

BUDGET WORKSESSION
DARLINGTON COUNTY COUNCIL
DARLINGTON, SC

May 15, 2014

A Budget Worksession of the County Council of Darlington County was held May 15, 2014, at 9 a.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 meeting notice, giving the date, time, and place of the meeting was mailed in advance to the local newspapers, persons requesting notification, and posted on the bulletin board at the entrance to the County Administrator's Office and the Courthouse Annex/EMS Building.

COUNCIL MEMBERS PRESENT

Chairman Wesley Blackwell, Vice Chairwoman Ms. Mozella "Pennie" Nicholson (*arrived at 9:22 a.m.*), Chaplain Dannie Douglas, Jr., Mr. Robbin Brock, Mr. Marvin Le Flowers, Mr. Bobby Hudson, Mrs. Wilhelmina P. Johnson, and Mr. Robert L. Kilgo, Jr. (*arrived at 9:13 a.m.*).

ALSO PRESENT

County Administrator Dale Surrett, Clerk to Council J. JaNet Bishop, Finance Director Perry Strickland, Accountant Phillip Aycock, Codes Enforcement Director Randy Evans, Recreation Director Ken McRae, Prison Farm Director Jonathan McFadden, Corrections Director Mitch Stanley, Sheriff Wayne Byrd, Elections/Voter Registration Director Hoyt Campbell, Historical Commission Director Doris Gandy, Planning Director Doug Reimold, Telecommunications Director David Sessoms, Tax Collector Mae Helen Burch, Fire Chief Kenny Stratton, Mrs. Kathy McDonald of the Humane Society, Mr. Sam Jackson of First Vehicle Services, and others.

REPORTERS PRESENT

Ms. Samantha Lyles of the News and Press.

Summary of Work Session

Chairman Blackwell called the worksession to order at 9:05 a.m.

County Administrator Dale Surrett pointed out that a keying error had occurred in the General Fund information that was provided to Council prior to the meeting. A handout was provided to Council members indicating the correct amount of expenditures and revenues for the General Fund Budget. Mr. Surrett also indicated that the budget presented for today was the same budget as the current year with adjustments for utilities and fuel and an increase in revenue from building permit fees. He reviewed the information that Council received, which included property tax estimations as requested by Councilwoman

Johnson; a history of the millage from 2003 to 2014; budget proposals/suggestions from Councilman Flowers, Councilman Blackwell, Councilwoman Johnson, and Councilman Kilgo; and suggestions from various departments about increasing revenue and/or decreasing expenditures.

~ Councilman Robert Kilgo arrived at 9:13 a.m. ~

Mr. Surrett briefly reviewed the suggestions/comments about possible savings and/or additional revenue as submitted by the various departments. He handed out additional information from the Sheriff's Department.

~ Councilwoman Mozella Nicholson arrived at 9:22 a.m. ~

Councilman Blackwell's Proposal

Mr. Kilgo indicated that Council needed to vote on the motion that was carried over from the last (May 8, 2014) budget worksession.

At the May 8, 2014 meeting, a motion was made by Mr. Kilgo and seconded by Mr. Flowers to reduce the budget by the items Chairman Blackwell had proposed, which would reduce the budget by \$1,063,000. Chairman Blackwell's proposal included a reduction for the Animal Shelter, Clemson Extension, the Historical Commission, EMS, the Sheriff's Department, and the Prison Farm.

Those voting in favor of the motion were Mr. Blackwell and Mr. Kilgo. Opposing were Mr. Brock, Mr. Hudson, Mr. Douglas, Ms. Nicholson, Mrs. Johnson, and Mr. Flowers.

The motion failed.

Capital Fund

MOTION was made by Mr. Flowers and seconded by Mr. Kilgo to use funds from the Capital Fund (\$1,377,715.68) to balance the budget with expenditures of \$25,948,370.34 and revenues of \$24,570,654.66.

Mr. Flowers discussed his proposal which would relocate the Prison Farm to the Detention Center, keep the nine deputies in the Sheriff's Department, place the ten inmates from the Prison Farm inside the Detention Center, move the staff from the Prison Farm to the Detention Center, switch inmate labor to paid labor within the Roads and Bridges budget and the landfill budget, and take the lease purchase payment from the Capital Fund account. However, this was not the motion for consideration.

Mr. Hudson talked about the lease purchase for the Fire District and the cost for dispatchers. The staff discussed the Fire District paying a proportional amount for dispatchers.

Mr. Kilgo stated that in five years, the county would not have a Fund Balance if Council continues to use it. He insisted that the county should balance the budget without using the Fund Balance.

Chairman Blackwell also expressed concerns about the county spending money it does not have. He said Council would have to cut people from the budget. The staff briefly talked about the amount of funds the county spends per month for payroll and accounts payable and the amount of money the county has in the Capital Fund account.

Those voting in favor of the motion were Mr. Hudson, Ms. Nicholson, and Mrs. Johnson. Opposing were Mr. Brock, Mr. Douglas, Mr. Blackwell, Mr. Flowers, and Kilgo. The motion failed.

Councilman Flowers' Proposal

MOTION was made by Mr. Brock and seconded by Mr. Flowers to approve the proposal submitted by Mr. Flowers.

Mr. Flowers' proposal involved shifting the Right-of-Way Agent from the Planning Department to Roads and Bridges, reducing funds for the Animal Shelter, deleting funds for Clemson Extension, shifting the GIS position from the Planning Department to E-911 Emergency Telephone Budget, Prison Farm closure/inmate swap, deleting funds in the General Fund for incentive pay; applying the CPI tax increase, and paying the General Fund lease purchase payment from the Capital Fund.

Ms. Nicholson clarified that Mr. Flowers' proposal included the elimination of jobs. Mr. Flowers confirmed that there was no elimination of jobs in his proposal. He was recommending that the Prison Farm staff be shifted to the Detention Center because ten people are needed at the Detention Center to meet the staffing requirement for PREA (Prison Rape Elimination Act).

Ms. Nicholson pointed out that, by statute, Darlington County Prison Farm cannot be under the Sheriff's Department. She explained that many years ago, Darlington County Prison Farm was separated from the Sheriff's Department due to illegal activities occurring. The statute was still in place.

Mr. Surrett added that the Prison Farm would cease to exist and the current positions moved to the Detention Center. The functions of the Prison Farm would be terminated. Ms. Nicholson said Mr. Flowers' proposal was a "backdoor" way to get around the statute.

Those voting in favor of the motion were Mr. Brock, Mr. Blackwell, Mr. Flowers, and Mr. Kilgo. Opposing were Mr. Hudson, Mr. Douglas, Ms. Nicholson, and Mrs. Johnson.

Due to a tie vote, the motion failed.

Recess

Council recessed at 10:26 a.m. and reconvened at 10:44 a.m.

Councilman Douglas' Proposal

MOTION was made by Mr. Douglas and seconded by Mr. Kilgo to cut five positions from the Sheriff's Department, two positions from EMS, and four positions from the Prison Farm. This would create an estimated savings of about \$450,000.

Mr. Hudson and Mr. Brock expressed concerns about reducing EMS and the Sheriff's Department. Mr. Surrentt talked about the required number of employees to maintain the Prison Farm.

Those voting in favor of the motion were Mr. Douglas, Mr. Blackwell, and Mr. Kilgo. Opposing were Mr. Brock, Mr. Hudson, Ms. Nicholson, Mrs. Johnson, and Mr. Flowers.

The motion failed.

Reduction In Overtime, Sheriff's Department

MOTION was made by Mr. Kilgo and seconded by Mr. Douglas to remove overtime (\$472,500) from the Sheriff's Department budget (\$252,500 from Sheriff's Department and \$220,000 from Adult Pretrial).

Mr. Kilgo and the staff talked about employees receiving compensatory time instead of overtime. Mr. Flowers suggested doing away with positions instead of the cutting overtime. Mr. Brock presented concerns about how cutting overtime would affect the Sheriff's Department.

Mr. Flowers stated that he would recuse himself from the vote since he works for the racetrack, which would be adversely affected by the overtime in the Sheriff's Department Budget.

Those voting in favor of the motion were Mr. Douglas, Ms. Nicholson, Mr. Blackwell, and Mr. Kilgo. Opposing were Mr. Brock, Mr. Hudson, and Mrs. Johnson. Mr. Flowers abstained.

The motion carried.

Reduction In Overtime, Prison Farm

MOTION was made by Mr. Kilgo and seconded by Mr. Douglas to cut overtime from the Prison Farm Budget (\$34,828).

Those voting in favor of the motion were Mr. Douglas, Ms. Nicholson, Mr. Blackwell, Mr. Flowers, and Mr. Kilgo. Opposing were Mr. Brock, Mr. Hudson, and Mrs. Johnson.

The motion carried.

Right-O-Way Agent And GIS Positions Moved From General Fund

MOTION was made by Mr. Flowers and seconded by Mr. Kilgo to move/transfer the Right-of-Way Agent position (\$51,009) from the General Fund (Planning Department) to Roads and Bridges and the GIS position (\$44,119) from the General Fund (Planning Department) to E-911 Central Communications.

Mr. Surrett explained that the job functions and location for these individuals would not change. The only change would be that their salary would come from a different account.

Those voting in favor of the motion were Mr. Brock, Mr. Hudson, Mr. Douglas, Ms. Nicholson, Mr. Blackwell, Mr. Flowers, and Mr. Kilgo. Mrs. Johnson opposed.

The motion carried.

Incentive Pay

MOTION was made by Mr. Flowers and seconded by Mr. Douglas to cut the General Fund incentive pay (\$250,000).

Mr. Kilgo pointed out that the motion would only affect the employees in the General Fund. This would not include the employees in Roads and Bridges, the Fire District, Environmental Services, the Library, and Emergency Telephone.

Mr. Douglas withdrew his second so that the motion could be amended to include all employees.

MOTION was made by Mr. Flowers and seconded by Mr. Kilgo to remove all incentive pay from all budgets.

Those voting in favor of the motion were Mr. Douglas, Ms. Nicholson, Mr. Blackwell, Mr. Flowers, and Mr. Kilgo. Opposing were Mr. Brock, Mr. Hudson, and Mrs. Johnson.

The motion carried.

Prison Farm

Mr. Flowers indicated that the employees required for PREA (Prison Rape Elimination Act) compliance had not been added into the budget. Mr. Surrett explained that if the jail is not PREA compliance, federal inmates could not be housed there. Therefore, the county would lose federal funds. He also stated that the county would get written up during the annual evaluations by the Department of Corrections, which would have no immediate monetary impact.

Mr. Flowers stated that the county could become almost within PREA compliance by closing the Prison Farm and transferring the employees into the Detention Center.

MOTION was made by Mr. Kilgo and seconded by Mr. Flowers to close the Prison Farm and transfer the employees into the Detention Center.

Those voting in favor of the motion were Mr. Brock, Mr. Blackwell, Mr. Flowers, and Mr. Kilgo. Opposing were Mr. Hudson, Mr. Douglas, Ms. Nicholson, and Mrs. Johnson.

Due to a tie vote, the motion failed.

MOTION was made by Mr. Flowers and seconded by Mr. Kilgo to reduce the Prison Farm by four employees.

Council and the staff briefly discussed how this would affect the operations of the Prison Farm. Mr. Surrett pointed out that entities using inmate labor would have to pick up the inmates from the Prison Farm.

Those voting in favor of the motion were Mr. Brock, Mr. Douglas, Mr. Blackwell, Mr. Flowers, and Mr. Kilgo. Opposing were Mr. Hudson, Ms. Nicholson, and Mrs. Johnson.
The motion carried.

Mr. Douglas asked whether the four positions eliminated at the Prison Farm would go to the Detention Center. Council clarified that the motion was to eliminate the four positions.

Capital Lease Purchase Payment

MOTION was made by Mr. Flowers and seconded by Mr. Hudson to pay the capital lease purchase payment (\$459,010) from the Capital Fund Account instead of from the General Fund operating funds.

Those voting in favor of the motion were Mr. Brock, Mr. Hudson, Mr. Douglas, Ms. Nicholson, Mr. Blackwell, Mr. Flowers, and Mr. Kilgo. Mrs. Johnson opposed.
The motion carried.

CPI Tax Increase

MOTION was made by Mr. Flowers and seconded by Mr. Kilgo to take the CPI tax increase.

Mr. Surrett explained that the county could increase the millage under the allowable CPI for the General Fund by .9 mills, which would generate an estimated \$278,785.55.

Those voting in favor of the motion were Mr. Brock, Mr. Hudson, Mr. Douglas, Ms. Nicholson, Mr. Blackwell, Mr. Flowers, and Mr. Kilgo. Mrs. Johnson opposed.
The motion carried.

Prison Farm

Mr. Flowers explained that Mr. Douglas' intent of the motion was to move the four employees from the Prison Farm into the five positions within the Jail/Detention Center and not to cut them. He questioned what needed to be done to make the intent of the motion actuality with Corrections Director Mitch Stanley.

Mr. Surrett indicated that since Mr. Stanley works for an elected official, all that Council could do is recommend that Mr. Stanley take the employees. He indicated that the certification for the officers were the same.

Ms. Nicholson clarified that Council could dictate to Corrections Director Mitch Stanley although he works for an elected official. She requested a legal opinion from Attorney Jim Cox regarding this matter. She said the decision governing county employees begins with County Council.

Sheriff Byrd indicated that Corrections Director Mitch Stanley was willing to take on the employees from the Prison Farm. However, he would wait for a decision from the County Attorney as to who the Sheriff can and cannot hire. He confirmed that if Council cuts the positions at the Prison Farm, the employees would be accepted at the jail.

Finance Director Perry Strickland recapped the changes made during this worksession which included, cutting overtime from the Sheriff's Department (\$250,000), cutting overtime from the Detention Center (\$220,000), cutting overtime from the Prison Farm (\$34,828), transferring the salary for the Right-of-Way Agent from Planning Department to Roads and Bridges Department to be funded by the road maintenance fee, moving the GIS position from Planning into E-911 Emergency Telephone budget, cutting all incentive pay from all funds, cutting four positions from the Prison Farm, taking the lease purchase payment from the Capital Fund Balance (\$459,010) instead of from the General Fund, and increasing the CPI for the General Fund (\$278,785).

Mr. Brock requested information from Sheriff Byrd, Corrections Director Mitch Stanley, and Prison Farm Director Jonathan McFadden as to what would happen in May of next year when they run out of overtime.

Budget Worksession

It was the consensus of Council to schedule the next budget worksession for Thursday, May 22, 2014, at 5 p.m.

Adjournment

MOTION was made by Mr. Douglas and seconded by Mr. Hudson to adjourn the worksession. There being no further discussion, the worksession was adjourned at 11:58 a.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Mrs. J. JaNet Bishop
Clerk to Council

Mr. Wesley Blackwell, Chairman
Darlington County Council

Approved at meeting of June 2, 2014.