



**MINUTES
BUDGET WORK SESSION III
FAIRFIELD COUNTY COUNCIL
APRIL 24, 2024**

Present: Shirley Greene, Doug Pauley, Peggy Swearingen, Timothy Roseborough, Clarence Gilbert, Dan Ruff (Council Members); Clay Killian, Interim County Administrator; Synithia Williams, Deputy County Administrator; Dr. Kimberly Roberts, Clerk to Council.

Absent: Cornelius Robinson

Others Present: Beverly Mozie.

In accordance with the South Carolina Code of Laws, 1976, Section 30-4-80 (e), as amended, the following persons and/or organizations have been notified of the time, date and location of this meeting: The Independent Voice of Blythewood and Fairfield, The Country Chronicle and one hundred forty one other individuals.

I. CALL TO ORDER

Mr. Pauley called the Work Session to order at 3:30 p.m.

II. APPROVAL OF AGENDA

Motion made by Councilman Gilbert, seconded by Councilwoman Greene, to approve the agenda. ***The motion carried 6-0.***

Mr. Pauley stated Mr. Robinson was running late.

III. INVOCATION

Councilwoman Greene led the invocation.

IV. ITEMS FOR DISCUSSION

A. AGENCY PRESENTATIONS

Finance Director, Beverly Mozie said they would have 5 minutes to present. Council had a copy of their budget appropriation requests. They should state their name, position/title with their organization, a brief purpose of their organization, the amount requested for the budget year and how the funds would be used. They should remain at the podium once their presentation was complete for tentative questions from Council. They were not required to stay after their presentation.

MIDLANDS TECHNICAL COLLEGE

Vice President of Business Affairs, Debbie Walker acknowledged Sheila Smith, the Associate Vice President of Business Affairs. Ms. Walker said they were requesting \$139,308. Fairfield citizens were charged an in-county rate vs. an out-of-county rate. Tuition for an in-county student for FY 23-24 was \$2,256 and \$2,820 for out-of-county students – a savings of \$564 per student per semester. The budget was based on approximately 247 Fairfield County students and was based on services already rendered. Mrs. Swearingen asked of the 247 students how many attended the Fairfield campus and she said 22 for the fall semester and 18 for the spring semester, which represented the academic courses. The corporate/continuing education courses had a total enrollment of 117. Mrs. Swearingen asked if tuition was free for in-county students and she said it was not free but discounted. Mr. Pauley mentioned the Promise Program, which was for students who lived in Fairfield County and graduated from a Fairfield County school. Mrs. Swearingen asked for the MOU to be revisited. Mr. Ruff asked how many in-county versus out-of-county students they had and she said 247. Mrs. Greene asked about the AP program and if it was included in the numbers she gave. She said it was called dual enrollment and they had 45 students in that program.

FAIRFIELD COUNTY COUNCIL ON AGING

There was no representative present.

V. FY 2024-2025 REVENUE DISCUSSION

Mr. Killian referenced their budget book and said he would point out certain items with substantial changes. The current utility taxes increased due to the recommended shift in millage from the hospital payment which would bring about \$1 million into the general fund. The real property tax would increase based on current and past collections. Homestead Exemptions would increase based on the numbers from the Internal Revenue. Payments in lieu of taxes (industry) increased and would possibly increase again before third reading. Transfer station fees were up about \$100,000 due to the increased use of the facility. He said for the most part, the revenues stayed pretty level/stable over the last few years. Mr. Pauley asked about the increase for the School Resource Officers (SRO). Mrs. Mozie said the SRO positions had not been stable so the revenue would increase once they were fully staffed. Mrs. Swearingen asked about the percentage employees paid for health insurance. He said under the Savings Plan, employees paid \$11.84 and the employer (Fairfield County) paid \$581.94. For employee spouse it was \$94.42 for the employee and \$1,224.24 from the County. Employee child was \$24.98 from the employee and \$969.50 from the

VII. CLASS & COMP STUDY

Mrs. Williams gave Council a handout of the results of the study. Mr. Killian said according to the study, they were about \$835,000 out of balance. They were looking at options to possibly fund the recommendation. Human Resource Director, Mary Smyrl, said to bring the 178 employees that were under the minimum up to the minimum, it would take \$835,105.03. She broke the numbers down as to what it would take for those making less than \$50,000 (\$481,688.85) and those making more than \$50,000 (\$353,416). For those employees who earned less than \$50,000 and needed a 10% or less increase to bring them to the minimum, it would cost \$178,897.65. She capped those needing more than 10% at 10%, which would cost \$215,973.98. The number of employees that were 10% or less was 71 and those needing more than 10% was 69. Mrs. Swearingen asked how many EMS, Fire and Sheriff Office employees were under \$50,000. She said there were 16 EMT's under the minimum and under \$50,000. The deputies did not fall under the minimum but other agencies were not starting their deputies at the minimum but closer to the competitive market rate. Mrs. Greene asked if they had any incentives for recruitment and she said no ma'am. Mr. Pauley asked if she had any recommendations and she said not officially that day but she thought the Sheriff's Office should get an increase. Mrs. Swearingen asked what that increase would be and she said they asked for 16% but she would like to compare them to similar counties. Mr. Killian said the purpose of the presentation was to give them an idea of the magnitude of the problem. They did not have a specific recommendation but Administration definitely wanted to do something if they could find a way to fund it. The challenge was that local governments in general were paying more competitive salaries. Mrs. Swearingen asked about the possibility of a retention bonus. Mrs. Smyrl said she did not think that was effective because a competitive salary was needed to get them in the door. Mr. Pauley said he looked forward to their recommendations. He appreciated all first responders but did not want to overlook all other employees. They believed all employees should be compensated. Mr. Killian agreed and said their employees were their most important asset and they needed to take care of them. Mr. Pauley said if they did not address it that year, they would get further behind – especially since they had the results from the study. Mr. Killian noted that a mistake some governments made was not maintaining the plan once implemented. Ms. Smyrl said she thought they could find a way to allocate money fairly across the board but she would need to know a potential amount that she could work with. Mr. Pauley said she could forward her recommendations to Administration and she agreed. Mrs. Swearingen asked if department heads could review their budgets for further cuts and if they could review cuts for the outside

agencies. He agreed and said they could do so by the next budget work session. Mr. Pauley said he understood Mrs. Swearingen's suggestions but he did not want to put the departments in a position to not be able to function properly. Mr. Killian agreed and said the budget spoke to what was important and core services were included but those things that made the county attractive and increased the quality of life were also important. Mrs. Swearingen asked about the recycling centers. Mr. Killian said that recommendation would not save a lot of money but would save some. Most counties opened their centers staggered at 1-2 days per week and Fairfield had all 11 open six days per week. His recommendation was to close them on Sunday's as they were already closed on Wednesday's. It was okay if it did not save enough money to make a difference but they needed to start somewhere. The Public Works Director was working on the numbers. Mr. Pauley said he remembered the previous Council discussing it and it was a savings of \$78,000. Lexington County's centers were closed on Tuesday's and Thursday's. He thought closing on Monday's and Wednesday's would be better. Mrs. Swearingen and Mr. Killian were concerned that if trash was taken to the center and it was closed, the trash would end up on the side of the road and litter would increase. Mr. Killian said they would get some numbers together and present it to Council. Mr. Ruff reminded him to look at the funding for agencies.

VIII. ADDITIONAL ITEMS CONCERNING FY 2024-2025 BUDGET

Mr. Pauley said they already talked about additional items concerning the budget and asked if there were any other concerns. Mrs. Swearingen asked if any employees could drop to part-time. Mr. Killian thought that might not be the best idea, especially since the core departments had the highest number of employees. Some departments only had 1-2 staff.

Mr. Pauley thanked Ms. Smyrl for her presentation and asked Mr. Killian if there would be another work session and they agreed on a potential date of May 15th at 3:30pm.

IX. ADJOURN

At 4:52 p.m., motion made by Councilman Roseborough, seconded by Councilman Ruff. ***The motion carried 6-0.***



KIM W. ROBERTS, Ed. D.
CLERK TO COUNCIL



DOUG PAULEY
CHAIRMAN