

NEWBERRY COUNTY COUNCIL
WORK SESSION
MINUTES
JANUARY 18, 2023

The Newberry County Council met on Wednesday, January 18, 2023, at 5:00 p.m. in Council Chambers at the Courthouse Annex, 1309 College Street, Newberry, SC, for a work session.

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

PRESENT: Todd Johnson, Chairman (District 1)
Les Hipp, Vice Chairman (District 5)
Mary Arrowood, Council Member (District 2)
Karl Sease, Council Member (District 3)
Robert N. Shealy, Council Member (District 4)
Johnny Mack Scurry, Council Member (District 6) (arrived at 5:25)
Travis Reeder, Council Member (District 7)
Karen Brehmer, Acting County Administrator (joined at 5:25)
Joanie Winters, Interim County Attorney
Debbie S. Cromer, Finance Director
Susan C. Fellers, Clerk to Council

MEDIA: Andrew Wigger, Newberry Observer

Mr. Johnson called the meeting to order at 5:00 pm and welcomed all visitors.

Mr. Hipp had the invocation followed by the Pledge of Allegiance.

1. PRESENTATION:

a. Final Draft of the Five-Year Economic Development Strategic Plan – Crystal Morphis

Ms. Morphis was unable to attend tonight's meeting. In her absence, Rick Farmer, Economic Development Director, presided over the presentation. Mr. Farmer introduced the members of the Economic Development Task Force who were present at the meeting. All members of the Task Force are: Jennifer Birochak, Kara Cannon, Buddy Johnson, Michelle Long, Boyd Parr, Blake Roche, and Jeff Wicker. Ex Officio Members are Ruby Flores, Barbara Miller and Matthew Kidder.

This task force was formed for the express purpose of formulating an Economic Development strategic plan for Newberry County.

Mr. Johnson thanked the task force members for their work.

Mr. Farmer stated meetings were held in different areas of the county in order to obtain input from the community. He also advised this was not a legally binding plan on County Council.

Tonight the strategic plan will be introduced. Thereafter, Council can amend as it sees fit. Mr. Farmer recommended a time frame of one month for Council to review and come back with comments or amendments.

Mr. Farmer then introduced Penny Whiteheart, who presented the strategic plan.

Ms. Whiteheart reiterated the time line set out previously by Mr. Farmer. Community and business surveys were done in arriving at this final draft of the plan.

The goals, as set forth in the plan for Newberry County, are as follows:

GOAL 1: Attract, retain and foster start-up businesses that will provide quality jobs and diversify the economy. (This goal stresses small business. Small business is defined as 500 employees or less).

GOAL 2: Expand the talent pipeline

GOAL 3: Make Newberry County a choice location for business, citizens and visitors

GOAL 4: Invest in community capacity building

GOAL 5: Be a leading economic development organization in South Carolina

Discussions were held as to more involvement of the school district, Career Center, Newberry College and Piedmont Technical College.

Mr. Hipp requested a breakdown as to management and skill set as it relates to the 4,000 out commuters mentioned in the plan so we can determine what group to target and how to keep people in the county.

Mr. Sease inquired about the 100,000 people on the slide and asked if that represented people from surrounding areas who could be brought into the county. Ms. Whiteheart advised that was correct and this probably represented people over the age of 21 who would be working age.

Mr. Farmer thanked Ms. Whiteheart for her presentation. He advised Council that when new industries asked him where they could get workers, he suggested they look at other employers, tapping the commuter pool and under employed persons.

Dr. Boyd Parr, Chairman of the Task Force, thanked County Council for the opportunity to serve. Newberry County is an attractive place, and we want an economic development plan that doesn't lose what attracted people here in the first place.

2. PUBLIC COMMENTS

Barbara Miller advised that she retired as the representative of the Small Business Development Center in September of 2022 but her replacement has not been found at this time. A local consultant is needed to do that. The job is posted on the University of South Carolina job board but getting help is hard.

3. COMMENTS/REQUESTS FROM ACTING COUNTY ADMINISTRATOR

No comments.

4. COMMENTS/REQUESTS FROM COUNCIL

Mr. Shealy felt the task force did a good job.

Mr. Sease thanked them for an excellent job and advised that he attended some of the community meetings. There was good input from the community.

Mrs. Arrowood thanked the committee and community members for their work and input into the plan. She felt it was a good plan.

Mr. Scurry thanked them for the good work.

Mr. Reeder stated it was a great job. A lot of people from different aspects of life were involved in coming up with this plan.

Mr. Hipp stated it was a great document. With the help of Rick Farmer and the Economic Development Committee of County Council, we can go through the document and prioritize items as to importance and what the County can do.

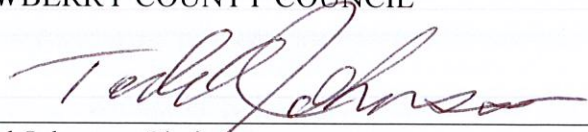
Mr. Johnson appreciated the work of the committee.

5. ADJOURNMENT

There being no further discussion, Mrs. Arrowood moved to adjourn; seconded by Mr. Shealy. Vote was unanimous.

Mr. Johnson declared the meeting adjourned at 5:50 p.m.

NEWBERRY COUNTY COUNCIL



Todd Johnson, Chairman



Susan C. Fellers, Clerk to Council

Minutes Approved: _____