

MARLBORO COUNTY COUNCIL
MARLBORO COUNTY ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT PARTNERSHIP BUILDING
COUNCIL CHAMBERS

TUESDAY, JANUARY 11, 2022

6:00 PM

CHAIRMAN

JASON STEEN

VICE CHAIR
ADMINISTRATOR
CLERK TO COUNCIL
COUNTY ATTORNEY

CORRIE PLATO
RON MUNNERLYN
PATRICIA BUNDY
ANDREW MCLEOD

COUNCIL:

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

DR. DAMIEN JOHNSON
CORRIE H. PLATO *
VERD ODOM
ANTHONY WOODS

- Absent

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

A copy of the agenda was emailed to Ms. Jacqueline Hough of the Herald Advocate and posted on the front door of the William P. Wallace, Sr. Administration Building and on the county's website (www.marlborocounty.sc.gov).

Mr. Jason Steen, Chairman, called the meeting to order. He stated Ms. Corrie Plato called staff and advised she would not be able to come to the meeting due to sickness.

INVOCATION – Mr. Anthony Woods

APPROVAL OF AGENDA ITEMS

Motion made by Mr. Charles P. Midgley, Jr., seconded by Mr. Steve Blackmon, to approve the agenda as presented. Vote in favor. Unanimous. Motion carried.

ELECTION OF OFFICERS

Nominations & Election of Chairman and Vice-Chairman

Mr. Jason Steen, Chairman, thanked members of Council for allowing him to serve as Chairman for the last two years. He stated it was time to elect a new Chairman and Vice Chairman for Council and stated he was certain the next Chairman would continue to lead the county forward.

Chairman Steen opened the floor for nominations for Chairman.

Dr. Damien Johnson nominated Mr. Anthony Woods to serve as Chairman and Mr. Kenneth Stroman seconded the nomination. Vote in favor: Dr. Damien Johnson, Mr. Kenneth Stroman, and Mr. Anthony Woods.

Mr. Verd Odom nominated Mr. Charles P. Midgley, Jr. to serve as Chairman and Mr. Steve Blackmon seconded the nomination. Vote in favor: Mr. Jason Steen, Mr. Charles P. Midgley, Jr., Mr. Verd Odom, and Mr. Steve Blackmon.

Mr. Charles P. Midgley, Jr. was elected as Chairman.

Mr. Jason Steen opened the floor for nominations for Vice Chairman.

Mr. Kenneth Stroman nominated Dr. Damien Johnson to serve as Vice Chairman and Mr. Anthony Woods seconded the nomination. Vote in favor: Dr. Damien Johnson, Mr. Kenneth Stroman, and Mr. Anthony Woods.

Mr. Steve Blackmon nominated Mr. Jason Steen to serve as Vice Chairman and Mr. Verd Odom seconded the nomination. Vote in favor: Mr. Jason Steen, Mr. Charles P. Midgley, Jr., Mr. Verd Odom, and Mr. Steve Blackmon.

Mr. Jason Steen was elected as Vice Chairman.

Dr. Damien Johnson stated it was obvious what was going on and stated it was very concerning.

Motion was made by Dr. Damien Johnson, seconded by Mr. Anthony Woods, to enter into executive session to discuss personnel/contractual issues. Mr. Steen asked County Attorney McLeod if there were any personnel/contractual issues to be discussed. Attorney McLeod stated he was not aware of any. Dr. Johnson stated that a motion had been made and seconded and the motion needed to be voted upon. Mr. Steen asked for a vote. Vote in favor: Dr. Damien Johnson, Mr. Kenneth Stroman, and Mr. Anthony Woods. Opposed: Mr. Jason Steen, Mr. Charles P. Midgley, Jr., Mr. Verd Odom, and Mr. Steve Blackmon. Motion failed.

Dr. Johnson stated it was obvious what was going on and asked that God bless Ms. Plato. He stated he hoped that there was no intimidation to keep Ms. Plato from attending the meeting. He

stated there was manipulation and backhandedness going on and everyone on Council was aware and knew this to be true.

Mr. Verd Odom stated he felt that Dr. Johnson was making accusations against members of Council that could not be backed up. Dr. Johnson stated he did not need proof.

Dr. Johnson stated Mr. Steen just came off as Chairman of County Council and asked why members of Council felt he should now serve as Vice Chairman. He stated Mr. Anthony Woods is a senior council member and his experience is needed much more in his role as Chairman or Vice Chairman. He stated it appears that Council is going through the same things over and over and he was tired of seeing it happen. He stated these members are elected officials who have been placed on Council to lead the county. He stated all members of Council are public servants and each deserves better. He stated he was not happy with the diversity and Council will continue to go through the same things we have been through year after year if there are no changes. He stated the tag team is unfair to the citizens who expect us to lead them.

Mr. Anthony Woods agreed with Dr. Johnson and stated there are meetings before and after meetings. He stated he felt the action taken tonight was a slap in his face and he had been treated unfairly. He stated he is being overlooked as a candidate for Chairman and he felt he had much experience. He stated Council members are asking Mr. Midgley to lead our Council with only two years of experience. He stated he had personally served as a member of County Council for 16 years. He stated he hoped that Ms. Plato was well. He stated County Council has never been a council of black and white but tonight he felt that we had become just that. He stated in the past, things have been done above board. He stated now is a very important time for Marlboro County. He stated in moving forward, we need the best people in positions of Chairman and Vice Chairman. He stated Council had the voting process and the votes have been made and it's done. He stated he felt that some folks have been intimidated. He stated what Councilman Johnson is implying is 100% true. He stated everything is not black and white and some things are being done under the table.

Dr. Johnson stated he did not become a member of County Council to just sit, but he became a member of County Council to make some changes. He stated some folks may be happy with the condition the County is in, but he was not. He stated some folks do not want any other voice or direction to move forward. He stated if seven minds cannot do it why do some think that one mind can do it all. He stated members of Council are elected officers and we need to help govern our County. We need leaders that will engage Council to move the county forward not the way one individual wants the county led. He stated the county is not getting results. Dr. Johnson stated that the Administrator's contract should be reviewed in February of each year, and it has never been reviewed by Council. He stated he felt that Council was in violation of the Administrator's contract since no evaluation had ever been done.

Mr. Charles P. Midgley, Jr. took over as Chairman and stated that council needed to move forward with the agenda.

Dr. Damien Johnson made a motion to go into executive session and Mr. Anthony Woods seconded the motion. Chairman Midgley stated there was a place on the agenda for an executive session if one was needed and he suggested Council wait and have it at the designated time.

Mr. Verd Odom addressed Dr. Johnson. He stated he had been a member of Council for the past five years and many council members have served for decades prior to that, and many good things have been accomplished. He stated Dr. Johnson attended his first council meeting and stated that nothing had been done for the past 50 years. Mr. Odom stated that was just not true.

Dr. Johnson addressed Mr. Odom and stated he should be ashamed of himself if he felt that things have been accomplished over the past several years. He stated the county is not in the best condition that we could be in, and the county had not changed one bit in years.

PUBLIC HEARING

ORDINANCE # 822 – AN ORDINANCE AUTHORIZING PURSUANT TO TITLE 12, CHAPTER 44 OF THE CODE OF LAWS OF SOUTH CAROLINA 1976, AS AMENDED, THE EXECUTION AND DELIVERY OF AN INFRASTRUCTURE CREDIT AGREEMENT BETWEEN MARLBORO COUNTY, SOUTH CAROLINA (THE “COUNTY”) AND A COMPANY KNOWN TO THE COUNTY AS PROJECT FEATHER (“PROJECT FEATHER”) WHICH INCLUDES A GRANT OF CERTAIN SPECIAL SOURCE REVENUE CREDITS; AN AMENDMENT TO AN EXISTING FEE-IN-LIEU OF AD VALOREM TAXES AGREEMENT BETWEEN THE COUNTY AND PROJECT FEATHER TO PROVIDE FOR AN EXTENSION OF THE INVESTMENT PERIOD THEREIN; AN AMENDMENT TO ANOTHER EXISTING FEE-IN-LIEU OF AD VALOREM TAXES AGREEMENT BETWEEN THE COUNTY AND PROJECT FEATHER TO PROVIDE FOR AN EXTENSION OF THE TERM OF THE AGREEMENT; AND OTHER RELATED MATTERS

Mr. Charles P. Midgley, Jr., Chairman, stated the public hearing for Ordinance # 822 has been postponed until a later date.

Mr. Ron Munnerlyn, County Administrator, stated that the Economic Development Attorney Sam Moses has advised that he has talked with Mohawk’s attorney, and they are awaiting specific information and asked that the public hearing be postponed until a later date.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

DECEMBER 6, 2021 – REGULAR COUNCIL MEETING

Mr. Charles P. Midgley, Jr., Chairman, asked if there were any comments on the minutes or suggested changes or additions. There were no recommended changes.

January 11, 2022 County Council Meeting

Motion made by Mr. Jason Steen, seconded by Mr. Steve Blackmon, to approve the regular council meeting minutes of December 6, 2021 as presented. Vote in favor: Mr. Jason Steen, Mr. Charles P. Midgley, Jr., Mr. Verd Odom, Mr. Steve Blackmon, and Mr. Anthony Woods. Opposed: None. Abstained: Dr. Damien Johnson and Mr. Kenneth Stroman. Vote: 5/0/2. Motion carried.

DECEMBER 28, 2021 – “CALLED” COUNCIL MEETING

Mr. Charles P. Midgley, Jr., Chairman, asked if there were any comments on the minutes or suggested changes or additions. There were no recommended changes.

Motion made by Mr. Verd Odom, seconded by Mr. Jason Steen, to approve the “called” council meeting minutes of December 28, 2021 as presented. Vote in favor: Mr. Jason Steen, Mr. Charles P. Midgley, Jr., Mr. Verd Odom, and Mr. Steve Blackmon. Opposed: None. Abstained: Dr. Damien Johnson, Mr. Kenneth Stroman, and Mr. Anthony Woods. Vote: 4/0/3. Motion carried.

OLD BUSINESS

ORDINANCE # 825 – AN ORDINANCE ADOPTING A REDISTRICTING PLAN FOR MARLBORO COUNTY COUNCIL REDEFINING THE EIGHT SINGLE-MEMBER COUNCIL DISTRICTS REAPPORTIONED AS TO POPULATION IN ACCORDANCE WITH THE 2020 FEDERAL DECENNIAL CENSUS AND APPLICABLE LAWS AND REQUIREMENTS - SECOND READING

Mr. Charles P. Midgley, Jr., Chairman, recognized Mr. Ron Munneryn, County Administrator, to make comments on this Ordinance.

Mr. Munneryn stated some new maps and information have been shared with members of Council and staff has requested a work session. He stated the last time members of Council met to review maps, changes were made, and staff sent the changes to the state. He stated the state reviewed the numbers and although the numbers were close as far as population, they were not demographic wise. He stated the state folks also found that Richardson Park was included in a census block that also included some island-type census blocks as well. Mr. Munneryn stated the easiest thing would be to have a work session to have Council review the maps and request the state folks run the numbers again, and then schedule community meetings to have input from the public. He suggested the work session be held quickly and suggested the dates of January 25th, 26th, or 27th. He stated staff will make anything work that Council suggests but stated it needed to happen quickly to move things forward so that it could be completed by March.

Mr. Jason Steen asked if the second reading is just to keep the Ordinance moving forward. Mr. Munneryn confirmed and stated all three readings needed to be held prior to March.

Chairman Midgley asked if there were any questions or comments. There were none.

Motion made by Mr. Jason Steen, seconded by Mr. Steve Blackmon, to approve second reading of Ordinance # 825 – an Ordinance Adopting a Redistricting Plan for Marlboro County Council Redefining the Eight Single-Member Council Districts Reapportioned as to Population in Accordance with the 2020 Federal Decennial Census and Applicable Laws and Requirements. Vote in favor: Mr. Jason Steen, Mr. Charles P. Midgley, Jr., Mr. Verd Odom, and Mr. Steve Blackmon. Opposed: None. Abstained: Dr. Damien Johnson, Mr. Kenneth Stroman, and Mr. Anthony Woods. Vote: 4/0/3. Motion carried.

ORDINANCE # 826 – AN ORDINANCE AUTHORIZING (1) PURSUANT TO TITLE 12, CHAPTER 44 OF THE CODE OF LAWS OF SOUTH CAROLINA 1976, AS AMENDED, THE EXECUTION AND DELIVERY OF A FEE-IN-LIEU OF AD VALOREM TAXES AGREEMENT, BY AND BETWEEN MARLBORO COUNTY, SOUTH CAROLINA AND A COMPANY KNOWN TO THE COUNTY AS PROJECT RHODES, AS SPONSOR, AND ONE OR MORE SPONSOR AFFILIATES TO PROVIDE FOR A FEE-IN-LIEU OF AD VALOREM TAXES INCENTIVE AND CERTAIN SPECIAL SOURCE REVENUE CREDITS FOR THE BENEFIT OF A PROJECT IN THE COUNTY; (2) THE ENLARGEMENT OF THE BOUNDARIES OF A MULTI-COUNTY INDUSTRIAL OR BUSINESS PARK PREVIOUSLY CREATED BY MARLBORO COUNTY AND DARLINGTON COUNTY TO INCLUDE CERTAIN PROPERTY LOCATED IN MARLBORO COUNTY, SOUTH CAROLINA, NOW OR TO BE HEREAFTER OWNED AND/OR OPERATED BY PROJECT RHODES, OR ONE OR MORE COMPANIES RELATED THERETO; AND (3) OTHER RELATED MATTERS – SECOND READING

Mr. Charles P. Midgley, Jr., Chairman, recognized Mr. Ron Munnerlyn, County Administrator, to make comments on this Ordinance.

Mr. Munnerlyn stated this was the second reading for a solar project that would be located on the corner of Hickson Road and Brickyard Road in Wallace. He stated the Codes Enforcement staff will confirm that the company follows all the required rules that Council adopted a few months ago. Mr. Munnerlyn confirmed that the project already had the required buffers in place.

Dr. Johnson asked if the county would be receiving a fee instead of taxes. Mr. Munnerlyn stated a fee-in-lieu of tax agreements are standard and typical type tax arrangements. He stated the county has done about 30-40 of these over several years to provide incentives for industries to come here. He stated these agreements are very competitive.

Chairman Midgley asked if there were any questions or comments. There were none.

Motion made by Mr. Verd Odom, seconded by Mr. Steve Blackmon, to approve second reading of Ordinance # 826 – an Ordinance Authorizing (1) Pursuant to Title 12, Chapter 44 of the Code of Laws of South Carolina 1976, as Amended, the Execution and Delivery of a Fee-in-Lieu of Ad Valorem Taxes Agreement, by and Between Marlboro County, South Carolina and a Company known to the County as Project Rhodes, as Sponsor, and One or

More Sponsor Affiliates to Provide for a Fee-In-Lieu of Ad Valorem Taxes Incentive and Certain Special Source Revenue Credits for the Benefit of a Project in the County; (2) the Enlargement of the Boundaries of a Multi-County Industrial or Business Park Previously Created by Marlboro County and Darlington County to Include Certain Property Located in Marlboro County, South Carolina, now or to be Hereafter Owned and/or Operated by Project Rhodes, or One or More Companies Related Thereto; and (3) Other Related Matters. Vote in favor: Mr. Jason Steen, Mr. Charles P. Midgley, Jr., Mr. Kenneth Stroman, Mr. Verd Odom, Mr. Steve Blackmon, and Mr. Anthony Woods. Opposed: None. Abstained: Dr. Damien Johnson. Vote: 6/0/1. Motion carried.

NEW BUSINESS

RESOLUTION # 01-22-01 – A RESOLUTION OUTLINING THE CRITERIA TO BE USED BY MARLBORO COUNTY COUNCIL FOR THE ADOPTION OF A REDISTRICTING PLAN FOR MARLBORO COUNTY, SOUTH CAROLINA

Mr. Charles P. Midgley, Jr., Chairman, recognized Mr. Ron Munnerlyn, County Administrator, to make comments on this Resolution.

Mr. Munnerlyn stated this Resolution was discussed at the last council meeting. He stated the Resolution confirms that the same criteria followed during the last redistricting process will be followed this time even though the Department of Justice will not be approving the final plan. Mr. Munnerlyn stated this Resolution will assure the public that Council will be fair and follow the criteria suggested by the SC Office of Revenue and Fiscal Affairs.

Mr. Kenneth Stroman asked Mr. Munnerlyn if he checked with the Department of Justice to see if they would be willing go review the final plan even though they are not required to do so. Mr. Munnerlyn stated he did check and found that the Department of Justice is no longer reviewing any final maps or plans.

Chairman Midgley asked if there were any questions or comments. There were none.

Motion made by Mr. Steve Blackmon, seconded by Mr. Verd Odom, to approve Resolution # 01-22-01 – a Resolution Outlining the Criteria to be Used by Marlboro County Council for the Adoption of a Redistricting Plan for Marlboro County, South Carolina. Vote in favor: Mr. Jason Steen, Mr. Charles P. Midgley, Jr., Mr. Kenneth Stroman, Mr. Verd Odom, Mr. Steve Blackmon, and Mr. Anthony Woods. Opposed: None. Abstained: Dr. Damien Johnson. Vote: 6/0/1. Motion carried.

REQUEST FOR CONSIDERATION FOR STARTING SALARY ADJUSTMENTS FOR SHERIFF'S OFFICE

Mr. Charles P. Midgley, Jr., Chairman, recognized Mr. Ron Munnerlyn, County Administrator, to make comments on this item.

Mr. Munnerlyn stated that Sheriff Larry McNeil was present and would be presenting and making the request to Council.

Sheriff McNeil thanked Council for allowing him the opportunity to speak concerning the request to adjust the salaries for the Sheriff's Department.

Sheriff McNeil stated he wanted to provide Council with a quick status of the Sheriff's Department so they will understand the justification for his request. He stated the Sheriff's Department is budgeted for 31 sworn officers and three civilians. He stated currently, the department has 24 sworn officers and three civilians. He stated of the 24 sworn officers, eight of them are not certified. He stated of the 16 officers that are certified, only three of them are road deputies. He stated he is working to get the uncertified officers certified and their training would begin soon.

Sheriff McNeil stated with the staff shortage which currently exists, overtime is needed. He stated he appreciated the great efforts provided by Council in February but stated that salaries needed to be increased. He stated it needed to be fair for everybody and good people were needed for the department. He stated the department has some good people but needs more good people.

Sheriff McNeil stated the county has only had two deputies on duty at night. He stated that is not safe and not good for our citizens. He stated it was not safe to send one out on a call at night because you are putting that one deputy at risk. He stated since December 19th, we have had three or four deputies on duty at night. He stated since more deputies have been on duty at night, staff has been able to stop some break-ins from occurring.

Sheriff McNeil mentioned the need for desktop computers. He stated the computers the department currently has are out of date and obsolete. He stated he was requesting laptops instead of desktops because many officers are unable to complete their online training in a timely fashion due to not having a proper computer available to them. He stated many officers have had to use their personal cell phones to complete their online training and he stated that was not acceptable.

Sheriff McNeil thanked Mr. Doug Carabo for coming out to the office last week and stated the new IT Director would be making the Sheriff's Department a priority once he was in place and back in the office.

Sheriff McNeil mentioned body cameras and stated they had some that were inoperable. He stated he spoke with someone at the Department of Safety about getting some body cameras as soon as possible. He stated staff found that the county secured grants for body cameras back in 2016 – 2018 to purchase body cameras. Staff began searching and found 30 body cameras still in boxes that would not work due to a bad docking station. Sheriff McNeil stated staff has taken

the initiative to have the docking station replaced which will allow the body cameras to work properly.

Chairman Midgley stated he thought the request was for starting salary adjustments. Sheriff McNeil stated it was, but all these issues deal with the need for salary adjustments.

Chairman Midgley thanked Sheriff McNeil for all that he is doing for the county and stated he hoped that the salary adjustments will allow him to hire the folks needed. Chairman Midgley asked Mr. Munnerlyn, County Administrator, if the requested funds were in the budget.

Mr. Munnerlyn stated staff has met numerous times with Sheriff McNeil and his request would increase the Sheriff's budget by \$28,000 which can be done. He stated if Council is considering approving the Sheriff's request, that it be handled as a budget amendment to the current budget in the amount of \$28,000.

Mr. Munnerlyn stated it would also make good sense to have some type of hiring bonus in place for law enforcement and EMS positions that staff has trouble hiring. He suggested a \$2,000 sign on bonus for employees for these departments if someone cannot be hired within 90 days from the time the job is posted. He suggested paying \$1,000 when they begin the job, \$1,000 within so many months from the time they begin. He stated if the employee does not stay for a specific amount of time, the county could require that the employee pay back a prorated portion of the bonus paid.

Mr. Kenneth Stroman asked if council could enter executive session to discuss the law enforcement personnel. He stated he would like to talk with Sheriff McNeil further about his request.

Motion made by Dr. Damien Johnson, seconded by Mr. Kenneth Stroman, to enter executive session to discuss law enforcement personnel.

Chairman Midgley suggested that the agenda be followed and have the executive session as outlined in the agenda as item 11. He stated a vote on the request for salary adjustments for Sheriff's office can be made after the executive session to allow Council to hear more from Sheriff McNeil.

ASSIGNMENT OF SPARE MARLBORO COUNTY EMS AMBULANCE TO WALLACE RESCUE

Mr. Charles P. Midgley, Jr., Chairman, recognized Mr. Ron Munnerlyn, County Administrator, to make comments on this item.

Mr. Munnerlyn stated that Mr. Calvin Cassidy, the Director of EMS was present and would address Council on this item.

Mr. Calvin Cassidy stated Wallace Rescue serves as a back up to Marlboro EMS when all ambulances are out on other calls. He stated Wallace Rescue was a volunteer organization and has limited resources. He stated Marlboro EMS will be receiving a new ambulance in the next 60 days and he would like to assign the spare ambulance which they presently have on hand to Wallace Rescue. He stated he would make sure the ambulance was stripped of any decals and would like to retain ownership of the ambulance and the maintenance on it but allow Wallace Rescue to use and stripe it to have their decals to meet state requirements. He stated this would assist Wallace Rescue without putting any strain on Marlboro EMS.

Mr. Anthony Woods asked how many employees short was Marlboro EMS. Mr. Cassidy stated the Marlboro EMS is presently nine people short. Mr. Woods asked were the positions advertised on the website. Mr. Cassidy stated the positions were advertised on the County's website, on Indeed, and on a targeted recruiting website. He stated the targeted website will expire in 30 days, but he plans to renew.

Mr. Ron Munnerlyn, County Administrator, stated the County would retain ownership of the ambulance to be assigned to Wallace Rescue and the Marlboro General Hospital Charities Trust agreed since they had assisted the County in obtaining the ambulance. Mr. Munnerlyn stated he did not feel a vote was needed but staff wanted to let Council know as information of the decision to assign it to Wallace Rescue.

Chairman Midgley asked if there were any questions or comments. There were none.

APPOINTMENTS TO BOARDS AND COMMISSIONS

There were no appointments to Boards and Commissions.

Mr. Charles P. Midgley, Jr., Chairman, asked staff to provide an updated list of Boards and Commission vacancies so that members of Council could work on filling any vacancies.

REPORTS

FINANCE REPORT – MR. WES PARK

Mr. Charles P. Midgley, Jr., Chairman, recognized Mr. Wes Park, Finance Director, for his report.

Mr. Wes Park, Finance Director, stated the general fund revenues for the six months ending December 31, 2021 total \$3,603,686 in comparison with the six months ended December 31, 2020, in the amount of \$3,184,733. Mr. Park stated the general fund expenditures through December 31, 2021 totaled \$5,769,009 of a 12,825,594 budget or 44.98% of budget year to date. Mr. Park stated expenditures for the six months ended December 31, 2020, totaled \$5,841,607. He stated in summary, income is higher, and expenditures are lower for the same year to date period for this year versus last year.

Chairman Midgley asked if there were any questions or comments. Mr. Kenneth Stroman asked if it would be possible to have the Finance Report included in the agenda packet. He stated he would like an opportunity to review the line items of the report prior to the Council meeting.

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

Mr. Charles P. Midgley, Jr., Chairman, recognized Mr. Ron Munnerlyn, County Administrator, for the report.

EMPLOYEE SERVICE ANNIVERSARIES

There were no employees with five or more years of service to Marlboro County through the month of December to be recognized.

UPCOMING EVENTS

1. **Upcoming COVID Vaccination Clinics** – Mr. Munnerlyn stated clinics have been scheduled for anyone who needs 1st and 2nd doses, or boosters from age 5 and older as follows:
January 12th at McDonald's of Bennettsville from 9:00 am - 12:00 pm;
January 20th at Bennettsville Community Center from 3:00 pm- 6:00 pm; and
January 21st at the Asbury United Methodist Church from 10:00 am - 1:00 pm.
2. **Martin Luther King Day Parade** – Mr. Munnerlyn stated the Martin Luther King Day parade is scheduled for Saturday, January 15, 2022 at 11:00 am with line up beginning on John Corry Road at 10:00 am.

ADMINISTRATOR’S REPORT

Recreation Study

Mr. Munnerlyn stated there will be a total of 7 focus group meetings next week conducted by GreenPlay, the consultant selected to conduct a comprehensive assessment of our recreation facilities and programs. He stated the groups will include members of County Council, Bennettsville City Council, the MC School Board, the appointed members of the County’s Recreation Advisory board, the mayors of the towns, as well as citizens. He stated the groups are organized so that the members of the various organizations participating are dispersed among all groups. He also stated there will be two groups that would include middle and high school students.

Mr. Munnerlyn stated as part of the meeting next week, there will be at least two site visits – one at East Side school and Lake Paul Wallace and the other at Lindsay Park.

Mr. Munnerlyn stated on Wednesday, January 19 at 5:00 pm, there will be a focus group open to the community. He stated this group will meet at The Skye on East Main Street in Bennettsville, and citizens are encouraged to come out and share their ideas on recreation.

Opioid Litigation

Mr. Munnerlyn stated staff has received a letter from lead counsel on the opioid litigation regarding how much our County can expect to receive on an annual basis. He stated the County's counsel is working to obtain an agreement on an allocation formula that increases the percentage of funds that will be allocated directly to the subdivisions for direct, guaranteed payments. He stated the agreement, once available, will need to be approved by Council by January 26 and there will most likely be a need for a called meeting to meet the required deadline.

Storm Tracker Training with E-911

Mr. Munnerlyn stated a storm tracker training virtual meeting will be offered to County staff soon. He stated the training will be coordinated by Mr. Steve Akers of the E-911 and the date and time of the virtual meeting will be announced as soon as it has been scheduled.

Request for Interested Vendors

Mr. Munnerlyn stated the county always has projects or repairs going on and wants to be sure we have a good list of available contractors interested in doing work. He stated in that interest, we are adverting for interested parties that wish to be considered for county work in the future. He reminded everyone the county's procurement policy allows for a "local preference" which provides up to a 10% advantage in some cases when a local contractor is competing against a business from outside of the county. He encouraged any interested firm to send us their basic information, licenses, and the type of work they do so we will have them on file.

Digital Sign

Mr. Munnerlyn stated the digital sign is scheduled to arrive next month. He stated the preferred location near Wal-Mart is not working out. He stated since council approved enough funds for two signs, he recommended staff install one at another location.

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

Executive session to discuss large project-

Mr. Munnerlyn requested there be an executive session at the upcoming redistricting work session to discuss an important economic development project.

Mr. Munnerlyn stated he would be happy to answer any questions that members of Council may have.

Mr. Anthony Woods asked what folks were on the Marlboro County Economic Development Partnership's Image Committee. Mr. Munnerlyn stated that committee was handling the recreation project and it included the mayors of all municipalities, the Lake Paul Wallace Authority representative, Chairman of the Marlboro County Historical Preservation Commission, Marlboro Chamber representatives and some other folks.

Mr. Kenneth Stroman asked if the committee was on schedule for the March, 2022 deadline. Mr. Munnerlyn confirmed they were.

Mr. Stroman mentioned the request for interested vendors. He stated the County does a lot of work and there is a great need for vendors. He asked Mr. Munnerlyn and staff to be sure that African Americans were included when soliciting for various jobs. Mr. Munnerlyn agreed and stated it was a real challenge to find folks to provide construction type services that are needed in the County.

RECOGNITION OF CITIZEN'S REQUEST BEFORE COUNCIL

Mr. Charles P. Midgley, Jr., Chairman, stated two citizens had signed up to address Council.

Ms. Pearlle Lawson – thanked Council for allowing her to speak. She stated she was present and representing herself, as well as the President of the NAACP. Ms. Lawson distributed a copy of a letter dated January 6, 2022 along with other information to each member of Council regarding the redistricting process. She stated this serves as a request to Mr. Frank Rainwater from the office of SC Revenue and Fiscal Affairs. She stated she would appreciate it if members of Council and staff would make sure that the conditions as set forth in the letter dated January 6, 2022 are complied with and that the redistricting process is done fairly. She stated the redistricting process must be done with public input. She stated in the past, citizens were given an opportunity to look at large maps. She stated the room where Council is meeting tonight is much too small and was not suitable for a large group of folks to have an opportunity to review and study the maps. She reminded Council that she attended a meeting in October of 2021 and requested that she be allowed to be included in the redistricting process. She stated to date, there has not been any public meetings to obtain public input. She stated she felt that public meetings needed to be held in McColl, Blenheim, Wallace, and Tatum, as well as a couple of meetings in Bennettsville to allow citizens an opportunity to see the maps.

Ms. Nan Fleming – addressed a question to Mr. Munnerlyn as to whether he had maps and if meetings had been held regarding the redistricting process. She stated Fair Election begins with this redistricting process. She stated voting is the top issue and we must do what is right. She stated public input was needed for the process to be accomplished correctly. She mentioned a lawsuit which was filed in 1968 which slaughtered Bennettsville and South Carolina. She stated the process must be done correctly and the public must be able provide input. She stated she needed to know who was in her district and the process should not be too complicated.

Chairman Midgley thanked Ms. Lawson and Ms. Fleming for their comments.

Chairman Midgley stated now would be the time to enter executive session to discuss the request for an adjustment in starting salaries for the Sheriff's Department.

Motion made at 7:10 pm by Mr. Steve Blackmon, seconded by Mr. Verd Odom, to enter executive session to discuss personnel contracts and compensation for the Sheriff's

Department pursuant to SC Code Section 30-4-70(1). Vote in favor. Unanimous. Motion carried.

Motion made at 8:14 pm by Mr. Kenneth Stroman, seconded by Mr. Anthony Woods, to leave executive session and return to open session. Vote in favor. Unanimous. Motion carried.

Motion made by Mr. Verd Odom, seconded by Mr. Steve Blackmon, to approve amending the 2021-2022 budget for Sheriff's request for salary adjustments in an amount of \$28,005. Vote in favor. Unanimous. Motion carried.

Chairman Midgley stated the second topic concerning personnel contracts was discussed but no votes or action is being taken at this time.

RECOGNITION OF COUNCIL MEMBERS

Mr. Anthony Woods – stated the major item of concern to him right now is the redistricting and the redrawing of the district lines. He stated this should be Council's top priority.

Mr. Woods stated Council has a chairman and then the Administrator. He stated recreation currently has no department head and has not had one for more than six months now. He stated Recreation Director is a full-time job and he felt that the county was being cheated by not having one in place. He stated it may take three to six months to hire a Recreation Director. He stated a Recreation Director needs to be in place while input is being shared by the public regarding the future of recreation for Marlboro County. He stated the Recreation Director would have experience and the County needs that experience and expertise in place. He stated he did not feel that it made much sense to bring a Recreation Director in after a recreation plan is made.

Mr. Woods stated he felt that Council should instruct the County Administrator to advertise for a Recreation Director. He stated Mr. Doug Carabo is doing all he can and wearing many different hats. He stated the recreation hat should be worn by one person. He stated he felt a Recreation Director must be hired and put in place so that things may move forward.

Mr. Kenneth Stroman – stated Council does not operate the way we have tonight, and we are normally calm in our open sessions. He stated he felt members of Council can do better as far as our tact to stay in order. He stated we have some issues and concerns but if we can discuss the issues calmly, he felt we could work them out.

Mr. Stroman thanked Sheriff McNeil for being willing to step up to the plate and assume the massive responsibilities that he has been called to handle. He stated he was hopeful that we could all work together. He asked Sheriff McNeil not to hesitate to let the Council know of anything that was needed for his department.

Mr. Stroman mentioned the redistricting lines. He stated Council has not come to an agreement on the lines and stated he assumed that once that was done, the maps would be shared with the public for viewing and comments. He stated the public is concerned about this because of what happened over ten years ago and the discrepancies during that time. He stated everyone has their eye on it and we want to be sure that the redistricting process is done correctly. He stated some folks have ideas now that they did not have ten years ago. He stated Council needs to make sure that things are done for the record.

Mr. Stroman thanked Mr. Steen for all he has done in his service as Chairman to County Council.

Mr. Verd Odom stated he had to be excused to go to work. He left the meeting at 8:28 pm.

Mr. Jason Steen – thanked Sheriff McNeil for the huge task he has at hand. He stated it seems that Sheriff McNeil has a great mountain to climb but stated he was a good man and would do a great job. Mr. Steen stated Council has always supported the Sheriff and he appreciated the expertise that Sheriff McNeil will bring to the table.

Dr. Damien Johnson – thanked Sheriff McNeil for his call of duty and his effort.

Dr. Johnson mentioned redistricting and thanked Ms. Lawson for her plea for public meetings to be held. He stated we are in a time crunch. He stated Council and staff needs to schedule several meetings to get citizens' input.

Dr. Johnson stated this has been one of the most disappointing days in his 20+ years in public leadership and he has seen much manipulation. He stated it was close and very personal to him. He stated the county has a high unemployment rate. Nobody seems to be alarmed by this. He stated we make decisions about things that we know nothing about and we cannot steer our county in the right direction by taking that kind of action. He stated there was no transparency. He stated one man cannot run the county and an effective job is not being done. He stated if we are not getting results, Council needs to look at our leadership. He stated we need to move forward. He stated it is unfortunate that we meet month after month and are not engaged with what goes on in the day-to-day operations of the county. He stated Council needs to know what is going on. He stated we are in year 3 of the pandemic and Council has not met with our legislative delegation. He stated he was ashamed to call himself a county councilman. He stated the county has a leader that will not share information with members of Council. He stated members of Council are sound men and a woman that have knowledge and are intelligent. He stated members of Council love this county and have committed to be public servants and need to be in action with our county administrator for the betterment of our county.

Dr. Johnson stated God is not pleased with what has happened. He stated he was very frustrated that the county is not seeing results and citizens feel that Council is not doing anything.

Mr. Steve Blackmon – thanked Sheriff McNeil for taking the position he has taken. He stated it says a lot about him. He stated Council would work with him and he was happy to have him on board.

Mr. Charles P. Midgley, Jr. –He thanked everyone for allowing him to serve as Chairman of County Council and stated he would do everything in his power to run a civil and organized meeting. He stated he would activate the standing committees in an effort to settle differences in an effort to continue to be unified in order to get things accomplished for the betterment of our county.

Mr. Midgley thanked Sheriff McNeil for taking on the position of Sheriff.

ADJOURN

Motion made by Mr. Anthony Woods, seconded by Dr. Damien Johnson, to adjourn the meeting. Vote in favor. Unanimous. Motion carried.

The meeting adjourned at 8:33 pm.

(SEAL)

ATTEST:



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

Patricia M. Bundy, Clerk
Marlboro County Council

Adopted: February 8, 2022