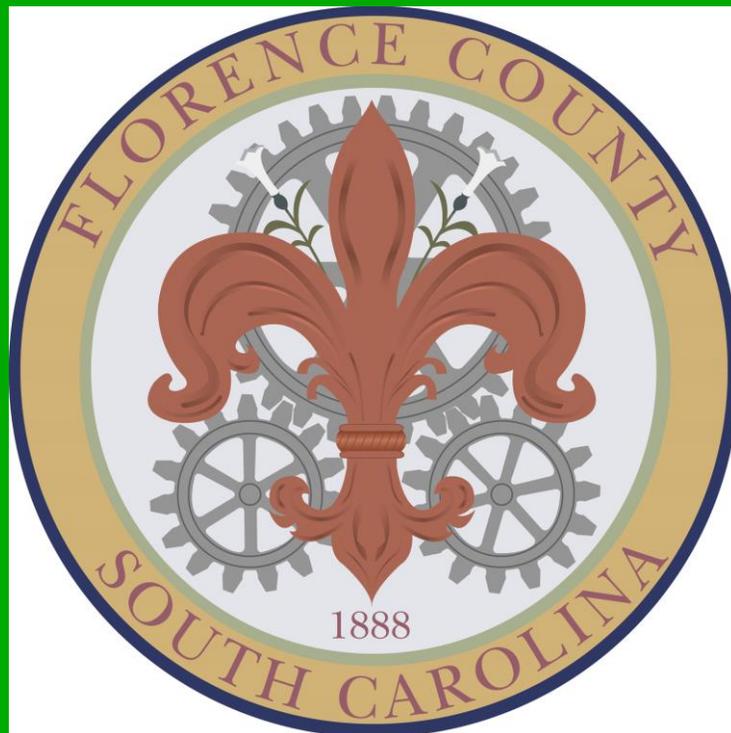


***FLORENCE COUNTY COUNCIL
COMMITTEE ON
ADMINISTRATION & FINANCE
COUNTY COMPLEX
COUNCIL CONFERENCE ROOM
ROOM 804
180 N. IRBY STREET
FLORENCE, SC***



***TUESDAY
MARCH 9, 2021
10:00 A.M.***

V. DISCUSSION ITEMS:

Economic Development Contractual Matter

VI. OTHER BUSINESS:

VII. ADJOURN:

Committee on Administration & Finance

October 1, 2019

AGENDA ITEM: Minutes

DEPARTMENT: County Council

ISSUE UNDER CONSIDERATION:

Council Is Requested To Approve The Minutes Of The March 28, 2019 Meeting Of County Council's Committee On Administration & Finance.

OPTIONS:

1. Approve minutes as presented.
2. Provide additional directive, should revisions be necessary.

ATTACHMENTS:

Copy of proposed Minutes.

**COMMITTEE ON ADMINISTRATION & FINANCE, THURSDAY,
MARCH 28, 2019, AT 8:00 A.M., CONFERENCE ROOM, ROOM 804,
COUNTY COMPLEX, 180 N. IRBY ST., FLORENCE, SOUTH CAROLINA**

PRESENT:

Waymon Mumford, County Council Chairman
Mitchell Kirby, Council Committee Member
James T. Schofield, Council Committee Member
Willard Dorriety, Jr., Council Committee Member
K. G. Rusty Smith, Jr., County Administrator
Kevin V. Yokim, Finance Director

ALSO PRESENT:

Roger M. Poston, Council Member
Kent C. Caudle, Council Committee Member
H. Steven DeBerry, IV, Council Member
Connie Y. Haselden, Clerk to Council
Rocky Pearce, Economic Development Partnership Board Chair
Matthew Christian, Morning News Staffwriter

Copies of the meeting Agenda were posted in the lobby of the County Complex, the Drs. Bruce and Lee Foundation Public Library and provided to the media and others requesting copies of meeting agendas in compliance with the Freedom of Information Act requirements for notice of meetings.

Chairman Mumford called the meeting to order. Councilman Dorriety provided the invocation and Councilman Schofield led the Pledge of Allegiance to the American Flag.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES – MAY 23, 2018 MEETING

Councilman Schofield made a motion to approve the Minutes of the May 23, 2018 Committee Meeting. Councilman Dorriety seconded the motion, which was approved unanimously.

PRESENTATION – 76 CORRIDOR ENHANCEMENT UPDATE

Chairman Mumford stated the next item on the Agenda was a Presentation on the 76 Corridor Enhancement. Mr. Smith stated he had often said that ‘you only have one chance to make a good first impression.’ In February, Council approved a Resolution to Adopt the 76 Gateway Corridor Study. This project was done to develop the corridor and find the right balance between growth, beauty, transportation and community needs. The study initially began in February 2015 with a steering committee comprised of representatives of the County, City, FMU, Airport, SCDOT, PDRTA, McLeod Hospital and the private sector. A planning grant was received initially to begin the project. Mr. Smith asked Planning Director Shawn Brashear to provide an overview of the 76 Corridor Enhancement Study. Opportunity was given for public input with surveys being

sent out and several meetings held at the library and one at a local church. The area encompassed from just beyond Church Street to just beyond Francis Marion University past the fairgrounds. One of the recommendations from the study was zoning and overlay districts. The study provided recommendations with signage to introduce visitors to the various districts as they travel the gateway. Mr. Brashear stated that the study did not include the Highway 327 corridor, which in his opinion needed to be addressed as well. The study included safety statistics and transportation information. The Fiscal Year 2019/2020 budget included a request for funding to address recommendations with regard to zoning and overlay. One of the recommendations for the 'Aviation District' was to install stop signs along the frontage road at the airport to slow traffic down and improve traffic flow as vehicular traffic turns off of Palmetto Street onto frontage road. Mr. Brashear stated that the projected costs to implement the recommendations for the study were approximately \$2.5 million. Mr. Smith stated that what precipitated this study was that when prospects were flown in for a potential economic development project, that corridor was the entryway so many times a circuitous route was taken to avoid bringing prospects into Florence via that corridor. From a financial perspective, all of the recommendations in the study could not be addressed at one time but gradually, especially if re-imposition of the capital project sales tax was considered, the project could be addressed in phases. (A copy of the presentation is attached and incorporated by reference.)

PRESENTATION – TRANSPARENCY/OPENGOV

Mr. Smith stated that in an effort to continue the County's effort on operational transparency the County had undertaken, through the website, Council meeting broadcasts and communication with media, he felt it was prudent to offer a presentation on a software program called OpenGov. Mr. Smith stated that OpenGov was a web based fiscal transparency application that takes a government's financial data and transforms it into graphical images. It allowed citizens to analyze data in numerous ways. Finance Director Kevin Yokim presented an overview of the program. It was the consensus of the Committee to direct staff to move forward with implementation of the program.

DISCUSSION – FISCAL YEAR 2019/20 BUDGET UPDATE

Mr. Smith stated that moving forward to the budget update, once again the County faced many obstacles as it continued the descent into the Age of 88 (or Act 388 to be specific). In the previous year, he expressed appreciation to Kevin and his staff for developing a 'rather austere budget' in the shadows of Act 388. He also mentioned that, as "Mr. Schofield likes to relate my miserly ways" were much needed in these very lean times of revenue with Act 388 and the millage cap. Until the Legislature restored full funding of the LFG or Act 388 was amended the County would continue to face the same obstacles year in and year out.

At the FY19/20 budget kick-off meeting Mr. Yokim again reiterated his austere message of "doing more with less" which had unfortunately become the mantra of the Legislature to limit County's ability to protect and serve. When the budget requests were received in finance the requests exceeded the FY18/19 budget by \$5,300,000.00, which of course meant that the lion's share of this amount would have to be deleted in order to present a balanced budget at the April 18th meeting. Mr. Yokim and his staff had worked extremely hard to present a balanced budget and Council might receive calls due to budget cuts, but it was necessary in order to present a balanced budget.

On a positive note there were 3 potential increases in revenue that might be realized. Thanks to the appointment of Representative Murrell Smith as Chairman of the House Ways & Means Committee, a 5% increase in the LGF might be included in the State's budget, which extrapolates into a \$250,000.00 increase in revenue for the County. Secondly, the County has seen an increase in property tax base by about 1.3% per year. If a similar rise was experienced this year it would equate to an increase in the General Fund of \$300,000.00. Lastly, the aforementioned Act 388 caps the ability to raise millage. This year's cap, if Council so desired, would be 1.5 mils or the equivalent of \$650,000.00 for additional revenue to the General Fund.

However, on the other side of the balance sheet, the County faced formidable tasks of dealing with known and/or contemplated increases. The first of these was the State mandated 1% increase of the employer contribution percentage for both the State Retirement System and the Police Officers Retirement System, which had a negative financial impact of \$291,000.00 for this year and going forward. Also, the statewide health insurance premiums continued to increase with a minimal impact of \$50,000.00. Staff had been doing everything possible to minimize escalations and felt confident the health & wellness initiatives had assisted in maximizing health and minimizing increases. On January 1, 2020, the experience mod would decrease from 23.1 to 5.6, which was attributed to the health clinic and risk management efforts. Thirdly, the Justice & Public Safety Committee recommended option 3 regarding salary increases for law enforcement officers. The estimated cost of Option 3 was approximately \$650,000.00. This proposed salary increase would be included in the proposed budget for introduction/first reading at the April 18th meeting of Council.

An additional obstacle was a notice from the State Insurance Reserve Fund indicating a premium increase of 20% or \$200,000.00 per year. This was a statewide increase in coverage for tort liability, property insurance and inland marine (heavy equipment, docks, boardwalk, suspended bridge, heart monitors, library art collections, etc.), to name a few. Mr. Smith got involved in this once he received the notice and initiated efforts to obtain additional quotes. However the quotes obtained were substantially higher.

Florence Darlington Technical College had also requested a 1 mil increase that, according to Mr. Yokim and SCAC, would count against the County's allowed millage increase under Act 388. Mr. Smith reminded Council that in the current year's taxes the County Auditor inadvertently omitted the millage for Tech so the Fiscal Year 2020 budget would include double the millage to compensate for this error.

Mr. Smith stated that the Fiscal Year 2018/19 budget was \$61,195,680 and requests received for Fiscal Year 2019/20 were \$66,521,703. In response to a question from Councilman Dorriety, Mr. Yokim responded that the portion of the budget allocated to the Sheriff's Office was always between 25-30%. In response to a question from Councilman Poston, Mr. Yokim responded that 1 mil on a \$100,000 home was \$4 so the increase due to the Auditor's error and the omission of millage for Tech, would be an increase to the property owner of approximately \$80.

Councilman Dorriety made a motion that The Salary Increase Of Law Enforcement Officers Be Included As Part Of The Fiscal Year 2020 Budget Process And Report This Item Out Of The Committee Favorably. Councilman Schofield seconded the motion, which was approved unanimously.

DISCUSSION – CPST RE-IMPOSITION

Mr. Smith presented information relative to the proposed re-imposition of the capital project sales tax. He stated that November 7, 2006 was without a doubt a day of profound significance for Florence County. The voters on that election day approved the initiative that would forever change the transportation landscape of the Pee Dee area. Capital Project Sales Tax I (CPST I) was nearing completion as was Capital Project Sales Tax II (CPST II). He stated that in his opinion the timing was right to begin moving forward with a possible re-imposition. Although there were some environmental issues in the beginning with CPST I it led to the re-imposition of CPST II by the voters in November 2013. To date, CPST II, with 18 of 28 quarters reporting, the CPST II brought in over \$99 million, which was \$1.85 million ahead of the financial advisors projections. If the projections continue as expected for the next ten quarters, the CPST II would bring in over \$156 million. This was revenue that would not otherwise have been available. This revenue facilitated over \$41 million of upgrades in public safety, \$3.5 million in recreation enhancements, \$14+ million in water and sewer upgrades, \$50+ million in road and drainage improvements and close to \$10 million in community facilities like the veterans affairs building and the new Timmonsville Community Center.

Mr. Smith stated that continued and persistent natural disasters had precipitated the need for a third imposition to address drainage and infrastructure enhancements and improvements throughout the County. He stated he thought it prudent to proceed with a November 3, 2020 election day for the re-imposition question. In order to accomplish this, Council needed to advise staff as to its intentions so that appropriate preparations to succeed could be implemented in a timely manner. A proposed calendar for the re-imposition was provided. (A copy is attached and incorporated by reference.)

He advised that a Commission would need to be created and based on State Law would be comprised of three members appointed by County Council, two members appointed by the City of Florence and one additional member chosen by the two City appointees from another municipality in Florence County. So in total three members of the Commission would be appointed by Council and three would be chosen by the City of Florence. He expressed his opinion that, although there was a very slight window of opportunity to attempt the re-imposition in 2019, it would not be advisable and would not be as palatable to the voters as a more transparent attempt at the next general election in November 2020.

Councilman Dorriety expressed his support and stated one of the reasons he liked it was that about 30-35% of the revenue was collected by tourists and travelers through the area. He stated this was the only way the County would have the revenue to address the drainage and infrastructure needs. It was incumbent upon the County to ensure the citizens realize that the voters chose the projects by voting on the list and only those projects would be a part of the CPST.

Councilman Dorriety made a motion that the Committee Make A Recommendation That Council Direct Staff To Continue The Momentum On The CPST Project And Move Forward With The Re-Imposition Schedule As Presented. Councilman Schofield seconded the motion, which was approved unanimously.

Councilman Schofield stated the public needed to understand that the citizens paid approximately \$90 million out of \$450 million on the CPST I road widening projects. The balance of funds was provided by the State Infrastructure Bank, which was a good bargain for the tax payers of Florence County. One of the reasons those widening projects took so long to get started was that it was a 'pay as you go' program so nothing could begin until funding was available, which delayed the projects. The County took a bond approach for the CPST II imposition so it would most likely be completed before the completion of the CPST I projects. His experience with the referendum taught him that you need to eliminate questions, eliminate objections, and include in the ballot question what the people want. Council needed to offer transparency and project a unified front. He asked that every member of Council provide the Administrator with a list of needs within the district in the next 30 days to begin crafting the ballot question and list of proposed projects. He applauded Mr. Smith for initiating the dialogue and getting this started.

Councilman Caudle stated he liked the fact that it was not an increase in taxes; it was a re-imposition. He said he also felt there was a credibility issue here in that Council did what they said they would do with CPST II.

FCSO – GRANT APPLICATIONS (3)

Councilman Schofield made a motion that the Committee Report Out The FCSO – Grant Applications (3) As No Longer Being Necessary Since The Deadline For The Application Has Passed. Councilman Dorriety seconded the motion, which was approved unanimously.

EXECUTIVE SESSION

Councilman Dorriety made a motion the Committee Enter Executive Session Pursuant To Section 30-4-70 Of The South Carolina Code Of Laws 1976, As Amended To Discuss Contractual Matters Related To Economic Development. Councilman Schofield seconded the motion, which was approved unanimously.

The Committee entered Executive Session at 9:03 a.m.

The Committee reconvened at 10:21 a.m. The Chairman stated that no action was taken in Executive Session.

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

THE MEETING ADJOURNED AT 10:21 A.M.