

**SPECIAL CALLED MEETING OF THE FLORENCE COUNTY COUNCIL, THURSDAY, MAY 2, 2013, 8:00 A.M., CONFERENCE ROOM, ROOM 802, CITY-COUNTY COMPLEX, 180 N. IRBY STREET, FLORENCE, SOUTH CAROLINA**

**PRESENT:**

James T. Schofield, Chairman  
Alphonso Bradley, Vice Chairman  
Waymon Mumford, Secretary-Chaplain  
Mitchell Kirby, Council Member  
Russell W. Culberson, Council Member  
Roger M. Poston, Council Member  
Willard Dorriety, Jr., Council Member  
Jason M. Springs, Council Member  
K. G. Rusty Smith, Jr., County Administrator  
D. Malloy McEachin, Jr., County Attorney  
Connie Y. Haselden, Clerk to Council

**ALSO PRESENT:**

Kevin V. Yokim, Finance Director  
Suzanne S. King, Administrative Services Director  
Sheriff Kenney Boone  
Chief Deputy Glen Kirby, Sheriff's Office  
Barbara Coker, Administrative Manager Sheriff's Office  
John Sweeney, Morning News

**ABSENT:**

Kent C. Caudle, Council Member

A notice of the special called meeting of the Florence County Council appeared in the May 1, 2013 edition of the **MORNING NEWS**. In compliance with the Freedom of Information Act, copies of the Meeting Agenda were provided to members of the media, members of the public requesting copies, and posted in the lobby of the City-County Complex, the Doctors Bruce and Lee Foundation Public Library and all branch libraries, and on the County's website ([www.florenceco.org](http://www.florenceco.org)).

Chairman Schofield called the meeting to order. Secretary-Chaplain Mumford provided the invocation and led the Pledge of Allegiance to the American Flag. Chairman Schofield welcomed everyone attending the meeting.

## **ORDINANCES IN POSITION:**

### **ORDINANCE NO. 30-2012/13 – INTRODUCED**

Chairman Schofield published the title and declared Ordinance No. 30-2012/13 Introduced: An Ordinance Authorizing The Execution And Delivery Of One Or More Incentive Agreements By And Among Florence County, South Carolina, And Project AP, And One Or More Affiliated Or Related Entities, As Sponsor, To Provide For A Fee In Lieu Of Taxes Incentive; To Provide For The Inclusion Of The Project In A Multi-County Business Or Industrial Park; To Provide For Special Source Revenue Credits; To Provide For A County Grant For Job Creation And To Enter Into Any Other Necessary Agreements To Effect The Intent Of This Ordinance; And Other Related Matters.

## **REPORTS TO COUNCIL:**

### **ADMINISTRATION/FINANCE**

#### **DISCUSSION OF THE FISCAL YEAR 2014 BUDGET**

County Administrator Rusty Smith stated that he and Finance Director Kevin Yokim had been working extensively to develop budget alternative options. Information was sent out to Council outlining previous items presented to Council requiring a 2.2 mill increase.

Mr. Yokim provided a brief overview of the information sent out to Council. He stated the increase in the employer contribution for health insurance would increase approximately 25%, depending on how the State balances its budget. There was a small increase in the amount required for Police Officers Retirement System (PORS). The second half of the funding for the 12 EMS positions Council added in December 2012 needed to be provided in the FY2014 budget. Additionally, the City would be vacating the City-County Complex, which would increase the County's cost to maintain and operate the Complex. Funding these items requires a 2.2 mill increase.

(Councilmen Kirby and Bradley entered the meeting.)

Included in the Budget Ordinance for Introduction was another 1.3 mill increase to provide flexibility for funding the EMS plan.

Possible alternatives to funding the FY2014 budget were:

- 1) Elimination of subsidy to the Solid Waste Fund by increasing the solid waste household fee by \$26 for a total of \$104.85 annually per household.
- 2) Establishment of a business license fee. Adjustments of the various fees currently charged by Florence County would not generate sufficient income to balance the budget and the only fee that the County does not currently charge that it could by law implement, was the business license fee.
- 3) 3% across-the-board budget cut.
- 4) Use of fund balance. However, this alternative would simply delay the implementation of any long-term solution to the following fiscal year.

In addition, the possibility exists that the Legislature could decrease and/or eliminate the \$30,000,000 in non-recurring funds added to the Local Government fund (LGF) in the FY2012/13 budget, which would reduce the County's share of the LGF by \$700,000 from its current level.

Councilman Dorriety asked if the business license fee were implemented did the County have any indication of the amount of funding it would potentially provide. Mr. Yokim responded that that we do not. State law requires that it must be based on the income of the business but the County could establish the license at the rate it desires. It would take time to develop a business license fee schedule and would likely not be ready for implementation for the beginning of the 2014 fiscal year. Councilman Culberson commented he thought it would create a hardship on many local businesses.

Chairman Schofield stated an alternative under State law would be the business registration fee, but it would be minimal revenue. Mr. Smith stated that the purpose of that legislation was to allow counties to collect personal property tax from businesses that they couldn't collect from in the past and that the business community was against it and it could potentially be counterproductive with economic development efforts.

Councilman Culberson asked if fund balance was used, would it compromise the County's fund balance threshold as dictated by a previously approved Ordinance. Mr. Smith stated the County was not on the threshold but was in a very precarious position. In previous years, the County used fund balance to keep from cutting additional positions and from increasing property tax millage. Councilman Culberson stated he was not advocating, he just wanted to know if that was a last resort, was there funding available that would not compromise the County's policy.

Chairman Schofield asked Mr. Yokim what his estimate would be for the potential revenue increase next year. He responded that if the 3.5 mill increase was approved for FY2014, then as much as a 2.0 mill increase could be used for FY2015. Chairman Schofield stated that only about 40% of the budget was actually under Council's control. The balance was dictated by State law and no cuts could be made to those departments without consequences from the State. Mr. Yokim stated that based on a recent study completed by the South Carolina Association of Counties in conjunction with Clemson, USC and FMU, Florence County's costs for funding State mandates were approximately \$3.6 million above the revenue received from the State, or approximately 8 mills.

In response to a question from Councilman Dorriety, Mr. Yokim responded that over the last two years, approximately 27 positions were cut from the County's budget. Councilman Dorriety asked Chief Deputy Glen Kirby if he was correct that additional revenue needed to be added to the Sheriff's Department just to bring the deputies up to the standard of surrounding counties. Chief Deputy Kirby confirmed that was the case and that the Department lost deputies to surrounding counties that were offering higher pay. He stated the Sheriff wanted to be on record as saying that he wanted pay raises for his deputies, but he understood Council's hands were tied. He asked that Council not cut additional positions. The jail was currently being mandated by the Department of

Corrections to hire an additional 17 positions, which did not include the 4 positions that were currently vacant.

(Councilman Bradley left the meeting.)

Mr. Yokim provided a brief overview of the proposed EMS Funding Plan. The projected total cost of the plan was \$1,018,000. The proposed funding for the plan would come from a portion of the 2.2 mill increase in the budget (\$385,000), an additional 1.3 mills to provide additional flexibility (\$550,000), and an additional \$83,000 which could be obtained by reducing the subsidy from Solid Waste Fund, which would require a \$2.18 increase in the household solid waste fee. If the alternate plan was considered, which included four assistant shift supervisors and one assistant training officer the increased cost of approximately \$340,000 would require an additional \$8.95 increase in the household solid waste fee. Councilman Springs stated he agreed that EMS needed to be addressed, but it needed to be handled in phases because other departments, in particular the Sheriff's Office, needed to be addressed as well. He was comfortable with the 3.5 mill increase and the \$2.18 to cover the first phase of the plan, even though he didn't like to increase taxes.

Councilman Kirby asked how much interest was earned on reserves and if that interest was included in the budget. Mr. Yokim responded that it was included in the budget and it was approximately \$200,000. Councilman Kirby asked if there was any funding still in the Landfill Fund. Mr. Yokim responded that there was some, but it had been drawn down to a level that it wouldn't be prudent for Council to pull from that non-recurring funding source continually.

Councilman Mumford requested that Council write a letter to the Legislature to request that public safety services be pulled out from under the millage cap mandate (Act 388) because, under the current guidelines, the County cannot adequately provide funding to meet the public safety needs of the residents of Florence County. He also requested that Council work with the Legislative Delegation to request that this be carried before the General Assembly, if not during the current session, during the next session, to implement Statewide. He stated he believed Chief Justice Jean Toal could be a tremendous help with this effort. Chairman Schofield stated he would include the South Carolina Association of Counties in this effort, as well.

Chairman Schofield stated a couple of issues that needed to be addressed in the budget were the Pamplico and Johnsonville Rescue Squads. There was currently \$30,000 in the budget for Pamplico. He expressed concerns that a County employee worked under the supervision of a non-County employee at the Johnsonville Rescue Squad.

Councilman Poston stated that with the County EMS being out of district 46% of the time, the Pamplico Rescue Squad was needed. He commented he would like for Council to hear from the Pamplico Rescue Squad concerning this issue. Councilman Poston stated if the County was funding the Rescue Squad, results were needed 100% of the time.

In response to a question regarding Johnsonville Rescue Squad, Councilman Poston stated he agreed that a County employee should not answer to a non-County supervisor. Council discussed setting up Johnsonville like Timmons ville. Chairman Schofield stated Johnsonville and Timmons ville handled about the same amount of calls on an annual basis. The budget should be fairly comparable. This would mean an increase in the allocation to Johnsonville from approximately \$100,000 to \$140,000, but then the County employee would be removed from Johnsonville Rescue Squad.

Councilman Poston asked if the County increased the Solid Waste Household Fee, if there was any way that it could be put on a monthly or quarterly payment schedule for citizens on a fixed income, particularly the elderly. It was the consensus of Council to increase the Solid Waste Household Fee by \$2.18 to assist in fully funding the EMS Plan.

After some continued discussion, the Sheriff stated he had a 10-year veteran deputy that was making \$100 less than when he started with the County 10 years ago. He stated he had one deputy for every 3,000 people, which was inadequate to provide quality service to protect the citizens. Councilman Mumford asked the Sheriff to request that the South Carolina Sheriff's Association support the request to the Legislature to remove the millage cap on funding for public safety.

Chairman Schofield stated he thought potentially Council should write a letter to the Delegation requesting assistance with explaining/detailing to the public the issues that caused the delays with the Capital Project Sales Tax (CPST) projects approved in 2006 (e.g. mitigation, right-of-ways, etc.) and that the SCDOT was moving as expeditiously as possible with the projects; and, requesting support for Council's moving forward with the re-imposition of the CPST for additional infrastructure projects. There were no objections voiced.

There being no further business to come before Council, Councilman Culberson made a motion to adjourn. Councilman Dorriety seconded the motion, which was approved unanimously.

**COUNCIL MEETING ADJOURNED AT 9:40 A.M.**