



Finance, Administration, and Economic Development Committee

Beaufort County, SC

This meeting was held both in person at the County Council Chambers, 100 Ribaut Road, Beaufort, and virtually through Zoom.

Monday, May 15, 2023
3:00 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/230157>

1. CALL TO ORDER

Committee Chairman Lawson called the meeting to order at 3:01 pm.

PRESENT

Chairman Mark Lawson
Vice-Chairman Anna Maria Tabernik
Council Member David P. Bartholomew
Council Member Gerald Dawson
Council Member York Glover
Ex-Officio Joseph F. Passiment
Council Member Paula Brown
Council Member Alice Howard
Council Member Lawrence McElynn

ABSENT

Council Member Logan Cunningham
Council Member Thomas Reitz

2. PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

Committee Chairman Lawson led the Pledge of Allegiance.

3. FOIA

Committee Chairman Lawson noted that the 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 Dawson, to approve the agenda.

The Vote - The motion was approved without objection.

5. APPROVAL OF MINUTES

Motion: It was moved by Council Member Tabernik, seconded by Council Member Passiment, to approve the minutes from April 10, 2023.

The Vote - The motion was approved without objection.

6. CITIZEN COMMENT PERIOD

No Citizen Comments.

7. BUDGET PRESENTATION BY THE BEAUFORT COUNTY SCHOOL DISTRICT

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

<https://beaufortcountysc.new.swagit.com/videos/230157?ts=98>

Tonya Crosby, Chief Financial Officer for the Beaufort County School District, provided an overview of the FY 2024 budget, including the budget development process; budget increases for employee compensation and staffing allocations; proposed revenues and expenditures; millage calculations; and the budget approval schedule. CFO Crosby also highlighted how Beaufort County now ranks number one in South Carolina for starting teacher salaries.

Committee Chairman Lawson and CFO Crosby discussed budget requests for previous years. Committee Chairman Lawson also commented on how people with homestead exemption do not pay school taxes.

Council Member Glover and CFO Crosby discussed whether steps would be capped. CFO Crosby stated that the plan is to go up to at least 28 years.

Motion: It was motioned by Committee Vice-Chair Tabernik, seconded by Council Member Glover, to move the Beaufort County School Board's budget proposal forward to County Council for the first reading.

The Vote – The motion was approved without objection.

8. BUDGET PRESENTATIONS BY THE SPECIAL FIRE DISTRICTS WITHIN BEAUFORT COUNTY

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

<https://beaufortcountysc.new.swagit.com/videos/230157?ts=1119>

Chief Paul Boulware of the Bluffton Township Fire District presented the FY 2024 budget, the current and proposed mill rates, estimated revenues and expenditures, and the projected fund balance.

Committee Vice-Chair Tabernik asked about the cost to build a new fire station. Chief Boulware replied that the cost would be three million and that there are plans to build a station in Sun City.

Chief Harry Rountree of the Burton Fire District presented the operation and debt mill request, the plan to increase total staff and the pumper truck that is scheduled to be delivered in 35 to 37 months.

Committee Vice-Chair Tabernik and Chief Rountree discussed the contract delivery date for the pumper truck.

Council Member Glover asked about the fund balance. Chief Rountree replied that annexations have been impacting the district's tax base.

Council Member Dawson asked about the millage decrease and thanked Chief Rountree for not placing a burden on taxpayers.

Chief Shane Comparetto of the Daufuskie Island Fire District presented on the decrease in the millage rate, step increases and COLA, and the fund balance.

Council Member Glover asked whether firefighters were full-time and the number of fire stations. Chief Comparetto confirmed that the firefighters are full-time, and one station is fully manned.

Chief Bruce Kline of the Lady's Island and St Helena Fire District presented the rollback mill rate, the operations mill rate request, total revenues and expenditures, fund balance amount, debt requirement, and protection provided to annexed areas.

Council Member Howard and Chief Kline discussed how the City of Beaufort funds the protection of the annexed areas.

Council Member Glover asked about potential fire stations. Chief Kline commented that the plan to add an additional station is three to five years out.

Committee Vice-Chair Tabernik and Chief Kline discussed the designation of administrative and firefighter staff members and response times.

Chief Buddy Jones of the Sheldon Fire District presented the FY 2024 budget, debt service, millage rate calculations, and expenditures for health insurance, salaries, and COLAs.

CFO Hayes Williams explained the process for reassessing property values and rollback millage.

Motion: It was moved by Council Member Passiment, seconded by Council Member Dawson, to approve the Fire Districts' budgets and moved them forward to County Council.

The Vote – The motion was approved without objection.

9. RECOMMEND APPROVAL OF A RESOLUTION AUTHORIZING THE COUNTY ADMINISTRATOR TO ENTER INTO A LEASE AGREEMENT WITH THE YOUNG MEN'S SOCIAL CLUB AND SOUTH PINE LADIES UNION FOR A PORTION OF THE REAL PROPERTY LOCATED AT 242 AND 228 SCOTT HILL ROAD

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

<https://beaufortcountysc.new.swagit.com/videos/230157?ts=2514>

County Administrator Greenway briefed the Committee on the Scott Center property, including the proposed lease, recreation programming, and property improvements to be made as necessary.

County Attorney Ward added that the lease would be based on the County's template and that any changes were specified in the resolution.

Council Member Glover asked whether staff had reservations about entering into the lease agreement and if the County would provide recreation activities and programming. County Administrator Greenway replied that there had been requests for programming that goes beyond what the Parks and Recreation Department offers and that there is very little programming that can be provided within the building itself.

Council Member Glover asked for an update on the study conducted on recreation facilities. Assistant County Administrator Atkinson replied that the target is for the study to be completed by July. ACA Atkinson also said that funding would be limited for a lease property and that the County would not own improvements made to the leased property, so Council would need to decide how they want to spend County resources.

Committee Chair Lawson asked about capital improvement costs. County Administrator Greenway replied that the costs are still to be determined, as there may be possible improvements to the concession stand building.

Council Member Passiment asked whether the County should wait to enter into the lease agreement until the study is completed. ACA Atkinson replied that the study is focused on county-owned facilities but that leased properties would be included.

ACA Atkinson commented that there were three leases on the property that expired this year. County Attorney Ward added that the proposed lease is for a ten-year term that can be renewed five times.

Motion: It was moved by Council Member Glover, seconded by Council Member Bartholomew, to recommend approval of a resolution authorizing the County Administrator to enter into a lease agreement with the Young Men's Social Club and South Pine Ladies Union for a portion of the real property located at 242 and 228 Scott Hill Road.

Discussion: Council Member Dawson commented that Council has the responsibility to provide recreational activities to all the County's citizens and that they need to discuss plans for a permanent solution to provide recreational activities and facilities County-wide.

The Vote – The motion passed by 8:1.

10. RECOMMEND APPROVAL OF A RESOLUTION AUTHORIZING THE COUNTY ADMINISTRATOR TO ENTER INTO A LEASE AGREEMENT WITH THE PAT CONROY LITERARY CENTER, INC. FOR A PORTION OF THE REAL PROPERTY LOCATED AT 1511 NORTH STREET

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

<https://beaufortcountysc.new.swagit.com/videos/230157?ts=3971>

County Administrator Greenway briefed the Committee on the witness tree located in a County-owned parking lot and the Pat Conroy Literacy Center's plans to create a pocket park.

Council Member McElynn and County Administrator Greenway discussed potential plans to sell the parking lot containing the tree.

Motion: It was moved by Council Member Howard, seconded by Committee Vice-Chair Tabernik, to recommend approval of a resolution authorizing the County Administrator to enter into a lease agreement with the Pat Conroy Literary Center, Inc. for a portion of the real property located at 1511 North Street.

The Vote – The motion passed by 8:1.

11. RECOMMEND APPROVAL OF A RESOLUTION AMENDING THE AMERICAN RESCUE PLAN ACT-FUNDED PUBLIC SAFETY RECRUITMENT INITIATIVES POLICY

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

<https://beaufortcountysc.new.swagit.com/videos/230157?ts=4325>

Human Resources Director Katherine Mead discussed ARPA funding, changes to the relocation policy, and retro payments for voluntary and involuntary separations.

Council Member Howard and Director Mead discussed the arrangements and timeline for the collection of payment after involuntary separation.

Committee Vice-Chair Tabernik and Director Mead discussed the two-year period for the recruitment policy and that employees can earn a \$5,000 sign-on payment and a \$2,500 relocation payment.

Council Member Glover asked whether new employees could earn more than existing employees in the same position because of the sign-on bonus. Director Mead replied that there could be an increase in the minimum wage and a retention bonus.

Motion: It was moved by Committee Vice-Chair Tabernik, seconded by Council Member Bartholomew, to recommend approval of a resolution amending the American Rescue Plan Act-funded public safety recruitment initiatives policy.

The Vote – The motion was approved without objection.

12. RECOMMEND APPROVAL OF A MOTION TO CORRECT SCRIVENER'S ERRORS IN ORDINANCE 2023/8 - TEXT AMENDMENTS TO BEAUFORT COUNTY CODE OF ORDINANCES, CHAPTER 82: IMPACT FEES, ARTICLE I, IN GENERAL; ARTICLE II, DEVELOPMENT IMPACT FEE PROCEDURES; ARTICLE III, PARKS AND RECREATION FACILITIES; ARTICLE IV, ROAD FACILITIES - SOUTHERN BEAUFORT COUNTY SERVICE AREA; ARTICLE V, LIBRARY FACILITIES; ARTICLE VI, FIRE FACILITIES; ARTICLE VII, ROAD FACILITIES - NORTHERN BEAUFORT COUNTY

County Attorney Keaveny briefed the Committee on how the impact fee ordinance has three tables that do not reflect what was agreed between the County and municipalities and that a two-thirds vote is needed to amend the tables.

Motion: It was moved by Council Member Dawson, seconded by Council Member Bartholomew, to recommend approval of a motion to correct Scrivener's errors in Ordinance 2023/8 - text amendments to Beaufort County Code of Ordinances, Chapter 82: Impact Fees, Article I, In General; Article II, Development Impact Fee Procedures; Article III, Parks and Recreation Facilities; Article IV, Road Facilities - Southern Beaufort County Service Area; Article V, Library Facilities; Article VI, Fire Facilities; Article VII, Road Facilities- North Beaufort County.

The Vote – The motion was approved without objection.

14. (Item 14 was taken ahead of 13 per the committee chairs request) DISCUSSION OF ELIMINATING CERTAIN AGENCIES, BOARDS, AND COMMISSIONS, AS WELL AS THE ADDITION OF AN INTERVIEW PROCESS FOR MEMBERS

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

<https://beaufortcountysc.new.swagit.com/videos/230157?ts=5034>

County Administrator Greenway discussed adding an interview process for candidates and reviewing the County's 28 boards and commissions to see if any should be eliminated.

Council Member Howard supported reviewing boards and commissions to see which ones could be eliminated and stated support for candidate interviews. Council Member Howard also noted that the City of Beaufort and the City of Port Royal have an interview process for candidates.

Administrator Greenway stated a good example would be the Historic Review Board, it never meets therefore we could let the responsibilities of that board fall under the Design Review Board.

Council Members Glover and Dawson emphasized that they want to maintain the ability to make recommendations for board positions that fall within their districts.

The Committee and County Administrator Greenway discussed the current appointment process for boards and commissions and the aim to ensure appointees are thoroughly vetted.

Committee Chairman Lawson confirmed with County Administrator Greenway that they would like staff to review the county's boards and commissions for consolidation and recommend a training program.

13. AGENCIES, BOARDS, AND COMMISSIONS APPOINTMENTS & REAPPOINTMENTS

County Administrator Greenway commented that staff might make a recommendation for the Airports Board reappointment not to move forward because issues with professionalism and compliance with airport regulations and protocols that need to be addressed.

Recommend approval of the appointment of Jannine Mutterer to the Library board for a four-year term with an expiration date of May 2027.

Recommend approval of the appointment of William Ricketts to the Bluffton Township Fire District Board for a partial term with the expiration date of April 2026.

Recommend approval of the reappointment of Brian Turrisi to the Airports Board for a two-year term with an expiration date of May 2025.

Recommend approval of the appointment of Sarah Marshall, Interim Executive Director Beaufort Housing Authority, as Beaufort County Business Representative on the Low Country Council of Government's Workforce Development Board for a three-year term expiring May 2026.

Motion: It was moved by Council Member Glover, seconded by Council Member Bartholomew, to approve the agencies, boards, and commissions appointments and reappointments.

The Vote – The motion was approved without objection.

15. ADJOURNMENT

Council Member Glover invited William Smith to comment on the Young Men's Social Club. Mr. Smith said he looks forward to the study and appreciates action on the Scott Center property.

Adjourned at or around 4:41 pm

Ratified: August 21, 2023