

WORKSESSION
DARLINGTON COUNTY COUNCIL
DARLINGTON, SC

August 29, 2017

A Worksession of the County Council of Darlington County was held this 29th day of August 2017, at 10 a.m., at Pee Dee Regional Council of Government Conference Center, 2314 Pisgah Road, Florence, South Carolina.

NOTICE OF MEETING

In compliance with the Freedom of Information Act, a copy of the agenda providing the date, time, and place of the meeting was emailed to the local newspapers, persons requesting notification, and posted on the county's website and on the bulletin board in the lobby of the courthouse.

COUNCIL MEMBERS PRESENT

Vice Chairman Marvin Le Flowers, Chaplain Dannie Douglas, Jr., Mr. J. Lewis Brown, Mr. David Coker, Mr. Robert L. Kilgo, Jr., and Ms. Joyce W. Thomas.

COUNCIL MEMBERS PRESENT

Chairman Bobby Hudson and Ms. Mozella Nicholson.

ALSO PRESENT

County Administrator Marion Charles Stewart, III, Clerk to Council J. JaNet Bishop, Finance Director Sherman Dibble, Human Resource Manager Ginger Winburn, and Facilitator Charles Weathers of The Weathers Group.

REPORTERS PRESENT

Ms. Samantha Lyles of the News and Press and Ms. Kiahna Patterson of WBTW TV 13 News.

Worksession Summary

The worksession began at 10 a.m. with Council Members introducing themselves and stating why they decided to serve on County Council.

Successes and Challenges. Council discussed and listed the successes and/or accomplishments of Darlington County which included a County Administrator that everyone is happy with; the annual race that doubles the county's population in a four square mile area for one weekend with the county providing and coordinating services with various entities; a diversified and phenomenal industrial base; revitalization and economic growth; home of an All American City and a fortune 500 company; a more cooperative County Council; open communication between County Council and the County Administrator; home of the Sweet Potato Festival; Florence/Darlington Technical College's

SiMT 3-D printing operation; and for the first time, Darlington Raceway President residing within the County.

Council also discussed and listed past and current challenges facing Darlington County. These challenges included declining population and tax base; shift in population; inability to retain young people in the county; growth not recognized; false reputation of the schools and certain areas; professional level people and corporate heads not residing within the county; the lack of recreation; the lack of health care and transportation for seniors in rural areas; poverty in many areas; the lack of an inventory of homes; state/county leadership not on one accord; continuation of economic development; and funding.

The Changing Landscape. Council talked about changes in the world, state, region, and nation that could impact the county. The changes included robotics/eliminations of jobs; technological changes; people wanting to handling their business electronically; everyone for themselves (the haves and the have nots); loss of the sense of community; the closing of schools to create a better school system but diminished student participation (especially in athletics), community cohesiveness/community spirit, and school loyalty; unintended consequences of Council's decisions; Sonoco's investment in a Pulse Program to understand and improve education and the community; and leadership (not the position, but the person).

Mr. Weathers and Council talked about people feeling like they belong to the community and Council making decisions on behalf of everyone in the county. It was pointed out that the community is looking for leadership. Mr. Weathers explained how trust equals confidence, and confidence is based upon credibility which consists of character and competency. He emphasized that Council members should demonstrate character and competency consistent with their position.

In his introduction, Mr. Weathers named the various government and public entities the Weathers Group has worked with. About fifty percent of their clients are government or public entities.

Governance & Management. Mr. Weather defined governance as organizational control by group leadership, usually on the behalf of others, that ensures an organization achieves what it should achieve while avoiding those behaviors and situations that should be avoided. He explained that Council provides control for the county but does not manage the county. The County Administrator manages the county. Council has a system in place to provide tools, resources, and mechanism (the annual budget, policies, minutes, etc.) for Council to control.

Mr. Weathers also explained that Council, as a body, hires the County Administrator, and the County Administrator has one boss - the Council as a body) and not eight individual

bosses. Council exhorts control by hiring, evaluating, and supporting the County Administrator.

Mr. Weather reviewed the County Administrator's job description which should be to organize, plan, control, direct, and coordinate the county's resources and activities in order to achieve defined objectives. Therefore, he talked about the importance of Council establishing vision and mission statements and long term goals to provide direction to the County Administrator.

Organizational Chart. A typical organizational chart was provided displaying the owners (the citizens) at the top, then Council (the agent of the owners), then the CEO/County Administrator (the agent of the Council), the Managers/Department Heads, and the staff. Mr. Weathers explained that Council is at the policy/governance level to approve policies and govern through long term strategies and vision. The County Administrator develops the processes/operational plans for the staff to go through day-to-day procedures to get things done. The key to this working would be everyone staying in "his/her lane." The County Administrator, being the most critical link in the organizational chart, must have a high trust relationship with Council and his team for everything to take place.

~ Councilman Kilgo left the meeting ~

Governance Decision-Making. Mr. Weathers talked about the process that should take place when there are complaints from constituents. He confirmed that Council should hand off the problem to the County Administrator to be resolved as opposed to Council contacting the staff. He encouraged Council, as a body, to answer the following questions when making tough decisions: (1) Is this true to our mission? (2) Does it safeguard our assets? (3) Is this in the public's best interest? If the answer is yes to each question, then Council should consider the matter. Mr. Weathers explained that there are things that need to be done, but these things may not be the County's to do, or place the county's assets at unnecessary risk, or not in the public's best interest. These three questions will help keep Council's decisions on track when it comes to setting priorities.

The county's current mission statement was read as follows: "It is the mission of Darlington County to improve the quality of life by planning, organizing, and conducting the public's business and providing public services with commitment to equal treatment, courtesy, high quality, economy, high ethical standards and promotion of unity among all segments and sections of the county through openness and citizen participation."

Mr. Brown stated that he would challenge the county's mission statement. He felt that the three things that taxpayers and employers look for are (1) quality of the school system, (2) quality of life, and (3) harmony among local governments although the county

does not control the school and municipalities. It was stated that if Council cannot control it, it should not be in Council's mission.

Stages of Development. Mr. Weathers talked about the stages of Development to include forming (transitioning from individual to member status), storming (difficult time for the team/resist collaborating with other team members/conflict), norming (members reconciling, establishing ground rules, assist one another), and performing (members accept each other's strengths and weaknesses/relationships and expectations are clear).

Mr. Brown stated that the county was currently in the forming stage due to the potential for change every two years. Mr. Flowers talked about competing ideas and tension between rural areas and municipalities. Ms. Thomas talked about the need for Council members to share their ideas.

In reference to the stages of development, Mr. Weathers explained that performance decreases during the storming stage due to lack of focus, distractions, etc. However, storming provides value because it causes forced communication, etc. The two most dangerous storms are (1) the quiet storm (when there are issues that no one wants to talk about) and (2) when the storm becomes the norm (when the "waters are never calm"). Performance increases during the norming and performing stages. However, the performing stage is the most dangerous because people become complacent. Mr. Weather's talked about the value of the "what's next person" who is never satisfied with status quo and always looking into the future for what's coming next. He mentioned that different areas of the county will go through different stages at the same time. He also stated that reality can be volatile, uncertain, chaotic, and ambiguous.

Council recessed for lunch at 11:22 p.m. and reconvened at 11:45 p.m.

Strategic Direction. Mr. Weathers defined vision as an aspirational state of being/great desire for what Council wants Darlington County to look like in 20 to 25 years. He also stated that visions are beyond Council members' terms, inclusive, and non-negotiable principals that guide decision making. The mission is the road traveled to get to the vision. The accomplishment of the mission results in the realization of the vision. He talked about organizations drifting off track – mission drift. Council listed the following as things that could cause Council to get off track: fear of losing control; splinter groups where the "squeaky wheel gets the grease;" shifting demographic groups; a shift in the metropolitan area; lack of money and too much money; and unhealthy conflict where you lose focus. Mr. Weathers explained that when Council makes decisions, Council must consider its values – those non-negotiable principles that guide the decision making. Value serves as the guard rails to keep Council on the road to its mission.

Mr. Weathers talked about value based decisions. When there is a group of people with different interests and different personal values, tough decisions need to be based on

values. He divided Council members into two groups and asked each group to write a vision (the big picture/short, direct statements), mission (purpose), and value statements for Darlington County Council.

Mr. Flower presented his group's vision statement - security of property and life. Ms. Thomas added liberty and happiness. Mr. Brown presented his group's vision statement - a better Darlington County which consists of better education, employment, and health.

The mission statement for Mr. Brown's group was, "Serve the people in Darlington County with respect to meet their governmental needs in a fiscal and ethical manner." Council talked about governmental needs and the tools to meet governmental needs. Mr. Weathers talked about the core things that the county must do, then other things that should be done.

The group talked about values (non-negotiable principles that guide decision making) to include integrity, freedom, transparency, equality, accountability, respect for life and liberty, and open-mindedness. Mr. Weathers stated that as the county continues to grow, demographics continue to shift, and the world continues to changes, there must be an inclusive environment.

Strategy. Mr. Weathers defined strategy as "an integrated and coherent explanation of how an organization is going to accomplish its mission." He explained that strategy is how everything that Council does connects and comes together to accomplish the mission.

Mr. Coker asked how Council could transition from being a reactionary Council to a strategic Council. Mr. Weathers stated that this could begin with a document he handed out entitled *visionkershaw 2030* dated March 2016. Mr. Brown suggested that Council members do their homework and not wait for the County Administrator to present issues to Council. He talked about a meeting he attended when Kershaw County Planning Director and County Council Chairman presented the document that was handed out. The document was not a strategic plan, but a vision plan. He also talked about Darlington County being very similar to Kershaw County. Mr. Brown and Council members talked about the number of people/groups involved in compiling Kershaw's vision plan.

Mr. Weathers explained that reality does not always accept Council's plan, but Council can be responsive instead of reactive. Also, with a plan, Council will understand where it is going with milestones and indicators to get there. Mr. Weathers talked about implementing the document once it is developed and modifying our culture to follow the document. He also talked about going through the process to develop the document which will build up ownership. The group agreed that planning, budgeting, and services must be linked together when deciding a strategic plan, operational plan, and work plan.

Considerations, Critical Questions, and Priorities. Mr. Weathers ask Council members to list Council's considerations, critical questions, and priorities. The list included a new courthouse (Flowers); revamping the Treasurer's Office to change the physical arrangement of the office (Flowers); improvement to Lake Darpo facility (Flowers); EMS services (Brown); housing development (Timberchase Subdivision) with deteriorating county roads (Brown); and numerous roads and drainage problems (Brown).

Individual Priority Ranking. Mr. Weathers asked Council members how they would decide which item would come first. He asked each council member to prioritize the six issues with the first being the top priority.

Mr. Flowers said his priority would be based on doing the least expensive thing first, "do-ability," or the easiest to fix. He listed his priorities as (1) revamp Treasurer's Office, (2) Lake Darpo, (3) EMS, (4) roads/drainage, (5) roads in housing development, and (6) courthouse project.

Mr. Douglas ranked his priorities as (1) courthouse project, (2) revamp Treasurer's Office, (3) Lake Darpo, (4) roads/drainage, (5) roads in housing development, and (6) EMS.

Ms. Thomas ranked her priorities as (1) EMS, (2) roads/drainage, (3) roads in housing development, (4) revamp Treasurer's Office, (5) courthouse project, and (6) Lake Darpo.

Mr. Coker ranked his priorities as (1) EMS, (2) roads in housing development, (3) roads/drainage, (4) revamp Treasurer's Office, (5) courthouse project, and (6) Lake Darpo.

Mr. Brown ranked his priorities based upon the county's legal obligations and big ticket costs as follows: (1) EMS, (2) roads in housing development, (3) courthouse project, (4) roads/drainage, (5) revamp Treasurer's Office, and (6) Lake Darpo.

Mr. Stewart asked whether Council had any other priorities that were not listed. Mr. Brown indicated the increased cost of State Retirement. Other items mentioned included Lamar Ballfield and Elections/Voter Registration Building.

Group Priority Ranking. After briefly talking about the priorities listed, Mr. Weathers ranked the items based on Council's individual rankings. The group's priority ranking was as follows: (1) EMS, (2) revamp Treasurer's Office, (3) roads in a housing development (Timberchase Subdivision), (3) roads and drainage, (4) courthouse project, and (5) Lake Darpo. Roads in housing development tied with roads and drainage throughout the county.

~ Councilman Kilgo returned at 1 p.m. ~

Mr. Stewart commented that he was shocked to see the courthouse project listed so low on the group's priority list. However, before the Courthouse Construction Advisory Committee can move forward with a plan, the Committee must know the amount that Council will fund the project. Mr. Stewart pointed out that he was not aware of an issue with the Treasurer's Office.

EMS. Mr. Weathers questioned what has taken place regarding the items on the priority list. Mr. Stewart explained that changes were made in the overall management of EMS without changing the budget. There would have to be a budget change to fix the problem. He requested the opportunity to see how much improvement there will be with what he can do within the budget and staffing restrictions, and then prepare for 2018 changes.

Mr. Coker suggested that there be a backup independent contractor or several contractors available for the county to call if needed. Mr. Stewart indicated that he could work on this (emergency backup) without a budget change. He talked about the staffing and response time for EMS.

Revamping The Treasurer's Office. Mr. Stewart pointed out that he did not know this was an issue. Mr. Flowers explained that he was invited to visit the Treasurer's Office to see the work that had been done. He noticed that the Treasurer's Office has old "hand-me-down" desks and credenzas from the School District that are too large for the work space. Therefore, the new Treasurer suggested making the work area similar to that of the DMV so that the staff actually work at the counter as opposed to having two separate workspaces. Mr. Flowers said the way business is done in the courthouse had not changed since the 1960's. The proposed changes make sense and would be a "cheap" fix.

Mr. Stewart explained that elected officials can do what they want within their office. However, if they need money beyond their budget, they must go to the County Administrator or to County Council.

Ms. Thomas was concerned about the county not being able to provide services in the courthouse to individuals with special needs.

Mr. Flowers explained that revamping the Treasurer's Office would include the work area inside the office and the installation of a kiosk in the lobby of the courthouse.

Mr. Stewart stated that there were previous discussions about installing a kiosk in the lobby of the courthouse which would require the County Administrator finding money or Council budgeting money for this project. This would require the Treasurer and the Auditor to have people in the lobby to provide the services and about \$10,000 to redo the lobby area.

With the discussion, Mr. Weathers said he did not see a need for a decision of Council on the matter. The Treasurer could work on his proposal and figure out what he needs money for and then address Council. Mr. Stewart added that the Treasurer and Auditor would need to meet with him to discuss what they want to do in their offices and what they can do in the shared space in the lobby.

Ms. Thomas presented concerns about all Council members not knowing about some matters/issues such as revamping the Treasurer's Office.

Roads in Housing Development and Roads and Drainage Issues. These two issues were tied in third place in the group's priority ranking. It was clarified that the roads in the housing development were the roads in Timberchase Subdivision. The roads and drainage issues concerned various roads and ditches throughout the county.

Mr. Coker reported that it cost about \$1.5 million to repair the roads in Timberchase Subdivision. He said the alternative would be to triple treat the roads for \$314,000 of which the Senator has indicated that if the county fund one-half of the cost (\$157,000), he would fund the other half. Mr. Coker assumed the funds would be through CTC (the County Transportation Committee). He felt that this would satisfy the county's legal obligation of maintaining these county roads as stated in the contract when the roads were built in the mid-1990's.

Mr. Stewart pointed out that someone would have to place this matter on the agenda for Council's consideration.

Mr. Weathers explained that Council has to make decisions that may not appear to have an immediate benefit to a member's district, but a decision has to be made for Council's obligations. Council has to justify why it has to do things.

Mr. Brown stated that Council has a legal obligation regarding the roads in Timberchase Subdivision and \$314,000 could end up being cheap compared to what it could ultimately cost. Therefore, it was not a matter as to whether Council has the opportunity to make a choice as opposed to what it would cost if Council does nothing.

Mr. Weathers talked about the criteria for decision making such as legal obligations, the risk of life, etc. These are why certain decisions have to be made.

Overall Roads and Drainage Issues Throughout the County. It was indicated that the county was constantly repairing roads throughout the county, and an additional fee/tax was implemented to address these issues. It was also mentioned that Council was being hard pressed about picking up/repairing roads that are not county roads. Therefore, there would not be anything new to do regarding roads and drainage issues, unless Council accepts new/additional roads to maintain.

Ms. Thomas mentioned the recent complaints Council received about road/drainage issues. Mr. Stewart clarified that Mr. Goldwire's complaint was about a State road and Mr. Samuel's complaint concerned a private development. The issues are valid but are not county issues, unless Council wants to take on and fix things that are not in Council's jurisdiction. Mr. Weathers suggested that council members receive a map showing county roads in each Council District. Mr. Stewart indicated that a list could be provided to Council.

Council briefly talked about not having the funds to make road repairs and not having input or control over CTC funds.

Recess. Council recessed at 1:31 p.m. and reconvened at 1:45 p.m.

Roads in Housing Development/Timberchase Subdivision. Mr. Coker suggested that the cost to repair the roads in Timberchase Subdivision be placed on Council's next agenda for consideration to use Contingency Funds. Mr. Flowers requested a completed plan as to what will be done, the time period for the work, the total cost, etc. Mr. Stewart pointed out that Council would be assigning Contingency Funds to repair the roads with the expectation that the project will move forward if the CTC or some other source assigns a certain amount of funds. The staff indicated that a quote had been received and the county funds would be contingent upon receiving funds from the Senator's source.

Courthouse Project. Mr. Stewart explained that the Courthouse Construction Advisory Committee met numerous times and was now at the point of asking Council how much money it would be willing to fund. He talked about security issues, facility issues, etc. Mr. Stewart explained that in some people's perspective, everything could be addressed by modifying the current courthouse building while others think that this would be a waste of money – there needs to be another building. However, both options are via based upon the amount of money Council wants to spend.

Mr. Kilgo talked about the history of the courthouse compared to today's use. He pointed out that the terms of criminal court and civil court have diminished considerably over the past 50 years. Therefore, there was not a need for a large courtroom for civil and criminal courts. Currently, the busiest and most dangerous court in the county is Family Court, then Magistrate and traffic courts which are currently held in Darlington and Hartsville. Mr. Kilgo mentioned that Probate Court was not that dangerous, but needed more space. He suggested the following: reduce the 5th Floor Courtroom by one half its size and restructure the back area into secure space for the judges and prisoners; move the Solicitor's Office from the 4th floor to the county owned building on the corner of Main Street and Fountain Street near Darlington Library; convert the Law Library on the 4th Floor to Family Court; move Probate Court from the 2nd Floor to the 4th Floor; move the Veterans Affairs Office from the 3rd Floor to the 1st Floor of the Mazingo Building where

Voter Registration currently stores voting machines; and consider building a storage/semi-office building for Election/Voter Registration next door to their current facility on Cashua Street to house the voting machines. He explained that bids were solicited and received for the proposed Elections/Voter Registration storage building and will be presented for Council's consideration at its next meeting.

Mr. Stewart responded that the funds to build the building for Elections/Voter Registration could be taken from the courthouse bond funds because this project would free up space in the courthouse.

Mr. Kilgo stated that the county would still have to find a way to provide secure parking for the jail and the judges. He felt that if his proposed changes are done, the county could keep the current courthouse building. Mr. Kilgo also suggested talking to the Senator about establishing and building a central magistrate court somewhere in the county. He emphasized that this was his personal opinion and not that of the Courthouse Construction Advisory Committee.

Council and the staff briefly talked about building a sally port or installing hidden garage type doors onto the current courthouse building/alcove for secure loading/unloading of prisoners which may create the need for an outside elevator shaft, additional employee(s) from the Sheriff's Office, and a means to transport the judges from a secure parking area to the courthouse.

Mr. Flowers said he would be willing to vote for \$14 million to \$20 million to renovate in and around the existing courthouse building to include moving the Solicitor's Office, etc. The \$14 million would be within the county's debt limit without going through other political processes.

Mr. Kilgo stated that the kiosk in the lobby could also be included in the proposed scheme and should include the Tax Assessor's Office along with the Treasurer and Auditor offices. He also mentioned that in the near future, child support payments will be made to Columbia as opposed to the Clerk of Court's Office.

Mr. Weathers clarified that the Courthouse Construction Advisory Committee was looking for some guidance from County Council in terms of money and expectations. Therefore, the staff could take the conversations from today and give it to the Courthouse Construction Advisory Committee as Council's parameters.

Mr. Stewart indicated that Council would need to vote on these parameters as a body. It was also suggested that Council include in the vote that the Committee will focus on the design for the courtrooms and security and leave the coordination of the other floors for the elected officials and County Administrator.

Mr. Brown suggested that Council receive feedback from the community on the courthouse project.

Mr. Stewart stated that he will draft something for Council's consideration regarding the repairs to the roads in Timberchase Subdivision, a plan for community meetings regarding the courthouse project, and the use of Contingency funds for someone to facilitate the community meetings.

Lamar Ballfield. Mr. Flowers mentioned the need for improvements at Lamar Ballfield which could be done immediately using Hospitality Tax revenue and Recreation Department funds. He suggested that someone present a design from scratch for Lamar Ballfield facility with costs and options.

Mr. Stewart indicated that this had been looked at and determined that it would be costly to move all the fields immediately. It was discussed that the lighting, parking lot, and a central concession stand be done and then plan to move the fields and fencing later.

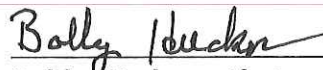
Closing Comments. Mr. Brown requested that a town hall approach is taken regarding the courthouse project and incorporate the Hospitality Tax questions/answers for feedback. Mr. Stewart suggested that a community meeting for the courthouse project be held in Darlington, Hartsville, Society Hill area, and Lamar area. Mr. Flowers suggested that use of the Music Hall if a fifth community meeting is needed since this facility is located in the middle of the county. It was also suggested and Council members spoke in favor of a third party facilitator for five community meetings.

There being no further comments, the worksession was adjourned at 2:21 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,



J. Janet Bishop
Clerk to Council



Bobby Hudson, Chairman
Darlington County Council

Approved at meeting of September 19, 2017.