

NEWBERRY COUNTY COUNCIL  
EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE MINUTES

OCTOBER 11, 2022

The Newberry County Council Executive Committee met on Tuesday, October 11, 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: Les Hipp, Chairman  
Henry H. Livingston, III, Council Committee Member  
Travis Reeder, Council Committee Member  
Christopher Inglese, County Administrator  
Karen Brehmer, Deputy County Administrator  
Jacquelyn R. Lawrence, Clerk to Council  
Debbie S. Cromer, Finance Director

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

**Additions, Deletions & Adoption of the Agenda**

Mr. Reeder moved to adopt the agenda, seconded by Mr. Livingston.

Mr. Inglese requested that item number 4 on the agenda be deferred to the next committee meeting. HR staff is still working on putting the data together and is not quite ready to present.

With no further discussion Mr. Hipp called for the vote. The vote was unanimous.

**Update regarding the amendments to the Newberry County Employee Handbook**

Mr. Inglese briefed the committee regarding the needed updates for the Employee Handbook. Interim County Attorney, Joanie Winters prepared a memorandum that was distributed to Committee. The recommended amendments to the handbook are many and will probably require a work session with full council. This can be done at another time.

Mr. Hipp asked that staff keep Committee and Council informed as to when the work session is planned.

## Discussion of Planning Department organizational chart and GIS position

### Building Permits Department/Planning and Zoning

Mr. Powell stated the Building Department currently has 2 employees and the Planning and Zoning has 3 employees. Based on the increase in new construction permits, which has more than doubled over the last ten years, the departments need an additional employee. Currently, if one person is out the departments must pull someone to one side or the other for help. There have been times where the departments have had to close so that inspections can still be completed, employees can get lunch, etc. The typical day consists of 6 to 7 hours of inspections out in the County. Leaving only a short amount of time to allow for phone calls, plan reviews, special request inspections, etc. Staff is requesting another inspector be hired so that he can work on getting that someone ready to be the director as it is getting close for him to retire.

Mr. Livingston asked for the estimated salary for the position being asked for.

Mr. Powell responded that the position would probably need to start at \$50,000. He has someone he would recommend for the position that is qualified and available.

Mr. Livingston inquired about the company that has been helping with getting the inspections done as to how much they are paid and would it be more beneficial to a full-time employee.

Mr. Powell stated that SAFEbuilt charges \$250 per trip and one hour of work. Additionally, they charge \$65 each additional hour. If there is a 5-to-6-hour job it is costing the county around \$600 to \$800. Currently, they are handling all the inspections needed for the Daeyoung Project.

The logistics of the monetary questions regarding not affecting the current budget do not have answers currently. Committee suggested that staff should have those answers available to take the matter before full Council.

Staff stated that they would like to keep the contract with SAFEbuilt as a backup.

Committee agreed.

Mr. Powell also added that the Planning and Zoning Department could also use additional staff. An on-staff Planner would help take some of the pressure and work off the Planning and Zoning Director. There is currently a Comprehensive Plan Consultant that the County is paying about \$80,000 per year. That money could go into finding a full-time planner position.

Mr. Livingston asked how much this position would require for a salary.

Mr. Inglese stated that to get an experienced planner the salary would be around \$70,000 per year.

Mr. Hipp asked if the proposed planner would be able to meet the same requirements as the consultant has been asked to handle.

Staff stated yes but it would not be a position that would be asked for this budget year but to look at adding into next year's budget.

Mr. Livingston made a motion to bring to full council the recommendation to hire a Building Inspector, seconded by Mr. Reeder. With no further discussion, Mr. Hipp called for the vote. The vote was unanimous.

### **GIS Position**

Liz McDonald spoke regarding the retirement of Bob Beard which will leave the GIS position open. With the increase in parcel count, the need for boundary changes the Assessor's Office will need a GIS Manager instead of a GIS Analyst. There is a need for our county to create a GIS website and the GIS Manager would verify and maintain that site. Staff would like to continue to train current staff on the GIS system and promoting a current staff person that is the GIS Technician. Making these changes would allow for integrating and consolidating services, such as the Building Department could color code the different permits issued to a particular parcel so they can look at the website to see the next steps needed. Also, moving to a different software, may be helpful in moving forward in the GIS area. It would be an expensive software, however with the hope of integrating and making some consolidations maybe some costs could be reduced.

Mr. Inglese stated that after meeting with Mr. Beard he reviewed many GIS projects that could be added to the current GIS website. Currently staff is reaching out to other jurisdictions to see what their experiences have been with a different software. If they can consolidate the current software, administration, tech, and programming support there should be room in the budget to consider hiring a GIS Manager at an appropriate salary. Additionally, Planning and Zoning could benefit greatly.

Committee agrees that the fewer kinds of software and better use of software is supported.

Staff stated that this is for information only and unless the proposed position were to go over the existing budgeted amount, \$99,200, staff will move forward with coming up with an appropriate position and integrating and consolidating.

Mr. Hipp stated that once the decisions are made that all departments return to Council to show that they are all harmonious in this decision.

### **Discussion of facilities DHEC building**

Mike Paisano presented that over a five-year improvement plan that the DHEC building will be a cost of \$430,000. The improvements would include roof replacement, parking lot improvements, office carpet replacement, and HVAC replacement. Staff is concerned that with the costs needed it may be more beneficial to move the departments out of the building and sell the building as is. Staff only wanted to bring this matter to the Committee's attention so that they are aware. There is no action requested at this time.

Mr. Hipp asked if this matter would be included in the current Comprehensive Plan that is being worked on.

Staff stated that it is.

Mr. Hipp asked what would happen if the building was abandoned?

Mr. Pisano stated that he recommended selling the building as is or as a building that needs improvements.

Mr. Hipp stated that before this matter could go before full council many questions would need to be answered.

#### **Discussion of the slogan on signage entering the county**

Mr. Inglese has been asked to discuss the current slogan on the county signage. The matter has been brought to his attention that maybe it is time for a change.

Mr. Hipp asked who initially paid for these signs. If they are paid for by the State, then there may be limitations on what can be done with the signs.

Staff stated this was just for information only and may need to be taken into consideration at a later date.

#### **Request to install a pump testing facility/underground tank at the Emergency Services Training location**

Tommy Long asked for permission to move forward with having the testing tanks installed. There is no cost to the County for this project. West Frasier has covered the cost of the equipment and a volunteer will do the installation at a minimal rate. When the original request was made for this project, it was stated that staff must get permission before installation.

Mr. Reeder made a motion to recommend approval to full council, seconded by Mr. Hipp. With no further discussion, Mr. Hipp called for the vote. The vote was unanimous.

#### **Public Comments**

No Public Comments were made.

#### **Comments from Committee Members**

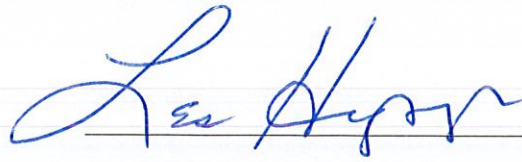
Mr. Reeder stated that the meeting was very productive, and he would like to see Newberry where it needs to be.

Mr. Hipp agreed and was very happy to see so many departments come together and work together. Also, he was very impressed with the amount of growth over the last few years by the numbers given by the different departments.

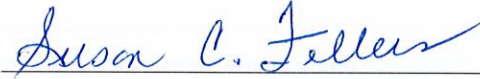
#### **Adjournment**

Mr. Reeder moved to adjourn the meeting, seconded by Mr. Hipp. Mr. Hipp called for the vote. The vote was unanimous. Meeting adjourned at 8:23 p.m.

Newberry County Council



Les Hipp, Chairman



~~Jackie Lawrence~~, Clerk to Council

Minutes approved: 11-2-2022