

NEWBERRY COUNTY COUNCIL
PUBLIC SAFETY COMMITTEE MINUTES

JUNE 13, 2022

The Newberry County Council Public Safety Committee met on Monday, June 13, 2022, at 6:00 p.m. in Council Chamber at the Courthouse Annex, 1309 College Street, Newberry, SC, for a regular scheduled meeting.

Notice of the meeting was duly advertised, as required by law.

PRESENT: Todd Johnson, Council Committee Member
Johnny Mack Scurry, Committee Member
Christopher Inglese, County Administrator
Tommy Long, Public Safety Director
Jackie Lawrence, Clerk to Council

ABSENT: Mary Arrowood, Council Committee Member

Mr. Johnson called the meeting to order and determined a quorum to be present.

Additions, Deletions & Adoption of the Agenda

Mr. Johnson asked if there were any changes to the Agenda. No changes being offered Mr. Scurry moved to adopt the Agenda, seconded by Mr. Johnson. Mr. Johnson called for the vote. The vote was unanimous.

Approval of October 4, 2021, Minutes

Mr. Scurry moved to approve the minutes, seconded by Mr. Johnson. Mr. Johnson called for the vote. Vote was unanimous.

An Ordinance establishing and implementing a program to charge mitigation rates for the development of emergency and non-emergency services by the fire or rescue department for services provided/rendered for the Newberry County Emergency Services.

Mr. Long explained the proposed ordinance to allow for fire and/or rescue to bill an insurance company for reimbursement for services rendered to incidents occurring in Newberry County. It is believed that this will not impact the Newberry County taxpayers. Laurens County is currently implementing this billing system as well as HAZMAT. To manage this system a billing service vendor will need to be acquired. The billing service would be an RFP. If the ordinance is passed the monies received would be deposited into the general fund as of now. There would need to be an amendment to allow those funds to be allocated to Public Safety.

Mr. Scurry moved to send the Ordinance to full Council, seconded by Mr. Johnson. Mr. Johnson called for the vote. Vote was unanimous.

Discussion of rolling stock

Mr. Long presented that the county is very far behind regarding the fire apparatus. Fire and Rescue are trying to find additional funding to help alleviate this issue.

Mr. Inglese stated that collectively, Fire and Rescue have about 112 vehicles of some type. The current stock needs to be decreased and some need to be upgraded. The department is currently working on removing vehicles that are no longer working or needed and will continue to work on fixing and upgrading where they are able. Being able decrease this number will be beneficial to the county with less insurance, maintenance, etc. This will be done in a manner that will not sacrifice service to the communities in any way.

MCIP/FILOT revenue diverted to Capital Purchases

Christopher Inglese informed the Committee of possible ways to divert some of the revenues from a new MCP so that they can be allocated to specific areas in need. This would have to be decided at the start of a new MCP with percentages named as to where they would be going. These amounts would be able to be amended as needed later. Since the revenues from the current MCCPII has not come out that the diversion plan can still be amended. That would allow for a significant source for seeding a capital fund. The initial thought is that the recommended amount to be diverted from a MCP would be 75% to be committed to a Capital Fund.

Discussion of Grant Writer Consultant Services

Mr. Inglese updated the committee regarding the possibility of hiring a full-time grant writer. Three different consulting firms have been contacted as possibilities. One firm is out of Washington DC. They have an office in Charleston, so they are familiar with South Carolina law. One firm currently works with Greenwood. The firms do not work on commission as it is not legal for them to do so. One fee schedule requires an \$8000.00 a month retainer where they would be always working to find grant monies from their DC contacts. The other fee schedule is based off how many hours their team has worked to get the possible grants. An example would be \$119.00 per hour for a 16-hour work week. Both offers come out to roughly \$96,000.00 per year. This amount is what is already in the works for the coming years budget. The firms also offer compliance review. The specific details of the contracts would still need to be worked out during the bidding process. The budgeted amount would have to be the amount worked with. There should not be any additional funds requested. The third contact was an individual person that owns a consulting firm, and the fee would be \$50 - \$125 per hour. There are several risks in hiring a full-time employee for this position so it is believed that a consultant will be the better route. Staff will bring this back to the Committee once the budget has passed.

Discussion of \$3 public safety fee on vehicle and boat tax bill

Mr. Long stated that if the County implements the \$3 fee it could bring in some extra funds. Based off last fiscal year's number, there were 40,206 vehicles and 3,424 boats registered in the county. These funds could potentially secure to position that are desperately needed in Public Safety, a Coordinator, and a Fire Marshall.

Mr. Inglese stated that the only hesitation right now regarding this fee is the recent SC Supreme Court case out of Greenville that changes the legality of a fee that is charged by a county. Once the bill is passed to resolve that issue this fee could be attached to the tax bill.

Mr. Johnson stated that he is against all fees generally as it affects everyone. However, \$3 does seem reasonable. The people of the county must be kept in mind when attempting to add any fees.

Proposal for renting the training facility

Mr. Long has been approached by a company that would like to rent the training facility for their individual training purposes. If the Committee is willing to allow the renting of the facility it should help bring in additional funds to help fund projects and needs for Public Safety.

Mr. Johnson stated that the agreement needed verbiage regarding "no alcohol consumption allowed".

Mr. Scurry moved to send the proposal to full Council, seconded by Mr. Johnson. Mr. Johnson called for the vote. Vote was unanimous.

Discussion of possible new position for Public Safety Training Coordinator

Mr. Long proposed that this would be a position for an Emergencies Service Coordinator. The person would work under Mr. Long. As the transition happens in trying to accomplish many of the items discussed in the current meeting, an extra person is needed to accomplish all of it. This position could be paid for from two other positions that have vacated. Those two positions would free up about \$40,000. In addition, there is a service agreement that is not being renewed which will free up another \$20,000. This would allow for the salary to be covered by what is already requested in the budget.

Mr. Inglese is in complete support of the new position.

Mr. Johnson stated that this was a great idea.

Mr. Scurry moved to carry this to full Council, seconded by Mr. Johnson. Mr. Johnson called for the vote. Vote was unanimous.

Public Comments

No Public Comments were made.

Comments/Requests from Committee

Mr. Scurry stated for everyone to be safe out there.


Adjournment

Mr. Scurry moved to adjourn the meeting, seconded by Mr. Johnson. Meeting adjourned at 6:35.

Newberry County Council



Todd Johnson, Chairman



Jackie Lawrence, Clerk to Council

Minutes approved:

July 6, 2022