



**NEWBERRY COUNTY COUNCIL
WORK SESSION
MINUTES
AUGUST 25, 2015
7:00 P.M.**

**Courthouse Annex Conference Room
1309 College Street
Newberry, SC 29108**

Chairman Livingston called the meeting to order and stated that this meeting pertains to the salaries of elected officials. All in attendance were provided with a survey containing salary comparison of county-wide elected officials in counties of like size to Newberry.

Chairman Livingston shared some questions and concerns submitted via email by Jackie Bowers and Kelly Nobles who were unable to attend the meeting due to a conference. He asked those who signed up if they wished to comment.

1. *Comments from Elected Officials*

Craig Newton, who signed up, responded that he did not have any comments at this time.

Sheriff Foster shared that he was not expecting the salary survey and asked Council to consider that they may not be comparing apples to apples when looking at the county comparison study for elected officials; some salaries may not include years of service. He also asked Council to look at other salaries in the county and see how they fit in and compare to other counties. He felt this would be a fairer way to look at it. He thanked Council and asked if he could reserve the right to comment later if need be.

2. *Public Comments*

No comments.

3. Ordinance #08-14-15: An Ordinance to provide for the determination of salaries for County Elected Officials other than members of County Council, subsequent to elections, appointments, and special elections pertaining to such offices, and to provide for the regular review of salaries for such offices.

Chairman Livingston opened the floor for Council discussion on Ordinance #08-14-15.

Mr. Hipp shared that this is a significant ordinance with two separate and distinct elements and he did not want to dilute one with the other or have opposition of one part and not the other. He would like to eliminate the portion dealing with salary reductions for newly elected officials and just deal with the salary progression portion for elected officials. He would like to propose a separate ordinance for sections 4, 6 and 9 if Council would like to pursue a reduction in salary for newly elected officials.

Mr. Adams provided Council with a copy of the Ordinance #08-14-15 with sections 4, 6 and 9 deleted and gave an overview of the ordinance.

Mr. Koon felt a COLA should not be a percentage of a person's salary but instead a budgeted amount divided by the number of employees. He said someone making \$100,000.00 will get more than someone making \$30,000.00 and this is not fair; everyone should get the same amount.

Mr. Reeder stated that he agreed with Mr. Hipp on the sections that needed to come out of the ordinance. He felt a salary should be based on a person's experience and not just because they have been here forever.

Mr. Stockman said he did not have a problem taking sections 4, 6 and 9 out but felt it needed to be addressed and we should have an ordinance in place for when it happens.

There was discussion about where Newberry County Elected Official's salaries ranked in comparison with other counties and comments that our elected officials are paid pretty good salaries; ranking high on the list even compared to counties with higher populations.

Sheriff Foster stated he does not dispute that but suggested that if Council looked at all salaries in management you will find similar circumstance. He realized that tonight; however, Council was only talking about elected officials. He said our current Auditor benefited by receiving a starting salary of a 40 year employee which had a lot of salary increases and cost of livings along the way. This was no fault of hers or Councils but it happened.

Chairman Livingston responded that several things need to be considered with one being that newly elected officials should be reclassified and two, there also needs to be a cap put on salaries; a maximum salary range. If one reaches their maximum salary, Council might consider a bonus that would not be added every year to escalate costs in these salaries.

Mr. Waldrop shared that years ago the county was losing employees to other counties because of low salaries and we hired Archer to do a study and we adopted his plan which did bring the salaries up; however, they have escalated over the years, especially those of elected officials.

Sheriff Foster wanted everyone to know he was not complaining about his salary and that elected officials did not go out and do this; we cannot legally increase our own salaries. He felt that all of managements' salaries, including elected officials, were in the same genre and needed to be looked at and compared.

Mr. Hipp commented that there seems to be a consensus that salaries have escalated and when you look at the data, we are skewed very high compared to counties of like size for these elected officials. We have no plans to reduce anyone's salary; however, we do not need to perpetuate increases that will further skew the salaries of elected official on the high end of the scale; even above counties that are much larger than ours and this ordinance will address that.

Mr. Koon noted that there are 30 county employees make over \$50,000.00 and this information falls under the Freedom of Information Act and is listed on the county's website. Out of those, 13 works for Administration, 10 for the Sheriff's Office and 5 are Elected Officials with 1 Elected Official, the Coroner, making under \$50,000.00.

4. Adjournment

Chairman Livingston adjourned the meeting at 8:20 p.m.

NEWBERRY COUNTY COUNCIL

Henry H. Livingston, Chairman

APPROVED:

Laurie N. Renwick, Clerk to Council