

**MINUTES
COLLETON COUNTY COUNCIL
REGULAR MEETING
TUESDAY, SEPTEMBER 10, 2019
6:00 P.M.
COUNTY COUNCIL CHAMBERS, OLD JAIL BUILDING**

Colleton County Council met in Regular Session on Tuesday, September 10, 2019 at 6:00 PM, at the County Council Chambers, Old Jail Building. Dr. Flowers called the meeting to order with Council Members Steven Murdaugh, Gene Whetsell, Art Williams, Phillip Taylor in attendance.

Others present included: Kevin Griffin, Sean Thornton, Ruth Mayer, Sue Keith, Becky Hill, William J. Hamilton, Janet Smith, Torsha Anderson, Jeff Ament, Laura Clark, Jimbo Warner, Cameron Warner, J. Gooding, Audrey Stephens, K. Hundley, Viola Williams, Shirley Mitchell, Grace Jarido, Evelyn Williams, Teretha Parker, Ladson Fishburne, Roy Williams, S. Harvey, Tyeesha?, Ed Williams

Mr. Taylor gave the invocation and led the Pledge of Allegiance.

Approval of Minutes

Regular Meeting July 30, 2019

A motion to approve the minutes was made by Mr. Murdaugh and seconded by Mr. Whetsell.

The motion carried unanimously.

Awards and Recognitions

Colleton County – Governmental Finance Officers Association Certificate of Achievement for Excellence in Financial Reporting

Dr. Flowers read the News Release from the Government Finance Officers Association and congratulated all the county employees for a job well done, pointing out that this was the 5th year in a row the county had received this prestigious award.

Appearances & Public Presentations

Southern Carolina Alliance Quarterly Report – Sandy Steele

Ms. Sandy Steele gave an overview of all of the activities for the quarter.

South Carolina Department of Juvenile Justice Quarterly Report – Torsha Anderson

Ms. Torsha Anderson gave an overview of all of the law changes that will be taking place within the Department of Juvenile Justice starting in the new fiscal year.

Administrator's Briefing

Mr. Griffin said a couple of quick ongoing project updates. Ms. Mullinax corresponded with us on the three CDBG projects we've got going on. The Gadsden Loop Neighborhood project, there was a low bid received for it for \$39,700 for the six demo projects. That contract is currently under review with Commerce and getting ready to move forward with approval. The sidewalk design plans are done and are in the permitting stage and most all of the street lighting has been added there as well. On the stadium demo project, the asbestos testing bid will be opened September 12th at 11:00am and then that will move forward once we do that. That will come to you guys in October, should be done by the end of the month and then they can move forward with the actual demo bids its self. Lastly, we are partnering with the City of Walterboro on the Eastside water project, which would be an extension out 64 in and around and behind H&D Supermarket on upgrading that line as well as expanding it. Also on the Neyles Community Center, we just found out today we have finally gotten an approval from DHEC on their well permit. That has been going on for a while. This has been the holdup on moving the rest of it forward. Now that we got that, they are going to have probably about another 6-8 weeks of work.

The only other item I have is item "c" (Res. 19-55), the County Safety Policy. We had SC Association of Counties come in and do a review of our Risk Management Program and the changes you see there, primarily the Vehicle Accident Review Board, are suggestions we got back from the State both in streamlining with their policies as well as trying as getting good participation from our elected officials and others on that board as well.

Mr. Murdaugh said he had a question about this storm, particularly Edisto, I am just curious how the county faired overall.

Mr. Griffin said overall we were very lucky and fortunate thanks to all of our goods folks that spent a lot of time at EOC last week. Edisto did get hit a little harder and are still dealing with some power outages. We worked with them today on coming up with some plans on their debris removal and they are still assessing a lot of what they have to deal with to get that out. Fortunately and unfortunately we have been through this a few times they are working on the plan now for debris removal side, but all in all we didn't have any sand up on the beach like we had previously and other than some downed trees and some other calls their we were pretty fortunate considering from what I saw today that Charleston County is at somewhere between 6-7 million dollar range right now just on debris removal itself. The eastern part of our county got most of it.

Mr. Murdaugh asked if FEMA was going to be involved this time.

Mr. Griffin said it depends. It sounds like from Edisto our threshold is around \$135,000 of damages and once that kicks in FEMA will be involved, but from what we are seeing so

far with Edisto and our other impacts with the Co-op anything that happens with the Co-op and their impact it goes towards ours as well.

Public Hearing

None

Old Business

None

New Business

Resolution 19-R-53, To Authorize Acceptance and Budgeting of Various Grants for FY 2019-2020

A motion to approve the resolution was made by Mr. Whetsell and seconded by Mr. Murdaugh.

The motion carried unanimously.

Resolution 19-R-54, To Provide for the 2020 Census Partnership

A motion to approve the resolution was made by Mr. Whetsell and seconded by Mr. Taylor.

The motion carried unanimously.

Resolution 19-R-55, To Amend the Colleton County Safety Policy.

Mr. Williams made a motion to approve the resolution

Mr. Murdaugh said he would like to move to table the resolution. I would like to have the County Attorney to go back and look at this as far as the review board's purpose and maybe scope. This is something we see in the legal field a lot and we need to see if the board is structured properly.

Mr. Williams made a motion to table the resolution until the County Attorney reviews and the motion was seconded by Mr. Murdaugh.

The motion carried unanimously.

Resolution 19-R-56, To Authorize the Purchase of Ambulances for Colleton County Fire-Rescue.

A motion to approve the resolution was made by Mr. Taylor and seconded by Mr. Murdaugh.

The motion carried unanimously.

Resolution 19-R-57, To Approve Purchase of a Kenworth Truck with a Roll-off Hoist for the Solid Waste Department.

A motion to approve the resolution was made by Mr. Taylor and seconded by Mr. Murdaugh.

The motion carried unanimously.

Resolution 19-R-58, To Authorize a One-Time Expenditure from the General Fund (Fund 100) Council Contingency in the Amount of \$11,513.33 to the Lowcountry Regional Transportation Authority (Palmetto Breeze) related to their Budget Request in the for Commuter Service from Colleton County to Bluffton and Hilton Head.

A motion to approve the resolution was made by Mr. Williams and seconded by Mr. Taylor.

The motion carried unanimously.

Resolution 19-R-59, To Authorize the Removal of Three Current Board Members and to Authorize the Council Clerk to Advertise for Board Vacancies.

A motion to approve the resolution was made by Mr. Taylor and seconded by Mr. Whetsell.

The motion carried unanimously.

Resolution 19-R-60, To Appoint Members to Board Vacancies

Ballots were given to Council Members

Ballot results:

Colleton County Resource & Development: James (Jimbo) Warner & Anderson Grant, Jr.

Items for Information and Public Record

None

Public Comments (3 minutes per person/max time 20 min.)

Sue Keith – Reminder Colleton County Legislation Delegation meeting Mon., Sept. 16th at 6:00PM at Colleton County Library.

Audrey Stephens- Palmetto Breeze Bus to Hilton Head, you said you had one more year to run the buses, right?

Dr. Flowers said this is funding for this fiscal year.

We have jobs in Walterboro, I have family going around filling out applications. They say they will call you in 2-3 weeks. There is no full time work here. No Insurance, and the rent to stay here is too much. Child Care costs is ridiculous. People can't afford it. The pay rate is no good. In order for us to work we have to have 2-3 jobs to make it here. What we make over there the pay is good. We need help. That bus has got to run. We need help with small programs such as day care. We need help with other programs.

Marilyn Beals- Palmetto Breeze Buses. Been working at Hilton Head 30yrs. My job pays well, I ride the bus. Don't pull the rug out from us. Are jobs in Walterboro full time, pay PTO hrs, Sick hrs., Holiday hrs. Are they going to give us 40 hrs. full time. We spend our money in Colleton County, live in Colleton County and Pay bills in Colleton County. Small bus should not go just to Walterboro, but also to surrounding areas. We all pay taxes here.

William Hamilton – Public Transit- 1st trip to Walterboro. Lead the fight for Public Transit in the Lowcountry. I understand and know giving people more options is difficult and it is not in-expensive; however, I would ask you not to make your 1st decision be how many more roads you can build every time somebody comes to you with a project. One thing you can do is focus on creating safe ways for people to walk and ride bicycles.

Jeff Ament- At the last meeting we had a Keep Colleton Beautiful Board vacancy, I was voted against unanimously. With that being said I feel that it was pre-planned and done at the aggression that is being forced on some of us that is sitting in this room. Me speaking on that subject is not what is important. What is important is that with the differences aside, I am a business owner as well. Somebody comes to me wanting a job and the end of the day I am going to put aside our personal differences to decide and give that person a job. Mr. Williams mentioned we needed more people involved in the community after that. With that being said, I am pretty as involved as I can get. I go to every county council meeting, every school board meeting, ...inaudible... PTO of Forest Hills Elementary. Ya'll are supposed to do what is best for the community at heart and I feel that you failed in that matter, personally I could care less about a job title. The by-laws of any Colleton County affiliated board is when somebody misses 3 consecutive meetings they are supposed up for termination. Well Keep Colleton Beautiful has 3 individuals now that are up for that. I believe that is in ya'lls best job to inform us of these things without us having to find out these things ourselves. I am also recommending that maybe there should be more training for every committee board member when elected or even an introduction packet would be nice. All I am saying is that litter is a serious problem in our community and wish ya'll would take this matter a little more serious. TAPE RAN OUT AT THIS POINT.

???- On behalf of not just myself, but the community with the last things that have been going on in our county and making headline news. I think as far as the county I haven't heard anyone speak up publically against it, but with these findings we have elected officials that are sitting in these positions that is mismanaging their funds. From the email that was released, how can we have a sheriff that's doing these type of things and no one is saying anything. No accountability. There is no accountability for funds, here and not

just with the sheriff and not just with the elected officials. We come in here and pretend we care about Colleton, but it is bigger than Walterboro because Colleton is very large and it seems like every focus is about Walterboro. We pay taxes in Ruffin, Red Root, Williams and all around, so why is it that everything is focused and centered around Walterboro. When it comes to our Sheriff's Dept., it is not a good look. We have our sheriff out here doing these things and no one is holding him accountable. I am coming to you for the last time. I have done spoke with some of the board members. The way the County Administrator spoke to me on the phone 2 weeks ago, it was a disgrace. It took me 3 weeks to get in contact with him. I did a FOI request, still haven't gotten the information yet. When it comes to the people that supposedly you guys work for, please take us into consideration the whole county and not just Walterboro.

Council Time

Mr. Whetsell said he wanted to recognize the Fire-Rescue, David Greene and Barry and all of these people I am going to talk about involved with the clean-up the storm we just had this past week. The Fire-Rescue, David and all their staff and Department of Transportation, Department of DSS, Administrator's Office, Sheriff's Office, Finance Department, we would just like to thank all of you folks that were involved. People out here do not realize what happened because we didn't get any big blow back from it, but they were kept alert of what was going to happen and we just missed the bullet, but we had people that was looking out for us during this storm and that is what this is about. Thank you all. David, I understand ya'll kinda took care of the cot situation that you had up there.

Mr. Greene said yes sir, it was taken care of.

Mr. Murdaugh said he wanted to speak briefly to the situation with the buses and I don't want to get into some of the personal issues some were trying to raise, but I will said is what we have done is we have funded this through our budget cycle. That does not mean that we had no intent to help folks in the future. In fact, I personally will help our citizens get to their jobs if it is possible that this council can do it, then I am in support of it. It is no doubt that transportation in this county is an issue, not just in employment, it is an issue of recreation with children trying to get kids to recreation. I grew up in a rural community. I lived down from Islandton. I understand it is not just about Walterboro. That being said, just in Colleton, but if you look anywhere in this state everything now is about consolidation. Saving money. You can't build a recreation department in every community. I understand that. It's just not feasibly possible. The way we try to cure that and this council has discussed that, trying to come up with a transportation solution. Colleton County is at a little bit of a disadvantage compared to most counties because we are the 5th largest county map wise as far as the number of acres, but when it comes to resources and population, we are much higher. So if you drive from Edisto Beach to Lodge from one end of the county to another it's over an hour. That's a long drive that some counties don't have that burden that we have. This council certainly is trying to look at not just with transportation for employment, which I get it you are working somewhere, you got your retirement, you built your relationship with your employer, and we need to help the folks in that situation. At the same time we need to be creating jobs here. I can't

make any employer pay \$10-\$12 an hour, but if you look at what we are doing we are trying to create more opportunity in this community and it is not just about Walterboro. As far as some of the things that were said here tonight, I can assure you, you saw tonight we got awarded the Government Finance Office Association award, that is not an award everybody gets, very few counties in SC get that. These claims about transparency I don't think are there. Maybe somebody got upset because, the issue wasn't that there wasn't transparency, the issue was maybe the individual got upset because he was getting questioned about something. With that being said, the Sheriff is not here to defend himself about the claims that were made against him tonight, so I am not going to get into the issues about the sheriff, but I will tell you that sitting on this body, all the years I have been here I have never been just about Walterboro. That is just not me, that's not my roots. I believe that rural communities like this gentleman here said he has been fighting for 20 yrs. Unfortunately he hasn't been here until tonight, but I don't know the solution he is offering is something we can look at, but certainly we are going to look at anything we can to try to help the transportation because we have a problem with it. I want to make sure you understand maybe we don't respond as quickly as you think we should sometime, but that doesn't mean that we don't hear what you are saying. It doesn't mean that we don't care about what you are saying. That being said, screaming and yelling at each other is not going to get anything done. If you call me I assure you I will do everything I can to try to provide transportation, not just for employment, but for the kids and try to figure out a solution for the county that we can afford. That means we all as a body have to agree on it. As you see that is not always easy. I hear what you are saying and we are going to try to find a solution.

Mr. Taylor said he wanted to concur with Mr. Whetsell and Mr. Murdaugh in relation to the work that was done to prepare people in this community for the weather, I really think Mr. Greene deserves a hand of applause because he rallied 30 something agencies in a room for several days. People spent the night for several days without going home to make sure that people in this community were safe. I think he is as unsung hero. That project that they have put together is something that the whole nation is looking at to see what type of work, the State came down a few weeks ago and met with David and some of the team to look at, just weeks prior to the event and they were very highly pleased with the high level of organization and the way they communicated on a regular basis. I think it was a stellar job. In relation to some of the comments that was made tonight, again I want to concur. I worked on the Island. I drove on the Island, I drove a van and drove people to the island. I rode the bus to the island. I know the costs, I know the struggle, I have been all the way down to the end of the island. I want to support the people. In terms of Mr. Ament tonight, I gave him my number. You can call me anytime. Mr. Ladson has my number. I've cleaned more trash in this county then the average person including many of the people on the Keep Colleton Beautiful. I have been recognized by the State of SC for picking up trash when you guys were in elementary school. It is not a new phenomenon for me. I am out here volunteering my time on a regular basis in Smoaks, Ruffin, Lodge, Cottageville, Walterboro, Green Pond, my number is out there. If you want to contact me you can get me 843-599-1711. You got a question for me, call. If I can help you I'm going to help you. In relation to other elected officials, I can't do anything in relation to them. I'm not going to get into liable and slander

and all of those things. I am a man with character and I believe in being upright and honest with people. If you come to me with a concern, I will do what I can to help you and try to give you a process. If you don't come to me, you don't call me then I don't think it is fair for you to come in here and lambast me in front of everybody. It's okay if that is what we need, but I am very assessable before tonight.

Mr. Williams said Ms. Anderson we certainly do appreciate the job that you are doing with our youth because all of us do realize that if we can reach our youth before they become a statistic it is better for Colleton County because they can certainly be productive. Ms. Stephens we understand your concerns and we have talked before and I didn't know your pains until you spoke out about your concerns. We can say what we want to say behind this desk, but the next cycle for budgeting will be here, so if there is a need now and a need then, we will see where we are going with it. Be assured that your concerns are my concerns. I haven't always had the opportunity. I can remember days when I have walked from Walterboro to Green Pond just to play sports. For someone to take it as serious or trying to put food on their table, yes I hear your concerns, I know your concerns. We have communicated several times before. I have talked to the folks down in Hilton Head, the media about the concerns that we have here in Colleton. We don't have a lot of resources. I don't want to miss lead you or anyone in the public to say that when a business owner calls me because my phone is probably one of the most public numbers that you can find if you look it up. When a business owner and I don't want to miss lead you, when a business owner calls me and says why are we funding a bus to take people out of Colleton County and we have opportunities here and not giving the people here a chance. If they are blowing smoke then we will find that out soon too, because you fool me once, but you can't fool me twice. Feel assured that I will support the needs of the community. I don't live in the town of Walterboro. I've lived in rural areas for 60+ years. I just recently moved a little bit closer to town, but we have in mind the needs of all Colletonians. Sometimes the persons needs only effects the individual, but from being a steward of the people's funds, then we/I have to look at it from a broader view than what an individual is looking for. I'm looking out for all of the citizens in Colleton regardless to whether I'm voted from the eastern district, the western district is just as much a concern for me as anywhere else. I thank you for coming and speaking out. This is a forum and I encourage anyone out there if there is something you're concerned with, bring it before the full council. I'm only one man, one vote and each of us have one vote each, but collectively if the persuasion is there then, of course you can get what we possibly can afford.

Dr. Flowers said he would like to thank Mr. Fisburne for his help with the Keep Colleton Beautiful and doing such a good job at Hilton Head with his presence at the Association of Counties. I would also like to emphasis the great job our Fire-Rescue is doing for the county and their dedication. People think we only thing we do is sit up her for a meeting once a month, but the amount of time we spend working on all of these issues is un-totaled. We sit here and listen to people and try to do the best we can for the majority of the people in the county, but also as Mr. Williams was saying our money is finite. We only have so much money especially in a rural county such as ours. We have to stretch the

dollars as far as we can. That is what we have to look at on a fiscal responsibility. That is our responsibility to do so.

Executive Session

- a. Economic Development
 - 1. Project Colony
 - 2. Labor Force Initiative

Regular session

Dr. Flowers said the items were discussed in executive session.

No further actions were taken.

The meeting was adjourned.

Date: _____

Joseph F. Flowers, Chairman

ATTEST:

Ruth Mayer, Clerk to Council

******* NOTICE OF THIS MEETING WAS GIVEN IN ACCORDANCE WITH THE PROVISIONS OF THE FREEDOM OF INFORMATION ACT**