

MARLBORO COUNTY COUNCIL
MARLBORO COUNTY ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT PARTNERSHIP BUILDING
COUNCIL CHAMBERS
REGULAR MEETING

TUESDAY, JANUARY 10, 2023

6 PM

CHAIRMAN

CHARLES P. MIDGLEY, JR

VICE CHAIRMAN

JASON STEEN

CLERK TO COUNCIL

SUSAN RIVERS

COUNTY ATTORNEY

ANDREW MCLEOD

COUNCIL:

JASON STEEN

DR. DAMIEN JOHNSON

CHARLES P. MIDGLEY, JR.

PEARLY LAWSON

KENNETH STROMAN

VERD ODOM

STEVE BLACKMON, AND

ANTHONY WOODS

- Absent

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

A copy of the Regular 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. Anthony Woods

Dr. Damien Johnson joined the meeting.

INSTALLATION OF COUNCIL MEMBERS

Magistrate Mia Weaver administered the oath of office to the newly installed Ms. Pearly Lawson who was joined by her son and other family members and friends.

Magistrate Mia Weaver administered the oath of office to council members: Mr. Anthony Woods, Mr. Jason Steen, and Mr. Steve Blackmon.

APPROVAL OF AGENDA ITEMS

Motion made by Mr. Jason Steen, seconded by Mr. Verd, to approve the Agenda as presented. Vote in favor: Mr. Anthony Woods, Mr. Kenneth Stroman, Mr. Charles Midgley, Jr., Mr. Jason Steen, Mr. Steve Blackmon, and Mr. Verd Odom. Abstain: Ms. Pearly Lawson.

Dr. Damien Johnson advised the Chairman that he did not ask for a vote of opposition. He opposed the approval. **Chairman Midgley, Jr., clarified the votes taken as: Vote in favor: Mr. Anthony Woods, Mr. Kenneth Stroman, Mr. Charles Midgley, Jr., Mr. Jason Steen, Mr. Steve Blackmon, and Mr. Verd Odom; Abstain: Ms. Pearly Lawson; and Opposed: Dr. Damien Johnson. Unanimous. Motion carried: 6/1/1.**

ELECTION OF OFFICERS

Nominations & Election of Chairman and Vice-Chairman

Chairman

Mr. Charles P. Midgley, Jr., Chairman, asked for nominations for Chairman of Marlboro County Council.

Motion made by Mr. Verd Odom, seconded by Mr. Steve Blackmon, to elect Mr. Charles Midgley, Jr., to serve as Chairman to Marlboro County Council. Vote in favor: Mr. Charles Midgley, Jr., Mr. Jason Steen, Mr. Steve Blackmon, and Mr. Verd Odom. Opposed: Mr. Anthony Woods, Mr. Kenneth Stroman, Ms. Pearly Lawson, and Dr. Damien Johnson. Vote: 4/4/0. Motion Failed.

Motion made by Mr. Kenneth Stroman, seconded by Dr. Damien Johnson, to elect Mr. Anthony Woods to serve as Chairman to Marlboro County Council. Vote in favor: Mr. Anthony Woods, Ms. Pearly Lawson, Mr. Kenneth Stroman, and Dr. Damien Johnson. Opposed: Mr. Charles Midgley, Jr., Mr. Jason Steen, Mr. Steve Blackmon, and Mr. Verd Odom. Vote: 4/4/0. Motion Failed.

Chairman Midgley advised that with a tied vote, another vote would be required. The current chairman remains in place until the tie is broken.

Vice-Chairman

Mr. Charles P. Midgley, Jr., Chairman, asked for nominations for Vice-Chairman of Marlboro County Council.

Motion made by Mr. Steve Blackmon, seconded by Mr. Verd Odom, to elect Mr. Jason Steen

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to serve as Vice-Chairman to Marlboro County Council. Vote in favor: Mr. Charles Midgley, Jr., Mr. Jason Steen, Mr. Steve Blackmon, and Mr. Verd Odom. Opposed: Mr. Anthony Woods, Ms. Pearly Lawson, Mr. Kenneth Stroman, and Dr. Damien Johnson. Vote: 4/4/0. Motion Failed.

Motion made by Mr. Anthony Wood, seconded by Dr. Damien Johnson, to elect Mr. Kenneth Stroman to serve as Vice-Chairman to Marlboro County Council. Vote in favor: Mr. Anthony Woods, Ms. Pearly Lawson, Mr. Kenneth Stroman, and Dr. Damien Johnson. Opposed: Mr. Charles Midgley, Jr., Mr. Jason Steen, Mr. Steve Blackmon, and Mr. Verd Odom. Vote: 4/4/0. Motion Failed.

Chairman Midgley, Jr. advised that due to a tie vote, another vote would be required. Mr. Jason Steen would remain in office until the tie is broken.

The meeting moved forward with Mr. Charles Midgley, Jr. remaining as Chairman to Marlboro County Council. He advised the elections for Chair and Chairman would be tabled until the February meeting.

Mr. Verd Odom advised he would like to make a note that in the past Council would normally appoint the Chairman and Vice-Chairman for two years. This was Mr. Midgley and Mr. Steen's first year in the current positions.

Mr. Anthony Woods advised he would like to make a note that this was a courtesy to council, but in this day and age things change. That's why votes are taken every year, to make changes when needed.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

DECEMBER 13, 2022 – COUNCIL “WORK SESSION”

Motion made by Mr. Jason Steen, seconded by Mr. Steve Blackmon, to approve the December 13, 2022 Council Work Session Minutes as written. Vote in favor: Mr. Charles Midgley, Jr., Mr. Jason Steen, and Mr. Steve Blackmon. Abstain: Mr. Verd Odom, Ms. Pearly Lawson, Mr. Kenneth Stroman, Dr. Damien Johnson and Mr. Anthony Woods. Vote: 3/0/4. Motion Failed.

DECEMBER 13, 2022 – REGULAR COUNCIL MEETING

Motion made by Mr. Verd Odom, seconded by Mr. Steve Blackmon, to approve the December 13, 2022 Council Meeting minutes as written.

After the motion and second were made, Dr. Damien Johnson stated that in reviewing the minutes, it was not an accurate reflection of what happened in the meeting as he previously stated. He advised that the Chairman never called for an opposing vote in any of the votes, so the motion to

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be carried have not been carried out fully. The minutes have that he abstained. He has never abstained from any voting, he said the Chairman has not called for any opposing votes at any meetings at any time. He wanted the minutes to reflect this. The minutes are inaccurate and incorrect. He did not abstain, he was opposed. They need to be changed to reflect this before Council can vote.

Chairman Midgley recognized the Clerk to respond to Dr. Johnson's statement. Ms. Susan Rivers respectfully asked Dr. Johnson about not putting him down as abstaining. She advised that in completing the minutes, there are three votes for the clerk to use: approved, abstain, or opposed. Dr. Johnson advised that the Chairman never called for an opposing vote. If the Chairman does not call for an opposing vote he could not vote. So the motion for the minutes were not carried out fully, the chairman called for all in favor and then he carried through without calling for opposing votes. Ms. Rivers advised Dr. Johnson that she could reflect his statement in the December minutes, however, she still had to put him down as not voting (abstain) because of the chairman not calling for an opposing vote.

Dr. Johnson stated that in reviewing those minutes there was a lot of information in regards to a dialogue that he had back and forth with some of his fellow council members. He said Ms. Rivers did an excellent job of capturing his words, but, she did a poor job of capturing everyone else's. He commented to Ms. Rivers that if she was going to be so meticulous in capturing his words, he respectfully requested that she do the same in capturing every other person's words. Ms. Rivers responded that she would.

Mr. Kenneth Stroman added that in reading the minutes there were some statements and opinions' that were given in the minutes toward Dr. Johnson. The minutes should reflect facts and statements and not opinions'.

Mr. Ron Munnerlyn, Administrator said that considering the contentious tone and hopefully working past it, he recommended having a court reporter do a transcript so they will have everything. He advised in doing this before, it is hard in making sure that you get everything. He did not want to put the clerk in that situation. Dr. Johnson said that was council's responsibility, not the administrators. Mr. Munnerlyn asked if he could continue. He said he was only making a recommendation, not a decision. Chairman Midgley said he thought it was an excellent recommendation. Mr. Munnerlyn said Dr. Johnson was correct in that council needed to decide, he was only making a recommendation to avoid any concerns in the future. Dr. Johnson stated that was what the Clerk of Court was hired to do. Mr. Munnerlyn said the Clerk to Council could work at doing the same thing, and he advised Dr. Johnson that he made a good point, however, when you are doing this it sometimes hard to get all the sides and all the comments.

Chairman Midgley said this would be discussed further in the future.

No vote was taken.

OLD BUSINESS

RECREATION AND COMMUNITY IMPROVEMENT INITIATIVES – STATUS UPDATE

Chairman Midgley recognized Mr. Munnerlyn to update council on the Recreation and Community Improvement Initiatives.

Mr. Munnerlyn advised that since the last meeting there had been holidays and short weeks, however, the county had been able to continue in the right direction with the major initiatives council approved to move forward. He updated council on the progress and the next steps. He advised that with the Lake Boardwalk project, he had met earlier in the day with Mr. Sully Blair, Chairman of the Lake Paul Wallace Authority. They are still on board, waiting on their money from the State which is only a technicality. The County has already received theirs. Mr. Wes Parks is involved with the project in trying to find an engineering firm that has done this type of project before because of the design. A firm has been identified that bid the Murrells Inlet boardwalk, however, council will have to make decisions as to whether we need to go out for qualifications or if the design can be used as a RFP from various contractors. Mr. Blair is working with DNR to make sure there are no hurdles because of the different regulations due to water and lake. Per a conversation earlier in the day, Mr. Blair advised there did not seem to be any issues. The project is moving along and hope is to have it completed by spring, possibly Memorial Day.

A meeting was held with the City of Bennettsville about a possible partnership on this project which would double the budget. The county is waiting to hear from them. The County has entered into a contract for the Old Bingo building on Broad Street. The City of Bennettsville was scheduled to hold a meeting (tonight) to discuss the various projects they discussed partnering with the county on. The meeting the county had with them was good and they seemed interested. Staff is working to be ready for the demolition or repurpose of the property. The county has inspection rights to go onto the property while under contract, however, the current owner wants a representative to be there while the county does this. It's a little limiting but will work out.

The County has received good news from South Carolina Parks, Recreation and Tourism. They do have assistance for these types of projects.

Conversation has come up concerning the Food Trucks at these locations. In order to have food trucks at this location, there must be a licensed kitchen located at the site. Some communities have a kitchen that is shared by the different Food Trucks. This may be something that council would be interested in.

The only issue to come up concerning the Splash Pad is the location. There are some concerns with it being located next to the Bennettsville Community Center. The design is simple with a possible location on the golf course property near the pool or where ever determined. An assessment of the pool will be necessary to see what is needed to bring it up to date. It is not a major issue.

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The Golf Course has a lot of moving pieces. The county has never done this type of project before. The county is advertising for positions for an outside grounds keeper and someone to manage the overall operations of the property. There are some qualified candidates for both and the county will begin interviewing soon.

There were concerns voiced by various council members as to whether council had actually approved the purchase of the golf course at the December meeting or whether it was for the administrator to pursue the matter and bring the contract back to council. The administrator advised council had voted to purchase the property, however, if they had any concerns they needed to discuss them and make a decision fast. Various council members stated that council had approved the purchase of the golf course in December. The administrator advised that if council did not approve the golf course, they did not approve anything. They had been presented with budgets, details, and information concerning moving forward with the purchase. It was suggested council have a "Called" meeting to discuss the issue further. Council agreed to hold the "Called" meeting on Friday, January 13, 2023 at 11:30 a.m. and requested documents from the December meeting be provided to them for review. They also requested to see a copy of the contract for purchase of the Country Club.

NEW BUSINESS

RESOLUTION # 01-23-01- A RESOLUTION REGARDING AN AGREEMENT BETWEEN THE MARLBORO COUNTY SHERIFF AND THE UNITED STATES MARSHALS SERVICE FOR THE HOUSING OF FEDERAL INMATES IN THE MARLBORO COUNTY DETENTION CENTER AND THE CREATION OF A SPECIAL FUND AND RELATED POLICIES FOR THE RECEIPT AND EXPENDITURES OF REVENUE COLLECTED AS A RESULT OF SAID AGREEMENT.

Mr. Munnerlyn advised information had been placed at each council members' seat. The basic purpose of the resolution was the creation of a special fund account to be set up. He recommended accepting the Resolution.

RESOLUTION # 01- 23 - 02 - A RESOLUTION AUTHORIZING SUBMISSION OF APPLICATIONS BY MARLBORO COUNTY FOR HIGHWAY SAFETY GRANTS ADMINISTERED BY THE SOUTH CAROLINA DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC SAFETY AND AVAILABLE TO OFFSET TRAFFIC SAFETY OPERATIONAL COSTS OF THE MARLBORO COUNTY SHERIFF'S DEPARTMENT AND AUTHORIZATION TO ACCEPT GRANT IF AWARDED.

Sheriff McNeil was recognized to answer any questions council may have concerning both the Inmate Housing and the Highway Safety Grant, both of which was discussed.

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Inmate Housing Agreement

Sheriff McNeil said staff has worked with the federal prison institute on the contract. They are ready to proceed, however, the Federal Prison Institute requires an account number to disburse the funds to before they can proceed. Marlboro County has agreed to house 15 inmates at a per diem of \$64 per day which would generate \$\$29,760 per month. This should generate revenue of \$467,200 per year. They would like to start housing them this month (January) which would only be some of the inmates, not the full 15. They should have the full 15 inmates by July 1st. It would be no less than 15 at this time or no more than 15.

He said council should know the flow of the funds between April to June 2023. After July 1st, he will request 5 more inmates bringing up to 20 inmates at the \$467,200. After July 1, 2023 the amount will not change. They would like to be able to request how the funds from the inmates will be spent. From the revenues generated, he would like to see an increase in salaries for both the Detention Center and the Sheriff Department staff. If council were to look at how much officers are being paid now, Marlboro County Correction Officers are at \$28,000 compared to \$32,000 or up to \$40,000 State wide. The average deputy in Marlboro County is \$34,400 compared to \$40,000 lowest in Pee Dee being \$40,000. By using the funds generated through the inmate housing, he believed they could increase all of their staff salaries by \$3000 each. It would cost approximately \$84,067 for the Detention Center, \$123,734 for the Sheriff's Department, add 3 more Detention Officers for \$162,123 with an overall cost of \$371,000.

Sheriff McNeil stated he wanted to be clear concerning the facts. There are two vehicles which the county bought for them several months ago with the agreement that the county would be paid back for the vehicles using the inmate funds. So from March until July they should have enough money to cover these two vehicles. Then all monies from July 1st forward would be allocated for employee salaries and staffing.

He said one of the things included in the agreement is that all transportation cost will be separate from per diem. The per diem is \$64 per inmate. The transportation is \$25 per hour per officer plus travel expense. So every time an officer goes out to transport, they will receive \$25 per hour plus their transportation expense. Marlboro County currently does not have this. Mr. Steen questioned the suitability of the two transportation vans currently owned. Sheriff McNeil said one is alright and the second one does not have a cage, of which one has been ordered. The 3 correction officers they are requesting will be strictly for transportation. They will also be in the office and will work as they are needed.

Various council members had questions concerning the inmate housing contract. Ms. Pearly Lawson questioned with having the inmates in the Detention Center and the previous issues with the cell locks, was the Detention Center up to par and safe for the employees. Mr. Jason Steen asked if we were in compliance. Sheriff McNeil advised the Detention Center had been inspected by both the State And Feds and was in compliance. They have done work to up-date it and continue to work on it. Mr. Verd Odom questioned the salaries for the Detention Center Officers. Sheriff

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McNeil advised \$28,500. It was noted that the figures given had to be corrected and new information was provided to council. Also explained that the benefits for the employees are included and are extremely high. Mr. Steen questioned how many inmates could they comfortably handle with their current staff. Sheriff McNeil advised 15.

Ms. Lawson questioned with the staffing would this require over time for the Detention Center. After some discussion of over time problems, it was clarified that Ms. Lawson was questioning the over time of the Detention Center, not the Sheriff's Department. Sheriff McNeil apologized for misunderstanding and said that if there was any over time, it was built into the budget. Mr. Munnerlyn advised we had a lot of over time in the past due to vacancies. As the department has grown and kept staff, the over time has gone down. Sheriff McNeil said they are staffed good at the Detention Center and the over time is minimal. The 3 new officers would be doing strictly transportation while in the past the Sheriff's Department had to do it. Ms. Lawson questioned with having the State and Federal prisons here in Marlboro County, would this grant be taking advantage. Sheriff McNeil advised it is not a grant, it is a contractual agreement. He said that the Federal Government does not have enough inmate housing, so they are reaching out to other facilities to help out. Mr. Munnerlyn and Sheriff McNeil advised that all of this information is for the next years budget.

Mr. Steen wanted to clarify that the Resolution is for housing the 15 inmates with their current staff. Sheriff McNeil responded "Yes". Sheriff McNeil said what they are agreeing to is the money coming in and going into a special account for them to use as needed. That is what is being requested. Mr. Steen thanked Sheriff McNeil for looking for other funds to help the county. Sheriff McNeil advised the contract could not be changed for 3 years.

Mr. Woods said he knew this was for the fiscal year which begins in July, however, when the Officers of the Detention Center and the Sheriff's Department hear about Council being agreeable, they are going to want to know when. At this time, Council doesn't know when. Sheriff McNeil said if approved, he's hoping July 1. Mr. Munnerlyn advised this is just a heads up of what the Sheriff will be asking for in the next budget request. This is part of their budget and where they will be headed.

Chairman Midgley asked if everyone understood the request or were there any questions. Ms. Lawson advised that she did not understand everything and asked if council did not approve it at present, would it hold up anything. Sheriff McNeil advised that it would hold up everything. Ms. Lawson questioned if this is only authorizing the Sheriff to set up an account for the funds. Sheriff McNeil said it was.

Highway Public Safety Grant

Sheriff McNeil said Highway Public Safety Grant is a grant for over-time. Approval is needed for the Highway Safety Grant at the meeting so staff can work on the application. The grant requires certain things, one of which they are currently doing such as safety check points. When they do

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these they are required to have additional people come and help with it. They are spending a good bit of money on over-time doing this now on overtime. However, they are trying to reduce some of the problems they have in the problem area of McColl. These are requirements that may generate overtime hours, which the county will be reimbursed for. They are trying to reduce the problems they have. Most of the check points have been in the McColl area. People are coming in from North Carolina going to the clubs. If they can set up the safety checks points to slow down some of the bad this will help. This has been an advantage for them in getting the guns and drugs off the streets. These funds would be used to subsidize what the county is encountering. The grant does not have a match, only requires they do certain things, which they are doing with the check points, which they are already doing twice a month. They are looking for monies to help the county.

Chairman Midgley asked if staff knew enough to make a recommendation.

Mr. Munnerlyn advised staff had been working with the Sheriff on both issues. The first Resolution for the Housing of the Federal Inmates is very reasonable. All it says is he is going to move forward with a contract that he is statutorily authorized to do without council approval. The money will come into a special account so it will not get mixed up with other monies. At Budget time, council knows his intent, they are getting a peep into the future and at budget time they can approve it.

The over-time grant is getting money if we can demonstrate that we are using it for the purpose intended. The administrator recommended adopting both resolutions.

Motion made by Mr. Jason Steen, seconded by Mr. Verd Odom, to approve Resolution # 01-23-01 – A Resolution regarding an agreement between the Marlboro County Sheriff and the United States Marshals Service for the housing of federal inmates in the Marlboro County Detention Center and the creation of a special fund and related policies for the receipt and expenditures of revenue collected as a result of said agreement. Vote in favor: Unanimous. Unanimous. Motion carried.

Motion made by Mr. Jason Steen, seconded by Mr. Verd Odom to approve Resolution # 01-23 – 02 – a Resolution authorizing submission of applications by Marlboro County for highway safety grants administered by the South Carolina Department of Public Safety and available to offset traffic safety operational costs of the Marlboro County Sheriff's Department and authorization to accept grant if awarded. Vote in favor. Unanimous. Motion carried.

Sheriff McNeil addressed Council with several other items while speaking.

He advised the Sheriff Department is partnering with the Pilot Club on Project Life Saver, The idea is to provide necklaces around the neck or pendants for people who tend to wander off, such as Alzheimer's or dementia. He said they recently had a situation with someone with autism that walked off. The way it works is, the necklace or pendant would be paired with a transmitter which

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would be kept at the Sheriff's office and if alerted, they would be able to find this person faster. He advised there is no cost to the Sheriff's office which includes training. Also, they will be able to train anyone in the county who is interested in helping with these situations. This is a good tool for them.

Sheriff McNeil said he is always apprehensive of what people think of them and how they are doing their jobs. He thinks they should show the people, show and tell, what they are doing. So they want to start a Sheriff/Citizens' camp which would be held for 2 hours a week where the public or anyone who wishes to join could come in for training and the Sheriff's Department can go through their policies with them. He invited all council members to be a part of it. This way they would know first hand how they do everything.

Mr. Stroman asked if he could get a copy of the Sheriff's Department excessive force policy. Sheriff McNeil advised they have a Department Policy which is mandated by the State per H-3050 which all law enforcement agencies in the state must follow. Ms. Lawson also requested a copy.

Mr. Verd Odom spoke of the drug problem in McColl which he said "there is no secret about". He said he had spoken with an EMS person recently and was told by that person that they had never seen anything like in in their life. Mr. Odom asked what was being done with McColl being very limited on their Police Officers. Sheriff McNeil advised they are doing some things in McColl. If they find someone who has over dosed on drugs, if they can find the seller, they will prosecute them and charge them with involuntary manslaughter. The Solicitors' Office has signed on to do this. They are doing everything they can. There needs to be some preventable measures by the county. They can lock them up, however, there is someone else waiting to take their place. The community has to come together to decide how to stop the problem. It is not only dealing with the drugs, it's also about the economic situation. The only way to do this is to stop fussing with each other. They need to work together to decide what is best. Until everyone sits down together as a community and work out their differences, things are going to be stuck here with the selling of dope. Mr. Odom thanked Sheriff McNeil for his help in McColl.

APPOINTMENTS TO BOARDS & COMMISSIONS

CONSIDERATION OF REQUEST FROM MARLBORO COUNTY ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT PARTNERSHIP BOARD

A letter was received from the Marlboro County Economic Development Partnership's Executive Board advising that at their December meeting, the Board voted to reappoint Mr. Andy Rogers as Chairman, Mr. Fred Thomas as Vice-Chairman, and Mr. Frankie Frazier as Secretary/Treasurer.

They respectfully requested the reappointment of the following Board Members whose terms expired at the end of December:

- Mr. Andy Rogers, Chairman Business & Industry Palmetto Brick
- Mr. Wes Park Small Business, Service Business Breeden Inn

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- Mr. Fred Thomas, Vice-Chair Bennettsville Resident with related experience
- Mr. Frankie Frazier Marlboro County Resident with related experience
- Mr. Luke Johnakin Marlboro County Resident with related experience

They advised that Ms. Joan Johnakin a “Marlboro County Resident with related experience” has indicated that she does not wish to be reappointed which leaves a vacancy in this field.

Chairman Midgley asked if there was a motion to approve the boards recommendations. He asked if they needed to read the names out loud or had council seen the list (almost last page in packet). Mr. Kenneth Stroman advised he had seen the list and by having been on the board, it’s a little different now in the way they do things with the officers. He would like to revisit the conversation on the appointments and everything at the next council meeting. He would like to table it.

Mr. Munnerlyn advised it was per Ordinance. Chairman Midgley asked if it could be placed on the February agenda. Mr. Munnerlyn said “yes” and advised that council needed to vote on Mr. Stroman’s motion. Chairman Midgely questioned whether the council members had looked at the list.

Motion made by Mr. Kenneth Stroman, seconded by Dr. Damien Johnson to table the Economic Development Partnership Board Officer recommendations until the February meeting. Vote in favor. Unanimous. Motion carried.

COUNCIL APPOINTMENTS OR REAPPOINTMENTS TO EXISTING BOARDS

A copy of a letter was received from the Marlboro County Economic Development Partnership’s Executive Board addressed to Ms. Donna Ridges advising that the Board had unanimously voted at their December meeting to appoint her to the Partnership’s Image Committee based on the recommendation of Bennettsville Mayor Carolyn Prince along with supporting comments by County Administrator Ron Munnerlyn. No vote was required.

Motion made by Ms. Pearly Lawson, seconded by Mr. Kenneth Stroman to reappoint Ms. Judy Fullard to the Planning Commission.

Motion made by Mr. Jason Steen, seconded by Mr. Anthony Woods to reappoint Ms. Patsy Driggers to the Library Board.

Vote in favor. Unanimous. Motion carried.

ACCEPTANCE OF BIDS

NONE.

REPORTS

FINANCE REPORT – MR. WES PARK, FINANCE DIRECTOR

General Fund revenues for the six months ending December 31, 2022 total \$4,019,610 in comparison to \$3,603,686 for the six months ending December 31, 2021. General fund expenditures through December 31, 2022 total \$6,739,664 of a \$13,904,125 budget or 48.47% of budget year to date. General fund expenditures totaled \$5,769,009 for the same six months ending December 31, 2021. In conclusion, revenues are up in comparison to the prior year but not as much as the increase in expenditures.

Ms. Pearly Lawson advised she had some questions. She suggested they may wish to do a work shop because she really wanted to understand the budget. She referred to page one, and questioned the credit cards. Mr. Parks advised these are the credit card payments received. They are classified separately in smaller amounts. He advised the county does have to pay a service fee when receiving funds through credit card payments.

Ms. Lawson referred to page 3, expenses. She questioned if they had been expended. Mr. Parks advised there was to be discussion on that on the auditor's report which was supposed to be presented at the February council meeting.

Ms. Lawson advised she did appreciate everything the departments were doing, but for her being new, she was going to expect detailed reports. This was so she could get a clear understanding. Mr. Parks advised he would be glad to do some type of work session to work with her.

ADMINISTRATOR'S REPORT – MR. RON MUNNERLYN, COUNTY ADMINISTRATOR

EMPLOYEE SERVICE ANNIVERSARIES

The following employee was recognized with five or more years of service to Marlboro County through the month of December: Warren McColl (5 years).

ADMINISTRATION

Christmas Spirit

Mr. Munnerlyn said the County employee events such as caroling, ugly sweater contests and door decorating contests were a hit. The events organized by an employee committee were well participated in and we intend to do the same thing next year.

County Wide Clean Up Day

Mr. Munnerlyn advised the county did not have a clean up day last year, but he thought it was a good idea to have one again. He stated that in doing it in the past, they realized they need to try and do it before it gets too warm with snakes crawling and people getting down in ditches. It's

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not a safe thing. He would like to suggest that staff come up with some dates that do not any conflicts with any other big events going on the community and they would email the dates to council. He suggested council review the dates and respond. When the county was doing them on a big scale, they would begin early on Saturday morning and ending at lunch. But, they also allowed flexibility for people. Some would clean up on Fridays. Some community groups would do it the prior week. It seemed to work out well. Council needs to pick a date and move forward. Do not want to wait too long, it gets warm fast.

Mr. Stroman questioned whether clean up day would include: couches, mattresses, tires or any hard garbage. Mr. Munnerlyn responded that it was his opinion it would. That is the only way to get it out. Mr. Stroman said that what normally happens with the ones he has participated in is they are given little bags, go into the ditches and clean up the paper. But, there are mattresses, and tires there that the normal people can't get. So, maybe they can have a day scheduled for a truck to go back and pick these things up. Maybe they can do this in conjunction with the City. Mr. Munnerlyn said he thought it was a good idea. The ones' held early were successful. They had folks bringing in the stuff they could bring. Other people were leaving it organized on the side of the road. Council may be interested in what the county did another time "tire amnesty day" in which people (excluding commercial) were allowed to bring in tires for free. This helped to keep a lot of them out of the ditches and off the sides of the road.

Audit Report

Mr. Wes Parks worked on the Audit New Year's Day. It will be placed on the agenda next Month (February). There are no issues with the audit. Council may ask questions about the different components of it. He advised it would be sent to the prior to the meeting to allow them time to look at it.

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

SCDEW Meeting

Mr. Munnerlyn was approached by SCDEW in reference to a bid community meeting they held after the closure of Mohawk. He said some of council may have gone to this meeting. They had a room full of people. SCDEW would like a follow up meeting with several purposes: to talk about how things were handled, how they responded, and how the community responded with the initial closure. The next part is how all of us will work together to come up with programs to train our folks to be employable or more employable. He has requested they add another component that he has previously discussed with council and citizens. We need to rebuild our local economy so we have trade again. This way the county is not dependent on companies that do not have our interest or the attachment to the community which we have. He advised the meeting would be held the following Thursday. They particularly wanted to invite the folks that attended that meeting. He requested they also invite council, Tech, and the school district. He recommended and hoped council would participate.

Meeting with MPD

Mr. Munnerlyn had a Meeting with Marlboro Pee Dee Electric Cooperative with regards to their assistance in marketing the county spec building. They are willing to help us. This would be a huge help as MPD has a wide network of potential tenants for the building. The Spec building is serviced by MPD so they have an interest in it as well. They also made a contribution to the construction of it when built. They are a partner.

Mr. Stroman questioned Mr. Munnerlyn in meeting with MPD, with the county going through Phase I, II, and III of the Recreation project, is there any way they could assist us with the funding. He said this might be a good opportunity for Mr. Munnerlyn to put out a feeler. Mr. Munnerlyn said he was meeting with the Economic person, but, he would bring it up.

Dillon County Multi-County Park Agreement

Dillon County has reached out with a request to complete a multi-county industrial park legal arrangement. These arrangements require 2 counties to form a virtual joint park in order to secure maximum incentives for the home county of a project. We already have agreements with other counties such as Darlington for the same arrangement. Once reviewed by our attorneys this will be put on the next month's agenda for consideration.

Other Requests' from Council

Ms. Lawson requested Mr. Munnerlyn put on his agenda that they would like to upgrade the website. Mr. Munnerlyn responded they had to do an RFP, it was in the budget, it just had not been done yet.

RECOGNITION OF CITIZEN'S REQUEST BEFORE COUNCIL

Donna Ridges (Recreation) – said she wished to address two things. She discussed the election and how it did not flow smoothly.

She discussed the recreation project and not wanting the golf course. She wanted council to consider the community and not tourist. She said food trucks do not sit in the same place every day. They move around. She was not in favor of the boardwalk, and said that possibly 30% of the community may use it. She was in favor of the splash pad. She said it was wonderful for children from one to possibly 10. They were interested in water projects, possibly somewhere for older people to do aquatic exercises. She said children needed swimming lessons, suggested giving money to the Schools for building in ground pools to provide swimming lessons to the students. She was not in favor of the golf course. She said they need something for the newer generation. People here need things, the youth need things, they're not going anywhere. Lastly, she said don't just think of the tourist, think of the people that live here.

RECOGNITION OF COUNCIL MEMBERS

Mr. Verd Odom –spoke of McColl. He said “the people are very concerned”. He thanked the Sheriff for his efforts and what they are continuing to do. He said “we need to get a handle on it. When an EMS guy says that in 40 years he has not seen anything like he had in two weeks, it’s pretty serious.” He appreciates the County employees and encouraged everyone to respect the blue lights. He encouraged everyone to move to the side of the road if they see blue lights coming because they are rushing to some type of emergency.

Mr. Steve Blackmon – thanked everyone for helping each other. He said “hopefully this year they can get things on track and work together to get some things done. With being on council, he hoped they could move forward with whatever they decide for the benefit of everybody”. Mr. Blackmon thanked the Sheriff, he thinks they are doing a wonderful job. He thanked staff and council members for what they do. He said “he was just glad to get started again with everybody and hopefully get together and get something done this year”.

Dr. Damien Johnson – said “Happy New Year and glad to make it into the new year”. “There was one issue he was having, it was calling the Initiative a Recreation Initiative. It had little to do with recreation and what they have going on with the \$7 million they have been gifted with”. He said he was surprised that no other city had come to them and requested to be involved. The money came to Marlboro County, not just Bennettsville. Surprised no one from other entities have asked for anything for recreation in their areas. He said “ it baffles him that the only Recreation building owned by Marlboro County is Prince Recreation Facility in Blenheim without any funds being allocated to it. He advised the kids started recreational basketball that day and described the floors of being like an icy skating rink. Dr. Johnson said was there was an 11 year old that nearly tore his knee to pieces playing on the floor that no one should be playing on. Dr. Johnson said he had spoken to the Recreation Director and he has done some proactive stuff to mitigate the liability. He spoke of council members going to Thomasville to see their facility and not one discussion has been had on how they could construct something in Marlboro County to mimic it like Thomasville with water features. He spoke of all counties around Marlboro County having Recreational Facilities and the county has been gifted money, but, not one idea has been shifted toward looking out for the next generation, the generation that will carry us out. He said “he respectfully asked they take a look and pump their brakes on these initiatives and really take a hard look at what we’re doing with this money that has been gifted”. He said if he were a citizen and the county came to him two years later and asked for a penny sales tax, knowing they had this money, and didn’t look out for the average citizen, he wouldn’t vote for it. He said council needed to be mindful of the decisions they make and for looking out for the next generation. They can help with building them into people that Sheriff McNeil won’t have to arrest for either selling drugs or having to succumb to them which they have seen in their community every day.

Mr. Jason Steen – welcomed Ms. Pearly Lawson. He said he thought she had been at every meeting for the last two years with this being the first time she sat up with them. He recognized Ms. Corrie Plato and said Ms. Plato had been on council for his whole term of serving. He thanked the Sheriff and said he knew it was tough, he listens to the pagers and what has been going on in

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McColl. Mr. Steen said “as the Sheriff said “It’s got to start at home. Everything’s got to start at home”. He hoped that with the New Year with everything getting eviler and eviler, everyone just has to look after each other and continue to move forward.

Mr. Kenneth Stroman – welcomed Ms. Pearly Lawson and congratulated other members on their reappointments. He congratulated Mr. Thom and Mr. Coachman on their victories. He also recognized the first African American Probate Judge (Rena McCoy) who was present. He wanted to thank her for coming and participating in the meeting.

Mr. Stroman said “I, like Dr. Johnson want to see the movement move forward in this county. We realize that we can’t have everything right away, but, when the movement is stagnant and we have tried on this board to address some of these issues that Dr. Johnson has brought up, we have had ideas trying to help everybody. All ideas, it takes five votes, and when you bring that idea up, it is a democracy. Sometimes you win, sometimes you lose. We would like to have everything gift wrapped. \$7 million was a gift handed to us”. Mr. Stroman said the county is stewards of that money. He was real big in the aquatics. However, the 5 votes were not there. So, they went another way. Is it too late to turn, the minutes will tell them in the workshop as to exactly what council voted on. He hoped they could do better, particularly since Dr. Johnson has brought up the issue of the children playing in arenas’ that are safe. They can correct the problem. He said he was looking forward to another year of serving on the board and working with them.

Ms. Pearly Lawson – said “Good evening to everyone present and those who may be after the meeting watching on social media. I took the privilege of writing down what I needed to say. One of the things I want to say is I really thank God for this opportunity to serve on this board. It’s different sitting out there and then having to make firm decisions up here”. She recognized Ms. Corrie Plato, her predecessor and said her hats off to her. She said “ I want to take this time to thank my son “Sturgill”, it took him twelve hours to come here to be sure that I was represented today and I thank him so much”. He came along with her aunt, church members, family and friends to support her. She also wanted to recognize her two sisters, daughter, grandchildren, and daughter-in-law that were not present but supported her. She was blessed to have family say “Proud of You”. She said “she prays for a day that more women can serve on the Board. As for her as a Council Person, she will do her best to work with each of them. She wants to learn as much as possible. “It’s easy to vote on some issues. Hard issues, she will pray she does right. If you do right, you can sleep tight at night”.

Mr. Anthony Woods - said “he was looking forward to working with Ms. Lawson”. He recognized the School Board Members in attendance and said a change is going to come. He said “2022 was a year of trial and tribulation. 2023, change needs to come”. He questioned worrying about the tourist, “they come and go”. He said the county needs to worry about “selves” . They are here 24/7. It’s not too late to reevaluate and make a change. They are not going to scape the whole plate. “Some of the things were good and some of the things could be better”. He advised they moved forward with what they thought the people wanted. When people start hearing what they are planning on doing, that is when they get conversations in their ears. The citizens need to speak to them before they move too far. Everyone has something to bring to the table. He advised

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they had met with both the City of Bennettsville and the Lake Paul Wallace Authority and advised the School Board members in attendance that they would love to meet with them. They need to collaborate. "Everyone needs to benefit and flourish. Need to make a change and come out of dead lock because it's not going to get pretty".

Mr. Charles P. Midgley, Jr., - welcomed Ms. Lawson. He thanked Sheriff McNeil for his hard work and for keeping everyone safe. He also thanked him for his efforts in obtaining the over-time grant.

NON-AGENDA ITEMS

None.

ADJOURN

Motion made by Mr. Verd Odom, seconded by Ms. Steve Blackmon, to adjourn the meeting. Vote in favor. Unanimous. Motion Carried.

The meeting was adjourned at 7:00 P.M..

(SEAL)

ATTEST:



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



Susan Rivers, Clerk
Marlboro County Council

Adopted: 2/14/2023