

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

TUESDAY, OCTOBER 18, 2022

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.

CORRIE H. PLATO

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 Public Hearing Notice along with 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 Public Hearing Notice ran in the Thursday, September 29, 2022 edition of the Herald Advocate. 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

Mr. Charles P. Midgley, Jr., Chairman stated that Council needed to go into executive session immediately to discuss an Economic Development issue.

Motion made by Mr. Steve Blackmon, seconded by Mr. Kenneth Stroman to enter Executive Session for discussion of an Economic Development issue. Vote in favor. Unanimous. Motion carried.

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Regular session reconvened at 6:45 pm.

Motion made by Mr. Jason Steen, seconded by Mr. Kenneth Stroman, to come out of executive session and re-enter regular session. Vote in favor. Unanimous. Motion carried.

Mr. Charles P. Midgley, Jr., Chairman advised that no decisions had been made, however, a statement had been prepared in response to the Sopakco announcement.

Mr. Midgley read County Council's statement concerning an announcement made earlier in the day of a planned \$85 million North Carolina project by SOPAKCO:

Marlboro County has had communications with SOPAKCO leadership in the past months when there were rumors of a plant closing here. We were told that no decision had been made and that company officials would contact the County if such a decision were to be made. Disappointingly, we have had no contact with the company in advance of the announcement today. We confirmed this afternoon that Marion County, where the company also operates, has not been contacted by the company.

Therefore, at this time, we do not know the impact of SOPAKCO's announcement on the company's Bennettsville or Mullins, SC sites.

Over the past 15 years, SOPAKCO has approached the County and City of Bennettsville multiple times regarding a potential expansion of their facilities. Each time the County responded with available incentives and other assistance to keep and grow the company in our community.

After similar communications within the last year, Marlboro County Council presented SOPAKCO with a very aggressive incentive package should they chose to locate their project here. The incentives included \$1.1 million dollars in cash grants from the County and the State of South Carolina, free land for the project and property tax discounts. The property tax breaks approached 100% in the first years of the potential project.

While the impact and timeline for the project announced today is unclear, Marlboro County is disappointed that the company has selected North Carolina for the project, but, will continue to work to preserve jobs in our community.

Mr. Midgley asked if Mr. Munnerlyn if he had any other details he would like to share. Mr. Munnerlyn said that he would like to add that Marlboro County had been very aggressive to get SOPAKCO to build their expansion in Marlboro County. He had heard the statement that property taxes were the reason. While it is difficult for Marlboro County to compete with North Carolina counties in this area, that issue had been taken out of the equation and was not the reason they decided not to build here as County Council had presented incentives that reduced taxes by as much as 100% for the project.

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APPROVAL OF AGENDA ITEMS

Motion made by Mr. Jason Steen, seconded by Mr. Kenneth Stroman, to approve the agenda as presented. Vote in favor. Unanimous. Motion carried.

PUBLIC HEARING

RESOLUTION # 10-22-01 – A RESOLUTION AUTHORIZING SUBMISSION OF GRANT APPLICATIONS TO THE SOUTH CAROLINA RURAL DEVELOPMENT AUTHORITY BY MARLBORO COUNTY FOR FACILITY AND EQUIPMENT PURCHASES UNDER THE COMMUNITY FACILITIES PROGRAM FOR MARLBORO COUNTY GOVERNMENT IN AN AMOUNT NOT TO EXCEED ONE MILLION DOLLARS AND AUTHORIZATION TO ACCEPT GRANTS IF AWARDED.

Mr. Wes Park, Finance Director discussed briefly. He advised the grant before them for authorization was a Community Facilities grant provided by the Rural Development Authority which included 55% grant funds with a 45% match by the county. The grant could be used in \$50,000 increments. The grant would be used to purchase equipment, addressing, and facility improvements. Mr. Park advised this would be very helpful. Mr. Anthony Woods questioned if the grant included any In-Kind match of which Mr. Park responded no, it would have to be cash match.

Mr. Munnerlyn advised Mr. Woods the match would be paid by General Obligation Funds. This would allow the county to take care of some of the big ticket items.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

SEPTEMBER 9, 2022 – “CALLED” COUNCIL MEETING

Motion made by Mr. Jason Steen, seconded by Mr. Kenneth Stroman, to approve the September 9, 2022 “Called” Council Meeting as written. Vote in favor: Ms. Corrie Plato, Mr. Kenneth Stroman, Mr. Charles P. Midgley, Jr., Mr. Jason Steen, Dr. Damien Johnson, Mr. Steve Blackmon, and Mr. Verd Odom. Abstain: Mr. Anthony Woods (not present at meeting). Motion carried.

SEPTEMBER 13, 2022 – REGULAR COUNCIL MEETING

Motion made by Mr. Verd Odom, seconded by Mr. Steve Blackmon; to approve the September 13, 2022 “Called” Council Meeting as written. Vote in favor: Mr. Anthony Woods, Mr. Kenneth Stroman, Mr. Charles P. Midgley, Jr., Mr. Jason Steen, Dr. Damien Johnson, Mr. Steve Blackmon, and Mr. Verd Odom. Abstain: Ms. Corrie Plato (not present at meeting). Motion carried.

OLD BUSINESS

ORDINANCE # 830 – AN ORDINANCE AUTHORIZING THE EXECUTION OF A MUNICIPAL ELECTION TRANSFER AND COSTS FEE AGREEMENT MARLBORO COUNTY AND THE TOWN OF CLIO – SECOND READING

Mr. Munnerlyn stated this is will allow Clio to reimburse the County for any costs.

Motion made by Mr. Anthony Woods, seconded by Mr. Kenneth Stroman, to approve the second reading of Ordinance # 830 - An Ordinance authorizing the execution of a Municipal Election Transfer and Costs Fee Agreement Between Marlboro County and The Town of Clio. Vote in Favor. Unanimous. Motion carried.

RECREATION INITIATIVE UPDATE AND DETERMINATION OF DATE/TIME FOR NEXT WORK SESSION

Mr. Ron Munnerlyn, County Administrator updated Council of information gathered since the last workshop. He advised staff is still gathering information concerning the golf course. There is still so much to understand and they are gathering information piece by piece such as number of rounds, etc. in order to make it work. The other part of it is the upfront and irrigation cost. Staff met earlier in the day with the irrigation contractor to get a firmer cost on it. This is the biggest ticket item for improvements if Council decides to move forward with the project. The pieces are falling into place and he wanted to recommend Council that they have until January 31, 2023. Staff recommends finishing the study before making any decisions.

In reference to a Recreation Facility with a multi-purpose room and a possible aquatic center, a copy of the City of Thomasville Aquatics Center plans were given to council members to review. This facility is far enough along to provide some costs. Their project cost is approximately six million dollars, which includes a Council Chambers and other things which Mr. Munnerlyn didn't believe Marlboro County needed. Another possible way of bringing costs down is to work with the City of Bennettsville, if they are interested. He recommended Council take a day trip to look at their facility before going any further. He questioned if any of the council members were interested in going. He provided some dates for Council to consider.

Mr. Munnerlyn said another thing to consider is the location for the facility. He said staff believes we need to leverage the positive areas and facilities that already have something going on and add to that momentum.

He advised he had called the Mayor and City Administrator to discuss the project in general details. He wanted to see if they were open minded and would other officials be open to helping with the project. This is something council could discuss at a later date.

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He asked if anyone was interested in the day trip. There was various discussion as to who would go and it was determined that at this time only council would attend. No decisions were going to be made.

Mr. Munnerlyn advised that Tourism and Image Issues also need to be addressed by the county. His question is “how do we get people off the interstate to come and visit Bennettsville”? Munnerlyn shared information regarding almost 10,000 cars on average a day are coming through Bennettsville. The next step is to determine “how do we get them to stop”? Possible solution include establishing locations for parking near local businesses and restaurants near downtown. There are some possible properties owned by the county that are available. This may lead to development of restaurants and other amenities that are needed

The next question is how can the county help small businesses? He felt this is something which needs to be explored. He recommended the possibility of starting a revolving loan fund.

Additionally, the image of our traffic corridors do not look good. A possible way of handling this situation is through CDBG Project Funds which are available annually. Typically \$500,000 grants are available with a 15% match. This may also be provided to the small towns in the County: Clio, McColl, etc. These items could be discussed further in another work session.

Mr. Munnerlyn recommended a day trip to Thomasville along with a meeting in the evening.

NEW BUSINESS

RESOLUTION # 10-22-01 – A RESOLUTION AUTHORIZING SUBMISSION OF GRANT APPLICATIONS TO THE SOUTH CAROLINA RURAL DEVELOPMENT AUTHORITY BY MARLBORO COUNTY FOR FACILITY AND EQUIPMENT PURCHASES UNDER THE COMMUNITY FACILITIES PROGRAM FOR MARLBORO COUNTY GOVERNMENT IN AN AMOUNT NOT TO EXCEED ONE MILLION DOLLARS AND AUTHORIZATION TO ACCEPT GRANTS IF AWARDED.

Motion made by Mr. Anthony Woods, seconded by Mr. Steve Blackmon, to approve Resolution # 10-22-01 – A Resolution authorizing submission of grant applications to the South Carolina Rural Development Authority by Marlboro County for Facility and Equipment purchases under the Community Facilities program for Marlboro County Government in an amount not to exceed One Million Dollars and authorization to accept grants if awarded. Vote in favor. Unanimous. Motion carried.

ORDINANCE # 832 – AN ORDINANCE TO PROVIDE FOR THE ISSUANCE AND SALE OF A NOT TO EXCEED ONE MILLION TWO HUNDRED FIFTY THOUSAND DOLLARS (\$1,250,000) GENERAL OBLIGATION BOND OF MARLBORO COUNTY, SOUTH CAROLINA, TO PRESCRIBE THE PURPOSES FOR WHICH THE PROCEEDS OF SAID BOND SHALL BE EXPENDED, TO PROVIDE FOR THE PAYMENT OF SAID BOND, AND OTHER MATTERS RELATING THERETO. FIRST READING

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Mr. Wes Park, Finance Director discussed briefly. He advised the county can do this every 5 to 7 years depending upon structure. The county currently is eligible to receive \$1,250,000 which can be used to address the facility needs, equipment purchases, and vehicles. Mr. Jason asked if this could be used as the match for the S.C. Rural Development Authority grant which the county is applying for. Mr. Park advised this would be the match for the grant funding. Mr. Munnerlyn advised this would not affect county taxes. It's the same as refinancing a home, an equity loan. We have previously done this for re-roofing the courthouse, paving parking lots, and other costly items.

Motion made by Mr. Jason Steen, seconded by Mr. Verd Odom, to approve the First Reading of - Ordinance # 832 – An Ordinance to provide for the issuance and sale of a not to exceed one million two hundred fifty thousand dollars (\$1,250,000) General Obligation Bond of Marlboro County, South Carolina, to prescribe the purposes for which the proceeds of said Bond shall be expended, to provide for the payment of said Bond, and other matters relating thereto. Vote in favor. Unanimous. Motion carried.

RESOLUTION #10-22-02 – A RESOLUTION TO APPROVE AMENDMENTS TO THE FISCAL YEAR 2022-2023 OPERATING BUDGET WITH REGARDS TO THE COSTS AND REIMBURSEMENT OF COSTS FOR THE PROVISION OF TEMPORARY LAW ENFORCEMENT COVERAGE FOR THE TOWN OF MCCOLL BY THE MARLBORO COUNTY SHERIFF'S OFFICE.

Mr. Munnerlyn advised the Marlboro County Sheriff's office has been helping McColl with over time deputies while they have been struggling and did not have any certified officers. He and the Sheriff were talking and initially this was not a problem. However, this is now creating major budget over runs with the over time. With this agreement the Sheriff and his staff could work with McColl and this will allow them to pay us back. Sheriff has already signed the agreement. This allows him (Administrator) to sign it. Mr. Andrew McLeod, Attorney has looked at the agreement and will make sure it is what the county needs. If the situation becomes more than temporary it will need to be a different discussion. He asked if this was agreeable to Council.

Sheriff Larry McNeil said the Town of McColl must agree with the conditions for it to work. By law, Marlboro County must provide coverage to McColl when needed. Marlboro County is having to pay our officers 1 ½ time of overtime affecting the Sheriff's budget. Also, any time the officers have to go to McColl, it leaves other rural areas without protection.

Mr. Munnerlyn advised that our officers are having to patrol McColl like police officers. Hopefully, McColl will agree to reimbursement. If they refuse, council will have to discuss it further. The biggest cost is the Sheriff's overtime. The agreement will be for time spent helping McColl, and is not retroactive. He was hoping the Mayor would be present at the current meeting for discussion.

Sheriff McNeil wanted to update council on vests and vehicles. He said the vests had come in earlier in the day. Also, they have received 3 of the vehicles to-date. They are also on schedule

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for the inmate contract.

Motion made by Dr. Damien Johnson, seconded by Mr. Jason Steen, to approve Resolution #10-22-03 – A Resolution to approve amendments to the Fiscal Year 2022-2023 operating budget with regards to the costs and reimbursement of costs for the provision of temporary law enforcement coverage for the Town of McColl by the Marlboro County Sheriff's Office. Vote in favor. Unanimous. Motion carried.

RESOLUTION #10-22-03 – A RESOLUTION APPROVING A BUDGET AMENDMENT TO THE FY2022-2023 EMS FUND BUDGET WITH REGARDS TO INCREASED COSTS FOR SALARIES AND BENEFITS FOR EMERGENCY MEDICAL SERVICE EMPLOYEES.

Mr. Ron Munnerlyn advised the EMS budget is different from the General Fund. It has separate millage rates. Mr. Calvin Cassidy, EMS Director was present to answer any questions council may have. The Director is requesting \$125,000 for an across the board salary increase for all EMS employees. Mr. Munnerlyn advised no funds would be taken from reserve or affect taxes.

Motion made by Mr. Anthony Woods, seconded by Mr. Steve Blackmon, to approve Resolution #10-22-03 – A Resolution approving a budget amendment to the FY2022-2023 EMS fund budget with regards to increased costs for salaries and benefits for Emergency Medical Service employees. Vote in favor. Unanimous. Motion carried.

RESCHEDULE NOVEMBER 11, 2022 COUNCIL MEETING DUE TO THE 2022 GENERAL ELECTION

Council agreed to hold the meeting the third Tuesday of November (15th).

Motion made by Mr. Verd Odom, seconded by Mr. Steve Blackmon, to Reschedule November 11, 2022 Council Meeting due to the 2022 General Election to November 15, 2022. Vote in favor. Unanimous. Motion carried.

APPOINTMENTS TO BOARDS & COMMISSIONS

Mr. Munnerlyn advised a list of board vacancies would be sent out again. He advised there are a couple of boards: Zoning Appeals and Construction Appeals Board that do not meet on a regular basis, only as needed. There is a current land use situation which they result in the fling of an appeal. The Zoning Appeals Board does not require board members to live within the same district as the Council member appointing them. Some boards have this requirement while others do not. Mr. Munnerlyn as requested staff put together a list of potential board members who qualify to give to council. He advised that Council may know of some people that are qualified for these

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boards. However, he did want to let them know that any person that they appoint may not serve on two separate boards at the same time.

ACCEPTANCE OF BIDS

None.

REPORTS

FINANCE REPORT – MR. WES PARK, FINANCE DIRECTOR

General fund revenue for the three months ending September 30, 2022 total \$1,585,764 in comparison to \$1,347,231 for the three months ending September 30, 2021. General fund expenditures through September 30, 2022 total \$3,506,035 of a \$13,854,125 budget or 25.31% of the budget year to date. General fund expenditures totaled \$2,790,940 for the same three months ending September 30, 2021. In conclusion, revenues are up in comparison to the prior year but not as significant as the increase in expenditures.

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

EMPLOYEE SERVICE ANNIVERSARIES

The following employees were recognized with five or more years of service to Marlboro County through the month of September: Delorice Barrington (15 years); Linda Coffy (7 years); Doug Carabo (5 years); Durant Turner (10 years); Hosea Lemon (15 years); and Sharita McCall (5 years).

ADMINISTRATION

“Trunk or Treat” to be held October 29th . The county will again participate in this joint event with MC School District, towns and MWE Library. There will be events that day at the schools in McColl, Clio, Wallace and Blenheim as well as Bennettsville.

Turkey Giveaway – As we have done over the past 10 years, our solid waste contractor, Waste Connections, will host a Thanksgiving turkey giveaway to be held November 12 at the Marlboro County High School. Look for more details in the coming week.

Recreation League Basketball Sign-ups – Signups for recreation league basketball are underway with a deadline of November 20th. Staff opened registration a month earlier to give time to reach all children in the County.

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

Community-wide Job Fair – The County's Job Fair on October 5th was well attended by employers and employees. SC Works recorded 150 job seekers and employers indicated that they had hired a number of the attendees. Another job fair is planned for early in 2023

Industry Appreciation Golf Tournament - The Industry Appreciation Golf Tournament on October 14, 2022, was a success with 17 teams representing most industries and supporting businesses participating. The event started with breakfast at 8:00 am and ended with a casual lunch. Attendees were encouraged to offer input on the County's potential acquisition the golf course.

Delta Mills Site – Met with the S.C. Department of Commerce the previous week on site regarding the Delta site. They wanted to come out and look at it. The entire section of the plant which could be seen from the road overpass is down. The brick will be ground up and used on county roads as fill. Also, lighting has been installed and it is being cleaned up. Demo is almost finished in the center part. Also, there is a local industry interested in using it for a short term storage facility.

The Department of Commerce is excited about it and another element of it, it has a huge sewer plant there which has been sitting there for awhile unused. The Town of Cheraw is interested in talking about possibly using it. Apparently it can be pumped across the river and they need more capacity. This would increase our odds of getting it funded.

RECOGNITION OF CITIZEN'S REQUEST BEFORE COUNCIL

Mr. Verd Odom requested to be excused from the meeting. Request granted by the Chairman.

Ms. Donna Ridges (Business Infrastructure) – said the county has been duped again by an industry. She said the way we get industries to come in need to change. We do not need to beg them. Need new things in place requiring them to give notice when they plan to leave. Need contingencies in place to prevent them from coming in and milking us. She said industries will come, but, it's time to make a change.

Ms. Wendy Woods (Pee Dee Coalition) – advised she is the County Coordinator located at 108 South Parsonage Street. October is Domestic Violence Awareness month. Their national theme is "Everyone knows someone", and in knowing someone she would like to tell everyone that in her position at the office, not only does everyone know someone, but everyone is affected no matter what class or status. Domestic violence affects everyone. She said everyone must work together. She stated she sees the worst in Marlboro County, but, she also sees the very best.

One of those very best things that happen in April and October of every year is Nia's Lemonade Stand. Ms. Woods recognized Nia stating that she had her lemonade stand the previous day against domestic violence. She wanted to thank everyone in the county that participate including all the fire trucks. She thanked Dr. Johnson for coming the previous day, it was free lemonade. But, people give donations. They have a parenting facility in the county. The Parenting Director, Sharon Woodham for the whole Pee Dee Coalition was present and recognized. She thanked both Ms. Woodham and Nia for their work. The lemonade stand is held twice a year (April & October). She requested everyone come and join them.

RECOGNITION OF COUNCIL MEMBERS

Mr. Steve Blackmon thanked all citizens for coming to the meeting and encouraged everyone to get out and vote.

Dr. Damien Johnson said he was not going to let the SOPAKCO news dampen everything. He recognized Nia and encouraged her to continue doing the great things she had done. She did a fantastic job and the lemonade was great. She stood out there, gave her platform speech, invited everyone, and served people. He stated he is fighting for the Nia's of this county. She is a young girl with a promising future and has passion for people. For her to have created this idea to help people is what this county is all about.

The Recreation Department 12 year old's from the Clio area were playing football for the first time in 3 years and he hoped to see part of it after the meeting. He recognized the Clio area for working hard to make this happen. He said the Recreation Department was doing a good job in working with them. He thanked Mr. Ron Munnerlyn, Mr. Doug Carabo, Ms. Rhonda Frazier, and Mr. Greg Leviner for their hard work.

Dr. Johnson said he was excited about the future of Marlboro County and would continue to pray.

Mr. Jason Steen thanked the Pee Dee Coalition for the job they do. He said he likes lemonade and wants to be reminded next April and he'll attend. Council is committed to the citizens and to making a positive impact on the economy. He said Marlboro County needs to take the lead in getting people to come to Marlboro County and not go anywhere else.

Mr. Kenneth Stroman recognized the Pee Dee Coalition in what they do for the community. He recognized Nia and said he missed her lemonade this time. He wanted to thank part of the Delegation for getting funds for the county, especially Representative Pat Henegan and Senator Gerald Malloy. He wanted to personally thank them for reaching out for the first time in a long time or long time in getting funds to the county. He said the county needs to develop relationships and keep good relationships with them. He believes if council does this, they will continue to help us. With that being said, Mr. Stroman said that Council has the Chairman of the Democratic Party and the Republican Party on County Council. He advised Council needs to be mindful of what they say about our Delegation. It can be hurtful. He wanted to address another council member, Mr. Verd Odom, who had already excused himself from the meeting, regarding some of his comments concerning Ms. Henegan on his personal website and he did not appreciate it. They do not need to alienate the delegation. We do not need to start a war. Mr. Stroman thanked the citizens for coming out.

Ms. Corrie Plato thanked all the citizens for coming out. She recognized Ms. Ridges and advised council had already discussed some of the things she had suggested. Council has done everything in their power to keep the industries here. Ms. Plato that the county administrator has also done all he could. Everyone needs to work together. The administrator will do everything he can to make sure they (council) move in the right direction. She said she worked at Oak River for 47

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years and it hurt when they left. She knows a lot of people at SOPAKCO and know they will be alright as long as they work together. She recognized Nia and asked if she could go ahead and make a donation for the next lemonade event.

Mr. Anthony Woods recognized Ms. Woods, Ms. Woodham, and Ms. Ridges. He said that elections are important and everyone needed to get out and vote. He was going to miss Ms. Lori Moses, who had just passed away. We do not need to sling mud, but, need to support all who go in to office. Football is back and that is a good thing. He recognized Nia for her lemonade stand. He made reference to SOPAKCO and what ever the circumstances, the county needs to move forward.

Mr. Charles P. Midgley, Jr., Chairman thanked staff for putting on a perfect Industry Appreciation event. He stated it was perfect weather.

EXECUTIVE SESSION – (If Council determines one is needed)

Held at beginning of meeting.

NON-AGENDA ITEMS

None.


ADJOURN

Motion made by Mr. Steve Blackmon, seconded by Dr. Damien Johnson, to adjourn the meeting. Vote in favor. Unanimous. Motion Carried.


The meeting adjourned at 7:55 p.m.

(SEAL)

ATTEST:



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



Susan Rivers, Clerk
Marlboro County Council

Adopted: November 15, 2022