

**NEWBERRY COUNTY COUNCIL  
BUDGET WORK SESSION  
MINUTES  
APRIL 26, 2021**

Newberry County Council met on Monday, April 26, 2021, at 6:00 p.m. in Council Chambers at the Courthouse Annex, 1309 College Street, Newberry, SC., for a scheduled budget work session.

Notice of the budget work session was duly advertised as required by law.

**PRESENT:** Henry H. Livingston, III, Chairman (District 3)  
Todd Johnson, Vice Chairman (District 1)  
Mary Arrowood, Council Member (District 2)  
Nick Shealy, Council Member (District 4)  
Les Hipp, Council Member (District 5)  
Johnny Mack Scurry, Council Member (District 6)  
A.J. Tothacer, Jr., County Attorney  
Karen Brehmer, Deputy County Administrator  
Debbie S. Cromer, Finance Director  
Taylor Davenport, Assistant to the County Administrator  
Susan C. Fellers, Clerk to Council

**ABSENT:** Travis Reeder, Council Member (District 7) - sick

**MEDIA:** Andrew Wigger, Newberry Observer

**1. Call to Order**

Mr. Livingston called the meeting to order at 6:00 p.m. and announced that Mr. Reeder would not be attending tonight due to illness. A quorum was present for the meeting.

**2. Public Appearances**

**A. Solicitor's Office - Solicitor David Stumbo**

Mr. Stumbo was unable to attend.

## **B. Board of Rural Fire Control - Chairman Aubrey Horne**

Aubrey Horne, Chairman of the Board of Rural Fire Control, handed out a list of trucks and age to Council. (Copy not provided for official minutes).

Mr. Horne requested that two (2) pumper tankers be considered in the budget for FY 21-22. Some of the older trucks are not being used because of safety issues. Estimated cost would be \$350,000 each. If demos are available, the cost would be approximately \$300,000 each.

## **C. Board of Rescue Squads - Chairman Chris Johnson**

Chris Johnson, Chairman of Board of Rescue Squads, handed out a list of problems with two of the ambulances. (Copy not provided for official minutes).

Mr. Johnson requested that funds of \$250,000 to replace one ambulance this year be placed back in the budget. The Board will ask for another ambulance next year.

Discussions were had with Tommy Long regarding a rolling stock program. Mr. Long said he was working on this.

## **3. Consideration of Annual Indexing of Elected Officials' Salaries**

- **Newberry County Ordinance #1-01-17 provides that “absent a successful vote to the contrary by Newberry County Council at its first meeting in May, the county-funded salary portions for all countywide elected officials shall be increased the a rate equal to the consumer price index for all urban consumers (CPI-U), as determined by the Bureau of Labor Statistics (unadjusted) for the most recently reported 12-month period.”**

After discussion, the consensus of Council was to increase the county-funded salary of elected officials at the same rate as all other county employees.

Mr. Livingston pointed out this does not include a salary increase for County Council.

## **4. General Operating Budget**

Mrs. Brehmer said after reviewing the minutes from the April 21, 2021 meeting, staff did not feel the amendments were clearly stated. Staff recommends that Council rescind the two amendments approved at that meeting. Those amendments included the reinstatement of the Soil and Water Conservation District and the Newberry Opera House to the FY 20-21 levels.

Mr. Hipp said he would have voted against first reading if those amendments had not passed. He asked if staff had the verbiage. Mrs. Brehmer advised Council would have that prior to second reading on May 5.

Mr. Livingston said amendments can be made at both second and third reading of the ordinance.

Mr. Tothacer advised that in order to rescind a motion, it will take a  $\frac{2}{3}$  vote of Council. This will put us back to the balanced budget presented at first reading. Staff will prepare the amendments for both the Soil and Water Conservation District and Newberry Opera House. Then Council can vote on the budget as amended.

Mrs. Brehmer advised this was an error on the part of administration in not making it clear to Council what wording was needed to reinstate these two agencies.

Mrs. Cromer advised mills remain the same at this time.

Mrs. Brehmer advised Council that on Friday, April 23, 2021, the Senate version of the Local Government Fund (LGF) would add \$42,099 to the LGF Revenue. A motion for amendment will need to be presented at second reading on the budget to increase the LGF revenue account. Staff recommends the offset by decreasing Fund Balance, unless Council has other wishes for this offset.

As of now, there are three amendments to be presented and voted on at second reading.

## **6. Debt Service Levy Budget**

Mrs. Cromer advised if Council reinstates the 2 pumper tankers at 3% for 5 years, there would be an increase of 1.02 mills.

Likewise, adding the ambulance for the Rescue Squad would add .361 of a mill.

Debt Service is already up .9 of a mill which would be an increase of 2.4 mills if the pumper tanks and ambulance are added.

## **7. Capital Budgeting and Finance Balance**

Mrs. Cromer advised no changes to this since first reading.

Mrs. Brehmer stated no projects had been added.

Mrs. Arrowood asked about the \$500,000, which she understood, was remaining in the capital budget. Mrs. Cromer said there were only 2 outstanding amounts to be paid from the Lease Purchase, and they did not total \$500,000. She added that if there was \$500,000 in that account she was not aware of it, but would check on it.

## **8. Questions/Comments from Council Members.**

Mr. Shealy thanked staff for all the information provided to Council.

Mr. Hipp thanked staff for answering their questions earlier.

Mrs. Arrowood thanked the staff. It would be great if the stimulus money could be used for some of these purchases.

Mr. Johnson thanked all employees for public service. We will work together and do what we can do.

Mr. Scurry thanked the staff and county attorney for their advice on the budget. He also thanked all of Council for working together on this.

Mr. Livingston said it is never easy to do a budget. He requested staff provide information as to what bonds come off, when and in what increments. He was also disappointed that the LGF to Newberry County was not increasing more.

## **9. Public Comments**

Gordon Johnson said the public needs to know that bigger trucks will take bigger buildings.

Ben Chapman passed.

## **10. Adjournment**

Motion by Mr. Johnson to adjourn/ second by Mr. Shealy.

Mr. Livingston declared the meeting adjourned at 7:28 p.m.

**NEWBERRY COUNTY COUNCIL**

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**Henry H. Livingston, III, Chairman**

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**Susan C. Fellers, Clerk to Council**

**Minutes approved:** \_\_\_\_\_