

**MINUTES
COLLETON COUNTY COUNCIL
VIRTUAL REGULAR MEETING
TUESDAY, JANUARY 5, 2021
6:00 P.M.**

Colleton County Council met on Tuesday, January 5, 2021 at 6:00 PM, Virtually. Steven Murdaugh called the meeting to order with Council Members Dr. Joseph Flowers, Art Williams, Phillip Taylor in attendance (via zoom) Gene Whetsell Absent

Others included: Kevin Griffin, Ruth Mayer, Sean Thornton, Jon Carpenter, Meagan Utsey

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

Approval of Minutes

Regular Meeting December 8, 2020

Special Meeting December 16, 2020

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

The motion carried unanimously.

Administrator's Briefing

Mr. Griffin said we will be getting the Administrative Report out to you. It's going to be a little late today because some of our departments and elected officials because of the Holidays were a little late getting the information to us. It will probably go out 1st thing in the morning.

In January, we are still working our 2020/2021 Budget. In September the Senate amended and passed H5201, which was the appropriations bill that continues to fund the majority of State Government provided for an earlier continuing resolution. In addition to that one past, the Senate appropriated eleven million six hundred eighty thousand (\$11,680,000.00) Local Government Fund, which would have fully funded the Local Government Fund; however, the House has not decided to take up that bill until January. They have started their meetings this week supposedly, only they have not given any direction back to us on what their schedule would be as far as taking up the appropriations bill and finally approving that. Hopefully that will be by the end of this month, but have not released any of those plans and as soon we get that information and know where we stand, get some direction as to where we are going to stand from a State prospective, is the funding coming back down to the county? We want to immediately schedule our council retreat/budget workshop and get this 2021 budget.

We got an email out today, there is going to be a Legislative Delegation meeting tomorrow at 4:00pm via zoom. I did send out a link to that earlier this afternoon. If you have not

received that or if anyone needs to have that link they can email or call Ms. Ruth and she can send it back out to you.

I would like to take a moment to recognize our first responders, those Fire-Rescue, Sheriff's Deputies, all our local first responders. We have had a good bit of loss of life here over the holidays. On top of that we had a firetruck get hit and looks like totaled on I-95, which the driver who actually hit the truck passed away. Looking at our numbers as you see the report comes out tomorrow, last year we had sixteen (16) accidental deaths in the county and this year we've had 39, so when you see those folks. Thank them for what they do. They have had a rough year, hopefully it will be a lot better as we go into 2021.

Public Hearing

Kimberly Mullinax- To Solicit Public Input on Community Needs & Priorities for Housing, Public Facilities and Economic Development in the County Under CDBG Program.

Ms. Mullinax gave an overview of the Community Needs & Priorities and also the CARES Act funding.

Mr. Williams requested a copy of the presentation be given to the administrator and said he personally would like it or you can send it directly to me.

Mr. Williams I know there are numbers of projects at a particular time that we can apply for and we have to have grants used before we can keep applying, but and I also heard you say something about the City of Walterboro with a water project over on Eastside Acres. Would that count against the county?

Ms. Mullinax said the way that works is the county was actually the applicant on that with the City of Walterboro being the sub-recipient. They have got to have Walterboro because of the water system. Now the houses that are being served are actually outside of the City Limits and that is why it is a county project. That was a very big need for both the City and the County to work together on that project. That project should be finished by the end of January, so that one is not going to hold up anything. The stadium demolition has been done and waiting on the fence to be put up around the property. That will go quickly, so that one can be closed out.

Our problem child is the Gadsden Loop project, which is finally starting to move and that is the old project which is going to hold us up until it is done. Hopefully we can have it done this summer and be in play for fall round, but there is no way we can do a spring project until we get that one closed.

Mr. Murdaugh said I didn't see anything on this list with the Corona virus, but it looks like it was limited to public facilities. If we were trying to assess things like the homeless shelter, a sprinkler system, it is not a public facility. Is there any part of these funds or any other funds at LCOG that you are aware of that would help us assess those folks in

trying to get those folks get their building retro fit so they could get their certificate of occupancy?

Ms. Mullinax said she didn't think it would fit in this program, but that is something we could look for in other funding sources and see if we can find a match.

Mr. Williams said when we apply for a grant, when we apply for a grant and there is funds that is earmarked in a particular grant and that fund, the funds that earmarked, if there's questions on whether it makes since to spend money on something when times are tight and there are people, places where they can get a fence around it with nothing in it and then there are some places in the rural communities can't get anything done, can that money be redistributed back to the county and not used for a particular purpose or it has to be since it had been earmarked for that it has to go for that.

Ms. Mullinax said the way the grants are designed, what you apply for is what you have to do and it has to serve that same group of people, so you can't turn it around and say okay, I've spent "X" number of dollars over here, but I have some left so I want to go give it to the people in the next community down the road. You can't do that it goes with a certain piece of property basically. Anything we have left over, we have to turn back into the State. Anything we can't cover, then we have to pay for, but it is all in that one neighborhood, or one piece of property or one project.

New Business

Emergency Ordinance 21-O-01, Temporarily Suspending the Existing Procedures for Conducting Meetings of the Colleton County Council and Its Boards and Commissions to the Extent Necessary to Protect the Citizens of Colleton County, Colleton County Staff, Board and Commission Members, and County Council Members from the COVID-19 Pandemic and Establishing Temporary Procedures for Such Meetings

A motion to approve the ordinance was made by Dr. Flowers and seconded by Mr. Taylor.

The motion carried unanimously.

Emergency Ordinance 21-O-02, An Emergency Ordinance Requiring That Face Coverings Or Masks Be Worn In Public In The City Of Walterboro And The Unincorporated Areas Of Colleton County During The Covid-19 Public Health Emergency And Recovery

A motion to approve the ordinance was made by Dr. Flowers and seconded by Mr. Williams.

The motion carried unanimously.

Mr. Murdaugh requested an update on the Covid-19 be given from Dr. David Greene.

Dr. David Greene – Today is day 295 of week 44 of the Covid-19 pandemic response. Last week we add 22,454 cases in South Carolina, which is almost 10,000 more cases that we witnessed during the summer peak. The daily percent positives are routinely being reported above 30%, both for the State and in Colleton County, which is trending slightly higher than the State average. The case counts and percentage of positive data suggest a high level of community transmission Colleton County and throughout the state. The mortality rate in Colleton County is 3.1%, which is higher the State and National mortality rates of around 1.7%. In South Carolina cardio vascular disease and diabetes continue to be ...inaudible... with the poorest patient outcome, making patients with these pre-existing conditions the most at risk. The other phase is vaccination are set by the CDC's Advisory Committee on Immunization Practices or ACIP. We are currently in phase 1a of the Covid-19 vaccination plan, which vaccinates, Health Care Providers & Long Term Care Facility Residents and workers. The Tentative time line according to the ACIP is to continue in phase 1a through February 2021 followed by phase 1b, which will be frontline essential workers, such as firefighters, law enforcement, corrections, teachers & support staff and persons 75 years and older which that phase should begin in late winter until early spring 2021. Phase 1c will then include people age 65-75 years of age and persons 16-64 years old with high risk conditions, with other essential workers not in phase 1b. Those these would include waste water treatment, transportation, finance communications, energy, legal media, etc. Then things will be followed by phase 2, which is all people age 16 years and older. Vaccinations are expected to become available for the general public in phase 2 during the summer & fall of 2021. Colleton County's Emergency Operations Center remains in operational condition 3, which is normal operations. Weekly testing is available at Valcor Pediatric Associates on Medical Park Drive, Walterboro Family Care on Spruce Street, Lowcountry Urgent Care, on Bells Highway, CVS which requires an online appointment, and free testing is available at the Colleton County Health Department on Tuesdays and Thursdays from 9:00-3:30 and an appointment is required for that as well. Testing is also available through several physicians' offices in town. Fire-Rescue Department continues to coordinate with other State and Local Agencies and host weekly conference calls to allow our local agencies to connect to the SCDEHC and SCE...inaudible... We continue to update information sources daily. We continue to coordinate logistical request to support our local organizations as needed. Operationally we have begun to experience constraints on both the pre-hospital and hospital resources in Colleton County as well as the long term care facilities in Colleton County. We will continue to work closely with those agencies to insure that we can provide the best possible care.

Mr. Williams said Dr. Greene in your opinion, what do you think is the main reason for Colleton County to be trending so much higher than the national average for South Carolina with mortality.

Mr. Greene said I don't know to be honest with you. The number is not tremendously higher than the national average. I couldn't guess to know what it is. I would suggest that maybe the numbers, the data could possibly be refined some to where the numbers are not quite as different. I think it is almost a percent difference, but if you really drill down on the data, which we have not had an opportunity to do. I am not sure that DHEC

has either, but they may find that the number is not quite a percent different. It maybe something that is maybe quite a pronounced as what we are seeing.

Resolution 21-R-01, To Authorize Acceptance and Budgeting of Various Grants for FY 2020-2021

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

The motion carried unanimously.

Resolution 21-R-02, To Declare Surplus Various Vehicles and Equipment and to Authorize Their Sale in Accordance with County Policy

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

The motion carried unanimously.

Resolution 21-R-03, To Approve Acceptance of a Grant from Coastal Electric Cooperative, Inc. in the amount of \$144,125 for Industrial Infrastructure Development

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

The motion carried unanimously.

Council Time

Mr. Taylor said he wanted to congratulate Dr. Flowers on his re-election. Thank you to the county for entrusting me to be re-elected as well. I wanted to make mention also of the LCOG does have its new annual report out and what is featured in here is one of our local businesses called Pack Net. Pack Net participated in a ...inaudible... youth workforce development program along with LCOG. If you get a chance to get a copy of this, please stop by and talk to Kevin at Pack Net . They are featured in here and there is a lot of good data in here about the numbers going on with workforce development and other things. They also have a long term care workbook for families. Let's make total use of it while the COG is there a lot of good things being put out by the COG do help with the enrichment for the county. One more thing I wanted to mention and I am real grateful for Colleton County that I was contacted by the South Carolina Association of Counties to serve on their board of directors. So you may see a release coming out about that in the coming days. We are just hopeful that is will be a real good plug for Colleton County. Happy New Year to everyone.

Mr. Murdaugh said he would like to follow-up with Councilman Taylor and congratulate Dr. Flowers and Councilman Taylor on their re-elections. We also had some newly elected officials in the county, Buddy Hill was elected Sheriff, Becky Hill was elected Clerk of Court and some re-elections involving the Coroner, Senator Matthews, our resident

Senator and would like to congratulate her as well. I just wanted to congratulate everyone and echo his sentiment with Happy New Year, Hopefully 2021 will certainly be better than 2020 was going forward.

No further actions were taken and the meeting was adjourned.

Date: _____

Steven D. Murdaugh, Chairman

ATTEST:

Ruth Mayer, Clerk to Council

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