

MARLBORO COUNTY COUNCIL  
MARLBORO COUNTY ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT PARTNERSHIP BUILDING  
COUNCIL CHAMBERS  
"CALLED MEETING"

TUESDAY, MARCH 17, 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. Stephen Pollard, IT 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 11:30 a.m.

INVOCATION – Mr. Anthony Woods

DISCUSSION OF COUNTY ADMINISTRATOR SEARCH

Chairman Midgley advised that anyone interested in applying for the position needed to recuse themselves from discussion.

Dr. Damien Johnson advised anyone wishing to apply had to recuse themselves from voting, not on the discussion process.

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Chairman Midgley said he did not think they needed to go into executive session, they needed to do it above board. He had a list of recommendations from the South Carolina Association of Counties of people that could help them in the search of an Administrator. He provided a copy of the list to the other council members.

Mr. Verd Odom read the directives from the email sent from the Chairman to council members prior to the meeting. It stated that any person wishing to seek the Administrator's position, now, or any time during the hiring process, must recuse themselves from any of the search discussion and process. This provision includes council persons or anybody on the staff. He noted one staff member interested in the position that recused themselves from the meeting. He advised they needed clarification so they wouldn't have a problem with anyone. After various discussion as to whether the directives applied to them, Mr. Anthony Woods said that since no one had recused themselves, evidently no one would be running for the position of the Administrator's job. Chairman Midgley stated that council would conduct their business as the State would see fit. If they find out someone should have recused themselves, they would see.

Mr. Kenneth Stroman was recognized. He stated that at the present time the council was discussing a job which had not been posted, a job description had not been defined, in which council had not done anything with. He said the job was not on the market at the present time, council will decide when it goes on the market. At that time they need to follow the statute if it applies.

Chairman Midgley said the reason for the meeting was to look at the Administrator's job. A job description was provided by Ms. Doris Sumpter, Administrative Services Director. He asked if everyone had received a copy. No one replied they had not. Various discussion was heard concerning the salary range for the Administrator. Ms. Pearly Lawson advised she had a manual provided by the South Carolina Association of Counties with the Salary range for the various counties in the State for Administrators. Dr. Johnson said he wanted a list of all Department Heads and their salaries because they could not offer an Administrator less than a Department Head. Mr. Woods said they needed to know who the highest paid employee was under the current Administrator, so they would know where to begin. He said that he, Mr. Steve Blackman, and Mr. Jason Steen had been on Council and hired three Administrators without any problems. The Human Resource Director had always helped with the process. But, with the current situation, the Human Resource Director can help with posting the job position, then the applications can be sent to a neutral person, no one employed by the county.

With various conversations concerning Council working together with the same adjective with the hiring of the Administrator, Chairman Midgley stated that all council members wanted the same thing.

Mr. Steen was recognized. He said in reference to the South Carolina Association of Counties, Council had asked them to provide information so they could move forward. He said the information they had received was a professional opinion. Council will set the salary and other requirements and the team hired will put it all together. They will go through all the applicants and then bring approximately 5 applicants for council to look at, meet, interview, and then move

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forward. This way Council nor County employees will have any ties to the hiring process. It would cost the county money, but it would be the most efficient way to go. This is thinking out of the box, the county has never done it this way before. Other counties have done it this way before on a professional level. This way, no one can say anything about it.

Mr. Odom said he would like to reiterate what Mr. Steen said, Council is proceeding down a road that is in the best interest of the county, going outside of the box. This way, getting a group from outside the county to take the applications, review them, pick the best candidates will help in getting a larger number of applicants. By going through one of these groups that do it every day of the week is best. Council needs to let an independent agent handle it and present 5 or however many council wishes to look at. Council will be the deciding factor as to who the most qualified will be. Council will make the decision.

After much discussion was heard from various council members of what is wanted in a County Administrator and the process of hiring one, it was the consensus that council members wanted to hire an independent firm to handle the process. Council members agreed they wanted the search to include diversity as well as publishing the ad locally so local people would know the process. Ms. Lawson suggested holding a meet and greet for the final candidates so the citizens could meet them. Mr. Odom agreed that Council could hold a meet and greet for maybe the last three candidates. That way Council could get an idea of whether they wanted to hire one of them or none of them. Dr. Johnson said they did not need to be hasty. He hoped they had capable people in place that could carry on when Mr. Munnerlyn leaves even if they have not hired anyone. He said if they don't, it's their fault for not knowing more about the positions. He encouraged the other Council members to go back and read the statutes. He said Council have more authority than they think. He said they need to know more about the position and whether we have someone in the office that is qualified to engage the position temporarily if necessary until they can find an Administrator. Mr. Steen said he did believe the county has a good group of people with Mr. Carabo, Ms. Sumpter, and Mr. Park than can step in if necessary. The county will continue to operate so they do not have to be in a hurry. He agreed that Parker Poe needs to be eliminated since they have ties to the county. He advised the Company they heard from (Find Great People) do not have any ties to anyone with the county. They have done executive searches before. Some of council members did hear their process of how they work, and they do feel comfortable to add it to the agenda to engage the firm in order to get the process started. Even if it takes 8 months everyone would know they are moving forward.

Ms. Lawson questioned if Attorney McLeod would be acknowledgeable about the process. It was explained that he was the county attorney, however, he worked at the direction of the County Administrator.

Ms. Lawson questioned the position of Clerk to Council which she said is also available now. It was questioned whether Council would be responsible for hiring this position. Mr. Midgley advised the position had already been posted.

**Motion made by Mr. Jason Steen, seconded by Mr. Verd Odom to amend the agenda to add “Moving Forward with a Third Party Executive Search for County Administrator. Vote in favor: Mr. Anthony Woods, Ms. Pearly Lawson, Mr. Charles P. Midgley, Jr., Mr. Jason Steen, Dr. Damien Johnson, Mr. Steve Blackmon, and Mr. Verd Odom. Opposed: Mr. Kenneth Stroman. Vote: 7/1/0. Motion Carried.**

Mr. Stroman advised he was opposed because he did not want to use a secondary firm. He thought it was council’s responsibility. He wanted this to go on the record that he thought it was council’s responsibility. Chairman Midgely said he did believe it was council’s responsibility, however, with this process the county would get better applicants. Chairman Midgley said council has been recommended 2 or 3 recruiting firms. Mr. Steen said the county does business with one of the firms “Parker Poe”.

**Motion made by Mr. Jason Steen, seconded by Mr. Verd Odom, not to use Parker Poe as a recruiting firm and to use the Firm of Find Great People, LLC in the search for the County Administrator. The terms of the contract are:**

- The cost of the search is 25% of the County Administrator’s 1<sup>st</sup> year annual salary to include sign on bonus’s
- The search begins with a payment (retainer fee) 1/3 of the estimated payment or replacement fee (non-refundable).
- The 2<sup>nd</sup> payment of the 1/3 would be due upon commencement of the interview process.
- The remaining portion of the fee would be due upon completion of the search within 30 calendar days of the candidates start date.
- With stipulation council sets the salary.

**Vote in favor: Unanimous. Motion Carried.**

ADJOURN

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

The meeting was adjourned at 1 PM.

(SEAL)

ATTEST:

Adopted: June 13, 2023



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



Susan Rivers, Clerk  
Marlboro County Clerk