

REGULAR MEETING
DARLINGTON COUNTY COUNCIL
DARLINGTON, SC

June 3, 2024

A Regular Meeting of the County Council of Darlington County was held this 3rd day of June 2024, at 6 p.m., at the Courthouse Annex/EMS Building, 1625 Harry Byrd Highway (Highway 151), Darlington, 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

Chairman Bobby Hudson, Vice-Chairman Marvin Le Flowers, Chaplain Dannie Douglas, Jr., Mr. David Coker, Mr. Albert Davis, III, Mrs. Angie Stone Godbold, and Ms. Joyce W. Thomas.

COUNCIL MEMBERS ABSENT

Mr. Michael Kirk Askins.

ALSO PRESENT

County Administrator Marion Charles Stewart, III, County Attorney James H. Lucas, Attorney Adam Gainey, Clerk to Council J. JaNet Bishop, Central Communications Director Michelle Hall, Emergency Management Director Molly Odom, Emergency Services Director Kenny Bowen, Finance Director Sherman Dibble, Fire District Chief Ricky Flowers, Sheriff James Hudson, and others.

REPORTERS PRESENT

News and Press.

Call To Order / Invocation / Pledge Of Allegiance

Chairman Hudson called the meeting to order at 6 p.m. Mr. Douglas presented the invocation and Mr. Flowers led the Pledge of Allegiance.

Citizens' Comments

Mr. Billy White expressed concerns about people tethering animals and leaving them to choke with no food, water, or shelter. He suggested that Darlington County should follow Florence and Lee Counties' tethering laws. Mr. White asked Council to enact an ordinance to make it illegal for animals in Darlington County to be tethered.

Ms. Lucinda Hubbs talked about the proposed animal welfare ordinance that did not receive second reading. She hopes that County Council and the staff will work collaboratively with Humane Society representatives and others to present an ordinance at a later date.

Mr. Dylan Meggs talked about a recent incident wherein a dog was tied up near Highway 151 in Darlington County and rescued by the Humane Society. He wants to work with county officials to find a solution that everyone can agree on to better animals in Darlington County.

Mr. Brandy Hill reported that on May 7th, his dog was picked up by an officer, and on May 8th, the Animal Shelter did not know the dog was there. Mr. Hill complained that the officer did not contact him as required by law. He said information on the county's website states that the county follows State laws and \$50 is the most that can be charged for first offense. However, the officer knew he was the owner and indicated that he would not contact him and threatened him with a \$150 fine for having a dog at large. Mr. Hill did not know what the extra \$100 was for. However, he will take this matter to Magistrate Court. Mr. Hill also reported that the officer mentioned that there had been a problem with his goats and livestock getting out, but he has since gotten this under control. He also talked about livestock and dogs being different according to the Code of Laws, the officer not trying to contact him, and the officer having a temper during the incident. Mr. Hill said he did not know the officer's name but stated that there were only two officers, and this officer was the bigger of the two.

Ms. Connie Ford read a story about a day in the life of a chained dog.

Amendment To The Agenda To Bring Forth Resolution No. 782, Proclaiming June 2024 As The Joy Of Fatherhood Month

MOTION made by Mr. Flowers and seconded by Mr. Davis to amend the agenda to bring forth Resolution No. 782 proclaiming June 2024 as The Joy of Fatherhood Month.

The motion carried unanimously.

Resolutions

Resolution No. 782, Proclaiming June 2024 As The Joy Of Fatherhood Month

After Mr. Flowers read the resolution, a **MOTION** was made by Mr. Douglas and seconded by Mr. Davis to approve Resolution No. 782 proclaiming the month of June 2024 as The Joy of Fatherhood Month.

The motion carried unanimously.

Mr. Davis presented the Resolution to Mr. Anthony Green, Intervention Specialist, and other representatives of Man 2 Man.

Personal Appearance - Mr. Wilbur Johnson, III, Pee Dee Regional Transportation Authority Outreach Coordinator/Executive Assistant - PDRTA Service Update

Mr. Wilbur Johnson recognized PDRTA's Executive Director, Mr. Don Strickland, who was present at the meeting. Each Council member received a handout regarding PDRTA's service update.

Mr. Johnson reported that PDRTA was celebrating its 50th anniversary. Although PDRTA has retained the same mission for 50 years, they are fostering new ideas and are more innovative than in 1974. He reported that PDRA currently serves six counties in the Pee Dee Region; is the largest RTA in South Carolina; and is the third largest in the country. He talked about PDRTA's new services; current services in Darlington County; the 2024 transit study which will focus on system redesign, transit development/coordination, workforce transportation, demand response, and micro transit; and their regional coordination plan. It was noted that 52 percent of PDRTA's fixed route ridership uses public transportation to commute to and from work. Therefore, PDRTA has joined with industries in the area to provide dedicated workforce routes for their employees as well as partnering with Darlington County School District's "Key to Career" program to provide transportation for student internships. PDRTA will pick up the students from school and take them to work to places such as Sonoco, fire departments, government services, health care, etc. PDRTA has also received approval to talk with other school districts about this innovative initiative. PDRTA, with assistance from the Byerly Foundation and the Darlington County School District, has come up with a \$300,000 grant to place twelve bus shelters in Hartsville to be utilized by students and PDRTA riders. The bus shelters will be equipped with Wi-Fi, charging stations, etc. Mr. Johnson also provided his contact information for feedback, questions, or any additional information.

Personal Appearance - Ms. Kristi Burch, Pee Dee Area and Grand Strand Outreach Director, SC Women In Leadership (WIL) - Applying To Serve On Boards And Commissions

Ms. Kristi Burch reported that Women in Leadership is a multi-partisan network of women whose mission is to network, inspire, and involve women to become engaged in civic leadership. This organization does not endorse candidates nor take a stand on issues. They believe in identifying common goals and working across the aisle on key issues to improve communities. Their efforts focus on fair voting, filling the pipeline with women in civic leadership, and reducing polarization. Ms. Burch reported that 130 women in Darlington County are a part of this overall network. The organization's "MORE in 2024" program focuses on recruiting women from across the State to run for elected office and to apply to serve on public boards and commissions. To increase the number of women serving on public boards and commissions, WIL has initiated and maintains a comprehensive database of open positions on public appointed boards and commissions across the state and a self-paced training course to enable growth and confidence.

Ms. Burch commended the efforts of Darlington County's Clerk to Council in organizing and maintaining the county's boards and commissions on the county website. A handout was provided showing how openings on Darlington County's boards and commissions are listed on WIL's website and how such information is maintained and updated through MatchBoard. MatchBoard is a digital proprietary software application platform through which cities and counties can manage their boards and commissions. This

platform makes the process of informing and recruiting qualified citizens from all backgrounds to serve in appointed positions more publicly transparent and administratively efficient. MatchBoard is used by 14 counties and cities across South Carolina and reduces the time required for Clerks to manage data and makes it easier for citizens to find and apply for vacancies. Should the county choose to use the MatchBoard software, a demonstration can be scheduled via Zoom. Information about the curriculum and MatchBoard was included in a handout given to County Council members.

Consent Agenda (Receive As Information)

Included in the Consent Agenda were the following:

- 5.A. Beaver Management Program Report, April 2024
- 5.B. E-911 Call Statistics, April 2024
- 5.C. Parks, Recreation, And Tourism Activities, June
- 5.D. Fire District Call Volume Report, May
- 5.E. Financial Update Through April 2024
- 5.F. Library Board Meeting Minutes, January 17, 2024
- 5.G. Fire Board Meeting Minutes, February & April
- 5.H. Darlington County Humane Society Meeting Minutes, April & March
- 5.I. Economic Development Partnership Board Meeting Minutes, March 20, 2024
- 5.J. Planning Commission Meeting Minutes, March 20,
- 5.K. Pee Dee Regional Council Of Governments COGNITIVE Connections Newsletter, May 2024
- 5.L. Pee Dee Workforce Development Minutes, May 7,
- 5.M. Darlington County Alcohol And Drug Advisory Board Meeting Minutes, May 23, 2024

MOTION made by Mr. Flowers and seconded by Mr. Davis to receive the Consent Agenda items as information.

The motion carried unanimously.

Approval Of Minutes – Minutes Of Joint Meeting Of Darlington County's Municipal Council, County Council, Board of Education, And Legislative Delegation, April 29, 2024

MOTION made by Mr. Douglas and seconded by Mr. Davis to approve the minutes of the Joint Meeting held on April 29, 2024.

The motion carried unanimously.

Approval Of Minutes – Minutes Of Public Hearing & Regular Meeting, May 6, 2024

MOTION made by Mr. Douglas and seconded by Mr. Davis to approve the minutes of the Public Hearing and Regular Meeting held on May 6, 2024.

The motion carried unanimously.

Ordinances

Ordinance No. 24-09, An Ordinance To Make Appropriations For Ordinary County Purposes For Darlington County For The Fiscal Year Beginning July 1, 2024, And Ending June 30, 2025; To Provide For The Expenditures Thereof; And To Provide For Revenues For The Payment Thereof, As Amended - THIRD READING

MOTION made by Mr. Flowers and seconded by Mr. Davis to approve third reading of Ordinance No. 24-09.

The motion carried unanimously.

Ordinance No. 24-10, An Ordinance To Designate That Agency In The County For Alcohol And Drug Abuse Planning For Programs And To Make Appropriations Pursuant To Sections 6-27-40(B) And 12-33-245(B) And (C) Of The 1976 Code Of Laws Of South Carolina, As Amended, For Darlington County For The Fiscal Year Beginning July 1, 2024, And Ending June 30, 2025 - THIRD READING

MOTION made by Mr. Flowers and seconded by Mr. Douglas to approve third reading of Ordinance No. 24-10.

The motion carried unanimously.

Ordinance No. 24-08, An Ordinance To Amend Darlington County Code Of Ordinances, Chapter 2 (Administration), Article IV. (Boards, Commissions, And Committees), Section 2-201 (Membership) To Clarify The Definition Of Membership For Appointments By County Council To A Board, Commission, Or Committee Enumerated In Section 2-204; And Division 5 (Economic Development Partnership Board) To Restructure The Economic Development Partnership Board; And Establish The Effective Date Of This Ordinance - SECOND READING - CARRY OVER REQUESTED {page 108}

MOTION made by Mr. Douglas and seconded by Mrs. Godbold to carry over second reading of Ordinance No. 24-08.

The motion carried unanimously.

Ordinance No. 24-11, An Ordinance Authorizing Pursuant To Title 12, Chapter 44 Of The Code Of Laws Of South Carolina 1976, As Amended, The Execution And Delivery Of A Fee-In-Lieu Of Ad Valorem Taxes Agreement, By And Between Darlington County, South Carolina And A Project Known To The County As Project Scout, As Sponsor, And One Or More Sponsor Affiliates To Provide For A Fee-In-Lieu Of Ad Valorem Taxes Incentive And Certain Special Source Revenue Credits For The Benefit Of A Project In The County; And Other Related Matters - SECOND READING

MOTION made by Mr. Flowers and seconded by Mr. Douglas to approve second reading of Ordinance No. 24-11.

The motion carried unanimously.

Ordinance No. 24-12, An Ordinance Authorizing The Enlargement Of The Joint County Industrial Park Between Darlington County, South Carolina And Florence County, South Carolina; And Other Matters Related Thereto. (Project Scout) - SECOND READING

MOTION made by Mr. Flowers and seconded by Mr. Douglas to approve second reading of Ordinance No. 24-12.

The motion carried unanimously.

Committee Reports

There were no Committee Reports.

Other Items

Appointments To Boards/Commissions/Committees

Chairman Hudson (Council District 1). Chairman Hudson nominated Mr. Hoyt Campbell for appointment to the Board of Assessment Appeals. **MOTION** made by Mr. Douglas and seconded by Mr. Coker to appoint Mr. Hoyt Campbell to the Board of Assessment Appeals.

The motion carried unanimously. Mr. Campbell will replace Mr. Sean Austin for a term to commence July 1, 2024, and expire June 30, 2028.

Chairman Hudson nominated Ms. Ann Weaver for reappointment to the Recreation Commission. **MOTION** made by Mr. Douglas and seconded by Mr. Coker to reappoint Ms. Ann Weaver to the Recreation Commission.

The motion carried unanimously. Ms. Weaver will serve a second term to commence July 1, 2024, and expire June 30, 2028.

Mrs. Godbold (Council District 2). **MOTION** made by Mrs. Godbold and seconded by Mr. Coker to appoint Dr. John Atkins, III to the Historical Commission to replace Ms. Sarah Fallaw.

The motion carried unanimously. Dr. Askins will serve a term to commence July 1, 2024, and expire June 30, 2028.

Mr. Flowers (Council District 5). **MOTION** made by Mr. Flowers and seconded by Mr. Coker to reappoint Mr. Troy Abraham to the Airport Commission, Mr. Gary Van Coe to the Construction Board of Adjustment & Appeals, and Mrs. JoAnn Lee to the Library Board.

The motion carried unanimously. Mr. Troy Abraham will serve a second term on the Airport Commission, Mr. Gary Van Coe will serve a full term on the Construction Board of Adjustment & Appeals Board, and Ms. JoAnn Kelley Lee will serve a second term on the Library Board. Their term will commence on July 1, 2024, and expire on June 30, 2028.

Mr. Flowers carried over his appointment to the Board of Assessment Appeals.

Mr. Coker (Council District 8). **MOTION** made by Mr. Coker and seconded by Mr. Davis to reappoint Mr. Bobby Dempsy to the Airport Commission.

The motion carried unanimously. Mr. Dempsy will serve a fourth term to commence July 1, 2024, and expire June 30, 2028.

Mr. Coker carried over his appointment to the Board of Assessment Appeals and the Construction Board of Adjustment & Appeals.

Mr. Douglas carried over his appointment to the Construction Board of Adjustment & Appeals and the Planning Commission.

Ms. Thomas carried over her appointment to the Board of Assessment Appeals and the Planning Commission.

Mr. Askin's appointment to the Board of Assessment Appeals was carried over.

Pee Dee Local Workforce Area SC Works System Memorandum Of Understanding

MOTION made by Mr. Flowers and seconded by Mr. Coker to authorize the Chairman to sign the Memorandum of Understanding for Pee Dee Local Workforce Area SC Work System.

The motion carried unanimously.

Longevity Incentive Pay Plan

MOTION made by Mr. Flowers and seconded by Mr. Douglas to approve the Longevity Incentive Pay Plan.

Mr. Davis requested clarification as to whether that longevity incentive pay was for 25+ years of service.

Mr. Stewart explained that County Council would be replacing the old scale for receiving an incentive at 15, 20, and 25 years of service to receiving an incentive at 5, 10, 15, 20, and 25 years of service. Previously, there were only three incentive markers for longevity. Now there will be five incentive markers for longevity.

Ms. Thomas stated that the numbers were small. She asked whether Council could have a special session to discuss this matter. She did not understand the proposal.

Mr. Stewart explained that this was a follow-up regarding the amendments made to the budget at the last council meeting wherein funds were included for the proposed Longevity Pay Incentives. This action would approve changing the Longevity Incentive Pay Plan in the policy manual.

Mrs. Godbold questioned whether the incentive pay was being replaced with a percentage.

Mr. Stewart explained that Council was replacing the information listed on page 253 of the agenda package, which lists \$500 for 15 years of service, \$750 for 20 years of service, and \$1,000 for 25 years of service, with the new policy wherein employees would receive 2% for 5 years of service, 3% for 10 years of service, 4% for 15 years of service, 5% for 20 years of service, and 6% for 25 years of service. He also pointed out that when Council accepted the salary study with the "Bring To Minimum," it did not include a longevity differential. Therefore, everyone at a service increment in this budget year (\$160,000 worth of cost) will receive a percentage raise in addition to the three percent across-the-board raise. Employees with 25-plus years will receive a 9% raise this time. Then 18 months from now, when an employee reaches the 25-year mark, he/she will receive an automatic 6% raise for longevity only. Mr. Stewart also pointed out that longevity does not increase the base pay for positions. For example, when an employee reaches 25 years of service, he/she will

receive a 6% pay increase. However, when that employee leaves employment with the county, the 6% pay will disappear from the budget and the pay for that position will return to the starting salary. Mr. Stewart also mentioned that when the "Bring to Minimum" pay was approved, there may have been new employees coming in making the same amount as an employee who had been doing the same job for 10 to 15 years. Therefore, this policy adds the longevity element that the county did not include during the last budget because of the expense for it. He also stated that Council could amend this policy at any time. However, this was the policy amendment to go with the budget amendment that was made at the last Council meeting.

The motion carried with Ms. Thomas opposing.

Animal Shelter Contract With Darlington County Humane Society

MOTION made by Mr. Flowers and seconded by Mr. Davis to approve the Animal Shelter Contract with Darlington County Humane Society.

Mrs. Godbold asked whether the statement in Section 2.1.1, "The County will be responsible for the structural and mechanical integrity of the facilities..." referenced the county building located at 1705 Adoption Way in Darlington.

Mr. Stewart confirmed that this was referencing the county facility located on Adoption Way in Darlington.

Mrs. Godbold also asked whether the county's payment for utility expenses was in addition to the amount in the budget (Section 2.3.2).

Mr. Stewart confirmed that this will operate the same way until the Humane Society is in its new facility. The county will not pay the light bill for the new facility. The budgeted funds will just be sent to them.

The motion carried unanimously.

Administrative Update

Solar Facilities. Mr. Stewart provided location maps of solar facilities in the county as requested. The first map showed parcels where Council has approved FILOT (Fee In Lieu Of Tax) Agreements for solar farms, but no building permits have been pulled (nothing has been built on these parcels); the second map showed parcels where solar facilities have been permitted by the Codes Department and are operational or the facilities have a permit to move land to begin clearing; the third map showed solar facilities that have been permitted in Darlington area; the fourth map showed solar facilities that have been permitted in Hartsville area; and the fifth map showed solar facilities that have been permitted in Society Hill area.

Mr. Stewart pointed out that since Council is in the process of approving Project Scout, it was not listed on the maps. However, this project would be located on the first map (Solar Facilities With FILOT With No Building Permits) under the label near Middleton Solar. This information will be posted on the county website.

Mr. Flowers requested the economic impact numbers for the solar farms that are in place now.

Mr. Stewart will analyze what is operating versus what Council has approved a FILOT Agreement for. He also explained that although Council has offered a FILOT arrangement, the organizations must seek approval from Duke Energy to get on their grid. Therefore, Council may not see all of the solar facilities come to fruition. However, if a company does not get a FILOT Agreement, they will not be able to make a proposal to Duke Energy to be on their grid.

Mr. Flowers clarified that he would like to know the impact of the operational facilities. He also requested the actual amount of revenue going to the landowners for those sites.

Mr. Stewart explained that the staff would not be privy to the amount of rent paid to landowners. However, he will get an estimate based on what is reported to the county. He will report what the properties were taxed at, what tax dollars were generated, and what tax dollars are generated now.

Courthouse Construction Update. Mr. Stewart reported that work was being finalized on the columns and other minor things along with waiting to receive a part for the detention elevator. In working with the builder, the Clerk of Court is planning to move into the new courthouse on July 1st and have the first term of court on July 8th. Everything may not be completed by then but will be far enough along to operate/use the facility. A dedication is being planned for this facility.

Stormwater Drainage Project – South Carolina Office of Resilience (SCOR). Mr. Stewart reported that from actions of Darlington County dating back to 2021 when County Council approved the stormwater study in the county, County Planning began working with the South Carolina Office of Resilience to conduct a stormwater study throughout 2022. Projects were then scored and selected to move forward for engineering plans during late 2022 and early 2023. In May 2023, the county signed and submitted four projects that SCOR was willing to accept for infrastructure funding. They awarded one of the four projects (an \$8.2 million project) in the Chestnut Street area in Darlington (Ms. Thomas Council District) to help remediate stormwater issues. It will be from 45 to 60 days before the county receives the details of the award and project area.

Mr. Davis asked whether the funds awarded by SCOR for the Chestnut Street area were only for that area. He had received phone calls about his area (Blanding Drive/Russell Road area).

Mr. Stewart clarified that the funds would only be for the Chestnut Street area in Darlington. The project in Mr. Davis' area (Blanding Drive/Russell Road area) did not receive approval. It was an engineered project but did not receive approval for the infrastructure construction grant. The project for Blanding Drive in Hartsville, Moses Drive outside the City of Darlington, and Sandpit Road area in Pine Ridge will be submitted for other federal grant opportunities.

Collaboration With Darlington County Humane Society. Mr. Stewart reported that Dr. Joshua Witten appeared at the last Council meeting and the staff will be meeting with him on

Thursday, June 6th, at 6 p.m. to begin the review/discussion of an animal control ordinance and where to go from here.

Requests / Comments - Members Of Council

Mr. Davis thanked the staff and everyone for attending the meeting. He asked everyone to be safe and take care of their neighbors.

Ms. Thomas thanked the staff for their work on the stormwater project in her area that received funding. She wanted to let people know that it takes longer than a couple of years to get things done and this was only her second term. She also thanked PDRTA's representatives for presenting the update.

Mrs. Godbold thanked the people for coming to talk about animal welfare and for being supportive and encouraging regarding this matter. She also thanked the other presenters at the meeting tonight.

Chairman Hudson thanked everyone for their work.

Ms. Thomas showed and commented on her picture in the most recent South Carolina Association of Counties' County Focus Magazine.

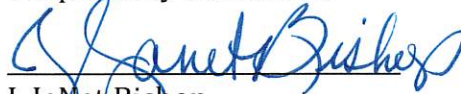
Chairman Hudson asked whether the stormwater grant for the Chestnut Street area is at no cost to the county.

Mr. Stewart confirmed that the grant requires no cost sharing. It is a 100% funded construction grant.

Adjournment

MOTION made by Chairman Hudson and seconded by Mr. Davis to adjourn the meeting. There being no further comments, the meeting was adjourned at 6:55 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,



J. Janet Bishop
Clerk to Council



Bobby Hudson, Chairman
Darlington County Council

Approved at meeting of July 1, 2024.