

**NEWBERRY COUNTY COUNCIL  
MINUTES  
DECEMBER 1, 2021**

Newberry County Council met on Wednesday, December 1, 2021, at 6:00 p.m. in Council Chambers at the Courthouse Annex, 1309 College Street for a regular scheduled meeting.

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

**PRESENT:** **Todd Johnson, Vice-Chairman**  
**Travis Reeder, Council Member**  
**Johnny Mack Scurry, Council Member**  
**Mary Arrowood, Council Member**  
**Les Hipp, Council Member**  
**Nick Shealy, Council Member**  
**Tony McDonald, Interim County Administrator**  
**A.J. Tothacer, Jr., County Attorney**  
**Karen Brehmer, Deputy County Administrator**  
**Susan C. Fellers, Clerk to Council**

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

**MEDIA:** **Andrew Wigger, Newberry Observer**

Mr. Johnson called the meeting to order at 6:00 p.m. and determined a quorum to be present.

Mrs. Arrowood had the invocation followed by the Pledge of Allegiance.

**1. CONSENT AGENDA**

Mr. Hipp moved to approve the Consent Agenda as presented; seconded by Mr. Shealy.

Consent Agenda consisted of minutes of the October 20, 2021, special call meeting; October 20, 2021 regular meeting; October 26, 2021 special call meeting and the November 3, 2021 regular meeting.

Mr. Johnson called for the vote. Vote was unanimous.

## **2. ADDITIONS, DELETIONS AND ADOPTION OF THE AGENDA**

Mr. Hipp moved to consider an amendment under future meetings regarding a change in date of the December 15 meeting to December 8; seconded by Mrs. Arrowood. Vote was unanimous to consider this request later in the agenda.

There being no further additions or deletions to the Agenda, Mr. Hipp moved to adopt the Agenda as amended; seconded by Mrs. Arrowood. Vote was unanimous.

## **3. CONSIDERATION TO ACCEPT BID FOR EMERGENCY LIGHTING - CRYSTAL WALDROP, PURCHASING DIRECTOR, AND TOMMY LONG, EMERGENCY SERVICES COORDINATOR**

Mrs. Waldrop and Mr. Long advised that the emergency lighting would cost \$54,000. Of that amount \$50,000 will be provided by the State and the remaining \$4,000 will be paid out of the Emergency Services capital account.

Mr. Reeder moved to accept the bid; seconded by Mrs. Arrowood. Vote was unanimous.

## **4. RESOLUTION TO AMEND THE GUIDELINES FOR PROPERTY RENTALS**

Mr. Hipp stated he had asked for this item to be delayed until more information was received. He doesn't have a problem with the raising rates but wanted information as to the preparation and clean up of both Community Hall and the Helena Center.

Ervin West said the Community Hall is an old building and still has a lot of old parts, including the lighting and plumbing. Most of the problems arising when it is rented are due to the old lighting, etc.

It also depends on who rents it as to how much time is spent in preparation and clean up. All set up and clean up is done by the county's custodial staff. There is always a maintenance employee on call, and that employee will usually get a call after hours if an event is going on.

The floors are stripped and rewaxed every year. The County just spent \$7,000 on repairs to the air conditioning and replacing the hot water heater, along with some mechanical repairs.

As far as Helena, the problems are the drywall, flooring and plumbing. The last repair there involved painting the walls and a few other items for a cost of \$7,000.

Mr. Hipp said failure of plumbing and other maintenance issues is not rent dependent. He felt capital improvement was needed on the buildings. Also, there is no additional charge for set up and clean up since the County maintenance employees are already paid their regular salary for these duties.

Mr. West added that the ice machine in both facilities is another maintenance issue.

Mr. Hipp felt the Rotary has done a lot of good and \$100 a meeting seems too high. Any non profit group should be given a break.

Mr. Tothacer advised there are different versions of 501(c)(3). These groups are required yearly to keep this status up to date.

Mr. Hipp felt the County should give those organizations a price break.

Mr. Johnson requested that staff amend the Resolution regarding these groups and bring it back to the next meeting.

Mr. Tothacer asked for a number. Mr. Hipp suggested keeping the rental what it is for any organization such as the Rotary, etc. and increase the rental rate for the others.

Mr. Tothacer will have this prepared for the next meeting.

#### **5. COUNCIL TO CONSIDER AMERICAN RECOVERY FUNDS PREMIUM PAY FOR EMPLOYEES**

Mr. Johnson welcomed the first responders to the meeting and advised that the County is continuing to move forward on a plan to accommodate as many people as possible. The County wants to make sure you receive the benefit of this. We were hoping to do this tonight but legal is trying to work out an issue, and we are unable to move forward right now.

Mr. Shealy concurred with Mr. Johnson's comments.

Mr. Hipp said the AFR allows for us to reimburse some of our employees and that is our number one priority.

Mrs. Arrowood agreed that the employees are our priority.

Mr. Reeder totally agreed but we want to do what is correct.

Mr. Scurry also concurred but we want to do it the right way.

Mr. Johnson said Newberry County has the best employees, and we want to show you appreciation.

Mr. McDonald stated the administration agrees. We are working and have been working on numbers and scenarios. There is a question of getting the final regulations. The regulations we have received right now are interim. We have been advised that we should have the final regulations by the first of the year.

#### **6. UPDATE ON CAPITAL PROJECT SALES TAX**

Mr. McDonald advised activities are ongoing and ramping up with the CPST. The committee had its organizational meeting on Monday night.

Karen Brehmer made an excellent presentation to the Newberry Governmental Association regarding the CPST.



November 30th was the last day for outside agencies to seek Council sponsorship. Another 8 to 10 requests came in on the 30th and those are being compiled for Council.

We will keep Council apprised of what is going on.

Mr. Hipp asked if the additional requests could be emailed to Council before next week. Karen Brehmer advised she would get a composite list. She also advised that Sid Crumpton resigned from the CPST Committee, and Mike Reeder stepped into his position. This leaves one alternate.



**7. APPOINTMENTS**

Mr. Shealy requested the appointment of Aubrey Horne, II to the Board of Rural Fire Control; seconded by Mr. Hipp. Vote was unanimous.

**8. PUBLIC COMMENTS**

**Sheriff Lee Foster** was appreciative of the consideration of the employees with the ARF funds. His office is competing for employees and retaining employees. Law enforcement is getting difficult to keep employees and to find qualified employees. People we recruit against have already issued the ARF funds to employees. We want to maintain and keep employees. He asked that Council give the ARF strong consideration.

Mr. Johnson stated nobody can take for granted that we have the finest law enforcement in the state. Sheriff Foster added he was also speaking on behalf of all first responders and not just law enforcement.

**9. COMMENTS/REQUESTS FROM COUNTY ADMINISTRATOR**

Mr. McDonald advised there is an Economic Development Committee meeting on Monday, December 6, at 6:00 p.m. That meeting was left off the agenda.

## **10. COMMENTS/REQUESTS FROM COUNCIL MEMBERS**

Mr. Scurry advised the ARF monies are being monitored, and we will look into it and give all a piece of the pie. It will be done fairly.

Mr. Reeder agreed. He said we have the best quality employees in the County and want to keep everybody here. He wished everyone a safe and happy holiday.

Mrs. Arrowood advised all employees would be taken care of. That is the number one priority with the ARF. She asked that we continue to keep Debra Beard in our prayers. Mrs. Arrowood thanked everyone praying for her daughter, who will be coming home from the hospital tomorrow.

Mr. Hipp requested prayers for Debbie Cromer, Finance Director, who is having surgery tomorrow.

Mr. Shealy said we certainly want to look out for the county employees but we don't want to jump the gun and do something we shouldn't. He wished everyone happy and safe holidays and asked for prayers for our county.

Mr. Johnson thanked the elected officials and department heads who attended tonight's meeting.

## **11. FUTURE MEETINGS:**

Mr. Johnson added the Economic Development meeting on Monday, December 6, at 6:00 p.m. to the list.

**a. County Council**

**12-15-21**

**6:00 p.m.**

This is the meeting Mr. Hipp requested be changed to next Wednesday, December 8, at 6:00 p.m., the reason being there will not be a quorum on December 15 because of some council members having prior commitments. Mr. Scurry moved to change the December 15 meeting to December 8; seconded by Mr. Reeder. Vote was unanimous.

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| b. County Council | 01/05/22 | 6:00 p.m. |
| c. County Council | 01/19/22 | 6:00 p.m. |

## 12. ADJOURNMENT

There being no further business, Mr. Shealy moved to adjourn; seconded by Mr. Reeder. Vote was unanimous.


Mr. Johnson declared the meeting adjourned at 6:40 p.m.

### NEWBERRY COUNTY COUNCIL



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Todd Johnson, Vice-Chairman



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Susan C. Fellers, Clerk to Council

Approved: 12-8-21