

BUDGET WORKSESSION  
DARLINGTON COUNTY COUNCIL  
DARLINGTON, SC

APRIL 12, 2010

A Budget Worksession of the County Council of Darlington County was held this 12<sup>th</sup> day of April 2010, at 6:30 p.m., at the Darlington County Courthouse Annex/EMS Building, 1625 Harry Byrd Highway, Darlington, South Carolina.

NOTICE OF MEETING

In compliance with the Freedom of Information Act, a copy of the agenda, giving the date, time, and place of the meeting was mailed in advance to the local newspapers (the News and Press, the Messenger, and the Morning News), persons requesting notification, and posted on the bulletin board at the entrance to the County Administrator's Office.

COUNCIL MEMBERS PRESENT

Chairman Billy Baldwin, Vice Chairman Anne C. Warr, Chaplain Dannie Douglas, Jr., Mr. Wesley Blackwell, Mr. Marvin Le Flowers, Mrs. Wilhelmina P. Johnson, Ms. Mozella "Pennie" Nicholson, and Mr. Alex "Buz" Shaw.

ALSO PRESENT

County Administrator Phyllis Griffiths, Clerk to Council J. JaNet Bishop, Sheriff Wayne Byrd, Chief Deputy Sheriff Jerry Thompson, Sheriff Deputy Ralph Brown, Captain Andy Locklair, Codes Enforcement Director Randy Evans, and Mr. and Mrs. Blake Bondy.

REPORTERS PRESENT

Ms. Lisa Chalain-Rock of the Messenger

Chairman Baldwin called the worksession to order. County Administrator Phyllis Griffiths reported that she had received a call from Senator Malloy on today. He indicated that he would like to address Council with budget concerns before Council's approval of third reading of the budgets. Mrs. Griffiths did not know which Council meeting the Senator plans to attend. Chairman Baldwin indicated that he also received a telephone call from Senator Malloy who was unable to attend the worksession.

Mr. Shaw commended the staff for developing a balance budget. He said the citizens should be thought of first when considering the budget; the people paying the bill need protection, but they could pick up their own garbage; and it was wonderful to have good libraries, but Darlington County was not big enough to have libraries all over the county especially when there exists a college library and major high school libraries. Mr. Shaw indicated that he had reported a problem to Codes Enforcement Director Randy Evans. However, the Sheriff may need to take care of it. Mr. Shaw said Council needed to place the money where the county needs it the most.

Mrs. Johnson stated that from reviewing the county's audit, the county appears to be in good financial standing. She mentioned that the past six budgets were management

budgets with minor changes. Mrs. Johnson commended Mrs. Griffiths' efforts to balance the budget with an incentive for the employees and confirmed that the statewide Case Management System (as presented by Judge Baxley and individuals from the South Carolina Judicial Department) was included in the proposed budget. However, she was concerned that Society Hill was not included in this plan. Mrs. Johnson stated that if the statewide Case Management System was going to be implemented in other municipalities in the county, it must be implemented in Society Hill, too.

Mr. Douglas asked about money being budgeted for a magistrate in Society Hill. Mrs. Griffiths stated that during last year, she informed Council that she had cut about \$12,000 from the budget in order to balance it. Base upon population, the county has the correct number of magistrates. She explained that one position was taken over by two part-time people.

Mr. Douglas questioned why Society Hill did not have a part-time magistrate. Mrs. Griffiths stated that the Senator appoints the magistrates. She explained that Judge James was the former magistrate in Society Hill until he was moved to Darlington as a full time magistrate when another magistrate retired. She could not speak as to why a magistrate had not been appointed for Society Hill. It was her understanding that most of the traffic tickets from that area were handled by Society Hill's Municipal Judge.

Mr. Douglas stated that there had always been a magistrate in Society Hill working at least one day per week until recently. Mrs. Griffiths said she did not know why a magistrate had not been appointed for Society Hill. Funding remained in the budget for about five years before it was taken out. She said the Senator would have to address this matter.

Mr. Douglas stated that the Magistrate in Lamar was part-time and worked out of Lamar Town Hall. He said this could happen in Society Hill, too. Mr. Douglas stated that if the Case Management System was going to be placed in one municipality, it should be placed in all of the municipalities. He clarified that another magistrate did not have to be appointed. One of the current magistrates could go to Society Hill one day per week or so many hours per month. Mrs. Griffiths stated that she would present Mr. Douglas' concern to the Senator. Chairman Baldwin suggested that Mrs. Griffiths talk with Mrs. Cely Ann Brigman, the Chief Magistrate.

Ms. Nicholson questioned the amount of state cuts and commended the Administrator for balancing the budget. She also asked about departments with fund balances at the end of the fiscal year. Mrs. Griffiths explained that monies that are not spent go back into the capital fund balance or the funds could be encumbered in a purchase order.

Mr. Blackwell asked about the estimated millage cap for previous years that were established by Bobby Bowers based mostly upon the student base in public schools. He requested that the Administrator challenge the numbers provided for Darlington County. Mr. Blackwell questioned and Mrs. Griffiths clarified the amounts of funds in the Economic Development budget and the Animal Shelter budget. Last year Council placed an additional \$25,000 in the Animal Shelter budget for a total of \$82,270. This year only \$57,270 was budgeted for the Animal Shelter because Council had voted give the Animal Shelter \$25,000

for one time, only. Therefore, the Animal Shelter's budget was reduced back to its original amount of \$57,270.

Mr. Blackwell questioned and Mrs. Griffiths explained the cost of insurance for retirees and the amount the county contributes toward retirees' insurance. Mr. Blackwell felt that if Medicare was a person's primary insurance, the county could obtain a supplement policy for retirees at a lower cost than the regular insurance. Mrs. Griffiths also explained that if a retiree carries a spouse on their insurance, their part would be at a higher cost.

Mrs. Warr reported on the returns of the 2010 census forms as of April 12<sup>th</sup> and the areas in the county that would qualify for CDBG grants.

Chairman Baldwin indicated that the proposed budget included funds for the statewide Case Management System and this could be placed on Council's May 3<sup>rd</sup> agenda for consideration. Mr. Flowers stated that since it was included in the proposed budget, Council did not have to vote on it separately. It would be approved with the budget. Mr. Douglas and Mrs. Johnson presented their concern about Society Hill not being included in the statewide Case Management Plan. Mrs. Griffiths stated that the magistrates offices would be covered 100 percent with state funds. The \$48,000 was for the remainder of the cost for courthouse offices that were not under the Magistrate. Therefore, the staff would need to contact the Judicial Department about adding and funding Society Hill. Mrs. Johnson wanted the disposition of a magistrate being in Society Hill and the case management system being implemented in Society Hill prior to second reading of the budget.

Mr. Blackwell reviewed the revenue received from cable franchise fees, building codes, and federal inmates. Mrs. Griffiths explained the process of how the staff monitors the level of revenue.

Mrs. Johnson questioned and Mrs. Griffiths compared the Sheriff's requests with her recommendations. She also reviewed the items included in the Sheriff's budget.

The worksession was adjourned at 8:35 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

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Mrs. J. JaNet Bishop, Clerk to Council

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Mr. Billy Baldwin, Chairman  
Darlington County Council

Approved at meeting of May 3, 2010.