

MARLBORO COUNTY COUNCIL

"CALLED" MEETING

MARLBORO COUNTY ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT PARTNERSHIP BUILDING

COUNCIL CHAMBERS

MONDAY, JUNE 3, 2013

5:30 P.M.

CHAIR	DR. CAROLYN PRINCE
VICE-CHAIR	RON MUNNERLYN
ADMINISTRATOR	JIM HAYNES
COUNTY ATTORNEY	HARRY EASTERLING, JR.

COUNCIL:

JASON STEEN,	WILLIE GLADDEN,
RON MUNNERLYN,	CORRIE H. PLATO,
DR. CAROLYN PRINCE, *	KEN ALLEN,
STEVE BLACKMON	AND ANTHONY WOODS *

* Absent

CALL TO ORDER

Mr. Ron Munnerlyn, Vice-Chair, called the meeting to order.

APPROVAL OF AGENDA ITEMS

Under Non Agenda Items, New Business, as Item A - Opening & Acceptance of Bids, Capital Improvements for Jean Wallace McLean Community Park. Vote in favor. Unanimous. Motion carried.

Under Non Agenda Items, New Business, as Item B - Rescheduling the regular scheduled council meeting until Tuesday, June 18, 2013, at 5:30 p.m. Vote in favor. Unanimous. Motion carried.

NON AGENDA ITEMS

OPENING & ACCEPTANCE OF BIDS, CAPITAL IMPROVEMENTS FOR JEAN WALLACE MCLEAN COMMUNITY PARK

Mr. Jim Haynes, Interim Administrator, advised that several bids were received for the purchase of playground equipment for the Jean Wallace McLean Community Park. The bids received were as follows: Leisure Lines, Inc., Georgia, \$21,494.78; Churchich Recreation & Design, Bluffton, SC, \$20,277.60; Playworld Preferred, Huntersville, NC, \$16,978.96; Bliss Products & Services, Inc., Lithia Springs, GA, \$16,142.29; and Park & Playground Systems, Cheraw, SC, \$14,669.76. Mr. Haynes advised that staff recommended the low bid made by Park & Playground Systems in the amount \$14,669.76.

Motion made by Mr. Jason Steen, seconded by Mr. Willie Gladden, to award the Capital Improvements for Jean Wallace McLean Community Park to Park & Playground Systems, Cheraw, SC, in the amount of \$14,669.76. Vote in favor. Unanimous. Motion carried.

RESCHEDULING THE REGULAR SCHEDULED COUNCIL MEETING UNTIL TUESDAY, JUNE 18, 2013, AT 5:30 P.M.

Mr. Ron Munnerlyn, Vice-Chair advised council that a called meeting was scheduled for June 18, 2013 for the Public Hearing of the budget for FY 2013-2014 and asked Council if they wished to reschedule the regular scheduled meeting for June 18th. The regular scheduled meeting was to be held on June 11th.

Motion made by Mr. Willie Gladden, seconded by Mr. Ken Allen, to reschedule the regular scheduled council meeting until Tuesday, June 18, 2013 at 5:30 p.m. Vote in favor. Unanimous. Motion carried.

OLD BUSINESS

DISCUSSION OF BUDGET FY 2013-2014

Mr. Ron Munnerlyn, Vice-Chair, asked Mr. Jim Haynes, Interim Administrator, to provide information on the 2013-2014 proposed budget and stated to Council that a more final version would be made available prior the meeting scheduled for June 18.

Mr. Haynes provided to Council a Delinquent Tax worksheet for the previous year which reflected the number of parcels which were delinquent, the cost of mailing and sale costs, as well as total net funds received into the General Fund in the amount of \$114,566.52. Also included in the worksheet included a proposed projection of costs and potential net funds into the General Fund based on an increase of charges for postage and sale costs.

Mr. Munnerlyn asked if these costs included the process of sending out notices to delinquent tax payer, sending out certified mailings, and the charge for posting the property by an

outside company. Mr. Haynes advised that there was no charge for posting the property as Ms. Shirley Dunsford does this herself, but that this did include the process of sending out notices and certified mailings. Mr. Munnerlyn stated that he thought that an outside company handled the posting of properties. Mr. Harry Easterling, Attorney, and Mr. Haynes both stated that Ms. Dunsford had been posting the properties herself.

Mr. Munnerlyn stated to Mr. Haynes that we were moving in the right direction. Mr. Ken Allen stated that the goal was for the office to be self-sufficient. Mr. Haynes agreed and stated that the idea would be to make those departments working for a much smaller group to be responsible for paying more of the costs for the upkeep of that office. This is the case with the Delinquent Tax office. Mr. Munnerlyn stated that Mr. Haynes had made a good point. He stated that if we are looking at raising taxes, then those who are delinquent in paying those taxes should certainly pay a higher late charge.

Mr. Haynes also provided to Council a proposal made by the Building Code Department which was prepared by Mr. Brad Leviner at Mr. Haynes' request. Mr. Haynes stated that the folks needing building permits would be the ones footing the bill for most of the cost. He reported that the current schedule of costs had been in place since 2004 and no changes had been made since that time. Mr. Haynes stated that the proposal by Mr. Leviner reflects an increase from \$15.00 per inspection to \$30.00 per inspection for a building to be valued at \$1,000.00 or less. He stated that the fees would be higher for properties with increased values. Mr. Willie Gladden asked if the fee would be \$30.00 for each inspection for foundation, framing and sheetrock and Mr. Haynes confirmed that the fee would apply to each required inspection.

Mr. Haynes advised Council that a bound proposed budget was before them and that page 2, the Current County Ordinary line, reflects the biggest change in numbers, in the amount of \$2,254,500.00 from the amount budgeted for last year which was \$1,850,000.00 which is an increase request of \$404,500.00. This number reflects a 5.9 mill increase. Mr. Haynes stated that he had told most of the Council members individually that this amount included a 2.6% cost of living increase based on the Consumer Price Index (CPI) published numbers. This cost of living increase resulted in a total increase of approximately \$140,000.00. He stated that the total budget for General Fund in this proposed budget is \$9,402,016.00. Mr. Haynes stated that the goal would be to use none of the fund balance or use no more than was used last year. He reported that he had been very conservative on projections for the upcoming year.

Mr. Ron Munnerlyn, Vice-Chair, stated that he knew there were some that did not want to raise taxes and stated he would love to see Council make cuts to avoid raising taxes. Mr. Steve Blackmon inquired as to what could be cut from the budget in order to avoid raising taxes. Mr. Haynes stated that he would begin by looking at the least required or least used department and begin to look at those numbers, and also look at the large departments such as the Sheriff's office and Road Maintenance. He stated that if you cut many people to gain \$200,000.00 in the budget, it would still come up short by about more than \$400,000.00. He stated that most of the departments were limited already. He stated that you could look at

cutting the number of dispatchers for 911 but then you would be paying more in overtime for the dispatchers that you would keep.

Mr. Jason Steen stated that he felt that Council had no options due to the fact that the County was working with a shoe string staff already.

Mr. Willie Gladden stated that he felt that many departments needed additional help rather than staff being cut and mentioned the Recreation department to be one of them.

Mr. Steve Blackmon asked Mr. Haynes what he expected for next year and did he feel like things would be much better next year. Mr. Haynes stated that right now he did not think things would get much better right away. Mr. Blackmon stated that he knew that taxes would have to be increased but that he did not want to over do it so that it would cause a burden on the citizens. He mentioned that people were already having it tough and that taxes would be just another expense for citizens.

Mr. Ken Allen asked what the 5.9 mill increase would reflect. Mr. Haynes stated that the millage increase would result in funds of \$404,500.00. Mr. Allen asked about how the increase in millage would affect our citizens. Mr. Haynes reported that based on a legal residence valued at \$50,000.00, the increase in taxes would be estimated to be \$10.00. Mr. Allen stated that when it is explained this way, citizens would understand it better.

Mr. Munnerlyn stated that Council had not considered raising taxes for a number of years.

Mr. Blackmon stated that he did not want to raise taxes really high and not make a change when things get better. He stated that this had been done in the past and it just was not fair to the citizens to continue to raise taxes and not give them something back when the County is able to do so.

Mr. Munnerlyn asked Mr. Haynes to check to see when taxes were last raised and report back to Council on his findings.

Mr. Munnerlyn asked Mr. Haynes to speak briefly about the Fire Fund. Mr. Haynes stated that the Fire Tax is currently \$.10 and Council recently had discussion about various Fire Department needs. Mr. Haynes stated that the overall goal of the Fire Departments was to provide a better level of fire service county-wide. Council discussed previously about possibly paying volunteers on a per-call basis, as well as paying for meals and training. Mr. Haynes stated that we needed to keep fire tax reserve funds from going down any further as the County had been using some of those funds in the past. Mr. Haynes reported that the countywide ladder safety inspection was done a few months ago and the charge for this inspection was \$3,500.00. He stated that there are many costs like this which add up. Mr. Haynes stated that two proposals had been presented earlier to Council by Mr. Keith Hughes. One was for a one mill increase which would result in \$48,000.00 and the other was for a two mill increase. Mr. Munnerlyn asked if a one or two mill increase would be enough for the fire departments. Mr. Haynes stated that it would only keep their head above

water, but would not allow the Fire Departments any extra money for equipment or improvements.

Mr. Jason Steen advised that Dr. Carolyn Prince, Chair, had discussed paying for training and that the two mill increase would allow them to do that. Mr. Willie Gladden stated that he thought the firemen's pay per call should be doubled due to gas prices. Mr. Steen reported that the volunteer firemen do not get anything now. Mr. Gladden stated that he felt that payment needed to be made on a per call basis and he thought this would encourage younger folks to be more involved since the average age of a local fireman is now 46 years old. Mr. Munnerlyn asked how much two mills would pay.

Mr. Keith Hughes, Fire Coordinator, stated that the first mill would result in funds of \$48,000.00 and would cover the payment of \$10.00 per call to the volunteers. Mr. Hughes stated that two mills would simply keep the fire funds where they are. He stated that gas and insurance had gone up and they are still working with the same budget as they have for several years.

Mr. Steve Blackmon asked if they could get by with a two mill increase and maybe Council could re-address this next year.

Mr. Haynes stated that the same statutory limits do not apply to Fire funds and that this could be looked at again next year. Mr. Willie Gladden stated that he felt something should be done and we needed to do more than just get by. Mr. Blackmon advised that we should give the Fire Departments what they absolutely have to have at this time, and if an increase was needed next year, it could be reviewed again. Mr. Jason Steen stated that the fire tax helps the ISO rating for all citizens. He stated that most residents are rated at this time at 9 and if they could get everyone down to a 5 rating, it would come back to citizens due to a decrease in homeowner's insurance premiums. He stated that most citizens would understand raising the fire tax millage to 5 which would result in about \$20.00 in taxes to get a greater return on a lower insurance premium.

Mr. Blackmon stated that he knew that a 2 mill increase was needed but he wanted to make sure that we do not put too much burden on the tax payers at one time.

Mr. Munnerlyn asked if the Fire Department was asking for a 5 mill increase. Mr. Steen advised that they were requesting a 5 mill increase to keep things moving forward with equipment and the per call pay. Mr. Haynes stated that the fire budget discussed tonight included a 2 mill increase.

Mr. Munnerlyn asked Mr. Haynes and his staff to go back and look at a higher millage increase for fire departments and to present it to Council so that it could be reviewed. He stated to Mr. Hughes and the other citizens that he hoped this would be a little encouragement and not too much discouragement. He stated that we must crawl, walk and then run.

Page Six – June 3, 2013 Council Meeting

Mr. Ken Allen stated that Council knew that the millage needed to go up but needs to figure out what the amount should be. He stated that Council could not put more on the citizens than they could handle, but that anything that could be done would be a help.

ADJOURN

No further discussion was heard. The meeting was adjourned.

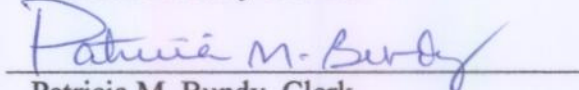
Motion made by Mr. Willie Gladden, seconded by Mr. Ken Allen, to adjourn the meeting. Vote in favor. Unanimous. Motion carried.

(SEAL)



Mr. Ron Munnerlyn, Vice-Chair
Marlboro County Council

ATTEST:



Patricia M. Bundy, Clerk
Marlboro County Council

Date Adopted: June 18, 2013