

JOINT MEETING OF DARLINGTON COUNTY'S
MUNICIPAL COUNCILS, COUNTY COUNCIL,
BOARD OF EDUCATION, & LEGISLATIVE DELEGATION
DARLINGTON, SOUTH CAROLINA

September 30, 2024

The Town of Society Hill hosted a joint meeting of Darlington County's Municipal Councils, County Council, Board of Education, and Legislative Delegation on September 30, 2024, at 6 p.m., at Society Hill Neighborhood Center, 223 Hall Street, Society Hill, South Carolina, to share information regarding matters of interest/concern to the units of government within Darlington County.

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 posted on the county's website and in the County Administrator's Office located in Darlington County Government Building and emailed to Darlington County's Municipal Clerks, Darlington County School District Superintendent Office, Darlington County Legislative Delegation, Darlington County Council, and the local newspapers.

COUNTY COUNCIL MEMBERS PRESENT

Vice Chairman Marvin Le Flowers, Chaplain Dannie Douglas, Jr., and Mrs. Angie Stone Godbold.

COUNTY COUNCIL MEMBERS ABSENT

Chairman Bobby Hudson, Mr. Michael Kirk Askins, Mr. David Coker, Mr. Albert Davis, III, and Ms. Joyce W. Thomas.

ALSO PRESENT

Darlington County Administrator Marion Stewart, III, Darlington County Clerk to Council J. JaNet Bishop; Society Hill Mayor Dwayne Duke; Society Hill Council Member Denise Douglas; Society Hill Clerk Brenda Nettles; Society Hill Staff Eugenia Peterson; Society Hill Police Chief Mark Campbell; Lamar Council Members Mary Ann Mack and Tyler Cook; City of Darlington Council Members Angela McRavin, Shelia Baccus, John Milling, Elaine Reed, and John Segars; City of Darlington Interim Administrator Gloria Pridgen; City of Hartsville Council Members Kenzie DeLaine and Bryson S. Caldwell; City of Hartsville Manager Daniel Moore; City of Hartsville Clerk Andrea Crenshaw; City of Hartsville Staff Sherron Skipper; Darlington County Board Of Education Members Audrey Gore, Wanda Hassler, Warren Jeffords, and Jamie Morphis; Darlington County School District Superintendent Tim Newman; Senator Gerald Malloy; Representative Robert Williams, and others.

REPORTERS PRESENT

Mr. Stephen Drew of the News and Press.

Welcome / Invocation

Society Hill Mayor Wayne Duke welcomed everyone to the meeting and expressed appreciation to Society Hill and county staff for coordinating this event. He also thanked county and municipal officials and Darlington County Legislative Delegation for their support.

County Councilman Dannie Douglas presented the invocation.

Suggestions For Use Of ARPA (American Rescue Plan Act) Funds

Society Hill Mayor Wayne Duke explained that he was seeking information on how other entities used their ARPA funds. American Rescue Plan Act funds were distributed to entities to provide financial relief in response to the economic hardships caused by the COVID-19 pandemic. It was Mayor Duke's understanding that ARPA funds must be obligated by December 2024, contracted to spend by 2025, and spent by 2026. The Town of Society Hill received about \$190,000 in ARPA funds.

Hartsville City Manager Daniel Moore reported that the City of Hartsville received \$3.9 million in ARPA funds that were used for premium pay for all City employees and volunteer firefighters; infrastructure (sewer/water) improvements; grant matching funds to receive \$9 million for a new water tank; an AI camera base system to help with policing; recreational services and facilities; and a new Master Plan for the City. He urged everyone to track their spending and keep records.

In the absence of Darlington City Mayor Curtis Boyd, Darlington City Councilman John Segars reported that the City designated its ARPA funds to match various grants to get more funds; for sewer infrastructure; construction of a splash pad in the center of town; and to partner with Darlington County School District on the construction of a sports complex on Blue Street.

Lamar Town Councilman Tyler Cook reported that the Town of Lamar received about \$470,000 in ARPA funds which were used for premium pay to employees; an LED message board for Main Street; police cars that were reimbursed through a South Carolina Department of Commerce grant; garbage carts for residents; a golf cart; for work on a pump station/bypass station on Railroad Ave; etc.

County Administrator Charles Stewart reported that the county received about \$12.9 million in ARPA funds. Shortly into the process, the county received the right to declare \$10 million as loss revenue to use for general government functions/services. Before the loss revenue was declared, \$1.6 million was used for premium pay to employees and \$1.8 million to contract with Spectrum to provide internet services throughout the county. Spectrum provided three times that amount to build the project. The county declared \$9.6 million as loss revenue and \$7 million went towards the construction of the new courthouse, replacing funds in the county's Fund Balance. Of the remaining \$2.8 million in loss revenue, a large amount was used to purchase medical equipment for EMS and "yellow iron" equipment for Roads and Bridges and Environmental Services. The remaining \$88,000 was listed on County Council's upcoming agenda for purchases. He also noted that ARPA funds must be obligated by 2024 and spent by 2026.

Darlington County School District Superintendent Dr. Tim Newman reported that the funds received by the School District were used for education. The School District had three different pots of funds with a different timeframe. Funds were used for HVAC systems, for the construction of three schools, and to hire additional employees to help students with online programs. During the COVID-19 pandemic, the school district had 3,800 students in its Virtual

Academy. Currently, there are only 120 students in the Virtual Academy and the funds have gone away. The School District had to cut various programs but was able to keep interventionalists at the schools.

Society Hill Mayor Wayne Duke reported that the Town of Society Hill used its ARPA funds for new computers; a phone system; an electronic sign; security; LPR security cameras at Town Hall and the boat landing; and to renovate various buildings. He expressed appreciation for the assistance he received from Senator Malloy, Representative Williams, and officials from other entities.

Senator Gerald Malloy talked about officials being good servants to the people and being unified. He thanked everyone for their work and commended the efforts of Representatives Robert Williams and Coty Mitchell. Senator Malloy talked about funds provided to build a new National Guard Armory off 14th Street in Hartsville and a Florence/Darlington Technical School in Darlington County; funds for the Governor School and Coker University; funds for the cemetery in Hartsville as a result of Ms. Adlenia Graham's efforts; funds for radios and the water project in Lamar; the new airport in Hartsville; and work on the American Legion Post in Lamar. He commended the county regarding the Chestnut Street Area Drainage Project and the new courthouse and local officials for maximizing their funds by obtaining grants and working together. Senator Malloy requested a copy of what local officials submit for economic development projects.

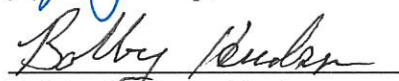
Senator Malloy stated that if he is re-elected, he will sit on the very front row in the Senate. He also talked about how South Carolina is growing but losing farm property. Therefore, conservation must be looked at. It was noted that Judge Eugene Warr will replace the late Judge Michael Holt as a resident judge in Darlington County.

Society Hill Mayor Wayne Duke talked about the work needed on the boat landing on the Great Pee Dee River.

There being no further comments, Mayor Duke thanked everyone for attending the meeting. The meeting was adjourned at 7:22 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,


J. Janet Bishop, Clerk to Council


Bobby Hudson, Chairman
Darlington County Council

Approved at meeting of November 4, 2024.