

October 24, 2022

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

The City of Hartsville hosted the joint dinner meeting of Darlington County's Municipal Councils, County Council, Board of Education, and Legislative Delegation on October 24, 2022, at 6 p.m., at The Edition, 221 North Fifth Street, Hartsville, 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 posted in the County Administrator's Office and mailed in advance to Darlington County's Municipal Mayors/Managers/Clerks, Darlington County School District Superintendent, Darlington County Legislative Delegation, Darlington County Council members, and the local newspapers.

COUNTY COUNCIL MEMBERS PRESENT

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

COUNTY COUNCIL MEMBERS ABSENT

Chaplain Dannie Douglas, Jr., and Mr. David Coker.

ALSO PRESENT

Darlington County Administrator Marion Charles Stewart, III, Darlington County Clerk to Council J. JaNet Bishop, Darlington County Board Of Education Members Wanda Hasseler, Leigh Anne Kelley, Charles Govan, Jr., and Warren Jeffords, Darlington County School District Superintendent Tim Newman, City of Darlington Council Members Shelia Baccus and John Segars (Mayor Pro Tempore), City of Darlington Staff Alex Gainey, City of Hartsville Council Members Johnny Andrews (Mayor Pro Tempore), Kenzie Delaine, Bryson Caldwell, Bobby McGee, and Teresa Mack, City of Hartsville Manager Daniel Moore, City of Hartsville Clerk Sherron Skipper, City of Hartsville Deputy Clerk Andrea Crenshaw, City of Hartsville Finance Director Karen Caulder, City of Hartsville Director of Tourism and Communications Michelle Byers Brown, Society Hill Council Members Melissa Burch and Deborah Harrell, Society Hill Mayor Dwayne Duke and guest Joanne Duke, Society Hill Clerk/Treasurer Brenda Nettles and guest Joseph Nettles, Society Hill Staff Eugenia Peterson and guest James Peterson, Town of Lamar Council Members Angele White Bradley and Tyler James Cook, Town of Lamar Mayor James Howell, Town of Lamar Manager Timothy Dargan, Senator Gerald Malloy, Senator Mike Reichenbach, and Representative Robert Williams.

REPORTERS PRESENT

None.

### Welcome / Invocation

Hartsville Mayor Pro Tem Johnny Andrews presented the welcome. Hartsville City Councilwoman Teresa Mack presented the invocation after a moment of silence for the recent loss of Hartsville Mayor Casey Hancock's mother and Society Hill Clerk Brenda Nettles' mother.

### Dinner Discussion - Communication Among Units Of Local Government – Mr. Daniel Moore, Hartsville City Manager

Hartsville City Manager Daniel Moore recognized and thanked members of the County Legislative Delegation for attending the meeting. He posed the following questions to the group: How has communication changed since COVID? What can be done to increase communication? How can we change how we talk to each other? What should we start talking about that has not been talked about?

After everyone introduced themselves, Society Hill Mayor Dewayne Duke talked about how he, as the new leader for Society Hill (since January 2022), has struggled with making communication better and with texting. He prefers to talk on the telephone or face to face to know the tone of the conversation. Mayor Duke pleaded for help from the other municipalities and the county. He thanked Hartsville Mayor Casey Hancock for reaching out to him before the recent hurricane. He emphasized that this is the type of communication that is needed – reaching out to each other.

Lamar Mayor James Howell, who also began his duties in January 2022, recognized Lamar Town Manager Timothy Dargan. Mr. Dargan reported that during the COVID pandemic, Lamar officials communicated via texting, Facebook, website, telephone, etc. However, it appears that people still did not receive the information. They are trying to find other means to get information out quicker. He stated that communicating is still a challenge that needs to be addressed.

Darlington City Mayor Pro Tem John Segars reported that the City of Darlington applied for a number of grants for infrastructure projects and just received \$300,000 in state appropriation funds for redevelopment in downtown Darlington.

Hartsville Mayor Pro Tem Johnny Andrews talked about the need for city managers, the county administrator, and the school district superintendent to communicate constantly and be on the same page when it really matters. If there is a drill, everyone (police, fire, law enforcement, parents, etc.) needs to know that it is a drill. He stated that these leaders need to get together regularly or at least communicate about routine things and agreements. The joint dinner meetings are good for elected officials to share common concerns and available resources.

County Administrator Charles Stewart stated that city managers, the county administrator, and the school district superintendent do not communicate as much as they did prior to the COVID pandemic. However, he has met and communicated regularly with Hartsville and Darlington Mayors but has not met with them in about three months. He agreed that the other mayors also need to be involved especially since they are new, and Society Hill does not have a town manager/administrator. Mr. Stewart stated that re-engaging in communication will be a good thing along with the quarterly dinner meetings.

School District Superintendent Tim Newman shared that Dr. Thelma Dawson, who has served Darlington County School District for a very long time, was in hospice care. He asked everyone to keep Dr. Dawson and her husband in prayers. As for communication, Dr.

Newman talked about the need for everyone to be on the same page. He mentioned the “swatting” calls that took place a few weeks ago. However, Darlington County School District was not in school. From what he has heard across the state, reunification drills must be in place. Darlington County has conducted three of these drills and is planning a countywide drill. The school district’s #1 goal this year is safety and security to protect the kids and adults physically and emotionally. Dr. Newman also talked about the huge surge in COVID cases that occurred at the beginning of the school year and again in February wherein almost 30 percent of students and staff were out of school at any given time. This disruption to learning was difficult. However, no school nor the district had to shut down. As for communications, Dr. Newman said everyone depends upon the county legislative delegation to be their voice in Columbia. Therefore, everyone needs to make sure the legislators are hearing from them, know what they are hearing in Columbia, and share what they need help with. He mentioned that the schools are open and encourage adults to enter their buildings. Dr. Newman also reported that Darlington County Education Foundation and The Byerly Foundation have joined forces to help the school district with student field trips, ideas on how to help teachers, etc. The school district is also communicating with a business group to come up with workforce initiatives and ideas to help create more job opportunities and internships for students. Dr. Newman briefly talked about the installation of weapon detectors and additional security resources at schools and stadiums. The school district is excited to move forward in a non-COVID era.

Hartsville City Manager Daniel Moore talked about communications when something goes wrong, and the number of people that must communicate during a countywide drill to make it work smoothly. He also talked about promoting what is good and working together when it is bad. He then posed the following questions: How can local entities work more with the legislative delegation to get things to the people? What does the legislative delegation need from local officials?

It was the opinion of Senator Mike Reichenbach, who has been in session for 21 days, that everyone must look at the success of the Pee Dee area collectively. He presented statistics that 40 years ago, the seven counties of the Pee Dee made up over 12 percent of the state’s population. The population has now dwindled to under 8 percent of the state’s population. This should be of concern to everyone because the Pee Dee area runs the risk of becoming irrelevant from the perspective of the state. Senator Reichenbach stated that he was not attending this joint meeting to gain votes because, in two years, no one in Darlington County will be able to vote for him. The two precincts that he represents in Darlington County will go to Senator Malloy and Senator Williams. He was present because he wants to work together for the Pee Dee area and not just Florence County. Communication has to be driven from the perspective that the Pee Dee area has to compete at the state level. Senator Reichenbach would like to be a resource to help collectively in the Pee Dee. He commended the work and efforts of Senator Gerald Malloy and Representative Robert Williams.

Representative Robert Williams talked about communication being a two-lane highway with someone talking and someone listening to solve problems. As a body, everyone needs to work on improving communication. He also talked about the many calls and text messages legislators receive daily from across the state. He prefers to talk via telephone or face-to-face as opposed to texting and using ZOOM. Representative Williams suggested talking with people intentionally or it will not happen and sharing and communicating outside your circle. He urged everyone to get involved with emergency notification and gun

detection and to become cognitive of the number of children with mental illness in Darlington County who are not in school. Representative Williams thanked Senator Malloy for funds to the City of Darlington and Lamar Police Department.

Senator Malloy talked about being cooperative and collaborative, competing with taxing authority (county and school district, etc.), and communicating because the taxpayers have one wallet. He talked about the thought that members of the legislative delegation should not attend meetings of a local county council, school board, or city council without being invited to eliminate the notion that the Legislators are attending the meeting to tell the local entity what to do. Local elected officials should be closer to the people. Senator Malloy urged everyone to send copies of their grants to delegation members because all of the senators are lobbying for the same pot of money. He also talked about local entities sharing grant information and having water projects, "supersizing" projects, local government funds, the school formula changing, funds for housing and road paving, police grants, multicounty jurisdictional/comprehensive money, and grant writing training. He mentioned funds obtained for the Center Theater, Coker University, the Governor's School, and Florence/Darlington Technical College. Senator Malloy urged the entities to max out themselves before calling him for grant funds. He emphasizes that entities should put together a plan, show it to him so that he will get what he can, and supersize their projects. Also, entities should talk about how they can pool their funds together to make things as efficient as possible.

Hartsville City Manager Daniel Moore concluded by stating that local officials should be talking and working together.

#### Items From The Floor

Society Hill Mayor Dewayne Duke announced that the Town of Society Hill received a grant for stormwater infrastructure (\$138,800 for the engineering). He commended the work of Mrs. Brenda Nettles, Society Hill Town Clerk.

Hartsville Mayor Pro Tem Johnny Andrews thanked everyone for attending the meeting and urged officials to share with someone what is going on in their community.

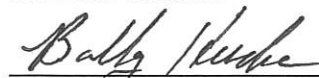
#### Adjournment

There being no further comments the meeting was adjourned at 7:34 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,



J. Janet Bishop  
Clerk to Council



Bobby Hudson, Chairman  
Darlington County Council

Approved at meeting of November 7, 2022.