



County Council of Beaufort County

County Council 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 Hervocho

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

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County Council Caucus Minutes

Monday, May 11, 2020 at 5:00 PM

VIRTUAL MEETING

PRESENT

Chairman Joseph F. Passiment

Vice Chairman D. Paul Sommerville

Council Member Michael Covert

Council Member York Glover

Council Member Chris Hervocho

Council Member Stu Rodman

Council Member Alice Howard

Council Member Lawrence McElynn

Council Member Gerald Dawson

Council Member Brian Flewelling

Council Member Mark Lawson

CALL TO ORDER

Chairman Passiment called the meeting to order at 5:00PM

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE AND INVOCATION

Chairman Passiment led the Pledge of Allegiance and gave the Invocation.

ADMINISTRATORS REPORT

Ashley Jacobs: Gradual reopening plan for the county with Department heads having the employees slowly return starting May 18, 2020 in a rotating schedule having most employees return on June 1, 2020. The county doors being open to the public on June 15, 2020. The county will provide PPE which includes mask that will be available to employees and the public. There will be an installation of cough guards to offices and signage to keep people at a safe distance. There will also be increased cleaning throughout all buildings.

The Arthur Horne Building is on schedule and the completion date is February 16, 2021. There will be monthly updates at the Public Facilities Committee meetings about all the construction projects.

There is an interim Human Resource Director Amanda Kincaid. There is a search for a permanent that should be filled by June.

There is a new Director of Transportation and Engineering which is Jared Fralix.

There is also a new Assistant Director of Transportation and Engineering, Deja Jackson.

There was an error in the cost of living increase for Council pay, which I will turn the discussion to the County Attorney, Kurt Taylor.

Kurt Taylor: There was an increase of meeting from 144 to 168. There is a code of ordinance that states there is a maximum salary of council members is \$16,798 with the amendment takes it to \$17,758. The finance staff discovered an error that they have been operating under a higher number. The cost of living raise was given to council members when the employees received it as well. The statute in South Carolina code 4-9-100 that limits on increases to compensation to only done January 1 after every general election when 2 or more are elections has been done. This needs to be suspended effective immediately and reapplied January 1, 2021.

Council Member McElynn: Believes that instead of a salary, mileage and stipend received. There should just be a base salary given to the council members with an allotment for the use of a car to simplify procedures. The council has 166 meetings however the average council member is going to more meetings a year than that. Would suggest council members salary be \$2,000 a month with an allotment of \$200 for car usage.

Vice Chairman Sommerville: There was an ordinance to reduce the pay however based on my W2 I do not see an increase.

Council Member Hervochon: Maybe we should think about giving council a salary close to Auditor or Treasurer would broaden the caliber of individuals on the council. However, I am in agreement with McElynn about the stipends.

Chairman Passiment: If there is any change done to the salary this would have to be this coming January which will have to be done next year via an agenda item. This would have to have 3 readings and be presented to council. How will we deal with the issue of overage payments?

Kurt Taylor: We can stop the overage payments immediately and do the math to configure for the rest of the year or we can amend the ordinance and increase the compensation.

Chairman Passiment: The 168 meeting is not in effect until next year.

Kurt Taylor: We are looking into amending the ordinance

Chairman Passiment: We need to put this as a discussion during the finance committee.

Council Member Hervochon: It will be put onto the agenda

Council Member Flewelling: The matter of changing nature of compensation should be done during community services.

Chairman Passiment: We can take it up at both meetings for finance and Community Services.

DISCUSSION ITEMS

Discussion regarding designated DMO for Northern Beaufort County's request for tourism recovery funding

Chairman Passiment: We have funding available in the 3% and 2% A-tax funds. The request is coming for usage in 3% A-tax funds which has a reserve of \$722,094. The CVB (Convention Bureau) is looking for \$750,000 in order to get this done we have to reopen the process for A-Tax under the rules of 3%. We cannot limit to just the CVB for A-tax funds this will be open for anyone that believes it can help their organization. We would have to go back through the entire process: getting applications, being submitted to finance, and 3 readings before approval. This would take approximately a 3-month period.

Council Member Flewelling: Can we not use the reserve fund for usage.

Council Member Sommerville: We can as council can move forward with the use of emergency funds.

Council Member Rodman: We can do this separately. However, the A-tax funds will be hit hard during this year.

Council Member Flewelling: Do not believe that the entire amount should be used in this instance.

Council Member Sommerville: Are these funds just for DMO. We only have 2 DMO in the county.

Council Member Hervochon: What exactly are the funds going to be used for? What will happen if we deplete the funds and there is a hurricane? What is the problem for not having a reserve amount of funds?

Robb Wells: The funds will be used for direct advertisement plan. We want to put money back into the market place.

Chairman Passiment: The funds that was already given through A-tax has it already been used?

Rob Wells: Yes it has

Council Member McElynn: Is this money coming from A-tax or reserve fund.

Chairmen Passiment: It is out of the A-tax fund

Council Member McElynn: There was 2 small businesses that requested money however we turned them down and want to give it in use for advertising. I see a conflict in this usage of funds.

Council Member Lawson: I think we need to look into the usage of funds for both North and South Beaufort County. It is a good idea to spend the funds to help with marketing of all businesses.

Council Member Flewelling: Robb, how much money is being requested?

Robb Wells: We are request total amount \$760,000 for advertising, ad content relations and sales recovery.

Council Member Rodman: Hilton Head has their own A-tax we are only referring to A-Tax in unincorporated Beaufort, which will include Bluffton and Beaufort. We should hear from them before we decide on usage. +

Robb Wells: This usage of funds is needed immediately for the recovery of our summer business.

CONSENT AGENDA

Chairman Passiment: There is a need to change the agenda this item is not an executive session for the consent agenda. Anyone has any objections to these items? I don't see any objections. The proclamation is supposed to come out of the finance committee. This afternoon I sent the Clerk to Council, Sarah Brock that I think we need to discuss. Please, take a look into the document and review it. These are items that needs to be looked at within the council for the county.

Council Member Glover: In agreeance with the health care system. Last year was recommended about drainage in the rural community and would like this looked into.

Chairman Passiment: We will add this to the list

Council Member Dawson: If a new home is being built and they need assistance putting it in we need to look into this for our citizens. I need to recuse myself from item number 12 on action items.

Chairman Passiment: We will make sure your recusal is noted.

CITIZEN COMMENTS

Council Member Covert: This is from a taxpayer via Facebook, Ashley R. Kelly would like to know about evictions.

Chairman Passiment: We will pass it on to the correct personal

Council Member McElynn: All evictions are put on temporary hold except those who are emergency evictions. Which is done 1 day a week. Those who request emergency evictions have to establish a damage to personal property.

The meeting adjourned at 5:53 pm

Ratified on: