

PUBLIC HEARING & REGULAR MEETING
DARLINGTON COUNTY COUNCIL
DARLINGTON, SC

May 6, 2024

A Public Hearing and Regular Meeting of the County Council of Darlington County was held this 6th day of May 2024, 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 and on the bulletin board in the lobby of the courthouse.

NOTICE OF PUBLIC HEARING

A Notice of Public Hearing for Ordinance No. 24-03, Ordinance No. 24-04, Ordinance No. 24-06, Ordinance No. 24-07, Ordinance No. 24-08, and Ordinance No. 24-10 was published in the News and Press and the Hartsville Messenger on April 3, 2024. Ordinance No. 24-09 was published in the News and Press and the Hartsville Messenger on April 17, 2024.

COUNCIL MEMBERS PRESENT

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

COUNCIL MEMBERS ABSENT

Chairman Bobby Hudson.

ALSO PRESENT

County Administrator Marion Charles Stewart, III, County Attorney James H. Lucas, Attorney Adam Gainey, Clerk to Council J. JaNet Bishop, Central Communications Director Michelle Hall, Codes Enforcement Director Terri Cribb, Emergency Management Director Molly Odom, Emergency Services Director Kenny Bowen, Finance Director Sherman Dibble, Human Resources Director Ginger Winburn, Library Director Jimmie Epling, Sheriff James Hudson, Darlington City Mayor Curtis Boyd, and others.

REPORTERS PRESENT

TV15 News.

PUBLIC HEARINGS

Ordinance No. 24-03, An Ordinance Authorizing Pursuant To Chapter 44 Of Title 12, South Carolina Code Of Laws, 1976, As Amended: (1) The Execution And Delivery Of A Fee-In-Lieu

Of Ad Valorem Taxes Agreement Between Darlington County, South Carolina And Cedar Creek Solar LLC, A Company Previously Identified As Project Tree, Acting For Itself, One Or More Affiliates, And/Or Other Project Sponsors; (2) Other Related Economic Development Incentives, Including Special Source Revenue Credits; And (3) Other Matters Related Thereto - THIRD READING

Mr. Flowers declared the public hearing open at 6 p.m. to receive comments on Ordinance No. 24-03. There being no comments, the public hearing was closed.

Ordinance No. 24-04, An Ordinance Authorizing The Enlargement Of The Joint County Industrial Park Between Darlington County, South Carolina And Florence County, South Carolina; And Other Matters Related Thereto (Project Tree/Cedar Creek Solar, LLC) - THIRD READING

Mr. Flowers declared the public hearing open to receive comments on Ordinance No. 24-04. There being no comments, the public hearing was closed.

Ordinance No. 24-06, 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 Fremont Solar, LLC, A Project Formerly Known To The County As Project Pathfinder, 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. 24-06. There being no comments, the public hearing was closed.

Ordinance No. 24-07, An Ordinance Authorizing The Enlargement Of The Joint County Industrial Park Between Darlington County, South Carolina And Florence County, South Carolina; And Other Matters Related Thereto (Project Pathfinder/Fremont Solar, LLC) - THIRD READING

Mr. Flowers declared the public hearing open to receive comments on Ordinance No. 24-07. There being no comments, the public hearing was closed.

Ordinance No. 24-08, An Ordinance To Amend Darlington County Code Of Ordinances, Chapter 2 (Administration), Article IV. (Boards, Commissions, And Committees), Section 2-201 (Membership) To Clarify The Definition Of Membership For Appointments By County Council To A Board, Commission, Or Committee Enumerated In Section 2-204; And Division 5 (Economic Development Partnership Board) To Restructure The Economic Development Partnership Board; And Establish The Effective Date Of This Ordinance - SECOND READING

Mr. Flowers declared the public hearing open to receive comments on Ordinance No. 24-08. There being no comments, the public hearing was closed.

Ordinance No. 24-09, An Ordinance To Make Appropriations For Ordinary County Purposes For Darlington County For The Fiscal Year Beginning July 1, 2024, And Ending June 30, 2025;

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. 24-09. There being no comments, the public hearing was closed.

Ordinance No. 24-10, 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, 2024, And Ending June 30, 2025 - SECOND READING

Mr. Flowers declared the public hearing open to receive comments on Ordinance No. 24-10. 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 Ms. Thomas led the Pledge of Allegiance.

Citizens' Comments

Ms. Reagen Roberts, who resides in Mr. Flowers' council district, talked about the lack of commitment to animal welfare in Darlington County. She presented information about the condition of several neglected dogs/puppies that were taken in at the Animal Shelter during the last four weeks. She briefly talked about the use of social media to adopt animals.

Mr. Timothy Weaver, who also resides in Mr. Flowers' council district, stated that he does not understand the concern about criminalizing something when the South Carolina Code of Laws already criminalizes animal neglect. He mentioned that the state statute is a broad statute that criminalizes the mistreatment of animals. Therefore, the county needs to figure out how best to enforce the laws.

Dr. Joshua Witten, Chairman of Darlington County Humane Society Board, stated that while many of the Humane Society's interactions with the county focus on the Animal Shelter, the Darlington County Humane Society's mission extends beyond the shelter. The Humane Society is committed to making Darlington County the best place it can be to live, raise families, and do business. Their approach to animal care and control is not only an issue of animal welfare, but public health, public safety, quality of life, and public image. He has listened to the concerns about the current ordinance and proposed changes and heard from community advocates and county civil servants expressing a shared desire to engage in collaborative discussions for a stronger and more enforceable animal ordinance. The Humane Society's official position on this issue is for local and state officials to enact stronger

and more enforceable ordinances to protect the health and safety of animals and citizens. The Humane Society stands ready to assist elected officials in any way possible. As a way to assist elected officials, Dr. Witten invited individuals from the county who are responsible for implementing these ordinances to join them in a discussion about approaches to stronger and more enforceable ordinances that address the concerns of the stakeholders. He indicated that he will follow up with County Administrator Charles Stewart to invite County Administration, the Sheriff's Office, and Codes Enforcement to meet for this discussion which he hopes will resolve intangible recommendations that will enjoy the broad support of County Council.

Ms. Lucinda Hubbs, a volunteer and representative of the Humane Society, talked about animal welfare and the Humane Society's schedule for orientation and adoptions. She also reported that they are working to get their foster dogs adopted so that they can ask for help to temporarily house weak/frail dogs that they have been receiving at such a fast rate. Ms. Hubbs also talked about being frustrated because circumstances have allowed for the maltreatment of animals in the county. She said a recommendation to do better is not enough. She will continue to appear before County Council regarding this matter because she believes in the animal rescue work in the county and is hopeful for a better and more humane Darlington for this and the next generation. They are ready to talk about solutions and will be looking to County Council to make changes when the opportunity presents itself again.

Personal Appearances

There were no Personal Appearances.

Consent Agenda (Receive As Information)

Included in the Consent Agenda were the following:

- 6.A. Darlington County Transportation Committee (DCTC) February Meeting Minutes & March Agenda
- 6.B. Beaver Management Program Report, March 2024
- 6.C. Darlington County Humane Society Animal Shelter Quarterly Report, January - March 2024
- 6.D. Darlington County Parks, Recreation, and Tourism Activities, May 2024
- 6.E. Darlington County Fire District Monthly Call Volume, April 2024
- 6.F. E-911 Call Statistics, March 2024
- 6.G. Financial Report Through March 31, 2024

MOTION made by Mr. Coker and seconded by Mr. Davis to receive the Consent Agenda items as information.

The motion carried unanimously.

Amendment To The Agenda To Bring Forth Administrative Update.

MOTION made by Mr. Coker and seconded by Mr. Davis to amend the agenda to bring forth Administrative Update.

The motion carried unanimously.

Administrative Update – Mr. Charles Stewart, County Administrator

Darlington County Museum & Courthouse Construction. Mr. Stewart announced the Grand Opening of the Darlington County Museum on May 18, 2024, at 10 a.m. Each Council member received an invitation at his/her desk. Mr. Stewart also reported that the construction of the new courthouse was almost complete except for a few items.

Administrative Update – Darlington City Mayor Curtis Boyd

LED Display Sign On The Square At The Current Courthouse. Mr. Stewart reported that there had been numerous discussions about replacing the old electronic sign at the current courthouse on Public Square. The City of Darlington has a proposal to present regarding a cooperative effort which Darlington Mayor Curtis Boyd will present. Mr. Stewart stated that he supports the proposal if County Council wishes to do it. Each Council member was given pictures of the proposed sign.

Darlington City Mayor Curtis Boyd reported that the current sign on the Square (labeled “D” in the handout) has been inoperable for a long time. He has been pushing to get a digital sign in town to post information that may not be seen in the newspapers or on social media. Since almost everyone goes to the Square at some time, the City of Darlington was proposing to replace the current sign with a 3-foot by 6-foot sign as shown in pictures labeled “A,” “B,” and “C” in a handout he provided. With each sign design, the current letters and the county seal on the wall will have to be rearranged above the digital sign. The cost of the proposed sign is \$21,000. The City was proposing to pay the \$21,000 and once the sign is installed, the county would reimburse the City one-half of the cost of the sign (\$10,500). The City’s staff (Hunter Thomas) will maintain the information on the sign. The only information displayed on the sign will be information about/from the City and County. There will be no advertisements for businesses. The City will maintain the sign which comes with a 5-year parts and labor warranty. All the county has to do is designate someone to call the City with county information to display on the sign.

Mr. Stewart stated that if Council would like to do this project, Council would have to amend the current budget to add \$10,500 under Courthouse Capital Improvements and the funds will be transferred. The City will make the purchase using its procurement rules and responsibilities, and the County will pay \$10,500 to the City for capital equipment installed on the courthouse grounds.

Ms. Thomas expressed her excitement about being able to see information on the sign as to what the county is doing.

Mayor Boyd commended the cooperative efforts of the City and the County.

Mr. Askins asked whether the City had received more than one bid for the sign.

Mayor Boyd confirmed that the City did receive more than one bid. He only brought the winning bid. The City will vote on this matter tomorrow (May 7th). Then it will take about a month for the sign to come in. He will need to know which option the County would like regarding how the letters and county seal will be arranged above/around the sign.

Mr. Stewart stated that if approved, the funds would become available in the budget on July 1st.

Approval Of Minutes – Minutes Of The Regular Meeting Held On April 1, 2024, And Minutes Of Budget Work session Held On April 10, 2024

MOTION made by Mr. Douglas and seconded by Mr. Coker to approve the minutes of the regular meeting held on April 1, 2024, and the minutes of the Budget Worksession held on April 10, 2024.

The motion carried unanimously.

Ordinances

Ordinance No. 24-03, An Ordinance Authorizing Pursuant To Chapter 44 Of Title 12, South Carolina Code Of Laws, 1976, As Amended: (1) The Execution And Delivery Of A Fee-In-Lieu Of Ad Valorem Taxes Agreement Between Darlington County, South Carolina And Cedar Creek Solar LLC, A Company Previously Identified As Project Tree, Acting For Itself, One Or More Affiliates, And/Or Other Project Sponsors; (2) Other Related Economic Development Incentives, Including Special Source Revenue Credits; And (3) Other Matters Related Thereto - THIRD READING

MOTION made by Ms. Godbold and seconded by Mr. Askins to approve third reading of Ordinance No. 24-03.

The motion carried unanimously.

Ordinance No. 24-04, An Ordinance Authorizing The Enlargement Of The Joint County Industrial Park Between Darlington County, South Carolina And Florence County, South Carolina; And Other Matters Related Thereto (Project Tree/Cedar Creek Solar, LLC) - THIRD READING

MOTION made by Mr. Askins and seconded by Ms. Godbold to approve third reading of Ordinance No. 24-04.

The motion carried unanimously.

Ordinance No. 24-06, 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 Fremont Solar, LLC, A Project Formerly Known To The County As Project Pathfinder, 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

MOTION made by Ms. Thomas and seconded by Ms. Godbold to approve third reading of Ordinance NO. 24-06.

The motion carried unanimously.

Ordinance No. 24-07, An Ordinance Authorizing The Enlargement Of The Joint County Industrial Park Between Darlington County, South Carolina And Florence County, South

Carolina; And Other Matters Related Thereto (Project Pathfinder/Fremont Solar, LLC) -
THIRD READING

MOTION made by Mr. Coker and seconded by Mr. Davis to approve third reading of Ordinance No. 24-07

The motion carried unanimously.

Ordinance No. 24-08, An Ordinance To Amend Darlington County Code Of Ordinances, Chapter 2 (Administration), Article IV. (Boards, Commissions, And Committees), Section 2-201 (Membership) To Clarify The Definition Of Membership For Appointments By County Council To A Board, Commission, Or Committee Enumerated In Section 2-204; And Division 5 (Economic Development Partnership Board) To Restructure The Economic Development Partnership Board; And Establish The Effective Date Of This Ordinance - SECOND READING

MOTION made by Mr. Davis and seconded by Mr. Coker to approve second reading of Ordinance No. 24-08.

Mrs. Godbold explained that she felt that the proposed changes would restructure the Economic Development Partnership Board such that there would be zero transparency and zero accountability. She did not understand why it would be necessary to remove some of the sections from the current ordinance.

Mr. Stewart respectfully disagreed with Mrs. Godbold's comments. He stated that the proposed changes were presented to Darlington County Progress Board (the private board of industries and businesses), Darlington County Economic Development, and Darlington County Economic Development Partnership Board (the board that the changes will primarily affect), and they voted unanimously to approve the changes. He explained that the Economic Development Partnership Board has operated for about two decades based on the way the changes are written. This Board has never operated the way the current ordinance is written. Mr. Stewart also indicated that a few of the changes were being proposed to make sure it is clear that if there are requirements in state law, such as with the Board of Assessment Appeals and the Planning Commission, the requirements for those boards and commissions are also required by the County. However, most of the changes will update the ordinance to the current operation of the Darlington County Economic Development Partnership Board.

Mr. Stewart also stated that he did not see how the proposed changes would stop transparency. However, the changes would stop some conflicts wherein the current ordinance talks about the budget going straight to county council while other ordinances state that the county administrator prepares the proposed budget and brings it forward for Council's consideration. The proposed changes would also clear up the matter to indicate that the Economic Development Partnership Board does not maintain its own financial system or accounting and that all their purchasing or recommendations involving county money are covered by the county's financing, purchasing, and procurement rules. The changes will clear things up to the way they operate. This was why the changes were placed before the Economic Development Partnership Board and Darlington Progress Board for review prior to being presented to County Council. It was noted that Councilman Davis was present at the meeting when the changes were reviewed by the Economic Development Partnership Board.

Mrs. Godbold referred to the sections in the current ordinance that would be deleted. She suggested that instead of deleting the sections, Mr. Stewart's comments be summarized in those sections.

Mr. Stewart explained that the sections being deleted were not necessary because they were already covered in the ordinances. The current sections are either in conflict or try to state something slightly different from what is already required for budgeting, procurement, use of funds, accounting of funds, etc. Procurement and contracting were already fully covered under Finance.

Mrs. Godbold pointed out Section 2-275(1) which states ... "Provide quarterly financial and economic development evaluation measures report to the county council...." She questioned why "quarterly financial" was being removed. However, she had never seen this report from this Board.

Mr. Stewart responded that Council receives a monthly financial report of all county activities which includes everything in Economic Development. Economic Development does not hold separate accounts or separate money.

Mrs. Godbold responded that the monthly reports that Council receives are not detailed, just totals, and she does not know what is included in the totals and does not want to ask the staff every time. Mrs. Godbold stated that it just looks bad to strike out "quarterly financials."

Mr. Stewart respectfully disagreed with Mrs. Godbold because County Council receives a monthly financial report already.

Mrs. Godbold pointed out the sections that would be deleted and the sections that would be modified. She felt that there would be no perimeters left.

Ms. Thomas asked whether the ordinance could be tabled.

Vice Chairman Flowers explained that it would be better to carry over the ordinance rather than table it.

Attorney Lucas explained the procedure to carry over the ordinance and to table the ordinance.

Mr. Davis **withdrew his motion** and Mr. Coker withdrew his second to motion to approve second reading of Ordinance No. 24-08.

MOTION made by Mrs. Godbold and seconded by Ms. Thomas to carry over second reading of Ordinance No. 24-08.

Mr. Coker questioned what would change in the ordinance.

Mr. Douglas pointed out that the ordinance would be the same if it is carried over.

Ms. Thomas commented that there would be time to research and do something.

Mr. Flowers called for the vote to carry over second reading of Ordinance No. 24-08. Those voting in favor of carrying over second reading of Ordinance No. 24-08 were Mrs. Godbold, Mr. Askins, Ms. Thomas, and Mr. Coker. Opposing were Mr. Douglas and Mr. Davis.

The motion carried to carry over second reading of Ordinance No. 24-08.

Attorney Lucas affirmed that Ordinance No. 24-08 would be on the next agenda in its current posture.

Ordinance No. 24-09, An Ordinance To Make Appropriations For Ordinary County Purposes For Darlington County For The Fiscal Year Beginning July 1, 2024, And Ending June 30, 2025; To Provide For The Expenditures Thereof; And To Provide For Revenues For The Payment Thereof - SECOND READING

MOTION made by Mr. Davis and seconded by Mr. Douglas to approve second reading of Ordinance No. 24-09.

Longevity Incentive Pay. **MOTION** made by Mr. Davis and seconded by Mr. Coker to amend the budget to add longevity incentive pay.

County's Payment For Electronic Sign. **MOTION** made by Mrs. Godbold and seconded by Mr. Coker to include \$10,500 in the budget to pay one-half the cost of the sign to the City of Darlington using design option "A" for the sign.

Mr. Flowers called for the vote to amend the budget to add \$10,500 to the budget to pay the City of Darlington one-half the cost for the LED electronic sign.

The motion carried unanimously.

Mr. Flowers called for the vote to amend the budget to include/add longevity and incentive pay as presented.

The motion carried unanimously.

Mr. Flowers called for the vote to approve second reading of Ordinance No. 24-09, as amended.

The motion carried unanimously.

Ordinance No. 24-10, 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, 2024, And Ending June 30, 2025 - SECOND READING

MOTION made by Mr. Coker and seconded by Mr. Davis to approve second reading of Ordinance No. 24-10.

The motion carried unanimously.

Ordinance No. 24-11, 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 Project Known To The County As Project Scout, 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 - FIRST READING - BY TITLE ONLY

The title of Ordinance No. 24-11 was read for first reading. No action required.

Ordinance No. 24-12, An Ordinance Authorizing The Enlargement Of The Joint County Industrial Park Between Darlington County, South Carolina And Florence County, South Carolina; And Other Matters Related Thereto. (Project Scout) - FIRST READING - BY TITLE ONLY

The title of Ordinance No. 24-12 was read for first reading. No action required.

Resolutions

Resolution No. 780, Proclamation For Emergency Medical Services Week, May 19-25, 2024

MOTION made by Mr. Coker and seconded by Mr. Douglas to approve Resolution No. 780 proclaiming the week of May 19-25, 2024, as Emergency Medical Services Week.

The motion carried unanimously.

Resolution No. 781, Identifying A Project To Satisfy The Requirements Of Title 12, Chapter 44 Of The South Carolina Code, So As To Allow Investment Expenditures Incurred By A Company Known To The County As Project Scout, Its Affiliates And Related Entities, To Qualify As Expenditures Eligible For A Fee-In-Lieu Of Ad Valorem Taxes Arrangement With Darlington County, South Carolina; Providing For Other Related Economic Development Incentives, Including Special Source Revenue Credits; And Other Matters Related Thereto

MOTION made by Mr. Douglas and seconded by Mr. Coker to approve Resolution No. 781 identifying Project Scout to satisfy the requirements for a Fee-In-Lieu-of-Ad Valorem Tax (FILOT) arrangement with the county.

The motion carried unanimously.

Committee Reports

There were no Committee Reports.

Other Items

Appointments To Boards/Commissions/Committees

Economic Development Partnership Board. **MOTION** made by Mr. Coker and seconded by Mrs. Godbold to appoint Mr. Howard Nettles to the Economic Development Partnership Board to replace Mr. Gregory Alexander.

The motion carried unanimously. Mr. Nettles' term will commence on July 1, 2024, and expire on June 30, 2028.

Historical Commission. Mr. Davis nominated Mrs. Caroly Govan for reappointment to the Historical Commission. The vote to reappoint Mrs. Carolyn Govan to the Historical Commission was unanimous.

Mrs. Govan's second term will commence on July 1, 2024, and expire on June 30, 2028.

Recreation Commission. Mr. Davis nominated Ms. Velda Mack for reappointment to the Recreation Commission. The vote was unanimous to reappoint Ms. Velda Mack to the Recreation Commission.

Ms. Mack's second term will commence on July 1, 2024, and expire on June 30, 2028.

Historical Commission. Mrs. Godbold nominated Ms. Sarah Fallaw for reappointment to the Historical Commission. The vote was unanimous to reappoint Ms. Sarah Fallaw to the Historical Commission.

Ms. Fallaw's first full term will commence on July 1, 2024, and expire on June 30, 2028.

Library Board. Mrs. Godbold nominated Ms. Carol Hill for reappointment to the Library Board. The vote was unanimous to reappoint Ms. Carol Hill to the Library Board.

Ms. Hill's first full term will commence on July 1, 2024, and expire on June 30, 2028.

Appointment To Pee Dee Workforce Development Board

MOTION made by Mr. Coker and seconded by Mr. Davis (member of South Carolina Education Association) to reappoint Ms. Bernell Evans to the Pee Dee Workforce Development Board as a Labor Organization representative as required by the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA).

The motion carried unanimously. Ms. Evans' fifth term will commence on July 1, 2024, and expire on June 30, 2027.

Bid Award For Lamar Baseball Field LED Lighting Upgrade

MOTION made by Mr. Askins and seconded by Mrs. Godbold to approve acceptance of the bid award from Ridgeway Electrical of Sumter, South Carolina, in the amount of \$85,200, to change forty-two 1500-watt metal Halide fixtures to new GEO Sport 630-Watt LED fixtures and replace two metal Halide fixtures that illuminate the parking area with new LED fixtures.

The motion carried unanimously.

Proposal To Digitize Probate Court Estate Files

MOTION made by Mr. Davis and seconded by Mr. Askins to approve acceptance of the proposal from All Pro Solutions, Inc. of Rock Hill, South Carolina, in the amount of \$27,967.50 per year, to scan four years of Probate Court estate files. The total amount after year four will be \$111,870 from the General Fund.

In response to Mr. Askins' request for additional information regarding this request, Mr. Stewart explained that a few years ago, another company began scanning old probate files to be digitized. However, the company failed to deliver as they were supposed to. Proposals were solicited and All Pro Solutions, Inc. is willing to do the work for less than the state contract vendor. Probate Court received recommendations from other probate judges who have used All Pro Solutions, Inc. to digitize their files. If approved, the funds will be worked into the budget and appear in a budget line item going forward.

The motion carried unanimously.

FY24/25 Accommodations Tax Funding Recommendations

MOTION made by Mr. Coker and seconded by Mrs. Godbold to accept the Accommodations Tax Advisory Committee's FY24/25 funding recommendations (below).

	REQUESTS	AVAILABLE FUNDS	COMMITTEE RECOMMEND
APPLICANTS / EVENTS			
30% Special Fund (\$16,800)			
1 Hartsville Chamber of Commerce	\$ 16,800	Available Funds ↓	\$ 10,000.00
2 Darlington Chamber of Commerce	\$ 16,800		\$ 6,800.00
Total Special Funds	\$ 33,600	\$ 16,800	\$ 16,800.00
65% Remaining Funds (\$55,000)			
Darlington Area - 37% = \$20,350			
1 Darlington Chamber of Commerce/Freedom Fest	\$ 7,000	Available Funds ↓	\$ 3,200.00
2 Darlington Downtown Revitalization/Buildup Dton Website	\$ 17,955		\$ 7,423.00
3 Grand Old Post Office Foundation/Concert Series	\$ 15,000		\$ 4,863.50
4 Southeastern Bluegrass Asso. Of SC/Monthly Concerts	\$ 12,000		\$ 4,863.50
Total for Darlington Area	\$ 51,955	\$ 20,350	\$ 20,350.00
Hartsville Area - 37% = \$20,350			
1 Butler Heritage Foundation/Butler Heritage Week	\$ 15,000	Available Funds ↓	\$ 4,172.00
2 Gospel in the Park Series	\$ 15,000		\$ 2,723.00
3 Hartsville Comm Ctr Bldg Comm/Center Theater Upgrades	\$ 11,664		\$ 4,194.00
4 Nickelson Media/Juneteenth Community Celebration	\$ 30,000		\$ 2,580.00
5 SC Jr. Golf Foundation/Players Championship	\$ 8,000		\$ 4,521.00
6 YMCA of the Upper Pee Dee/Races & Night Golf	\$ 30,000		\$ 2,160.00
Total for Hartsville Area	\$ 79,664	\$ 20,350	\$ 20,350.00
Lamar Area - 13% = \$7,150			
1 Christmas on Main of Lamar / Festival	\$ 3,500	Available Funds ↓	\$ 3,300.00
2 Lamar Egg Scramble Jamboree	\$ 4,500		\$ 4,300.00
Total for Lamar Area	\$ 8,000	\$ 7,600	\$ 7,600.00
\$7,150 + \$450 carried over from FY23/24 = \$7,600			
Society Hill Area - 13% = \$7,150			
1 New Vision Community Dev. Corp./Rice Festival	\$ 15,000	Available Funds ↓	\$ 4,746.00
2 Society Hill Catfish Festival	\$ 3,000		\$ 2,404.00
Total for Society Hill Area	\$ 18,000	\$ 7,150	\$ 7,150.00
Total Requests	\$ 345,238		
Total 65% Remaining Funds		\$55,450	\$ 55,450.00
Total Available Funds (30% Special Funds & 65% Remaining Funds)		\$72,250	\$ 72,250.00

Mr. Douglas asked Council to look at the request from Nickelson Media/Juneteenth Community Celebration. He also asked whether anyone knew this person.

Mr. Stewart pointed out that the agenda package contained the first two pages of each application that was submitted to the Accommodations Tax Advisory Committee.

(The first two pages of each application contained the applicant's name and contact information, project category, project/event date, amount requested, projected tourism impact, general description of the project/event, budget request and description, etc.).

Mr. Coker explained that Council tasked the Accommodations Tax Advisory Committee to recommend how to allocate the funds given the parameters of 13% to Lamar area, 13% to Society Hill area, 27% to Darlington area, and 27% to Hartsville area. Therefore, Darlington area requested \$50,000 and \$20,000 recommended, Hartsville area requested \$79,000 and \$20,000 recommended, Lamar area requested \$8,000 and \$7,600 recommended, and Society Hill area requested \$18,000 and \$7,100 recommended based on the percentages set by County Council. Mr. Coker stated that if Council is going to keep the percentages going forward, Council needs to approve the Advisory Committee's funding recommendations.

Ms. Thomas agreed with Mr. Coker's comments.

Mr. Douglas indicated that he was not satisfied because Mr. Nickelson of Nickelson Media does not live in Hartsville. He resides in Elgin.

Mr. Askins asked whether Council members knew anything about the event (Juneteenth Community Celebration) and whether it brought people to the area.

Mr. Davis responded that last year, Mr. Nickelson's event was held in/near the high school ballfield.

Ms. Thomas added that Mr. Nickelson is very community-oriented.

Mr. Coker responded that he did not know anything about the event or the person. However, he was going by the Advisory Committee's recommendations.

Mr. Askins felt that the county has gotten away from the spirit of what the Accommodations Tax is about -- to encourage events that bring people into the area to stay overnight and spend money locally. He also mentioned that the county has Hospitality Tax funds that can also be used to fund things. Mr. Askins stated that Council needs to rethink the percentages and read the intent of Accommodations Taxes. He stated that he did not know enough about the events. However, Council gave the Advisory Committee the task to do the research. Mr. Askins felt that some of the things did not appear to fit the intended use of Accommodations Tax funds.

Mrs. Godbold stated that the issue was that Darlington, Society Hill, and Lamar do not have suitable accommodations. But this should not penalize them.

Mr. Flowers called for the vote to accept the Accommodations Tax Advisory Committee's funding recommendations for FY24/05. Those voting in favor of the motion were Mr. Coker, Mr. Flowers, Ms. Thomas, and Mrs. Godbold. Opposing were Mr. Davis, Mr. Douglas, and Mr. Askins.

The motion carried.

Requests / Comments - Members Of Council

Mrs. Godbold thanked everyone for attending the meeting and speaking on behalf of animal welfare. She commended the Humane Society Board Member, Dr. Joshua Witten, who indicated that the Humane Society Board would like to begin conversations with the County

Administrator, Codes Enforcement, and the Sheriff's Office. She hopes that they will keep Council up-to-date on this matter. Mrs. Godbold also expressed concerns about ensuring that some of the funds from the county in the Humane Society's budget go to their outreach program. She also suggested that the Humane Society consider increasing its funding for its outreach program. Mrs. Godbold then requested a map showing the locations of solar farms in the county.

Mr. Askins thanked Dr. Witten for offering the idea of engaging all the stakeholders in a discussion involving animals. He felt that having people who are directly impacted to provide input should produce an ordinance that can be enforced. He thanked everyone for their input.

Ms. Thomas asked about the status of the Office of Resiliency's Plan.

Mr. Stewart responded that the South Carolina Office of Resiliency (SCOR) plans to award projects on May 21st.

Mr. Davis thanked everyone for attending the meeting and thanked Dr. Witten and the Sheriff's Office for their efforts. He also thanked the employees.

Mr. Coker stated that he had mixed views regarding the Accommodations Tax Advisory Committee's funding recommendations. He voted to accept the recommendations because Council had tasked the group to come up with the recommendations. He also stated that the Advisory Committee should have conducted their research, etc. Therefore, he voted yes to accept what they suggested. But if it is wrong, Council should not vote yes. However, he trusts the fact that the Advisory Committee dug into this, and divided up the money based on the percentages that Council gave them. He asked the County Administrator to clarify how Accommodations Tax funds are supposed to be allocated and whether the county actually brought in these funds.

Mr. Stewart explained that most of the Accommodations Tax funds are collected in places such as Myrtle Beach, Greenville, and Charleston and the state redistributes the funds throughout the state based on a funding formula established by the state. Some people refer to this as Robin Hood money since the taxes are generated in other counties and sent to encourage tourism and growth in less fortunate locations that do not have that type of money. He stated that there may be very few dollars from Darlington County.

Mr. Askins asked how the cities distribute their Accommodations Tax funds.

Mr. Stewart confirmed that the cities have their own process, and he did not know how the cities' Accommodations Tax funds are dispersed by the state. He would have to look this up.

Mr. Flowers thanked everyone for attending the meeting.

Adjournment

MOTION made by Mr. Flowers to adjourn the meeting. There being no further comments, the meeting was adjourned at 7:14 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,



J. Janet Bishop
Clerk to Council



Bobby Hudson, Chairman
Darlington County Council

Approved at meeting of June 3, 2024.