



**County Council of
Beaufort County
Caucus Meeting**

Chairman

Joseph F. Passiment, JR.

Vice Chairman

D. Paul Sommerville

Council Members

Michael E. Covert
Gerald Dawson
Brian E. Flewelling
York Glover, SR.
Chris Hervochoon
Alice G. Howard
Mark Lawson
Lawrence P. McElynn
Stu Rodman

County Administrator

Ashley M. Jacobs

Clerk to Council

Sarah W. Brock

Administration Building

Robert Smalls Complex
100 Ribaut Road

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Caucus Minutes

County Council of Beaufort County

Monday, June 22, 2020 at 4:30 PM

VIRTUAL MEETING

CALL TO ORDER

Chairman Passiment called the meeting to order at 4:30 p.m.

PRESENT

Chairman Passiment
Vice Chairman Sommerville
Council Member Covert
Council Member Dawson
Council Member Flewelling
Council Member Glover
Council Member Hervochoon
Council Member Howard
Council Member Lawson
Council Member McElynn
Council Member Rodman

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

Council Member Stew Rodman led the Pledge.

APPROVAL OF AGENDA

Motion: Made by Council Member Hervochoon, seconded by Council Member Flewelling to approve agenda. Voting Yea: Chairman Passiment, Vice Chairman Sommerville, Council Member Covert, Council Member Glover, Council Member Hervochoon, Council Member Rodman, Council Member Howard, Council Member Lawson, Council Member McElynn, Council Member Dawson, Council Member Flewelling. Motion Passed 11:0

ADMINISTRATOR'S REPORT

Ashley Jacobs, County Administrator stated that all County Buildings opened to the public on June 15th. PPE and social distancing will continue to remain in place. Protocols were established for in person meetings in Council Chambers. There is a need for a Finance meeting in July to discuss the following items; Fripp Island Fire District GO Bond, Mitchellville Phase 1 plan, TCL agreement, approval of carryover budget, State Infrastructure for funding of the SCDOT preferred alternative plan for Highway 278.

DISCUSSION ITEMS

AGENDA REVIEW

Chairman Passiment made some remarks regarding the agenda.

DISCUSSION ITEMS

Chairman Passiment stated items nine, ten, twelve, and thirteen will be taken up by way of Roll Call Vote.

Council Member Hervochoch mentioned that item number three on the consent agenda should be pulled as he was planning to vote against it, like he has done in the past. Chairman Passiment will hold a roll call vote for this item.

Committee Reports: Chairman Passiment will report on a meeting he attended with Hilton Head Island. Council Member Howard would like to report on TCL.

NEW BUSINESS ITEMS

Council Member Flewelling mentioned that the Administrator requested a discussion regarding the potential bond referendum and believes it is more appropriate to be discussed during a Finance Committee Meeting instead of Public Facilities.

Council Member Hervochoch stated that a finance meeting should be held in July as the Administrator suggested and preferably held on the 6th. Council Member Howard would also like to have a Natural Resources meeting be held the same day. Chairman Passiment schedules a Finance Committee Meeting and Natural Resources Meeting for July 6th and County Council Meeting on July 13th. Council Member Rodman suggested that the Natural Resources and Finance Committee be held on July 13th after the infrastructure meeting. Council Member Hervochoch agrees to Finance at 3pm on the 13th and in addition the internal audit needs to be discussed.

Council Member Howard would like to know about the Zoning Board of Appeals. Clerk to Council, Sarah Brock stated that they were meeting in person.

Council Member Sommerville stated that he would like clarification on the processing of affidavits and which department is responsible for monitoring the caps on the stipend.

Council Member McElynn would like to know where Community Services Meeting will fall. Monica Spells replied that there aren't any items for Community Services. Council Member McElynn suggests cancellation of the meeting if there are not items moving forward and mentions that he would like to resurrect interest in the noise ordinance, it is still requiring a third reading and would like to discuss a mask requirement inside business, revisit and reconsider the assistance from the reserve funds to help businesses and families in need. Council Member McElynn mentions the discussion of salary and how to accomplish compensation and why COLA was removed from the new ordinance.

Council Member Howard would like to request a formal retraction from the Island Pack regarding the articles written on May 24th. Council Member Sommerville would like to know when item number nine will be discussed, when there is an actual ordinance? Ashley Jacobs stated that she has submitted in writing for the Island Packet to issue a retraction for the three articles in May. Council Member Rodman stated that a retraction is needed but also a personal apology. Council Member Sommerville stated that FOIA needs to be addressed.

Chairman Passiment listed items he would like to review.

1) Executive Committee was eliminated but should have regular meetings as necessary and would like to see that reconsidered. 2) as Chairman of Council, it does not feel right to be Chairman of a Committee and recommends the Vice-Chair become the Chair of the Executive Committee. Council Member Rodman stated that the Executive Committee serves as a committee for items that may span several different items and therefore assigned to Executive along with items that required immediate action. 3) Evaluation on the Clerk to Council has been done and Administrator's evaluation needs to be complete and requests that all Council Members participate. 4) A list of County Council Issues, 25, from when Chairman first became a council member, issues that need to be addressed if not already addressed, each member of council will be receiving a copy. 5) Topics of discussion which was created a few weeks ago and submitted to each council member regarding committees. A) Finance: budget, internal audit committee, receiving documentation from the groups that received A-Tax/ H-Tax funds. B) Natural Resources: Status of Passive Parks for FY2021 C) Public Facilities: Solid Waste and Recycling D) Communication and Transparency: FOIA' 6) mentioned that back in May Council Member Hervochoch and Council Member Lawson received an email regarding school millage. After researching the County has the ability to establish the school tax millage when the budget is developed and

Ordinance is not needed. 7) Emergency Resolution, the Resolution allows for virtual meetings, this had an expiration date but because the Ordinance still stands the Resolution stays in place. 8) Request for a public grievance hearing by Chris Ingleses.

Council Member Sommerville stated that FIOA's have become a pretty big problem. The packet was given a lot of raw data from the County and would like to know if the Packet received this information for free and was the packet given things without a FIOA request. There is a loss of employees in Records Management and that is becoming an issue. A lot of information is needed about FOIA. Council Member Rodman mentioned that the County needs to charge for FOIA especially commercial request, and would like an update on this. Council Member Sommerville said that Legislature gave the County authority to charge and that the County has been inundated with request because it has become free. Especially the multimillion dollar company that is making everyone miserable and would like to see the frequency of request then when there was a charge versus now when it is free. Chairman Passiment stated the Communication and Transparency came up with the free FOIA's and it came out of that committee being passed by Council. Council Member Covert stated that the charges were becoming excessive which was identified across the board and yes, people can't afford or may not be able to afford FIOAs became indefinite. The committee suggested that it be free or less expensive unless it was extremely time consuming, this will be a forever fluid conversation. Chairman Passiment suggested that the Communication and Transparency Committee review it again and again until they can get it right, there are charges that are available. Council Member Hervochon stated that the public is entitled to the data as well as the press and maybe there needs to be stipulations around the context of the raw data when provided. Chairman Passiment stated that the newspapers should have an idea of what they are looking for and should be able to request that appropriately. Council Member Howard stated that having to answer Congressional and FIOA's that there were always coordinated with the people the request was about, that was neglected and it should have been through several individuals before released. Council Member Sommerville mentioned specifically that the commercial industry makes money off of this free information and there is a lot of work to do to formulate FIOA as workable. Chairman Passiment stated that some of this will be taken up at Council and will be discussed again at the next Communications and Transparency Committee meeting in which the committee will need to do research to formulate a good policy. Council Member Flewelling brought up that even though the article had some errors it leads us to solve some problems internally in which we are not attempting to fix. Chairman Passiment stated the headline of the article stated that the Council knew what was going on when in fact they weren't aware, it was a mistake. There is disagreement with the article because things were not factual but we will address the internal issues that need fixed.

Chairman Passiment wants Council to be totally transparent and to communicate and would like each member to evaluate his position as a chair with feedback on how he is leading. Council Member Flewelling mentioned that he and the Chair have a weekly phone call every Monday and that it is very valuable and he recommends each member do the same to keep communication open.

Council Member Sommerville mentioned that the press identified a problem that Administration was aware of and never did anything to fix and exploited it.

Council Member McElynn stated that he like this open mic forum because there isn't always an opportunity for members to discuss topics openly. Would like to know about the status of Bay Point in which Mr. Phil foot stated that it was going to the Zoning Board in July.

Council Member Glover would like to revisit the retiree discussion and would like a follow up.

Council Member McElynn also wanted an update on Island West.

Adjournment: 5:45pm