



Special Called Meeting of the Public Facilities and Safety Committee

Beaufort County, SC

Council Chambers, Administration Building Beaufort County Government Robert Smalls Complex 100 Ribaut Road, Beaufort

Monday, December 11, 2023

4:00 PM

MINUTES

Watch the video stream available on the County's website to hear the Council's discussion of a specific topic or the complete meeting. <https://beaufortcountysc.new.swagit.com/videos/285343>

1. CALL TO ORDER

Committee Chairman Cunningham called the meeting to order at 4:08 p.m.

PRESENT

Chairman Logan Cunningham
Vice-Chairman David P. Bartholomew
Council Member Paula Brown
Council Member Gerald Dawson
Council Member York Glover
Council Member Alice Howard
Council Member Lawrence McElynn
Council Member Joseph F. Passiment
Council Member Thomas Reitz
Council Member Anna Maria Tabernik

ABSENT

Council Member Mark Lawson

2. PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

Committee Chairman Cunningham led the Pledge of Allegiance.

3. FOIA

Committee Chairman Cunningham noted that public notification of this meeting had been published, posted, and distributed in compliance with the South Carolina Freedom of Information Act.

4. APPROVAL OF AGENDA

Motion: It was moved by Council Member Passiment, seconded by Council Member Tabernik, to approve the agenda.

The Vote – The motion was approved without objection.

5. CITIZEN COMMENT PERIOD

No citizen comments.

6. RECOMMEND APPROVAL OF A RESOLUTION TO ADOPT THE RECOMMENDATIONS OF THE SALES TAX ADVISORY COMMITTEE (STAC) REGARDING CONSIDERATION OF A 2024 SALES TAX REFERENDUM

Assistant County Administrator Fralix introduced Dean Moss, Chairman of the Sales Tax Advisory Committee (STAC). ACA Fralix noted that this year's STAC had six members instead of last year's seventeen members. ACA Fralix added that the STAC had very constructive discussions about the region as a whole and long-term planning.

Please watch the video stream available on the County's website to view the full discussion.

<https://beaufortcountysc.new.swagit.com/videos/285343?ts=227>

Dean Moss briefed the Committee on the STAC's recommendations to the County Council, including a sales tax referendum in November 2024 for a one percent additional sales tax beginning in 2025 and extending for fifteen years and a standing Citizen's Oversight Committee to assist the County Council and staff with the prioritization and implementation of projects. Mr. Moss noted that the tax proceeds would go towards a series of critical transportation and mobility projects vital to the health and safety of Beaufort County residents and visitors. Mr. Moss also provided an overview of the projects that could be supported with the sales tax funds, including large-scale projects like Reimagine Ribaut Road, Highway 170 improvements, and Lady's Island Corridor improvements and smaller-scale projects like mass transit, pedestrian and bike pathways, ferry service, and safety and traffic flow improvements.

Council Member Glover and Mr. Moss discussed Chowan Creek Bridge as the endpoint for the Lady's Island Corridor improvements.

Council Member Dawson commented on the need to improve road conditions and pave dirt roads in rural areas. Mr. Moss commented that funds could be put toward road pavement and resurfacing projects, but those funds can only be used to pave County-owned roads.

Council Member Glover highlighted the need for pedestrian and bicycle pathways.

Council Member Howard commented on her appreciation of the emphasis on mass transit and the need for a master plan.

Committee Chairman Cunningham asked if the projected \$1.6 billion in sales tax revenue would be enough to complete the transportation projects. Mr. Moss replied that the funds should be able to cover the major projects since other funding sources are involved, but that the transportation needs and list of projects will continue to grow. Mr. Moss added that other areas, like Charleston, have decided on twenty-five years instead of fifteen years for their sales tax.

Committee Chairman Cunningham asked if the end of the Green Space Program's sales tax should be considered and if the amount of the tax should be increased. Council Member Passiment commented that the Council has time to adjust the time and amount of the sales tax since there will be three readings and a public hearing before the referendum question is finalized for the November 2024 ballot.

Council Member Glover and Mr. Moss discussed how the money provided through the sales tax could help leverage state and federal funds.

Committee Vice-Chairman Bartholomew and ACA Fralix discussed the funding available for the Lady's Island Corridor improvements.

Motion: It was moved by Council Member Tabernik, seconded by Council Member Glover, to recommend approval of a resolution to adopt the recommendations of the Sales Tax Advisory Committee (STAC) regarding consideration of a 2024 Sales Tax Referendum.

The Vote – The motion was approved without objection.

7. ADJOURNMENT

Adjourned: 4:48 p.m.

Ratified: January 22, 2024