

MARLBORO COUNTY COUNCIL
MARLBORO COUNTY ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT PARTNERSHIP BUILDING
COUNCIL CHAMBERS

TUESDAY, MAY 10, 2022

6:00 PM

CHAIRMAN

CHARLES P. MIDGLEY, JR

VICE CHAIRMAN
CLERK TO COUNCIL
COUNTY ATTORNEY

JASON STEEN
SUSAN RIVERS
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. Steve Pollard, IT Director; and Mr. Wes Park, Finance Director.

A copy of the agenda was 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, Marlboro Herald Advocate prior to the meeting.

INVOCATION – Mr. Anthony Woods

APPROVAL OF AGENDA ITEMS

Motion made by Verd Odom, seconded by Mr. Jason Steen, to approve the agenda as presented. Vote in Favor. Unanimous. Motion carried.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

APRIL 19, 2022 – REGULAR COUNCIL MEETING

Motion made by Mr. Steve Blackmon, seconded by Mr. Kenneth Stroman, to approve the regular meeting minutes of April 19, 2022 as presented. Vote in favor: Mr. Kenneth Stroman,

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Mr. Charles P. Midgley, Jr., Mr. Jason Steen, Dr. Damien Johnson, Mr. Steve Blackmon, and Mr. Verd Odom. Abstain: Mr. Anthony Woods (not present). Motion carried.

OLD BUSINESS

ORDINANCE # 827 – AN ORDINANCE TO ADOPT THE ANNUAL BUDGET AND TO MAKE APPROPRIATIONS FOR MARLBORO COUNTY FOR THE FISCAL YEAR BEGINNING JULY 1, 2022 AND ENDING JUNE 30, 2023 – SECOND READING .

Mr. Ron Munnerlyn, County Administrator explained Council did not get to discuss the proposed budget in the Work Session held prior to the Council Meeting due to a legal & contractual issue. Mr. Munnerlyn discussed the proposed budget briefly along with presenting a power point presentation to show Council all aspects of the proposed budget.

Mr. Munnerlyn advised the main focus of the budget is the general fund, however, he wanted to give an update on the Rural Fire Fund since the last meeting. Revenue is currently \$100-\$125,000 in excess of expenses annually without impacting the required fund balance. The County needs a clear plan for surplus revenue above surplus revenue above required reserves, not just write everyone a check. The funds must be used for Fire.

Mr. Munnerlyn advised that he along with Staff and Councilman Steen met with the Fire Committee to discuss various issues which Staff jointly recommends. These include: an increase from \$15 per call to \$17 per call expense reimbursement for firefighters (which is in line with other counties around us); additional revenue to be used to reimburse for workers compensation/property/liability insurance (currently being paid by the firefighters and ranges between \$10,000 - \$16,000 per year); consider fuel reimbursement of excess revenue allows; and work towards identifying other ways to best use funds by partnering.

Mr. Munnerlyn stated that he went to the meetings in the 90's and it was not a good thing. This is a different crowd that is willing to work with the county.

Mr. Munnerlyn advised the Roll Cart Service Contract expires this year. He stated that Staff recommends the renewal of a three year contract because of the economy not rebounding due to inflation. All residence rates will increase. Mr. Doug Carabo, Public Services Director and Staff are trying to keep the Homestead residences (over 65 & or disabled) down as much as possible. The current Homestead charge of \$170 will increase to \$185. All other residences current charge of \$205 will increase to \$235. The current proposed budget has no charges for the Convenience Center with no transfer of funds from the General Fund compared to \$200,000 for the current budget. This allows the \$200,000 to be used for other things.

Mr. Jason Steen questioned the amount of increase for the Home Stead Residences. Mr. Munnerlyn advised there would be a \$15 increase for Home Stead residences and \$30 for all other. He stated that if citizens wanted to go to the Convenience Center, there would be no charge on taxes. This does not include commercial businesses or contractors.

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Mr. Jason Steen questioned the cost of disposal for the convenience center. Mr. Doug Carabo, Public Works Director, advised the cost per load was \$50.

Mr. Ron Munnerlyn went over the budget changes completed by staff since the last Council Meeting. The previous proposed budget included using \$450,000 from the Reserve. Due to a decrease in vacancies, the proposed budget needs to include a target of \$350,000 from reserve.

Mr. Munnerlyn advised that just with the Mandatory increases and the COLA (Cost of Living Adjustments) we need a 2 mil tax increase. 1 tax mil equals \$65,000 in revenue. The county has not had any millage increases in the last 3 years. We can legally increase our taxes by 8.5 mils. He advised council could take the COLA out, however, he did not recommend it. He stated that Council needed to move forward in helping employees who are seeing terrible increases this year with inflation. With this being included, it means using 490,000 out of the Reserve Fund because with the increased employee benefits, it means fewer vacancies.

Mr. Munnerlyn advised that Act 388 (passed by State Legislature) Allowable Tax Increases: State sets percentage increase allowed each year; if you don't use the increase, you can carry it forward for 3 years; and Currently available 8.5 mils based on: 2022-23 4.7%, 2021-22 1.23%, and 2020-21 1.81%.

Mr. Munnerlyn advised most of the changes are from the Sheriff Department. He had met with Sheriff Larry McNeil the previous day. The current updated budget requests for the Sheriff Department and Detention Center include: 5 additional deputies (\$260,000); 5 additional Detention Center Officers has been set aside, Additional computers for the Sheriff Office has been set aside, a new Transport van for the Detention Center has been set aside, 5 new vehicles (in place of 7) for the Sheriff's Office through lease (32,000) he sheriff has agreed that the number of vehicles be tied to the number of deputies. Right now, they also have some decent spares; Increase base salary of all Detention Center employees by \$3000 (\$80,575); New ballistic vests for Sheriff Department set aside, Salary increase/create corporal positions at MCSD (10,200).

Mr. Munnerlyn advised that Sheriff McNeil is working on an agreement to house Federal Inmates in which the county will be reimbursed. If the agreement works out, the revenue should cover the expenses. These changes will be set aside for now, until we know whether the agreement works out, if the revenue does not come in, we cannot spend it.

Mr. Munnerlyn asked Sheriff Larry McNeil to elaborate on the changes. Sheriff McNeil advised his staff is continuing to work on the agreement to house federal inmates at the Detention Center. They will be reimbursed and the funds will go into the general fund. Sheriff Larry McNeil advised they are continuing to work on the agreement. They are looking at other sources for obtaining the computers and transport van they need. They are looking at possible grant funds for the ballistic vests which will be reimbursable. They are requesting approval for 5 new vehicles for the Sheriff Department which they need. Sheriff McNeil stated the increase for Detention Center Staff is needed in order to be competitive with other counties such as Florence and Darlington. Currently,

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we cannot compete and are losing staff. McNeil advised the requests for 5 additional deputies is desperately needed. The officers are worn out. They are currently covering the whole county with 3 officers at night and going into dangerous situations without back up. They cannot continue at this rate.

Mr. Anthony Woods questioned if the Federal Inmates coming in would be for a specific period of time. Sheriff McNeil advised it would have to be negotiated. Mr. Ron Munnerlyn advised that it would have to be for the expenditures and revenue to break even or it would not work out.

Mr. Munnerlyn went on to advise that the Weather warning siren system (\$175,000) request has been set aside, the county cannot do this year. He stated that Mr. Steve Akers, E911 Director will look possible other sources.

The Field data collectors for Tax Assessor Office has been cut to \$55,000 in place of the original request of \$110,000. The new budget requests of \$437,775 if approved will raise the mills to 8.5 and \$375,000 out of the reserve fund. It requires the maximum tax increase. Mr. Munnerlyn requested Council's direction in how they wish him to continue with the budget for third reading.

Mr. Verd Odom stated the County has not increased taxes in the last 2 years, in fact they went down last year. He questioned that if we increase by the maximum and something comes up next year, will we be locked out. Mr. Munnerlyn advised that the State gives a new amount each year and we have no way of knowing this.

Mr. Odom stated that right now the citizens and country are getting hammered by the inflation, prescription, drug costs, and gas cost increases which is over \$4 per gallon. If we do the maximum increase, it will hurt the citizens. He stated that if you listen to the experts, they say this economy has not hit bottom yet.

Mr. Jason Steen advised he does the numbers. He stated his brother works in law enforcement, so he knows the urgency.

Mr. Kenneth Stroman asked Sheriff McNeil how confident he was in getting the Federal Inmates Agreement approved. Sheriff McNeil responded that he was very confident.

Mr. Kenneth Stroman questioned what the bottom line was in dollars. Sheriff McNeil responded approximately \$60 per day, per inmate. If approved, this is well above the amount of requests the Sheriff is asking for.

Mr. Charles P. Midgley, Jr., asked whether the 5 new Detention Center Officers would be designated to work with the Federal Inmates. Sheriff McNeil said they would not be specifically assigned. All officers are trained to deal with all inmates. Mr. Midgley asked if this number of employees is needed for the agreement. Sheriff McNeil responded yes. Mr. Midgley asked if the Sheriff was looking at the requests for the Sheriff Department and the Detention Center separately. Sheriff McNeil advised he was.

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Mr. Ron Munnerlyn stated that with housing the Federal Inmates, they will make money to go to other things they need without using the general fund. He stated that he and Mr. Wes Park, Finance Director are working with Sheriff McNeil on this project. He was confident the sheriff would be going to the Feds to make sure we make enough money. The first year will give us an idea of how it works, the second year we should make money. Other counties are doing this, and it appears to be working well.

Motion made by Mr. Kenneth Stroman , seconded by Mr. Steve Blackmon, to approve the second reading of Ordinance # 827 - An Ordinance to Adopt the Annual Budget and to Make Appropriations for Marlboro County for the Fiscal Year Beginning July 1, 2022 and Ending June 30, 2023 – Second Reading . Vote in favor. Unanimous. Motion Carried.

ORDINANCE # 828 – AN ORDINANCE TO APPROVE THE CAPITAL IMPROVEMENT PLAN FOR MARLBORO COUNTY FOR THE PERIOD OF FY 2023 – 2027 - SECOND READING .

Mr. Ron Munnerlyn, County Administrator advised the Capital Improvement Plan follows the Budget. It is only a plan. It will be in line with the proposed budget by the third reading.

Motion made by Mr. Verd Odom, seconded by Mr. Steve Blackmon, to approve the second reading of Ordinance # 828 – An Ordinance to Approve the Capital Improvement Plan for Marlboro County for the Period of FY 2023 – 2027 – Second Reading . Vote in favor. Unanimous. Motion carried.

NEW BUSINESS

ORDINANCE # 829 – AN ORDINANCE CREATING A SPECIAL TAX ASSESSMENT FOR ELIGIBLE REHABILITATED HISTORIC PROPERTIES – FIRST READING (TITLE ONLY)

Mr. Ron Munnerlyn, County Administrator advised the City of Bennettsville approached us regarding this special tax assessment. After final approval of the Ordinance, taxes on these properties would be frozen for 20 years. Most counties have this ordinance in place.

Motion made by Mr. Anthony Woods, seconded by Mr. Kenneth Stroman, to approve the first reading (Title Only) of Ordinance # 829 – An Ordinance creating a special tax assessment for eligible rehabilitated historic properties – First Reading (Title Only). Vote in favor. Unanimous. Motion carried.

ORDINANCE # 830 – AN ORDINANCE TO PROVIDE FOR CREATION OF A COUNTY ROAD MAINTENANCE FUND, THE RECURRING IMPOSITION OF A ROAD MAINTENANCE FEE AND THE USE OF REVENUES COLLECTED FOR THE ROAD MAINTENANCE FEE AND TO PROVIDE CERTAIN FINDSINGS WITH RESPECT TO TH ROAD MAINTENANCE FEE REQUIRED BY THE SOUTH CAROLINA SUPREME COURT IN BURNS VS. GREENVILLE COUNTY COUNCIL - FIRST READING (TITLE ONLY)

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Mr. Ron Munnerlyn, County Administrator advised this ordinance is due to a legal action Burns Vs. Greenville County Council in which the South Carolina Supreme Court ruled the fees unconstitutional. Marlboro County is in good shape. The Association of Counties came up with Ordinance to protect the counties. It is set up to create a separate fund to use only for road maintenance. It ratifies an Ordinance approved several years ago.

Motion made by Mr. Jason Steen, seconded by Mr. Kenneth Stroman, to approve the first reading (Title Only) of Ordinance # 830 – An Ordinance to provide for creation of a County Road Maintenance Fund, the recurring imposition of a Road Maintenance Fee and the use of Revenues collected for the Road Maintenance Fee and to provide certain findings with respect to the Road Maintenance Fee required by the South Carolina Supreme Court in Burns vs. Greenville County Council – First Reading (Title Only). Vote in favor. Unanimous. Motion carried.

REQUEST FOR APPROVAL OF APPLICATION FOR USDA GRANT FOR HEAVY EQUIPMENT.

Motion made by Mr. Steve Blackmon, seconded by Mr. Verd Odom, to approve the request for approval of application for USDA Grant for heavy equipment. Vote in favor. Unanimous. Motion Carried.

APPOINTMENTS TO BOARDS AND COMMISSIONS

Appointment of Susan Rivers as Clerk to Council.

Mr. Ron Munnerlyn advised that Ms. Patricia Bundy had moved on to another position. He advised that Ms. Susan Rivers had agreed to return as part time Clerk to Council, a position she had held for numerous years up until 2012.

Motion made by Mr. Anthony Woods, seconded by Mr. Verd Odom, to approve Susan Rivers as Clerk to Council Vote in favor. Unanimous. Motion carried.

REPORTS

FINANCE REPORT – MR. WES PARK, FINANCE DIRECTOR

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

Mr. Wes Park, Finance Director, stated the general fund revenue for the ten months ending April 30, 2022 was a total of \$10,485,223 compared with the ten months ending April 30, 2021 in the amount of \$10,007,090. General Fund expenditures through April 30, 2022 were \$9,620,314 of the budgeted \$12,825,594 compared to the ten months ending April 30, 2021 of \$9,412,718. In summary, income is higher due to increases in state and local tax revenues and expenditures are slightly higher for the same year to date period versus last year.

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

Mr. Charles P. Midgley, Jr., Chairman, recognized Mr. Ron Munnerlyn, County Administrator to present his report.

EMPLOYEE SERVICE ANNIVERSARIES

The following employees were recognized with five or more years of service to Marlboro County through the month of April: Ms. Shante Weldon (5 years); Ms. Amber Goins (7 years); Mr. Brian Oxendine (9 years); Ms. Teresa Burgess (20 years); Ms. Kaye Liner (22 years); and Mr. Arthur Hamer (24) years.

UPCOMING EVENTS

Marlboro County Employee Appreciation Day – Thursday, May 12 2022 – in recognition of Public Service Week and to honor our excellent team members, the county will have its Employee Appreciation Day on Thursday, May 12th from 3pm until 7pm on the grounds between the Library and the Murchison Building. The event will include food, games, music, a bouncy house, and a dunking booth. Mr. Munnerlyn advised that there will be karaoke, so he said council needed to come ready to sing. Mr. Munnerlyn advised that he along with Sheriff Larry McNeil, Public Services Director Doug Carabo, and EMS Director Calvin Cassidy have all agreed to get into the dunking booth. Mr. Munnerlyn stated there would be a line around the block, but, they had to make a donation to dunk them. The donations will be given to the Humane Society. Council members were encouraged to attend and to thank the county employees if they see them for the good job they do.

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

Website – staff will soon be advertising a request for proposals for the re-do of the Economic Development website, included in the current budget year. Our goal is to interconnect this site with the county government website, and we will include this scope in the RFP. Some of the information on the site are out of date. We also need photo's of Dr. Johnson and Mr. Stroman and this would be a good time to take care of everything.

Spec Building Update – Mr. Munnerlyn encouraged Council Members to stop by the Spec Building and see the progress being made. The building is all but done. He wanted to remind council that this building is being constructed to attract new jobs to the county and is not being built for a predetermined tenant. Marketing is beginning with NESAs and the Marlboro Economic Development team as well as the state. Marlboro Electric Cooperative has provided \$150,000 toward this project.

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Administrator's Report

Budget efforts – Senior staff and finance staff have been hard at work on this years' budget. Mr. Munnerlyn wanted to publicly thank them for their efforts.

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Digital Sign Delay - there is a continued delay in delivery of our digital sign. Mr. Munnerlyn stated this is very disappointing and that staff along with the county attorney are reviewing our agreement with the vendor to understand our options. However, after contacting other vendors, it appears that there are no faster solution allowing us to get the sign sooner. Unfortunately, it appears that the supply chain delays are impacting all companies, particularly with custom made, large signs like the one we have ordered. He advised he would keep council up to date.

Mr. Anthony Woods questioned where the digital sign was to be placed. Mr. Munnerlyn responded it would be placed on Broad Street across from the old Hamer building.

RECOGNITION OF CITIZEN'S REQUEST BEFORE COUNCIL

No citizens were heard.

RECOGNITION OF COUNCIL MEMBERS

Mr. Charles P. Midgley, Jr., Chairman recognized each Council Member.

Mr. Anthony Woods – welcomed Ms. Susan Rivers back as Clerk to Council.

Mr. Jason Steen – expressed his condolences to Mr. Kenneth Stroman in the loss of his wife. He welcomed Ms. Susan Rivers back. He stated that the budget is not always what everyone wants. They need to look out for the citizens and try to be fair. He said this year was going to be hard, we must make compromises, however, they must move forward.

Mr. Damien Johnson – expressed his condolences to Mr. Kenneth Stroman. He welcomed Ms. Susan Rivers back as Clerk to Council. He said he was looking forward to getting his picture placed on the website along with Mr. Stroman. He wanted to thank Mr. Ron Munnerlyn and Mr. Doug Carabo for help with recreation in his area. He stated the Brightsville Park is the only bright thing that his area has. There are a lot of people that come from the North Carolina area to enjoy the walking trail.

Mr. Steve Blackmon – expressed his condolences to Mr. Kenneth Stroman in the loss of his wife. He welcomed Susan Rivers back as Clerk to Council.

Mr. Verd Odom – expressed his condolences to Mr. Kenneth Stroman in the loss of his wife. He welcomed Ms. Susan Rivers back as Clerk to Council. He wanted to thank Mayor George Gardner, Chief Robbie Tryon, Ms. Lynn Kubas, Director, Mr. Dwayne Driggers, Ms. Cindy Driggers, Ms.



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Teresa Freeman and everyone else who had helped with the McColl Mayfest. This was the first event held within the last 3 years. The event was held on May 7th from 10 a.m. until 4 p.m. He said there were a lot of good vendors with the streets staying full. It was a great event. The streets were full by 9:30 a.m. and stayed busy. It was a complete success.

Mr. Odom stated that Face Book viewers were watching the 7 council members present trying to work on the budget. He said council was trying to work with the various agencies, but, still they must be cognitive of the people. The citizens are suffering right now because of the inflation. Gas is back up to \$4 per gallon. As the Public would see by viewing the current meeting, council is wanting to work with Sheriff McNeil. But, with the money, they are trying to put Marlboro County front and center. Council has started with the budget, they will work through it, and hopefully, they will be able to get it where it is good for everybody. The citizens of Marlboro County are suffering and council needs to look out for them.

Mr. Charles P. Midgley – expressed his condolences to Mr. Kenneth Stroman on the loss of his wife.

EXECUTIVE SESSION

Not required.

NON-AGENDA ITEMS


No items were added.

ADJOURN

Motion made by Mr. Steve Blackmon, seconded by Mr. Kenneth Stroman, to adjourn the meeting. Vote in favor. Unanimous. Motion Carried.


The meeting adjourned at 7:20 p.m.

(SEAL)



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

ATTEST:



Susan Rivers, Clerk
Marlboro County Council

Adopted: June 21, 2022