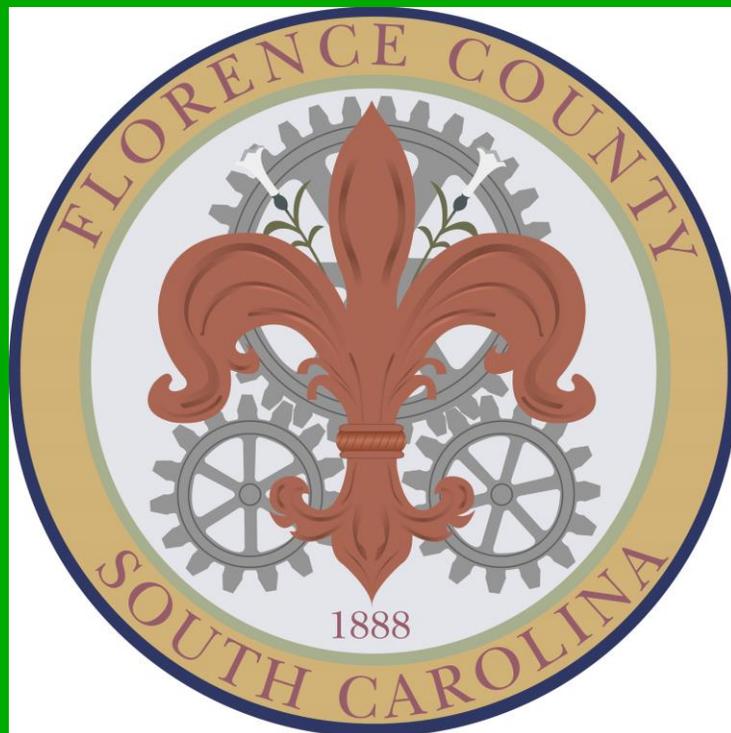


***FLORENCE COUNTY COUNCIL  
COMMITTEE ON  
ADMINISTRATION & FINANCE  
COUNTY COMPLEX  
COUNCIL CONFERENCE ROOM  
ROOM 804  
180 N. IRBY STREET  
FLORENCE, SC***



***TUESDAY, MAY 11, 2021  
8:00 A.M***

AGENDA  
COMMITTEE ON ADMINISTRATION & FINANCE  
CONFERENCE ROOM, ROOM 804  
180 NORTH IRBY STREET  
FLORENCE, SOUTH CAROLINA  
TUESDAY, MAY 11, 2021  
8:00 A.M.

**Due to the current pandemic, all visitors entering the Complex must wear a face mask/covering and observe social distancing guidelines.**

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*Chairman Willard Dorriety, Jr. (Council District 9)  
Councilman Waymon Mumford (Council District 7), Member  
Councilman H. Steven DeBerry, IV, (Council District 6), Member  
Councilman Frank J. "Buddy" Brand, II (Council District 8), Member  
K. G. Rusty Smith, Jr., County Administrator, Ex-Officio Member  
James Goff, Finance Director, Ex-Officio Member*

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- I. **CALL TO ORDER:** CHAIRMAN WILLARD DORRIETY, JR.
- II. **INVOCATION:** WAYMON MUMFORD, MEMBER
- III. **PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE TO THE AMERICAN FLAG:**  
H. STEVEN DEBERRY, IV, MEMBER
- IV. **APPROVAL OF THE MINUTES OF THE APRIL 27, 2021 MEETING**
- V. **DISCUSSION – FISCAL YEAR 2021/22 BUDGET**
- VI. **OTHER BUSINESS:**
- VII. **ADJOURN:**

**Committee on Administration & Finance**  
May 11, 2021

**AGENDA ITEM:** Minutes

**DEPARTMENT:** County Council

**ISSUE UNDER CONSIDERATION:**

Council Is Requested To Approve The Minutes Of The April 27, 2021 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, TUESDAY, APRIL 27, 2021, AT 8:47 A.M., CONFERENCE ROOM, ROOM 804, COUNTY COMPLEX, 180 N. IRBY ST., FLORENCE, SOUTH CAROLINA**

**PRESENT:**

Willard Dorriety, Jr., County Council Chairman  
Waymon Mumford, Council Committee Member  
H. Steven DeBerry, IV, Council Committee Member  
Frank J. “Buddy” Brand, II, Council Committee Member  
K. G. Rusty Smith, Jr., County Administrator  
James Goff, Finance Director

**ALSO PRESENT:**

Roger M. Poston, Council Member  
Kent C. Caudle, Council Member  
Jerry W. Yarborough, Jr., Council Member  
D. Malloy McEachin, Jr., County Attorney  
Connie Y. Haselden, Clerk to Council

A notice of the meeting of the Committee on Administration & Finance appeared in the April 26, 2021 edition of the **MORNING NEWS**. In compliance with the Freedom of Information Act, copies of the meeting Agenda were provided to members of the media, members of the public requesting copies, posted in the lobby of the County Complex, provided for posting at the Doctors Bruce and Lee Foundation Public Library, all branch libraries, and on the County’s website ([www.florenceco.org](http://www.florenceco.org)).

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

**APPROVAL OF MINUTES – MARCH 9, 2021 MEETING**

Councilman Brand made a motion to approve the Minutes of the March 9, 2021 Committee Meeting. Councilman DeBerry seconded the motion, which was approved unanimously.

**DISCUSSION – FISCAL YEAR 2021/22 BUDGET**

Chairman Dorriety asked Mr. Smith to lead off the discussion with a brief overview of the Fiscal Year 2021/22 Budget. Mr. Smith stated he wanted to place accolades on the outstanding finance director James Goff and his staff for doing an exemplary job in assimilating the rough draft of the budget. Mr. Goff had prepared this amidst COVID, four (4) bond issuances and Act 388, which severely hampered Council’s ability to carry out the basic function of County government, which was to protect the lives and property of the citizens it represents. Until the legislature fully funds the local government fund or amends Act 388 the County would face this same formidable task of having to provide more with less.

When the budget requests were received in finance requests exceeded available funds by approximately \$4 to 5 million. Thanks to the County's austere and conservative approach in last year's 'COVID budget' staff was able to maintain and in so doing Council would see revenues increase for this fiscal year. Property tax and local option sales taxes were up from \$41.39 million to \$45.58 million. Also of special note was the fact that CPST II revenues remained strong with the first quarter of 2021 results being one of the highest on record at \$6,831,254.00, which not only boded well for CPST II but also for CPST III as the County prepared to kick off those projects. Total budgeted revenues approached \$66.4 million which was up from \$63.4 million last year.

Even though the County had not received a definitive millage cap designation due to the lack of census data, staff included an approximate 1 mil increase to assist with a 3% COLA and the strengthening of personnel in law enforcement and EMS. Given that the CPI index had increased by 1.23% the SCAC and Mr. Goff felt that the 1 mil increase was in order and permissible if Council so desired. Also of note "license & permits" revenues were projected lower at \$1.5 million down from FY21 numbers of \$1.72 million. Building inspection fees were also projected to be down by \$150,000. Councilman Caudle expressed concerns regarding the announcement that the President had issued an executive order to increase the federal minimum wage from \$10.65 to \$15 per hour, which would have future impact on the County. Councilman Poston stated he understood that was also for federal contractors as well.

In response to a question from Councilman Brand, Mr. Smith responded that he anticipated minimal if any growth to be reported through the 2020 Census. Mr. Smith stated he wanted to thank Ways & Means Chairman Murrell Smith, SCAC and the Delegation for a purported increase to the LGF funds to \$434,000 for a total of \$6.13 million. The House had approved this and Senate Finance had also reported it out favorably. Representative Smith was also planning to implement a hold harmless amount that would "*maintain our LGF amount*" even if census numbers did not show any growth. This was a very important amendment given that lower census numbers could result in reduced revenue levels for noncoastal or smaller counties.

Mr. Smith advised that fines & forfeitures remained flat at \$2.95 million but hopefully with the reopening of court dockets and proceedings this would rebound. The County would also see a reduction from service charges (primarily EMS fees, jail per diem, and recreation fees) of \$9.28 million in FY2021 to \$8.45 million. This was in part due to a reduction in EMS transport revenue of \$900,000 due to 'old collections' declining sharply and the write-off of non-collectable accounts. The outsourced service provider - EMS MC provided projections based on current call volume and Medicare pay rates.

The County had realized a downturn in earned interest of about \$400,000 this year driven by the dramatic decline in interest rates paid on County deposits. The current rate was less than 0.2%; however the County saved significant numbers by achieving unbelievable rates of 0.68% on its CPST III bond and also saved \$1,895,000.00 on the refunding of the IPRB's. Staff would continue to monitor, review and execute on any opportunities to save taxpayer dollars. Councilman Brand asked how the County was marketing this so that the taxpayers were aware of the cost savings. Mr. Smith stated the information was provided to the media and was posted on the County website. He had already received positive comments on the renovations to the exterior of the Complex and the parking deck. It would be like a totally different facility once completed and would serve as an anchor for the downtown Florence development.

Staff was also working on a major fundraising campaign for the first responder's monument to be erected at the Judicial Center. The County had already received commitments for approximately \$6 - 700,000. He advised that Bruce Lee Foundation and Scotty Campbell had already made contributions and Councilman Mumford obtained \$25,000 from a local company.

On a positive note, the fund balance was over \$17 million and the County received \$5.5 million CARES Act funding and a portion of that would be used to fund expenditures in this year's budget. Another project the County was looking at per Councilman DeBerry's request was the digitization of files in the Probate Court and he anticipated having this project of approximately \$141,000 on the May 20<sup>th</sup> Agenda. Councilman DeBerry asked if the CARES money could be used for that project. Mr. Smith stated that was the plan unless legal counsel determined it could not. Mr. Goff stated the CARES Act money was reimbursement for expenses the County already incurred due to COVID. Mr. Smith stated the guidelines for use of the latest stimulus package for counties under the American Recovery Act (ARA) had still not been issued. The Treasury would likely use its entire 60 days before issuing the guidelines. One of the items discussed as potential use of funding was broadband, especially for citizens that were outside of a municipality or areas that offered broadband services.

Mr. Smith advised that another issue that could potentially come before Council was that there were problems with security system at the jail locking and unlocking randomly. This could probably be covered with salary savings but it needed to be addressed expeditiously.

Mr. Smith advised that the fund balance was in the 30 plus percent range, well over the 25% threshold set by Council and he anticipated it would increase from savings in the current year budget. The County only utilized \$1,025,000, which was up by approximately \$196,000 from the previous year's budget, to fund select one-time capital items such as an equipped truck for the coroner's office, 19 of 23 fully equipped Sheriff's vehicles, 2 new ambulances, and a QRV (quick response vehicle) for EMS and a fully equipped truck for Emergency Management.

Another item that members of Council had expressed an interest in was the fact that the County had not given an across the board cost of living increase for quite some time (3% FY16). In these trying times not providing a regular COLA had an impact on employee morale especially as employee insurance premiums had risen and take home pay was reduced. The cost to include a 3% cost of living adjustment to all 878 employee slots (805 employees: 745 full time and 60 part-time) was \$1.2 million.

Also to benefit the County's outstanding workforce was the increased cost of approximately \$335,000 to supplement the employer contribution to the SC Retirement System (SCRS) and the Police Officers Retirement System (PORS), which added 1% to the SCRS for a total of 16.56% and the PORS for a total of 19.24%. Also of benefit to employees was an appropriation of \$120,000 to cover a 2% health insurance increase.

Also included in the budget for the Sheriff's Office was 4 additional deputy positions which equated to 1 more per shift to allow for more 'boots on the ground.' This equated to personnel costs of \$211,000 with benefits not to mention the cars and equipment required to outfit a deputy which was also included in other components of the budget.

Also included was an additional increase of 5% to all advanced EMT's and paramedics at a cost of \$204,000 to hopefully assist with maintaining and recruiting staff to man County ambulances. The cumulative total of the 5% raise and the 3% COLA represented an 8% increase for personnel. Councilman Brand asked if there was a way to increase fees to offset costs for EMS. Mr. Smith responded that if Council so desired it could raise the EMS fee from \$17.50 to \$19.50 and get an additional \$250,000 in revenue to further supplement salaries (each \$1 increase raised approximately \$125,000). Councilman Yarborough stated this was going to be an ongoing problem with regard to the availability of qualified paramedics. Chairman Dorriety asked the average cost of a transport by EMS. Councilman DeBerry stated it was \$695 and Councilman Yarborough stated that the last two times his mother was transported it was \$892 each. Mr. Goff stated the County collected \$4.6 million based on the current call volume and Medicare allowables.

(Councilman Caudle left the meeting at 9:09 a.m.)

Mr. Smith stated the budget also included 3 part-time climbing wall attendants at \$25,000 and a part-time recreation technician at \$17,000. These costs would be partially offset by additional revenue.

Also in an effort to prepare for the future as part of an administrator succession plan a new deputy administrator position at a cost of \$120,000 salary (\$159,000 w/ benefits) was included in the budget. In response to a question from Councilman Brand, Mr. Smith stated this position was created as a result of conversations with Chairman Dorriety and Councilman Caudle and would start learning for transitional purposes to have someone trained to take over and maintain continuity of operations.

As to capital appropriations, major cuts were made from last year's capital requests (over 70%) in order to weather the COVID storm which had been accomplished to this point. Major appropriations in the proposed FY2022 budget included:

- \$1.3 million to the Sheriff's department and detention center (discussions had taken place and would continue regarding the potential lease of vehicles for the narcotics division as a cost saving measure);
- \$463,000 to EMS for new ambulances;
- \$45,000 to the Coroner's Office;
- \$105,000 to EMD; and
- \$190,000 to IT.

Additionally, in the Road System Maintenance Fund Public Works had \$1.03 million of \$1.57 million budgeted to purchase 4 new John Deere tractors, a CAT loader and a CAT grader to name a few.

Staff was also trying to minimize operating costs while assuming the maintenance of the highly successful parking deck, new maintenance agreements on new voting machines, fuel costs and the associated costs of equipping 4 new officers. The ancillary cost to equip a deputy was approximately \$40,000 per officer and an additional cost of \$50,000 in capital for an equipped police vehicle for a total of approximately \$90,000 per officer.

Mr. Smith stated this was an overview of the proposed draft budget which was a 'work in progress.' Mr. Goff would provide a full text of the ordinance ready for second reading at the May 20<sup>th</sup> meeting. Councilman Yarborough asked if there would be another meeting like this so he could write up his questions for discussion. Mr. Smith stated he could send his questions to him and they would provide answers.

Councilman Yarborough asked if there was any consideration for improving or transitioning from the AS400 accounting system. Mr. Goff responded that a Committee was in place and met regularly to discuss options with regard to the accounting system and was looking at financial management options that were available.

Chairman Dorriety asked if there was an increase included for Council District Infrastructure Allocations. Mr. Goff responded that the current budget was consistent with the previous year. Chairman Dorriety asked if there were a way to increase the amount to \$70 or 75,000. Mr. Goff responded they could look at that and see.

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

**THE MEETING ADJOURNED AT 9:21 A.M.**

Approved by the Committee at its meeting on \_\_\_\_\_.

ATTEST: \_\_\_\_\_  
Connie Y. Haselden, Clerk to Council