

**MINUTES
COLLETON COUNTY COUNCIL
VIRTUAL REGULAR MEETING
TUESDAY, SEPTEMBER 1, 2020
6:00 P.M.**

Colleton County Council met on Tuesday, September 1, 2020 at 6:00 PM, Virtually. Steven Murdaugh called the meeting to order with Council Members Gene Whetsell, Dr. Joseph Flowers, Art Williams, Phillip Taylor in attendance (via zoom)

Others included: Kevin Griffin, Ruth Mayer, Sean Thornton, Jon Carpenter, Meagan Utsey, Larry Lightsey, Shane Roberts, Carla Harvey, Charles Ghent, Michael Butler

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

Approval of Minutes

Regular Meeting August 4, 2020

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

The motion carried unanimously.

Appearances & Public Presentations

Michael Butler, Workforce Dev. Dir.- Workforce Regional/Local Strategic 4 Year Plan

Mr. Butler gave an overview of the plan and opened the floor for any questions.

There were no questions.

Larry Lightsey, 2020 Census Update

Mr. Lightsey gave an overview of how the 2020 Census was going.

Administrator's Briefing

Mr. Griffin - Larry has put in a lot of work with the Census at a very tuff time with trying to implement such a plan with the COVID-19. The COG is staying on top of this helping us, we are coming up with a number of different programs. Just last week everyone in the Summer Feeding Program, we sent out flyers with them to try to make contact. One of the areas we are having the hardest time in, is the lower part of the county to try and get contact down there. There are a number of things that are coming up here through the month of September that we are really going to be hitting hard. I'm sure he will come back and expand on that as well. I am also going to tell you in a minute about an effort that SCAC and a number of other organizations we just found out about yesterday will be doing the end of September. Although the numbers are down from where we were this

time last year, we are actually leading our region, Colleton County is, in comparison to Hampton, Jasper, & Beaufort as far as our census response numbers and we actually for the 1st time went blue last week on our census map. If you look at the state map it runs almost to the number of the rural counties are the ones that are undercounted and the urban areas are the ones with the higher count rates. I don't know if you attribute that to better communication in those urban areas or a higher access to broadband and internet and those type things. There is another number of factors cause I promise you we have pushed out there and done far above what was done here in 2010 to try to move things forward. Hopefully these efforts we can do in the next month we can push that over to at least get it up to 60-65 percent, I am hoping. That is one trend that oddly the Rural Areas are not being counted as well as the more Urban Areas.

We sent out I believe August 21st a packet of budget information. As you know we are currently operating under a continuing resolution 20/21 Budget Year. Comptroller General, Richard Eckstrom, just closed the books on the 20/20 Budget Year for the State. Said S.C. ended with Seven Hundred Seventy Five million Surplus, hopefully some of that maybe could come back down to the counties. Both the House and the Senate plan a special session starting September 15th to finish the budget. As you know with the information we sent out right now we are looking at a roughly One Million Dollar shortfall for the 2020/2021 Budget Year. Things are still relatively fluid with that, since we sent out the latest information out to County Council we have had some positive revenue news with a couple of grants we are working on in 2021. Hopefully these will help soften the blow. We are set to receive one hundred and twenty-one thousand dollars in COVID-19 reimbursements that was not budgeted in the information that we sent out to you. We just found out about this last week. We also have a Disaster Relief Application in regards to the tornado. That is looking really good and if that is approved it would put about three hundred and eighty thousand dollars into the Budget, so those are two one-time revenues that would help us out in the upcoming year of around a half million dollars. As far as the State Budget, approval goes out standing in the State Budget is roughly a two hundred twenty-nine thousand dollar expenditure 1% retirement employer match. This was postponed in the General Assembly ...inaudible... moved budget session to September to try to wait and see what revenues do. Hopefully that will be postponed throughout the year. That would be a help. We also have our fingers crossed FY19 & 20 non state participating employers were provided a 1% credit. We are hoping for those to continue, if for some reason they weren't, you are looking at a number roughly \$178,000 in expenditures. We also don't know right now if the 1% health insurance increase will be mandated. That's another \$52,000. We budgeted it based on current coverage. With the State Budget right now we are looking at roughly \$450,000 in expenditures still hanging in the balance for the county. There is also some possibility of some COVID relief being added in the State Budget for Local Governments or an increase the Local Government Fund to help offset these expenses. A lot of things are being talked about, obviously nothing is in stone as far as that. In discussing with the chairman, we thought it may be best to wait until the General Assembly finishes their budget work before we schedule a budget meeting to try finalize and put some plans together on getting this budget passed for this year. This means we will likely be having a budget meeting

sometime the 3rd or 4th week in September to try to finalize our budget at the October meeting.

A couple of project updates, these are CBDG project updates. The Gadsden Loop Neighborhood Program has been going on since 2016 now. We have cleared environmental review, the exterior rehab has been done, asbestos testing, all the demo is being done, they finished streetlights. We are working on the very final phase, which is the acquisition of the sidewalk easements, which has taken some time. We've now got four of those signed up out of nine. We got one donated and one condemnation in progress. We are hoping to have all those put together in the next month and a half and get this project closed by the end of the year. We need to get it closed because we cannot open another CDBG round until such time that one is closed.

The stadium demo project – the demo has been completed. The project is now working on some re-grassing of the area, there is some grubbing that still needs to be done around the perimeter and that process is underway as well as the bid is out now for perimeter fencing to be installed around the property as well as some lighting to be added there. That project should close on time by the end of the year.

Another outstanding project is the Eastside Water Project goes hand and hand with ...inaudible... around H & D and that area that had some water issues. That one is moving forward rapidly and is scheduled to close ahead of schedule, which was June 2021.

We still have an outstanding application on the Buckner Building. We do hope to hear from that within the next 2-3 weeks so hopefully by the next meeting I'll have some info on that. We have gone ahead and done the asbestos testing on the Buckner Building. We also have the asbestos testing for the Ivenia Brown School to be demolished. That will be the sight for the new Greenpond Community Center. Hope to have that moving within the next 60 days, at least out to bid.

Regarding the census, we got some conversations back and forth with the SCAC finally got some stuff finalized. We understand yesterday that SCAC is helping lead an effort called SC Counts. This is a statewide day of action. There is a collaborative effort SC Counts 2020, the United Way of South Carolina, South Carolina Women in Leadership, SC DEHEC, SCAC, and the Municipal Association of SC and a number of other organizations are putting together a Statewide Civic day of engagement. This will take place on Saturday, September 26th from 9:00AM until 4:00PM. The objective of this event is to offer a one stop shop for residents to complete Census Forms, to have access to COVID-19 testing, free flu shots, and complete Voter Registration and Absentee Voter Registration forums. Larry is going to be leading us along with David Greene as well as Angela over at Voter Registration. We will have a meeting on that in the morning and have more information back out to you on the exact location later in the week.

Mr. Taylor – You talked about the COVID money that came down. Is that the Federal dollars that came down, did we get any of that money for a county like ours?

Mr. Griffin – No this is the CARES ACT Funding this the reimbursement for the direct COVID expenses like PP&E those type things is what this funding is for.

Mr. Taylor – The funding we were left out of in the original funding.

Mr. Griffin – That is correct. The original round only included local government funding for jurisdictions of ½ a million or more in population, so the rural areas were left out of that original. There is some talk in the second round of hopefully getting some help back down to the rural governments as well, but no there was none of that included in the 1st bill. What we are doing now is direct impacts that we've had from COVID on our Fire-Rescue, 1st responders, those type things as well as any other resources we have had to buy reimbursed as far as that is concerned.

Mr. Williams- I noticed to spoke about the project at the Old Football Stadium. Is the fence and lighting a part of the grant.

Mr. Griffin- yes it will be paid for as part of the grant.

New Business

Emergency Ordinance 20-O-07, 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 Mr. Whetsell and seconded by Mr. Taylor.

Mr. Williams said he did support the covering, that is not the issue, but when I go throughout the day when I am out there in stores, many of the merchants are not wearing masks or some of the people going in and if we are going to have an ordinance in place, what are we going to do about and I know we can't enforce 100%, but we should strive for that, what are we going to do with some of these vendors that are just determined that there employees are not going to wear mask so therefore when an individual comes in and they are breathing all over you because they are not wearing a mask, the business folks can't say anything because they are not wearing a mask, so do we have any ways of at least trying to enforce an ordinance in place.

Mr. Murdaugh said well of course the ordinance it's self-spells out what the penalties would be and how it is enforced, but I would agree with you that it's a owners task trying to enforce that. I don't have t solution for it, but I have witnessed the same thing you are talking about. Does anybody else want to speak to that? How we could go about enforcing that.

Sheriff Ghent said we have been approaching these as we get complaints and in the county we have not gotten the complaints like what the City does. I don't want to speak for Chief Marvin, but we try to approach this from an educational standpoint in terms of

educating people and telling them what the penalties are and we are seeing in the cases when we do that, generally speaking we are getting compliance. We are having some issues with ...inaudible... bars in the areas and we have reached out to our State partners as far as enforcing those, but until we get the call/report we can't decide what our course of action is, so initially I would say is if you see something that concerns you can call us and let us know about it.

Dr. Flowers said he thought it was an un-enforceable law I think we need to educate people about the dangers of the COVID virus, but I don't know how you can make people be compliance with something that would help their own health. Just like people won't take the flu shots. I think it is an individual responsibility that people aren't taking seriously unfortunately.

The motion carried unanimously.

1st Reading Ordinance 20-O-08, To Approve Designation of the Colleton County Planning Commission as the Official Planning Commission for the Town of Lodge

A motion to approve 1st reading was made by Dr. Flowers and seconded by Mr. Whetsell.

The motion carried unanimously.

Resolution 20-R-35, To Award the Contract for Debris Monitoring and Recovery Services

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

Mr. Williams said he supported the process, but his question was are the evaluation criteria that is being used and I see where a veteran company gets additional points, what happens if I am a newly formed company, I have some great employees, but then I bid on a project and the evaluation criteria is subjective, how would that help me as a young business person to compete fairly.

Mr. Murdaugh said I guess the best answer I could give for it and I'll ask Mr. Griffin if he would like to comment, I would think that experience is just one of the criteria. If a new company exceeds in the other areas, I assume they could potentially win the bid, Mr. Griffin would like to add any other comment to that.

Mr. Griffin said I was going to defer to Carla to see if you had anything to add as far as the criteria goes and how you all handle that process.

Ms. Carla Harvey (County Engineer) said we have that in there just to insure that we have someone who has knowledge of the process and especially FEMA especially when it comes to the reimbursements side of it. We have to make sure that they are knowledgeable and know the process. A new start company could potentially be successful if they can show that they have worked with other companies in order to get

that knowledge. We just have to make sure from the FEMA side of things that you insure our reimbursement, that we have a company that is very knowledgeable of the rules and regulations and with disasters like a disaster that we would have here. We make sure they can handle hurricanes and tornados and whatever disaster that we may experience here that they are capable of that to the scale we would need. Not a super small company that has only done one little disaster. We make sure they can cover all of our needs.

Mr. Murdaugh – Carla, I know we have these three resolutions before us Debris Monitoring & Recovery Services, we have Removal & Disposal and I am pretty clear on that, then we have Debris Management & Disaster Recovery Services, can you kinda just tell me just what each of these providers are doing so I have a better understanding.

Ms. Carla Harvey – We have the 1st push contract which is the debris removal and disposal services that was CC29. This is the contractor that is going to come in within the 1st 72 hrs. after the storm event. Come in an immediately be here and help us clear roadways, repair washouts, drainage issues, and that sort of things, so that is the 1st push. That is within the 1st 72 hrs. Then we have the debris management & disaster recovery services. That is our large scale debris contractor, so he comes in after the 72 hrs. Once the residents have had a chance to stack things on the curb, he comes in with the really big truck, picks up everything off the curb, creates the debris site where he will mulch it or burn it or do a disposal part of it. The much larger contractor that comes here and is here sometime for several months picking up the resident debris from the right of way and whether that debris is vegetative or C&D or white goods, whatever we need. That also has the disaster recovery element in there so if we need special services, such as generators or vessels removed from waterways and things like that, they can cover all that stuff. They are a very large national company that has a lot of resources that can bring to us. The other one, the one we are talking about right now is CC28, that's the debris monitoring, so everything we touch has to be monitored by a FEMA, you know FEMA requires us to monitor everything that the contractors are doing and then report in on that just to insure that we are doing everything properly, so we have all the documentation. We have to take photograph, get GPS locations, insure the amount of debris, we have to measure that, so the monitors measure the amount debris in the trucks and make sure it is disposed of properly. That is a FEMA requirement that we have the monitoring.

Mr. Murdaugh- We get reimbursed based on that....TAPE RAN OUT....

Mr. Taylor- Have you seen some inflated pricing on things that are coming in through this last series of events where we had to have debris removed and then at any time the other part of the question in the monitoring do they see where any sub-contractors are being used to do this work in their monitoring?

Ms. Harvey- As far as cost, I looked at the pricing received for all three of these and compared them to our three current contracts and some of those are relatively older

now like the one for AshBritt, that's our large scale debris contractor, his numbers were actually the same or very close as they were 5 years ago when did that one. The same is true for the monitoring. They are very close numbers and with the 1st post contractor. Our numbers are staying the same and if they went up they only went up \$5.00 or something like that. No significant increases at all in the costs. As far as the monitoring goes that company typically hires local and trains local folks to assist them on the monitoring, so yes there is some sub-contracting when it comes to monitoring itself they will typically hire a local person. Now, we do look at that local contracting in all of them to make sure they can meet our needs, so the large scale debris contractor does have contacts here locally that he can use as well as national contractors that he can bring in from outside. For instance, when we just had the tornado, he hired someone from Summerville to do all the grinding to reduce the debris at the landfill. So, even though they are out of Florida, he still hired someone here local to complete that work and then of course the 1st push contractor, they are local here to Colleton County so they can be here as soon as the event is over.

The motion carried unanimously.

Resolution 20-R-36, To Award the Contract for Emergency Debris Removal and Disposal Services

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

The motion carried unanimously.

Resolution 20-R-37, To Award the Contract for Debris Management and Disaster Recovery Services

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

The motion carried unanimously.

Resolution 20-R-38, To Appoint Members to Board Vacancies

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

Board of Disabilities & Special Needs: James M. Bunton, Jr., Jasmine Douglas
Colleton County Planning Commission: Adam Bishop
Edisto River Canoe & Kayak Trail Committee: John Burroughs

The motion carried unanimously.

Resolution 20-R-39, To Approve a Master Services Agreement Between Colleton County and Smart Communications Holding, Inc.

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

The motion carried unanimously.

Council Time

Mr. Taylor – Wanted to recognize a silent moment for Mable Hendricks, who was a member of our sheriff's department as a Victims Advocate for a number of years and she past in recent weeks with a beautiful celebration of life ceremony.

Mr. Williams – Thanks to the administrator and John Stieglitz and Bill Washington and his Roads & Bridges crew, they did an excellent job of removing the debris from around the Old Ivenia Brown School. The community certainly does appreciate that.

There is a couple of things I would like to request since we are not making any progress on the meeting that we had requested and I understand the Pandemic is a part of it, it slowed down the initial process, but still the government work must go on. I would like to request a list of all active contracts that have more than 1 year remaining. I would also like to ask for a weekly report so we can stay abreast with some of the things that are actually happening. I know there are times when we do get streamlined, but we do have enough people on staff that we certainly should be able to get a report weekly to keep us abreast of what's happened that week or what is ...inaudible... the week ahead. Until we can have ...inaudible... I would like to see if those things could be done.

Mr. Murdaugh- To make sure I am clear, you are talking about weekly report as it relates to progress on the budget?

Mr. Williams - No I am talking about things that goes on in the county. A report the same way we expect the South Carolina Association of Counties to give us a weekly report to keep us abreast of some of the things that are taking place on the State level with them, then I think that...inaudible... keep relying on the Press & Std. not that I have anything against them, but I don't want to rely on them for information that I receive and there is some procedures at some point we need to have some guidelines or something. This is 21 since I have been on council and we haven't had a sit down discussion among the council members. I don't have anything negative towards the administrator, because I think he is doing a fine job, but it is just that the process is what I am concerned about. Case and point would be the bids and proposals that are actually going out, well yes he is hired to make sure those things are done, but who prioritized and what project is next in the pipe. I didn't see any documentation that tells me that we got project "X" is on the easel that is going to be done next. It's no time line that is set up and I would like personally to be more involved in selecting some of the projects that are deemed necessary the next process not put it all on the administrator's back although he is capable of handing it, but I still want to do my share.

Mr. Murdaugh asked if the administrator was still there.

Mr. Griffin - I apologize, I am here, I had it on full screen. That is not a problem we can. Councilman Williams I will probably contact you individually to see exactly what you are looking for in a weekly report. We will figure out how that could function if that is okay with you.

Mr. Williams said that is fine. We can have a one on one.

Mr. Griffin said thank you.

Mr. Murdaugh said he didn't have a problem with it. I don't want it to get so detailed to the level that you are spending most of your week just trying to come up with a report and not actually doing the work of the county, but at the same time, obviously we are in some austere times here with the Pandemic and having a report would be helpful too, but if it is just something in sort of a summary form I don't have a problem with that.

Mr. Taylor- Just in line with it in terms of that I had a conversation with Sheriff Ghent and I hope he doesn't mind me mentioning this, but in terms of us and our responsibility for public safety and health and wellness of people in the county and I talked to him about it, maybe we could see maybe a quarterly report or something from the Sheriff's Office too. We kinda get a handle of things going on in the county, but we don't have to get everything from the social media/networks where we are getting hit blindsided and there may things they can supply without interfering with their investigations. I just told him I want to see him here a little bit more besides when it is a contract or budget issue. Maybe we could hear a little more from law enforcement.

Sheriff Ghent- I think we could certainly update you on some crime trends and things that we are seeing as they come up. I think we all kinda expected this year to be one we had a lot more interaction, a lot more chances to sit down, but I am certainly willing to work around that and see what we can do to get ya'll a little more information.

Mr. Murdaugh – I wanted to point out I know we are scheduling this budget meeting and in case anybody is wondering our continuing resolution runs through October, so we are operating on a budget. It is just that it is a continuing resolution which may end up being our budget the way things are going, but I just wanted to point that out.

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**