

JOINT MEETING OF DARLINGTON COUNTY'S
MUNICIPAL COUNCILS, COUNTY COUNCIL,
BOARD OF EDUCATION, & LEGISLATIVE DELEGATION
DARLINGTON, SOUTH CAROLINA

April 29, 2024

The City of Darlington hosted a joint meeting of Darlington County's Municipal Councils, County Council, Board of Education, and Legislative Delegation on January 29, 2024, at 6 p.m., at The Grand Old Post Office, 201 Peal Street in Darlington, South Carolina, to share information regarding matters of interest/concern to the units of government within Darlington County.

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 posted on the county's website and the bulletin board in the lobby of the courthouse and emailed to Darlington County's Municipal Managers/Clerks, Darlington County School District Superintendent, Darlington County Legislative Delegation, Darlington County Council, and the local newspapers.

COUNTY COUNCIL MEMBERS PRESENT

Chairman Bobby Hudson, Vice Chairman Marvin Le Flowers, Chaplain Dannie Douglas, Jr., and Mrs. Joyce W. Thomas.

COUNTY COUNCIL MEMBERS ABSENT

Mr. Michael Kirk Askins, Mr. David Coker, Mr. Albert Davis, III, and Mrs. Angie Stone Godbold.

ALSO PRESENT

Darlington County Clerk to Council J. JaNet Bishop; Town of Lamar Council Members Inez Lee, Tyler Cook, and Mary Ann Mack; Town of Lamar Mayor James Howell; Town of Lamar Manager Tim Dargan; City of Darlington Council Members Angela McRavin, Shelia Baccus, John Milling, and Elaine Reed; City of Darlington Interim Administrator Bill Taylor; City of Darlington Clerk/Treasurer Gloria Pridgen; City of Hartsville Council Members Kenzie DeLaine, Bryson S. Caldwell, and Teresa Mack; City of Hartsville Mayor Casey Hancock; City of Hartsville Manager Daniel Moore; City of Hartsville Clerk Andrea Crenshaw; City of Hartsville Staff Sherron Skipper; Town of Society Hill Council Members Denise Douglas and Melissa Burch; Darlington County Board Of Education Members Lucas Reed, Audrey Gore, Charles Govan, Wanda Hassler, Warren Jeffords, Jamie Morphis, and Amanda Thompsen; and Municipal Association of South Carolina Field Service Manager Charlie Barrineau.

REPORTERS PRESENT

Mr. Stephen Drew of the News and Press.

Welcome / Invocation

Lamar Town Manager Timothy Dargan called the meeting to order at 6:10 p.m., Lamar Mayor James Howell presented the welcome, and Lamar Town Councilwoman Inez Lee presented the invocation.

Presentation - Mr. Charlie Barrineau, Field Service Manager, Municipal Association of South Carolina (MASC)

Mr. Charlie Barrineau, former Greenwood City Manager and currently one of three Municipal Association of South Carolina Field Managers, reported that the Municipal Association of South Carolina provides services, programs, and tools to municipal officials in 271 incorporated municipalities to enable the most efficient and effective operation of their municipalities. The Municipal Association of South Carolina is an advocate for municipalities, and as a Field Service Manager, Mr. Barrineau serves approximately 90 municipalities in this area.

Mr. Barrineau briefly talked about the Municipal Association of South Carolina's pledge to work on restoring civility in government, which would enable citizens to work together constructively although there may be differences of opinion. During his 25-year career in local government, he has found that working together is key, and when working with angry people, it takes time, patience, tolerance, and respect. He thanked everyone for their service in local government and their commitment to their community and urged leaders to not fall into the trap of social media, especially during campaign season.

This summer, the Municipal Association of South Carolina will host their annual meeting and a meeting for municipalities that have a population of 3,000 or less.

In response to a question about whether insurance rates will increase for municipalities, Mr. Barrineau responded that liability and health insurance premiums/rates were increasing everywhere. He talked about becoming involved in risk management to help control rates. Realizing that many entities are understaffed, he emphasized that entities need to adhere to strict hiring principles to hire good people and not rush hiring to simply fill a position.

Discussion - An opportunity to share and discuss information regarding matters of interest/concern to the units of government within Darlington County

Hartsville Mayor Casey Hancock announced that Neptune Island Waterpark in Hartsville will be opening on May 18th for the 2024 summer season. He also mentioned that the South Carolina Supreme Court was holding "Reach Out" sessions in Hartsville at Coker University. Two cases were heard today, and two cases will be heard tomorrow, April 30th. Everyone was invited to attend. It was also announced that in conjunction with the South Carolina Supreme Court sessions, mobile offices are located at Senator Gerald Malloy's Law Firm providing free legal services to citizens.

Darlington County Councilman Le Flowers talked about the upcoming NASCAR race that will double the county's population and place the county on a national stage. He also talked about how emergency and law enforcement personnel from the cities and other agencies will come together to assist with this event.

Board of Education Chairwoman Wanda Hassler announced the school district's upcoming graduations, and that the construction of the new Darlington area elementary school is on schedule to open Fall of 2025.

Darlington County Council Chairman Bobby Chairman Hudson announced the Grand Opening of Darlington County Historical Commission & Museum's new addition scheduled for May 18th and that the opening of the new Courthouse about two weeks later.

In response to a question as to whether anyone was doing anything for solar power to buildings, Hartsville Mayor Casey Hancock mentioned that a company was working with Coker University and the City of Hartsville had looked at sustainable power for several public works buildings. Sonoco Products was also working with Duke Energy Progress.

Hartsville Councilwoman Teresa Mack reported that the State of South Carolina did not elect to continue the federal program to provide families with financial assistance for internet services. Therefore, such financial assistance was ending for many county residents. From this discussion, it was mentioned that the current internet provider in the county was changing and there will be an additional provider from Charleston which will make internet service more competitive in the county.

In response to how the elimination of federal assistance to families for internet services will affect students, it was noted that the school district does not have many eLearning days. Also, if a problem with student access to broadband services arises, the school district will address it just as it did during the pandemic.


Adjournment

There being no further comments, Lamar Town Manager Timothy Dargan thanked everyone for attending the meeting. The meeting was adjourned at 6:53 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,



J. Janet Bishop, Clerk to Council



Bobby Hudson, Chairman
Darlington County Council

Approved at meeting of June 3, 2024.