

MARLBORO COUNTY COUNCIL
MARLBORO COUNTY ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT PARTNERSHIP BUILDING
COUNCIL CHAMBERS
“CALLED MEETING”

WEDNESDAY, APRIL 27, 2023

11:30 A.M.

CHAIRMAN

CHARLES P. MIDGLEY, JR

VICE CHAIRMAN
ADMINISTRATOR
CLERK TO COUNCIL
COUNTY ATTORNEY

JASON STEEN
RON MUNNERLYN
SUSAN RIVERS
ANDREW MCLEOD *

COUNCIL:

JASON STEEN
CHARLES P. MIDGLEY, JR.
KENNETH STROMAN
STEVE BLACKMON, AND

DR. DAMIEN JOHNSON *
PEARLY LAWSON
VERD ODOM
ANTHONY WOODS *

- Absent

Others Present: Mr. Doug Carabo, Public Services Director; Mr. Stephen Pollard, IT Director; Ms. Doris Sumpter, Administrative Services Director; Mr. Wes Park, Finance Director; and Ms. Jacqueline Hough, Herald Advocate.

A copy of the Called Meeting Notice and agenda were posted on the front door of the William P. Wallace, Sr. Administration Building and on the Marlboro County Website. A copy of the agenda was provided to Ms. Jacqueline Hough, Herald Advocate prior to the meeting.

CALL TO ORDER – Mr. Charles P. Midgley, Jr. Chairman called the meeting to order at 6 p.m.

INVOCATION – Mr. Jason Steen

DISCUSSION OF FISCAL YEAR 2023 – 2024 OPERATING BUDGET

Mr. Ron Munneryn, County Administrator went over the various sections of the proposed budget while providing a power point presentation. Brief presentation was made for:

- **Increases**
- **Cost Reductions**

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- **Revenue Changes**

- a. Loss of Mohawk = - \$520,000
- b. Additional Mfg Reimbursement from State = + \$310,000
- c. Miscellaneous Revenue increases after review = + \$203,210

Net no real growth in revenue.

- **Unavoidable Expenses and Revenue Changes**

- a. Does not include any Budget requests
- b. Currently \$880,000 Deficit
- c. Reserve target should be \$300,000

- **General Fund Budget Requests**

- a. Sheriff Department
- b. Detention Center
- c. Public Works
- d. Cost of Living Increase beginning in January

Mr. Wes Park, Finance Director briefly discussed the Federal Inmate Program Fund for expenses and revenue.

Chairman Midgley asked if the Inmate revenue is part of the budget. Mr. Munnerlyn advised “No”.

Mr. Munnerlyn advised the vehicles for the sheriff’s department and the medical contract would have to be paid for through these funds. The expected cost of the vehicles are \$45,000 each. The sheriff said he did not request any employee raises and since they were not giving any, he planned to give \$1500 bonus’s every 4 months using the federal funds. Ms. Lawson questioned why the county was not going to buy the Sheriff vehicles since they were buying them for the other departments. She advised she could not make any informed decisions since she had only just received her budget information. It was explained that this was not a “Called” meeting, but, a workshop only to provide information. Mr. Munnerlyn was making changing to he presentation as council members discussed the items. He also advised that Public Works said they could survive without any vehicles if necessary. Sheriff McNeil said he thought it was the responsibility of the county to purchase the vehicles. He said they could get by with only 4 vehicles for the SRO’s if necessary. Ms. Lawson asked Sheriff McNeil how many employees he had. Sheriff McNeil responded “56” including SRO’s. She asked how many employees he had making less than \$31,000 per year. Sheriff McNeil responded he had 12 making less than \$15 per hour. After further brief discussion, Mr. Munnerlyn continued with the presentation.

EMS Fund

- Billing Revenue has slightly increased
- Hospital Charities Trust gave the county a One Million Dollar donation. These funds will go toward the purchase of a new ambulance. Also, applying for a grant.

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- Have met with their board and requested continuation of funds

Rural Fire Fund

- Revenue decreased due to loss of Mohawk
- \$130,000 deficit due to new lease payment for air packs and fund balance contribution to purchase
- No other significant changes
- Need to minimize expenses until growth to protect reserve

Solid Waste Fund

- Balanced Budget
- Some concern about collection % however delinquent tax process will “catch up”

Ms. Lawson questioned who pays the drivers of the trash trucks. She was advised the Trash Company which the county contracts with.

Employee Compensation

Ms. Doris Sumpter, Administrative Services Director addressed Council regarding employee compensation. She advised that employees may be doing more than one job, not just the job description. She advised the S C Association of Counties book is not accurate. Their data is 2-3 years old. Job descriptions are not equal in every county. With this current situation, 11 counties in the state are currently conducting or recently completed paid compensation studies. The State has now started paying more than the County for the same positions which means the county can not compete with the State for employees. We are also competing with outside private entities as well as industries which are now paying more than the county. The county is now having trouble hiring.

Council Action on Compensation

- In 2017, salaries on average were less than minimum in other counties, not even considering private sector.
- Council has acted annually on staff recommendations to address the issue
- Council allocates a budget amount and authorization in budget ordinance every year.

Ms. Lawson advised she would like to go back and discuss the compensation challenges. She if the County has any Full Time Employees working for less than \$15 per hour. Ms. Sumpter advised yes, the lowest pay grade begins at \$26,000. Ms. Lawson said she was concerned about the average employees making less than \$15 per hour. She wants to keep the good qualified people. Ms. Sumpter advised the county has some options in helping the employees. The county tries to do cross training. Mr. Munneryn advised the county has a good crew of people working.

Compensation Adjustments

- 2% COLA each year since & periodic review of salary ranges
- Changes based on job duties and/or market conditions
- Many jobs have combined or additional duties – cross training
- Consider not just government jobs but all jobs in area
- Adjustments in line with similar government and/or private sector jobs within driving distance.
- Last overall review was in early 2022.

Fund Balance

- Important to protect
- Need to prioritize requests

Mr. Munnerlyn advised it was important to keep Finance and Sheriff Departments involved in the process. He advised staff just found out that medical costs were going up. Also, the State has been cutting the Rural Fire Fund since 2008. Even if they were to increase it now, it would not help.

Conversation

Ms. Lawson questioned if the “Draft” Budget included all departments. Mr. Munnerlyn responded “yes”. She asked for the impact of bringing all Full Time employees up to \$15 per hour. She also wanted to know how many Full Time and Part Time employees the county has. Mr. Stroman said he wanted to make sure that all Full Time and Part Time salaries are reasonable. She questioned the Sheriff’s Department bonus’s over salary increases. Mr. Munnerlyn advised council does not need departments doing that. Mr. Stroman said if it were paid by the Federal Inmate Program, he did not have a problem with it. Mr. Munnerlyn advised council the fund was not guaranteed, it was a moving target. Mr. Steen questioned whether the county had received the funds back for the previous sheriff vehicles the county purchased. Mr. Wes Park advised the county has not been reimbursed at the time, waiting on the funds to reach \$90,000. Ms. Lawson recognized the Clerk of Court and Magistrate and asked if they had any requests. The Magistrate said she had requested salary increases. Ms. Lawson said council needed the Treasurer and Auditor to sit around the table with them to discuss the budget. Mr. Munnerlyn advised that the Elected Officials do not have anything to do with setting the budget or taxes. He said this was not trying to make anyone paranoid, he was just stating the facts. Several Council Members mentioned various offices which they said mentioned their needs to them about. Mr. Stroman said the Voter Registration Office told him they need another building and storage. Ms. Lawson said she wished to speak with the elected officials. Chairman Midgley advised there are procedures which they have to go by per State Law. There are laws council must follow. Mr. Stroman questioned if there were any departments over budgeted where the funds could be moved to another department. Mr. Munnerlyn advised “no”. Mr. Munnerlyn advised Staff has worked numerous hours getting to

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where the proposed budget is currently. Mr. Stroman said he was glad to see the Recreation Department request \$82,000, this shows the program is getting better.

Ms. Joy Williams, Clerk to Council said she would like a copy of the proposed budget. She advised the Family Court is paid through Federal funds while the Clerks Office (5 employees) is funded through the County. She advised her bailiffs make \$10 per hour.

ADJOURN

Motion made by Mr. Verd Odom, seconded by Mr. Jason Steen, to adjourn the meeting. Vote in favor. Unanimous. Motion Carried.

The meeting was adjourned at 1 PM.

(SEAL)

ATTEST:



Charles P. Midgley, Jr., Chairman
Marlboro County Council



Susan Rivers, Clerk
Marlboro County Clerk

Adopted: June 13, 2023