



**County Council of  
Beaufort County  
Community Services  
Committee Meeting**

**Chairman**  
LAWRENCE MCELYNN

**Vice Chairman**  
MICHAEL COVERT

**Committee Members**  
GERALD DAWSON  
YORK GLOVER  
CHRIS HERVOCHON

**County Administrator**  
ASHLEY M. JACOBS

**Clerk to Council**  
SARAH W. BROCK

**Staff Support**  
MONICA SPELLS

**Administration Building**  
Beaufort County Government  
Robert Smalls Complex  
100 Ribaut Road

**Contact**  
Post Office Drawer 1228  
Beaufort, South Carolina 29901-1228  
(843) 255-2180  
[www.beaufortcountysc.gov](http://www.beaufortcountysc.gov)

## Community Services Committee Minutes

Monday, May 04, 2020 at 2:00 PM

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

### PRESENT

Council Member Joseph F. Passiment  
Council Member D. Paul Sommerville  
Vice Chairman Michael Covert  
Council Member York Glover  
Council Member Chris Hervocho  
Council Member Stu Rodman  
Council Member Alice Howard  
Chairman Lawrence McElynn  
Council Member Gerald Dawson  
Council Member Brian Flewelling

### CALL TO ORDER

Chairman McElynn called the meeting to order at 2:00 p.m.

### FOIA COMPLIANCE

Sarah W. Brock, Clerk to Council, confirmed that public notification of the meeting was published, posted, and distributed in compliance with the South Carolina Freedom of Information Act.

### APPROVAL OF AGENDA

**Motion:** It was moved by Vice Chairman Covert, seconded by Council Member Howard, to approve the agenda. The vote: YEAS – Council Member Passiment, Council Member Sommerville, Vice Chairman Covert, Council Member Glover, Council Member Hervocho, Council Member Rodman, Council Member Howard, Chairman McElynn, and Council Member Flewelling. Absent from Voting: Council Member Dawson (connection issues with WebEx) The motion passed 9:0.

### APPROVAL OF MINUTES

**Motion:** It was moved by Vice Chairman Covert, seconded by Council Member Howard, to approve the minutes for February 3, 2020. The vote: YEAS – Council Member Passiment, Council Member Sommerville, Vice Chairman Covert, Council Member Glover, Council Member Hervocho, Council Member Rodman, Council Member Howard, Chairman McElynn, and Council Member Flewelling. Absent from Voting: Council Member Dawson (connection issues with WebEx) The motion passed 9:0.

### ACTION ITEMS

**Consideration of a Contract Change Order from \$100,000.00 to \$320,000.00 to the Hilton Head Humane Association to provide additional services for Beaufort County's Animal Services.**

The Partnership was awarded by the RFP process for Veterinary Services back in 2013. Hilton Head Humane Association (Non-Profit) was the only organization willing to contract with the County. Since moving into the new campus their services have expanded to include supplies for Beaufort County's Animal Services, discounted pharmaceutical supplies, support staff, spay and neuter free vouchers, free federal cat program, crematory services, and general medical care of shelter animals. The additional funds will be redirected from other accounts with no increased budget requests. This partnership will improve customer service and public support for Beaufort County. Original Annual Cost \$100,000.00. Additional services through June 30, 2020, \$220,000.00. Total Contract with change order \$320,000.00. Funding from 1) Account 10001270-51160 Animal Shelter Professional Services Hilton Head Humane \$100,000.00 2) Account 10001270-51165 Animal Shelter Spay/Neuter Services \$100,000.00 (previous contract) 3) Account 10001270-52300 Food Supplies \$20,000.00 4) Account 10001270-52300 Medical/Pharmacy \$100,000.00. Redirecting funds from Account 10001270-50020 Salaries and Wages and Account 10001270-51100 Heating Fuels.

Dave Thomas, Purchasing Director, explained to the Committee that the change order requested by Animal Services Director Tallulah Grice, is not a request for more money but in fact, a request to move money around from other Animal Services Department accounts in order to fund the increased contracted cost with the Hilton Head Humane Society. Mr. Thomas also stated that this contract change is due to additional services being performed for Beaufort County's Animal Services.

Chairman McElynn brought to the Committee's attention a discrepancy between the agenda and the AIS regarding the contract amount and the amount being requested. Mr. Thomas clarified that the amounts reflected on the Agenda are incorrect and the AIS amount provided is the correct amount.

Chairman McElynn asked Mr. Thomas to clarify that this contract change was not an additional request for funding. Mr. Thomas confirmed that the contract change was only a re-appropriation of funds that the Animals Services Department currently has and not a request for additional funds.

Council Member Covert would like to make sure it is noted in the minutes that the dollar figure mentioned was an error on the agenda. Mr. Covert inquired upon the accounts in which the transfers were being made from. Mr. Covert would like to confirm that these accounts are not being put in jeopardy by this action. Mr. Thomas stated from a financial standpoint everything will be fine, that there are enough funds but refers the question to Mr. Phil Foot, Assistant County Administrator. Mr. Foot confirmed that the accounts will be ok after making the transfers.

Council Member Hervochon inquired on how COVID-19 has affected Animal Services. Mr. Foot responded that shelters have had to shut the doors and have implemented appointment only adoption therefore decreasing the adoptions. Mr. Foot also stated that there has been an increase in animals coming in and very few being adopted. Council Member Hervochon asked Mr. Foot if the longer stay resulted in additional expenses. Mr. Foot stated yes, the longer the animal stays, the longer Animal Services has to care and feed the animal. Council Member Hervochon mentioned a difference in the cost on page 24, the original cost reflected \$302,000.00 and AIS reflected \$320,000.00. Mr. Foot clarified that the \$320,000.00 was a high-end estimate and what they don't use will remain in their account.

Council Member Rodman stated that he is confused about the need for an additional \$220,000.00 for sixty days and wanted to know if this takes Animal Services beyond June 30, 2020. Mr. Thomas asked that Mr. Rodman refer to page 3 regarding the breakdown owed to Hilton Head Humane Association, and pointed out that there is a significant amount that Animal Services still owes and this will catch the department up. Council Member Rodman requested information on next year's contract amount. Mr. Foot stated that the new contract will be brought forward to the Finance Committee once it is ready. Mr. Rodman is concerned that the County needs to look at current spending and not to increase what we are spending. County

Administrator, Ashley Jacobs responded that there are sufficient funds to operate for the remainder of the year.

Council Member Sommerville inquired on how the contract went from \$100,000.00 to \$320,000.00. Animal Services Director, Tallulah Grice stated, the Hilton Head Humane Association is providing food, litter, pharmaceuticals, cremation services etc., these services can be provided at a lower rate because Hilton Head Humane Association is a non-profit organization. Ms. Grice also reiterated that this contract change is not a request for additional funds but to move available funds around to meet the contractual amount.

**Motion: It was moved by Vice Chairman Covert, seconded by Council Member Flewelling, to approve the contract change order form from \$100,000.00 to \$320,000.00 to the Hilton Head Humane Association to provide additional services for Beaufort County's Animal Services. The vote: YEAS – Council Member Passiment, Council Member Sommerville, Vice Chairman Covert, Council Member Glover, Council Member Hervochon, Council Member Rodman, Council Member Howard, Chairman McElynn, Council Member Dawson and Council Member Flewelling. The motion passed 10:0.**

### **DISCUSSION ITEMS**

#### **Discussion regarding the January needs assessment Public Hearings by LowCountry Council of Governments regarding potential Beaufort County Community Development Block Grant projects and referred to this Committee from County Council**

Deputy County Administrator, Chris Inglese, reminded the committee that in January County Council was presented an item from LowCountry Council of Government regarding a Community Development Block Grant Projects and then was referred to this Committee from Council. Mr. Inglese provided updated information on the County's development of a Community Development Block Grant to install sewer lines. Mr. Inglese stated that this project is known as the Bonaire State Sewer Line Project and County is not eligible at this time for a Community Development Block Grant opportunity and that staff is preparing for the next cycle of Grants. Mr. Inglese provided an add on memorandum that is being presented which explains where the County stands on this process and informed the Committed that Council will need to vote on areas that are eligible for the next Community Development Block Grant projects. Mr. Inglese noted that this is Federally Funded and is to be used to improve the lives and areas of low-income citizens. Mr. Inglese recommended the following priority project need areas for Beaufort County, which was approved by staff: 1) Public Infrastructure and Improvements project, e.g., water and sewer improvements and drainage systems 2) Neighborhood Improvements Projects, e.g., sidewalks and storm drains 3) Community Facilities, e.g., curbs, gutters streetlights, neighborhood facilities.

Chairman McElynn asked Mr. Inglese if there was an immediate need for action. Mr. Inglese explained that there were not time constraints at the moment and the next process would be for the Committee to vote on a priority area and then forward it to Council which could be done today or the Committee could take time and discuss it further.

Council Member Flewelling pointed out that there was a \$20 Million project pending for sidewalk improvements and that amount was not enough to complete process and questioned Mr. Inglese if this Community Development Block Grant Project was a way to supplement the difference. Mr. Inglese responded that the funding from the referendum could be leveraged if the Committee were to vote for the sidewalks to be a priority but noted that these sidewalks would be for the low-income areas.

Vice Chairman Covert asked Mr. Inglese if there were more specific granular areas to be discussed or just the three topics. Mr. Inglese explained at this time Committee needs to identify the three priority areas or an option would be for the Committee to submit an idea. Mr. Inglese suggested that if a Council Member has an

area of concern in their district that it can be evaluated by LowCountry Council of Governments for a potential Community Development Block Grant noting that at this point suggestions are not granular yet. Vice Chairman Covert asked if the three suggestions provided were in any particular order. Mr. Inglese said no.

Council Member Rodman supported Council Member Flewelling discussion regarding the sidewalk referendum and he recalled that the number on the referendum was \$10 Million but the repairs would cost \$20 Million Council Member Rodman also mentioned that if anything can be done to fill the gap, it would be helpful and to be mindful on which sidewalks are recommended for repairs, that they are the same.

**Motion:** It was moved by Council Member Howard, seconded by Council Member Flewelling, to approve the recommended priority project need areas for Beaufort County: 1) Public Infrastructure and Improvements project, e.g., water and sewer improvements and drainage systems 2) Neighborhood Improvements Projects, e.g., sidewalks and storm drains 3) Community Facilities, e.g., curbs, gutters streetlights, neighborhood facilities and forward the recommendation to Council. The vote: YEAS – Council Member Passiment, Council Member Sommerville, Vice Chairman Covert, Council Member Glover, Council Member Hervocho, Council Member Rodman, Council Member Howard, Chairman McElynn, and Council Member Flewelling. Absent from Voting: Council Member Dawson (connection issues with WebEx) The motion passed 9:0.

#### **Discussion of potential Beaufort County COVID-19 Small Business and Community Support Relief Program**

County Administrator, Ashley Jacobs stated that she tasked with finding a source of funds for Hungry Hearts in the amount of \$25,000.00 and suggested that there is money to fulfill that request from the County Council Professional Services line item and all that would need is a motion. Ms. Jacobs also asked that the Committee take a broader look at this situation and follow Kershaw and Richland County's implementation of allocating \$1 Million which provides grants to small businesses. Ms. Jacobs explained the application process as submissions to United Way or Community Foundation of the Lowcountry as these businesses are set up to review this type of grant funding. Ms. Jacobs wanted to make it clear that this \$1 Million allocation is not extra money that the County but monies set aside for emergencies and disasters. Normally this is the money the County uses when there is a Hurricane. COVID-19 is a different type of a disaster but those funds could be allocated for this program.

Chairman McElynn mentioned that there are several programs presently available for small businesses and unemployment and has suggested to use these funds for businesses in Beaufort County once they are opened. Chairman McElynn felt that even though the businesses are reopening they will still struggle. Chairman McElynn also stated that these businesses will need to be accountable for how they spend the grant money because it is taxpayer money and suggested developing a procedure where the County can disperse the money quarterly for the remainder of the calendar year in the following way: \$125,000.00 increments to the United Way for their consideration of people in need, \$125,000.00 for Community Foundation of the LowCountry for small business and \$125,000.00 to Community Foundation of the LowCountry for people in need.

Council Member Hervocho does not support this because he doesn't believe this is something Council should get involved with.

Chairman McElynn stated that the County will give the application decision to those who are trained in handling this type of grant funding. Council Member Hervocho understood that a third party would handle the application processes but reiterated that the money is still taxpayer money and the County should not be involved.

Council Member Rodman noted that the service workers in the hospitality industry will be the hardest hit and suggested that since the County has sufficient funds in A/Tax and H/Tax could that possibly be a

legitimate use for those funds. Ms. Jacobs stated that the State law dictates how those funds can be used and the County cannot use the funds for that purpose.

Council Member Glover supports the recommendation and feels that there is a need for a more specific desired outcome when using taxpayer's dollars.

Monica Spells, Assistant County Administrator recommended reviewing the following criteria, noting that these are some area the Committee needs specification on; offering consideration for businesses located in Beaufort County, what would constitute a small business 20 or fewer employees, would like Council's feedback to include if this countywide implementation and if it is including unincorporated Beaufort county and municipalities, what are the business licenses requirements. After receiving specification, having the Committee bring this item to Council for consideration and then having additions and deletions to the criteria, as suggested by the Council.

Council Member Sommerville believes that this is well-intended as most programs are but there are federally funded programs still going on and even if the County has a third party vet the applications small businesses will still come to Council anyway. Mr. Sommerville doesn't think this is going to end well for anyone and suggested giving extensions on business licenses. Council Member Flewelling is in agreeance with Council Member Sommerville and wanted the Committee to keep in mind that business licenses will be a big problem for us moving forward and will have a loss in business license revenue and do not support using taxpayer's money at this time.

Council Member Dawson asked when will the recommendations be received from Ms. Spells. Chairman McElynn stated that if the recommendation doesn't get moved out of this committee, there won't be recommendations to receive.

Council Member Hervochon mentioned Ms. Spells indicated funding business with 20 employees and questions how those businesses are going to define employees. Council Member Hervochon stated that federally funded programs are going through a third party program as well and that is the bank, noting that it has not gone well reflecting an indication of what happens when these types of programs are put in place.

Chairman McElynn commented that this program is not meant to replace or compete with any type of federal funded program, the amount of time spent with the businesses will be numberless and a negotiation compromising their experience versus things the County would like to achieve would be endless. He also explained that there are a lot of questions that need to be answered going forward and nothing will be happening in the next 60 days, this is just a first step for discussion.

Council Member Rodman shared others Committee Members concerns and questioned if the County looked at dispersing funds on July 1<sup>st</sup>, that will be Fiscal Year 21. He also stated that if the County dips into the reserves those funds will have to be replaced and that will need to be taken up during the budgeting process. Ms. Jacobs replied to Council Member Rodman's concern by stating that the funds will not need to run concurrently with the budget process, just appropriating funds from the fund balance. Ms. Jacobs shared the overall general fund balance as being \$43 Million and \$37 Million of that has not been assigned. The County's fiscal policy is that between 17% to 30% is to be kept in reserves and with Hurricane Season coming up, the County has a big question mark for the County regarding COVID-19 and the long term impact.

Chairman McElynn reminded the Committee that this recommendation developed from one request for funding and knows if the County granted that request, the County would have to grant more.

Council Member Sommerville stated that he cannot support spending taxpayer's money selectively on private businesses.

Council Member Rodman asked if this will this require a supplemental appropriation for three readings in which Ms. Jacobs responded, yes.

Vice Chairman Covert asked if we funded the Community Foundation of the Low Country or United Way with A/Tax-H/Tax or in another way. Ms. Spells answered that on behalf of United Way, the funds come through

the community grants program through operational support and Community Services has two funds to allocate United Way and they provide assistance to the County for the VITA program and a variety of other programs administered by the United Way. Vice Chairman Coverts asked if this is funded by budgeted and appropriation etc. Ms. Spells, explained that it depended on the Community Services Grant Program, that is an application program, so the funding may not be the same each fiscal year, but it normally runs between \$20,000.00 to \$25,000.00 a year. Fred Leyda, Beaufort County Human Services Director, does not recall the Community Foundation receiving money from the County in the past and there isn't a Community Services Grant application for next year to receive money.

Vice Chairman Covert said that he would like to put on the record that he agrees with Mr. Rodman suggestion for the budgeting proviso and it is definitely appropriate and stated that it was sparked his questions for Mr. Leyda and Ms. Spells.

**Motion:** It was moved by Council Member Glover, seconded by Council Member Dawson to approve the Beaufort County COVID-19 Small Business and Community Support Relief Program. Voting Yeas: Council Member Dawson, Council Member Glover, Chairman McElynn Voting Nays: Council Member Passiment, Council Member Sommerville, Vice Chairman Covert, Council Member Flewelling, Council Member Rodman, Council Member Hervochon, Council Member Howard. The motion failed 7-3.

### **Discussion of additional Voting Precinct on Hilton Head Island by the Beaufort County Board of Voter Registration and Election**

This item is being presented per request of Council during its Caucus meeting on April 27, 2020. Board to determine whether the HHI Government Center meets exterior and interior site standards. Board to determine availability and whether Providence Presbyterian Church on Cordillo Parkway in HHI meets exterior and interior site standards. Board must ensure compliance with specific Federal and State guidelines when opening voting locations. Board must secure additional staff necessary to operate an additional location and ensure new staff receives prescribed training by the State Elections Commission. Board's FY21 Budget request includes additional support needs necessary to accommodate a location on HHI.

Chairman McElynn informed the committee that recommendation would involve hiring a training officer, which will be a full-time position, and recruiting and training poll workers, who needs an early voting location.

Ron Clifford, Chairman of Board of Voter Registration and Election informed the Committee that there was a site found for the absentee voting location at the Government Office located mid-island and this space provided enough room for a check in office and noted that the board room would serve as the ballot marking location and voting equipment to check in absentee voters. Mr. Clifford stated that more workers will be needed to run the absentee office.

Chairman McElynn agreed that there would be adequate space at this location. He also stated to hire the Training Officer around July 1<sup>st</sup>. He also commented that the June primary will be missed but would the location would be set up by the Presidential election and be providing absentee voting. Chairman McElynn wanted to make Ms. Jacobs aware that the funding needs for the training officer would be for a full time position. Ms. Jacobs assured the Chairman that everything was addressed regarding the funding and has the recommendation in the budget for the next fiscal year.

Council Member Flewelling asked Mr. Clifford if the facility has been evaluated for with social distancing compliance due to COVID 19. Mr. Clifford responded yes, but it also depended on how many absentee voters show up at once and voters tend to come in spurts but believes there is enough space to spread voters out enough and space out the machines. Mr. Clifford commented that there will be bottlenecks at check-in and that will cause an issue no matter where the location.

Council Member Rodman suggested if getting them in and out becomes a problem, there may be a back door that voters can exit through after voting. Mr. Clifford agreed that would be beneficial and that room does have a side door that can be used for that purpose.

Gerald Dawson commented that this location was going to be Satellite Office around 4-6 weeks before an election, and recalls that there were some security issues and handicap compliance not being met and if it hasn't been it needs to be fixed. Mr. Clifford stated that the parking lot and the building were examined with security issues and the doors are wheelchair accessible and believes everything is being complied with. Council Member Dawson asked Mr. Clifford when he anticipated bringing a training officer on board. Mr. Clifford recommends immediately once approved and hopes to have the Training Officer recruit poll workers.

Council Member Howard asked Mr. Clifford if he thinks there will be a problem recruiting poll workers due to COVID-19. Mr. Clifford responded, yes the number of poll workers have decreased due to the virus.

Council Member Glover wanted to know if Mr. Clifford was prepared to provide PPE for the poll workers. Mr. Clifford responded that the State is funding the PPE equipment and he will do all he can to keep the poll workers safe.

Ms. Spells pointed out that Marie's request, in addition to the training position, was for an election technician to support the equipment and the budget request for the two positions would be about \$90,000.00,

Council Member Rodman commented that he would like to see those positions as county-wide position and questions the need to vote on this today when it will be voted on during the budget session. Ms. Jacobs stated that Council Member Rodman is correct and the item does not need to be voted on at this time because it will be voted on during the budget session.

## **BOARDS AND COMMISSIONS**

**Motion:** It was moved by Council Member Flewelling, seconded by Council Member Glover to reappoint Phil Kiser and appoint James Mack to the Parks and Recreation Board and reappoint Louis Poindexter and Elaine Lust to the Bluffton Township Fire District. Voting Yeas: Council Member Passiment, Council Member Sommerville, Vice Chairman Cover, Council Member Dawson, Council Member Flewelling, Council Member Rodman, Council Member Glover, Council Member Hervochon, Council Member Hervochon, and Chairman McElynn. The motion passed 10:0

## **CITIZEN COMMENT**

No Citizen Comments via Clerk to Council, Sarah Brock.

Vice Chairman Covert had a comment from Elizabeth, on line wanting to know when Burton Wells Park will be open. Ms. Jacobs stated that there was not a date for reopening the parks at this time.

Council Member Howard stated that the Passive Parks are open.

Council Member Glover asked Ms. Jacobs if there was a possibility of Burton Wells' walking area being open for exercise. Ms. Jacobs responded that there isn't any problem with walking the trails as long as social distancing is being maintained.

## **ADJOURNMENT**

Meeting adjourned at 3:31