the surplus was due to overbudgeting every year. This was good but could be tightened up.

Mr. Stewart disagreed. He felt that this was caused by trying to come under expenditures and revenue came in slightly over. He also stated that the amount held at \$2 million for two years then began to narrow. Part of the "narrowing" was used to make this budget work as presented. Mr. Stewart said he would have to disagree with Mr. Askins' assessment that at the end of FY23, unless income comes in that the staff is not aware of, there would be funds to add to the \$2 million surplus.

Mr. Askins said he was not in favor of maintaining a \$2 million surplus. It should shrink by increasing expenses without increasing taxes.

Mr. Stewart explained that with the proposed budget, the county would not expect a \$2 million surplus over expenses. The surplus was already shrinking.

Mr. Askins asked how much the additional millage will increase the revenue.

Mr. Stewart responded that the new millage should generate about \$1.8 million.

Mrs. Godbold said that it was her opinion that a 3% increase across the board would not make a big difference. However, it would be a big chunk of money spread out among a lot of people. She would rather see a threshold established for a certain pay level and establish a certain percent living increase based on salaries, not earnings. Then, in addition to this for that same group of employees, there be an incentive-based bonus. This would create a more meaningful increase because the employees would see an increase in their paycheck versus it being absorbed in taxes. Then the following year, the staff would look at the people in the higher threshold. This could take 2.5 years because there are a lot of employees who also have a county vehicle. Although the vehicles are not considered a part of their earnings, the county vehicle saves them money (gas, vehicle upkeep, a car payment, taxes, insurances, etc.). Mrs. Godbold felt that having a county vehicle is a part of compensation and would buy time to not increase taxes. She stated that there are places to cut expenses, and this would also give economic development time to bring in industries to create revenue versus raising taxes to get revenue. Mrs. Godbold felt that a 3% raise across the board for everybody, regardless of performance, was like a participation trophy. A raise should be tied to something. She was trying to be creative and find a better approach.

Mr. Hudson asked whether the \$2 million was set aside for natural disasters.

Mr. Flowers commented that the county maintains a surplus of funds in case there is a natural disaster.

Mr. Stewart pointed out that the 35% Fund Balance minimum was part of the Unassigned Fund Balance.

In reference to Hartsville Fire Protection District Fund and other funds listed in the proposed budget, Mrs. Godbold wanted to know whether the City of Darlington Fire Department has a contract and receives funds.

Mr. Stewart responded that County Council had not established another fund similar to the Hartsville Fire Protection District Fund.

Ms. Thomas asked whether the Fund Balance was cash on hand and available to spend.

Mr. Stewart said not necessarily. The Fund Balance is the total of assets after all restrictions and liabilities are removed. He explained that the county Fund Balance had \$27 million of unassigned funds that would be used to pay for the courthouse construction. The balance would be approximately the 35% minimum required Fund Balance.

Mr. Flowers explained that during the Request/Comments portion of the meeting, Council members can request a meeting to work on the budget. Any changes within the budget would require a majority vote of Council. This would give the staff time to adjust the numbers as the motions are made.

Mr. Flowers called for the vote to approve second reading of Ordinance No. 22-07. Those voting in favor of the motion were Mr. Coker, Mr. Douglas, Mr. Hudson, and Mr. Flowers. Those opposing were Mr. Davis, Ms. Thomas, Mr. Askins, and Mrs. Godbold.

There being a tie vote, the motion failed. Council will start over with first reading of the budget at its next meeting.

Resolutions

Resolution No. 742, Fair Housing Resolution, April 2022

MOTION made by Mr. Hudson and seconded by Mr. Douglas to approve Resolution No. 742 designating April 2022 as Fair Housing Month.

The motion carried unanimously.

Resolution No. 743, Proclamation For Emergency Medical Services Week, May 15-21, 2022

MOTION made by Mr. Hudson and seconded by Mr. Douglas to approve Resolution No. 743 proclaiming Emergency Medical Services Week, May 15-21, 2022.

The motion carried unanimously.

Committee Reports

There were no committee reports.

Other Items

Appointments To Boards/Commissions/Committees Due To Vacancies & Term Expirations As Of June 30, 2022

Mr. Douglas' Appointments. **MOTION** made by Mr. Douglas and seconded by Mr. Davis to reappoint Mr. Chris Blackmon to the Airport Commission, Mr. Jimmy Dixon to the Board of Assessment Appeals, and Ms. J. Gail Gandy to the Library Board.

The motion carried unanimously.

Ms. Thomas' Appointments. **MOTION** made by Ms. Thomas and seconded by Mr. Hudson to reappoint Mr. Franklin Jordan to the Parks and Recreation Commission.

The motion carried unanimously.

Mr. Askins' Appointments. **MOTION** made by Mr. Askins and seconded by Mr. Davis to reappoint Mr. Samuel Phillips to the Construction Board of Adjustment & Appeals and Ms. Belinda Copeland to the Parks and Recreation Commission. He previously appointed Mr. Clay Parker to the Alcohol and Drug Citizen Advisory Committee.

The motion carried unanimously.

FY22/23 Accommodations Tax Funding Recommendations & Budget Of Planned Expenditures For 30% Special Funds

MOTION made by Mr. Coker and seconded by Mr. Hudson to approve the Accommodations Tax Advisory Committee's funding recommendations as presented.

MOTION made by Mr. Davis and seconded by Mrs. Godbold to amend the motion to change all the Accommodations Tax funding recommendations.

Mr. Coker stated that Council appointed a committee to look at the requirements, evaluate each application, and come up with numbers. If Council changes too much of this, Council will not be able to get good committee members. He would not want to be on a committee that is never listened to. Mr. Coker recommended that Council accept the Committee's funding recommendations.

Mr. Askins explained that he watched the live stream of the Accommodations Tax Advisory Committee meeting, read the restrictions on how the money should be applied, and heard the Committee members' thought process. He said the Committee thought this through very well and made a push for the activities that place "heads in beds." He commended the Committee and did not want to second guess the recommendations. Mr. Askins said Council appointed a Committee so that Council would not have to hash out all of this at a Council meeting. He agreed with Mr. Coker to leave the recommendations as presented.

Mr. Davis said he wanted to change all the funding recommendations because only \$500 was recommended for Lamar and Society Hill. He said these hometowns had been having festivals for many years and just came out of the pandemic, and there are new activities that were recommended to receive thousands of dollars. He suggested that funding be equal across the board. Mr. Davis said the Committee did an excellent job. However, these were recommendations, and Council, as a body, can change the recommendations.

Ms. Thomas commented that the dollar amounts did not align.

Mr. Coker again emphasized that the Committee members went through each application and presented their case for what they thought each applicant should get. The members evaluated the applications based on the requirements and assigned what they thought was the appropriate percentage of the total amount of money available. He was comfortable with the Committee's funding recommendations.

Mr. Douglas stated that he was not comfortable with the recommendations.

Mr. Flowers stated that according to the rules for appointing Committee members, the Committee is set up against the smaller towns because Lamar and Society Hill do not have hotels. He felt that the Committee is heavy towards Darlington and Hartsville. Mr. Flowers asked whether Council could leave the recommendations as presented and through a second action of Council, make up the difference using hospitality tax funds since the festivals in Lamar and Society Hill generates hospitality tax and not necessarily accommodations tax.

Mr. Stewart replied that the county could fund the towns for the festivals using hospitality tax. Hospitality tax has very strict rules. According to state laws, hospitality tax cannot be given directly to festivals. However, if the towns of Lamar and Society Hill have a project that would qualify, Council could fund them, and they could give the money to the festivals. The county would have to make sure that the funds are appropriated for a purpose listed in state laws.

Mrs. Godbold asked about the SC Junior Golf Foundation/Players Championship.

Mr. Coker responded that this event is held in Hartsville with about 150 junior golfers from all over the state. This event is the end of the season championship and books all the hotel rooms in Hartsville that weekend.

Mrs. Godbold also asked about New Vision Community Development Corporation/Community Rice Festival.

Mr. Davis responded that this event is held in Society Hill.

Mr. Flowers called for the vote to amend the funding recommendations. A yes vote would open the document to make changes to the funding recommendations. A no vote would approve the recommendations as presented.

Those voting in favor of the motion were Mr. Davis, Mr. Douglas, Mr. Flowers, Godbold, and Ms. Thomas. Those opposing were Mr. Askins, Mr. Coker, and Chairman Hudson.

The motion carried to change the Accommodations Tax funding recommendations.

Mr. Douglas stated that Society Hill and Lamar should have received more than \$500 when one applicant received \$20,000 and another received \$7,000. He asked that the recommendations be fair.

Mr. Hudson asked about giving hospitality tax to Lamar and Society Hill.

Mr. Stewart explained that the towns would have to present something that would qualify for hospitality tax funds. This would require the towns to agree that Council would give them something for hospitality tax and then they would give the funds for something that they were going to pay for anyway, as a replacement for them to pass on. He pointed out that hospitality tax has stricter use than accommodations tax.

Mr. Flowers said the largest amount of funds were recommended for Hartsville Community Center Building Commission/Hartsville Center Theater. He asked whether this applicant was in line to apply for hospitality tax for certain projects such as infrastructure, changes to the building, etc.

Mr. Stewart responded that Hartsville Center Theater would be in line to apply for hospitality tax funds for facilities for cultural recreation through the county and the City of Hartsville.

MOTION made by Mr. Flowers and seconded by Mr. Davis reduce the recommended funding amount for Hartsville Community Center Building Commission/Hartsville Center from \$20,000 to \$16,000 and divide the \$4,000 between Society Hill Catfish Festival and Lamar Egg Scramble Festival (\$2,000 each).

Mr. Davis clarified that he wanted to change all the figures although the Committee had done an excellent job. He mentioned that we were coming out of the pandemic and the Terrence Carraway Foundation may need more than \$500 to further its agenda. He also stated that some applicants were recommended to receive thousands of dollars while others would receive only several hundred dollars.

Mr. Flowers explained that Council was at a point to make changes and vote on the changes one at a time or Mr. Coker could withdraw his motion to approve and then move to carry over this item to a later date to have more time to review.

Mr. Davis suggested that instead of having another meeting, each Council member could email their funding recommendations to the Clerk to Council for her to distribute to the body via email.

Mr. Coker pointed out that everyone's recommendation would be different. He asked why have a committee go through the process of looking at each application to disperse \$50,000 appropriately if Council was going to do this.

Mr. Flowers called for the vote on the motion to reduce the funding for Hartsville Community Center Building Commission/Hartsville Center from \$20,000 to \$16,000 and divide the \$4,000 between Society Hill Catfish Festival and Lamar Egg Scramble Festival (\$2,000 each).

The motion failed unanimously.

Mr. Coker withdrew his motion to approve the Accommodations Tax Advisory Committee's funding recommendations as presented.

MOTION made by Mr. Coker and seconded by Mr. Davis to carry over the accommodations tax recommendations. Those voting in favor of the motion were Mr. Coker, Ms. Thomas, Mr. Davis, Mrs. Godbold Mr. Douglas. Opposing were Mr. Hudson, Mr. Askins, and Mr. Flowers.

The motion carried. A date will be established for a worksession to take this as an action item.

Transfer Of Currently Approved Ambulance Remount From Select Custom Apparatus To Southeastern Specialty Vehicles For Ambulance Remount

MOTION made by Mr. Coker and seconded by Mr. Davis to approve the request to transfer the purchase order for the currently approved ambulance remount from Select Custom Apparatus to Southeastern Specialty vehicle, as well as the additional funds (\$4,747.02) needed for the purchase.

Mrs. Godbold asked whether this had been done because of the date listed on the invoice that was included in the agenda package.

Mr. Stewart confirmed that this has not been done and a purchase order had not been issued.

The motion carried unanimously.

Request To Replace Engine in Truck For Environmental Services

MOTION made by Mr. Hudson and seconded by Mr. Douglas to approve the request to replace the engine in the 2013 Mack roll-off truck for Environmental Services for \$58,720.

Mrs. Godbold asked whether this was the only truck in the fleet, whether the county shop had worked on the truck, and whether there were other bids.

Mr. Stewart responded that this was not the only truck in the fleet, but a necessary truck. The county does not have extra roll-off trucks to maintain the volume of the 13 sites. The county shop tried to work on this truck in the past. However, this was a complete engine replacement. Mr. Stewart also reported that the bid was from Mack since this was a Mack

truck. He confirmed with Finance Director Sherman Dibble that the county procurement ordinance did not require three bids.

Finance Director Sherman Dibble stated that the county also looked at purchasing a new truck but went back to the idea of having the engine replaced. This was a Mack truck and there was a local Mack dealer.

It was Mr. Stewart's understanding that the county was not required to obtain an additional bid.

Mr. Dibble stated that this was their (Mack) engine and their truck. The county was going back with the same vendor to put their engine in their truck, and this was the only local Mack dealer.

Mr. Douglas asked about the cost of a new truck.

Mr. Stewart reported that a truck that would possibly work was found in Texas for \$175,000 a month ago. However, the new bids were \$250,000 or higher with a wait time. Therefore, the most fiscally responsible and quickest way to get the truck back in the fleet would be to replace the engine in the truck since it is a 2013 model and a larger truck.

Mrs. Godbold wanted to know how it is determined when the county will go with only one bid.

Mr. Stewart stated that this is determined according to the Procurement Code, and the procurement staff goes through the process with the department.

Mr. Dibble added that this matter involved a Mack truck and a Mack truck engine.

The motion carried unanimously.

Robert L. Grooms Fire Alarm System Upgrade, \$98,203

MOTION made by Mr. Hudson and seconded by Mr. Douglas to award the bid for \$98,203 to Safeway Signaling to upgrade the fire alarm system in the Robert L. Grooms Building.

The motion carried unanimously.

Administrative Update – Mr. Charles Stewart, County Administrator

Monthly Financial Statement. A copy of the monthly financial report for April was placed at Council's desk. This report will be included in the agenda package going forward.

Employees' Appreciation. Council also received a sample of the appreciation card that will be distributed to employees on Wednesday, May 4th, in recognition of the annual Employee Appreciation. The card includes a thank you note from County Council, a \$25 gift card, and an insert for employee service recognition.

SCAC Annual Conference/Meeting. Council members received a copy of their registrations to attend the South Carolina Association of Counties Annual Conference and Institute of Government classes.

Countywide Watershed Study. Individuals who spoke during the Citizens' Comments segment of the Council meeting received a copy of the information regarding the public

meetings for the countywide watershed study. Mr. Stewart presented the dates and locations of the four public meetings where the staff and engineers will be present to accept information and later present proposals on ways to move forward.

Courthouse Construction Update. Mr. Stewart reported that the cement for the second-floor slab had been poured. Everything was on schedule.

Historical Commission Building Construction. The addition to the Historical Commission building was also underway.

Requests / Comments - Members Of Council

Ms. Thomas mentioned that Williams Drives, located off Timmonsville Highway, was not listed in the Beaver Program Report.

Mr. Stewart said this complaint was called in by Roads and Bridges Director Bobby Richardson. No beavers were found in the ditch. However, yard debris and tree debris had been dumped in the ditch. Since this is a private ditch, the property owners should clean it out. Mr. Stewart will verify and send an email to Ms. Thomas.

Ms. Thomas asked about people on Brown Street and Patience Street being annexed out of the City of Darlington.

Mr. Stewart stated that this would have been an action of the City of Darlington, but he will find out whether people were moved.

Mr. Hudson stated that he was leaving the Council meeting to attend visitation services for the late Mike Lloyd, the former Fire Chief of Lamar. Mr. Hudson left the meeting at 7:13 p.m.

Mrs. Godbold mentioned that this was National Correctional Officers' Week, and she had toured the Detention Center. She extended her appreciation to Correctional Officers. She also reminded everyone of the upcoming Memorial Day holiday and Mother's Day. Mrs. Godbold stated that Council members received the county's Job Classification Plan that lists all the grades and job titles. She noticed that the Classification Plan included a job title for IT Manager.

Mr. Stewart responded that the county had an IT Manager at one time.

Mrs. Godbold said she previously inquired about the county's IT service contract and found out that the county does not have a contract for IT services which is risky in today's environment. She feels that this is something that the county might want to look into.

Mrs. Godbold then asked about the EMS base being overnight.

Mr. Stewart talked about one 12-hour truck that goes to the Jetport during the day and the others being 24 hours, and all stations do not have sleeping quarters.

Mrs. Godbold reported that a fire truck from Swift Creek arrived at a fire on/near Wire Road without water. She wanted to know more about when the stations are manned.

Mr. Stewart talked about the staff working in zones, responses to standard house fires, which station responds, etc. He also stated that he would have to look at the map and

find out what the situation was at the time of the fire on/near Wire Road. Nevertheless, the county does not have staff who sleep in each station or on duty all the time.

Mr. Askins recognized the employees for their years of service and commended Mr. Andrew Smith for 55 years of service with the county.

Ms. Thomas expressed appreciation for the countywide flood study and hopes that it will accomplish solutions to major problems. She also thanked the staff for the calendar of events.

Mr. Douglas commended the countywide watershed study meeting held on April 28th. He hopes that people will attend the public meetings and stop arguing about drainage problems.

Mr. Davis thanked the citizens and employees for their hard work. He stated that he requested a 5% raise to take care of and retain current county employees. He also commended law enforcement. Mr. Davis expressed appreciation for the work of the Accommodations Tax Advisory Committee. However, he did not want to overlook the small events and those trying to do something.

Mr. Coker stated that he rescinded his motion because he felt that it was not going to pass, and Council needed to talk about it. He felt strongly that the Accommodations Tax Advisory Committee members did their due diligence and some of the other activities could be funded using other monies. It was his understanding that accommodations tax is generated by "heads and beds." The committee compiled their recommendations by looking at each application and recommended funds accordingly. He would still go with the Committee's recommendations but would accept small changes. However, he did not want to redo everything. Mr. Coker stated that other monies could be used to help the small festivals.

Council Worksession. Mr. Flowers stated that it appears to be Council's wish to have a working workshop where action items are taken on the budget and Accommodations Tax proposals. There will be binding actions of Council during this worksession. Anything that is changed would require a majority vote. He requested a date and time for the workshop.

Mr. Stewart clarified that since the budget has gone back to first reading, this could be a worksession where Council will take a vote on what the staff needs to change. Then the proposal will be presented for first reading.

After suggesting possible dates and times, a **MOTION** was made by Mr. Flowers and seconded by Mr. Davis to schedule a Worksession for the budget and accommodations tax funding on Thursday, May 12th, at 9 a.m.

The motion carried unanimously. The staff will confirm the location.

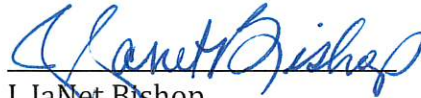
Executive Session

There was not a vote for executive session.

Adjournment

MOTION made by Mr. Davis and seconded by Ms. Thomas to adjourn the meeting. There being no further comments, the meeting was adjourned at 7:28 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,



J. Janet Bishop
Clerk to Council



Bobby Hudson, Chairman
Darlington County Council

Approved at meeting of June Le, 2022.