

**MINUTES
COLLETON COUNTY COUNCIL
REGULAR MEETING
TUESDAY, JULY 30, 2019
6:00 P.M.
COUNTY COUNCIL CHAMBERS, OLD JAIL BUILDING**

Colleton County Council met in Regular Session on Tuesday, July 30, 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, Suhailah Beyah, A. Kinsey, Karla Daddieco, Audrey Stephens, Evestine Fryar, Brenda Brown, Stephanie Williams, Tracy Johnston, Kathie Smith, Susan Keith, Jean Harrigal, Anderson Grant, Rick Hawkins, Mathias Chaplin, Roosevelt Chaplin, Doretha Jenkins, Sharon Jordan, Dominiave Brown, Joenathan Chaplin, Erma Farmer, G. Kinsey, Viole Williams, Shirley Mitchell, Gracie Jarido, David Linder, Dr. Jacinta Bryant, Lorenzo Hills, Al Jenkins, Norman R. Hosey, Ladson Fishburn, Dr. Cordela Jenkins, Emily Williams, Cliff Warren, Kenny Blakney, Jeff Ament, Laura Clark, Georie Brown, Essie Bowles, Vivian McFadden

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

Approval of Minutes

Budget Meeting May 29, 2019

Regular Meeting June 4, 2019

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

The motion carried unanimously.

Awards and Recognitions

Proclaiming Gullah-Geechee Nation Appreciation Week

Dr. Flowers read the proclamation.

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

The motion carried unanimously.

Proclamation 'I Love Ruffin Day'

Dr. Flowers read the proclamation.

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

The motion carried unanimously.

Mr. Taylor pointed out that there were probably a few members present at the meeting and would like to see if they could stand and be recognized.

Dr. Flowers said he would like to give the proclamation to someone so they could present it at Ruffin Day.

Appearances & Public Presentations

none

Administrator's Briefing

Mr. Griffin said he had met with Ms. Kimberly Mullinax. She wanted me to give ya'll a few updates on our current CDBG projects. Our most longest lasting one, the Gadson Loop Neighborhood project, they are getting demo bids now being advertised for another six properties in the Gadson Loop area for demo. That should come to council at the September 10th meeting. Also, she said that had made offers to roughly eleven property owners for sidewalk easements there, the appraisals have been done, but those responses have been slow coming in. If you know any of those folks in that area, that is trying to get that sidewalk, on Peurifoy and Smith Street. The design plans are done and working on the permits, but they have to work through the sidewalk easements as well. They are starting to work on the street lighting there as well. The other big project that is kicking off now is the Stadium Demo Project. The environmental testing bids are out now. Those will be open for 15 days. Once that is completed and the environmental testing is done then that demo bid will likely be advertised sometime assuming the environmental testing doesn't take any more than 30-45 days, sometime the end of September to get that moving. We have had a number of questions about that one. Kenny Blakely is back there and I appreciate all of his help. He and I have been going back and forth trying to answer a good many of those questions. Thank you Kenny.

I wanted to remind you we have the Airport Commission open house is going to be 9:00am on September 20th and I think Councilman Taylor had a little more of an update on what is happening there.

I wanted to remind everyone because of Labor Day being on Monday, September 1, we have moved our council meeting to September 10, the 2nd Tuesday, instead of the 1st Tuesday.

Public Hearing

Ordinance 19-O-03, Approving An Application For Preliminary Certification for Historic Rehabilitation; and Other Matters Related Thereto.

No comments were made.

Old Business

2nd Reading Ordinance 19-O-04, Providing For Infrastructure Or Special Source Revenue Credits To Project Colony; Authorizing An Infrastructure Credit Agreement Between Colleton County And Project Colony; Providing For The Allocation Of Fees-In-Lieu Of Taxes Payable Under The Agreement For Development For A Joint County Industrial Park With Hampton County; Authorizing The Execution And Delivery Of A Fee-In-Lieu Of Tax Agreement By And Between Colleton County And Project Colony; To Further Amend The Multi-County Industrial/Business Park Agreement Between Colleton County And Hampton County Providing For A Joint County Industrial Park, So As To Include Additional Property In Colleton County As Part Of The Park; And Other Matters Relating

A motion to approve 2nd reading was made by Mr. Taylor and seconded by Mr. Whetsell

The motion carried unanimously.

3rd Reading Ordinance 19-O-03, Approving An Application For Preliminary Certification for Historic Rehabilitation; and Other Matters Related Thereto

A motion to approve 3rd reading was made by Mr. Taylor and seconded by Mr. Murdaugh.

The motion carried unanimously.

Resolution 19-R-44, To Establish Millage for School Operations for the Fiscal Year 2019-2020 Budget Year.

Mr. Murdaugh made a motion to adopt the resolution with the amendment to set the millage at 3 mills and was seconded by Mr. Taylor.

Mr. Murdaugh said he wanted to go on the record with this because this is a decision that has not come lightly. I have thought about this and we have been contacted with people, pro and con in favor of funding the district and in favor of not funding the district at all. My rationale for this is that the unfunded mandate of teacher's salaries or a portion of that four hundred and something thousand, it was kinda thrown on the district I think maybe unfairly by the legislature at the last moment and I don't think they have had adequate time to prepare, so I do think that they need the help with the funding in that regard. That being said my caveat is and I have no ...inaudible... the district needs to find within themselves, a way to cut their spending, particularly to give the classified employees their pay raise as well. I know it is not an easy process, we have gone through that with this council, but it appears we may be in for an additional round of increases in the coming years and now they have a warning and can start preparing for that. I know the school board has a meeting tonight, but I plan to talk to some of them to talk to some of them just to let them know that while I am willing to help them, I think they have got to start helping themselves some and they also need to take care of the classified staff as well as the procedure. For that reason that is why I am agreeing to do this. This is a tuff decision and may not set

well with everybody, but I wanted everyone know my position on this is that I think that it is a duty to help them with this teacher's salaries quote unquote unfunded mandate if you will ...inaudible...

Mr. Williams said his position is that if we don't fund our children's education then who will? We must fund our children's education. We look at other places, but we are always putting everything ahead of our children and then we wonder why our test scores are where they are at, I'm not saying throwing money at it is the issue, but it's a start. Once you start funding it properly, then you can hold people accountable, but when you don't fund it properly, you allow loopholes and excuses. I'm for holding people accountable, if they are using your resources, then you have the right to hold them accountable, but if you are not funding it adequately then how can you hold them responsible. Of course our educators need to be funded because if we don't fund it, I guarantee you that Beaufort, Dorchester, Berkley and Charleston County just love a well-trained teacher. We don't have to worry about continue ...inaudible... I can assure you that other districts are waiting for trained teachers.

Dr. Flowers said he wanted to point out a few things relative to this. None of us like to raise taxes because once you raise taxes it is a permanent tax. I have never seen taxes go down, they always go up. One of issues that we have, 1st of all we've got less students in our county than we have had in a long while. Our demographics indicate that this is going to be a trend for the foreseeable future in our county. We are having more older people moving in and young people moving out, so our demographics show that our student population is going to go down. They are spending more money and they have less students. ...inaudible... We provided a millage increase last year, provided a millage increase in 2016, and are asking for another millage increase now. Our present millage is 113 operating and our total millage is 167.5 mills at the present time because the debt service has to be made by the same people that are paying for the other part of the education process. The school board has elected to spend seven million dollars to renovate Forest Circle School for administrative purposes. That's a lot of money. I just wonder if that money could not be spent better in the classroom. Also increase in the millage makes our county less attractive to industry. We want new industry to come in so we will have a better tax base. We can't compete with Charleston County, Beaufort County and even Dorchester County because our tax base being ...inaudible... as far as businesses is concerned. We have got to attract businesses in here so that our own people when they get through school have a place to work. This is a fact. Small businesses are going get the blunt of this tax increase. Small businesses in our county struggle a lot now and they don't have a lot of resources to increase their payment of taxes. We can't continue to cover unfunded mandates from the State. Every year we get unfunded mandates from the State of South Carolina. The school gets them, we get them, everybody gets them. Our Legislators are going to have to be held accountable to the local people to fund these programs, so they mandate things. When they don't fund them adequately our poor rural counties get hurt the most because we just don't have the tax base for this. This year in our county I want to bring out the fact that our total projected expenditure is 68.3 billion dollars. That is a lot of money for Colleton County. My thought is I think out of 68.3 billion dollars some fat can be cut somewhere that would cover this

less than ½ of 1% shortfall that we are seeing here right now. That is my problem with the tax increase that is being proposed here.

The motion carried 3-2 (Flowers and Whetsell opposing)

New Business

Resolution 19-R-45, To Approve Appointments to the Lowcountry Workforce Investment Board.

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

The motion carried 4-1 (Williams opposing)

Resolution 19-R-46, To Authorize the Council Clerk to Advertise for Board Vacancies.

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

The motion carried unanimously.

Resolution 19-R-47, To Authorize the Waiver of Various Fees for the Summer 2019 Mission Serve Home Repair Program.

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

The motion carried unanimously.

Resolution 19-R-48, To Authorize Renewal of an Agreement Between Colleton County and the South Carolina Department of Juvenile Justice for the Housing/Detention of Juveniles.

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

The motion carried unanimously.

Resolution 19-R-49, To Authorize Acceptance and Budgeting of Various Grants for FY 2019-2020.

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

The motion carried unanimously.

Resolution 19-R-50, To Declare Surplus Various Vehicles and Authorize Their Sale in Accordance with County Policy.

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

The motion carried unanimously.

Resolution 19-R-51, To Approve Purchase of a Kenworth Truck with a Knuckle Boom Trash Loader and Dump Body as Included in the 2018-2019 Lease Purchase.

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

The motion carried unanimously.

Resolution 19-R-52, To Appoint Member to Board Vacancy.

Ballots were given to council members. (three applicants had applied for one position on Keep Colleton Beautiful).

Results of ballots: William Smyly unanimous (5-0)

Items for Information and Public Record

None

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

Sue Keith – September 16th at 6:00PM at the Colleton County Museum, there will be a meeting of the Colleton County Legislative Delegation. Everyone is invited.

Mathias Chaplin – I thought Sen. Margie Bright-Matthews was going to be here tonight, but she couldn't. I am here to inform County Council of a problem & hopefully you will take it upon yourselves to investigate this matter. A year or two ago \$400,000 was allocated to build a Community Center for the citizens of Colleton County. Not just Neyles, but all of the communities within in Colleton County. That community center and the administrator is well aware is being built, however it is supposed to represent all the citizens, but the board that is controlling the building of this community center and the management and day to day operations only consists of members from Neyles community. This is not to be a Neyles Community Center. This is to be a Colleton County Community Center and that is what Senator Margie Bright-Matthews clearly said in her letter, when you requisitioned this money. I think that County Council has a duty to investigate this matter and look into and try to insure that all of your constituents are fully represented in this new center and to insure that the board is consisting of members from each community in Colleton County and not just Neyles Community. Now that I have made you aware of this matter and now that you are on notice of this matter I feel certain that you will act responsibly.

Anderson Grant Jr. – My question I think has already been discussed, resolution 19-R-45 and 19-R-46. Mid January I placed an application for one of the boards. Have never received an official response to my application. I followed up in June to the reason why I have not gotten any contact from the clerk or from council concerning why my application may have been turned down. Why was I not contacted. The answer I got was not satisfactory with me. My other question is at that particular meeting in June, I asked if there were any other boards available from your minutes now, I see that there was a board available, but I was not made aware of it. I come to county council and you say you encourage members of the community to apply for these different board vacancies, but you have an application. How do you dispose of these applications once that particular board position has been filled? Do you just garbage them or do you hold on to them for future reference and refer back to them and find what that individual is interested in one of the other boards that have come available. That is my question to council. You encourage folks to apply, but when they do apply then they get no feedback.

Audrey Stevens – I am sponsoring the Palmetto Breeze bus. We have been on that bus for 30 years. Back & forth, Ruffin, Smoaks, Catholic Hill, White Hall, Yemassee, and Walterboro. I have been on my couple for a couple of years. They are going to stop the bus. How can we get our retirement or anything? We need that bus. That is a sure ride back and forth. My mother went on that bus, my father, everybody. Now my children going on that bus. We bring all that money back to Walterboro. Our shelter food and everything. Dr. Flowers, my mother went to you, my father, these people right here. We need that bus. Fund us something please. That bus is a sure ride. It gets us back and forth. I would like to have an answer and I beg you.

Council Time

Mr. Williams said 1st of all, I would like to find out from the attorney as to whether if you are on the prevailing side of a vote and it is after 30 days can we make another motion and I do know we did have it on the agenda and if necessary we can put in on the agenda for next month and I am sure they would not mind waiting, but here is where I am going. When we initially got the information from Palmetto Breeze, I too was one of the ones that agreed that we needed to cut the service going to Hilton Head/Bluffton simply because we are not in the business of supplying employees for other counties when we have a need here. I personally after talking to the administrator and economic development director, they pointed me out to workforce development. I went there, sat down with the workforce development person and they showed me that in Colleton County we had over 1,000 jobs in Colleton County that wasn't filled. At that time when I came back to the meeting, then the only thing that I could see at that time was we need to supply the workers here in Colleton County and not pay for the services of those in Bluffton and Hilton Head. After talking to some of the employees there, then my perception changed simply because I feel that we just snatched the rug from under them and away although they should have been here to address it when we were having the hearings. Hine site always 20/20, so my thought process is now since we have many of them that are almost near retirement, is that we reconsider and at least extend the bus service for one more year with the understanding that next year we are not going to fund somebody else's problem and I am not talking about the employees as being the problem, I am talking

about Hilton Head and Bluffton. I have been to stores here within the last three months where there were signs on the doors that said they were closed because we don't have anybody to work in it. I have been inside a store when a young lady asked me pick up the pace a little bit because she was the only one working and she had been there all day and didn't have a relief and she was getting ready to close the store. All those things happened before I made my decision and now after hearing from the people that it effected I'm not too proud to ask that we put it back on the agenda if it is legal and see if we can get some of the other council members to agree with one more year extension to give these people an opportunity, if they choose to stay there that is up to them, but we are not going to fund transportation for them, they would have their own private source.

Mr. Griffin said that particular item in the budget, there wasn't a negative vote on it because we never funded that particular route. We funded \$5,000 last budget year and increased our funding this current budget year to \$49,000. From \$5,000 to \$49,000, so there was no negative vote. It could just be put back on the agenda as an individual item.

Mr. Williams said okay because when we voted we voted not to fund it, so that is why.

Mr. Griffin said voted not to fund it, but we did not de-fund it.

Mr. Murdaugh said maybe I had a misconception, I understood we offered the funding. We funded one component what they were asking for and decreased the funding on the other. I did not have the understanding that they were discontinuing the service. I thought they were going to find a way to fund it because we were funding the other. What was the amount of the funding I don't remember now?

Discussion among council members.

Mr. Williams said if the administrator says he can find the funds because it wasn't taken out, then by all means let's get a vote next

Mr. Griffin said that is not exactly what I was saying. What I am saying is last year we funded Palmetto Breeze \$5,000. This current budget now FY20 we increased that funding from \$5,000-\$49,000 to cover the local Palmetto Breeze bus because that Federal Funding had run out. That provided the match for that. We never have funded the bus coming from here to Hilton Head. My understanding Hilton Head and the Beaufort businesses provided the majority of the funding in the match for that, which they did not do this year. That is what was discussed with us in the budget meeting.

Mr. Williams said okay, but they did come to us for an additional \$27,000 and when they came to us for the additional \$27,000, we had five votes against, so that is what I am trying to clear up. If we had five votes against, how can we still fund them the \$27,000 if that is what it is going to take to get the bus continuing to operate.

Dr. Flowers said we have never funded them that much money since I have been on council. We have been funding the about \$5,000 - \$10,000. We have never funded

\$27,000. They always make requests for more funding than we are capable to fund. Because of the local bus requiring this match money, it took all the funds we had available and put it into that. This what we did. We will have to see if we have any funds ...TAPE RAN OUT AT THIS POINT.....

Mr. Murdaugh said we were giving them \$5,000 they were providing the service. We increased it from \$5,000 to \$49,000, I know they put this other route in, for them to take away that service, what is it going to take for them. I don't know if the service is stopped now or if they are telling them it is going to stop.

Individual from audience- June 30th they were going to stop and my company, our companies gave money for the bus to run to July 30th. Today is the last day.

Dr. Flowers asked the individual what company did she work for.

Individual – I work for Seabrook Nursing Home. I have been there for like 16 years.

Mr. Thornton, county attorney interrupted – Councilman Williams and Mr. Chairman in answer to your question earlier, you would need to wait until the next time simply because there are two reasons. One it wasn't on the agenda, which you could rectify normally, but since we have already passed public comments and everything else all the way down to the end of the meeting, you would need to do that at your next meeting.

Mr. Taylor said he wanted to make mention for our citizens that our one cent sales tax went to work for us. We do have our operations moved into our newly renovated airport. No property tax dollars were used to do that with. We had a special \$500,000 award from the SC Aeronautics Commission as well as funds used from the Lowcountry Regional Airport Commission. Dr. Flowers and myself does sit on that commission and we just wanted to make the public aware we are out of our temporary space and the new airport operations are in place and we will have open house coming up soon. I also wanted to make mention, I don't know how many of you are aware of the graphic nature of the violence that our county saw in the last couple of days. Horrific murders have taken place. There is a public outcry regarding it. There is going to be a march against violence on August 17th. We have permits for people to bring signage and things like that will be joined by some organizations from around the country. Starts at 10:00 am at the courthouse on Hampton Street and will go to Pinckney Park and then we will proceed to St. Center Ministries for a back to school bash.

Dr. Flowers said one thing he would like to mention relative to the gentleman about the applications for commissions, each time we have a vacancy we have to advertise to the local media and you can make an application one time and then you have to do another application again if you want to be considered for another post.

Executive Session

- a. Contractual
 - 1. Colleton Center
 - 2. Election Commission
 - 3. Recreation

- b. Economic Development
 - 1. Project Global

- c. Legal
 - 1. Opioid Litigation

Regular session

Mr. Taylor made a motion to authorize the administrator to enter into a MOU with the S.C Election Commission and was seconded by Mr. Murdaugh.

The motion carried unanimously.

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**