

Council Members

District 1: Terry Graham
District 2: Charlene McGriff
District 3: Billy Mosteller, Secretary
District 4: Jose Luis
District 5: Steve Harper, Chair
District 6: Allen Blackmon
District 7: Brian Carnes, Vice-Chair

**County Administrator**

Dennis E. Marstall

County Attorney

Ginny L. Merck-Dupont

Clerk to Council

Sherrie Simpson

May 3, 2023

1:00 PM

**101 North Main Street
Lancaster, SC 29720**

**LANCASTER COUNTY COUNCIL
County Council Chambers, County Administration
Building, 101 North Main Street, Lancaster, SC 29720**

SPECIAL MEETING MINUTES

Council Members Present: Allen Blackmon, Brian Carnes, Steve Harper, Jose Luis, Charlene McGriff, and Billy Mosteller.

Absent: Terry Graham

Staff Members/Others present: Dennis Marstall, County Administrator; Ginny Merck-Dupont, County Attorney; John Bodner, Assistant County Administrator; Sherrie Simpson, Clerk to Council; Veronica Thompson, Financial Services Director; Kim Belk, Budget Director; Graham Shuford, Budget Analyst; Major Matt Shaw, Sheriff's Office; Clay Catoe, EMS Director; Darren Player, Emergency Management/Fire Rescue Director; Robert Purser, Public Safety Communications Director; Scott Hernandez, MIS Director; Lisa Robinson, Human Resources Director; Brenda Thompson, Communications & Marketing Director; Carrie Helms, Treasurer; Suzette Murphy, Auditor; the press; various employees; various department heads; and citizens.

A quorum of Lancaster County Council was present for the meeting. The following press were notified of the meeting by e-mail in accordance with the Freedom of Information Act: *The Lancaster News*, *Kershaw News Era*, *The Rock Hill Herald*, Cable News 2, Channel 9 and the local government channel. The agenda was posted in the lobby of the County Administration Building and also on the County website the required length of time. The power point presentation utilized during the meeting is attached to the written minutes in the Clerk to Council's office.

Call to Order - Chairman Steve Harper

Chairman Steve Harper called the Administrator's Budget Presentation and Special Meeting to order at approximately 1:00 p.m.

Welcome and Recognition - Chairman Steve Harper

Chairman Steve Harper welcomed everyone to the meeting.

Pledge of Allegiance and Invocation - Council Member Jose Luis

Jose Luis led the Pledge of Allegiance to the American Flag and delivered the Invocation.

Approval of the Agenda

Allen Blackmon moved to approve the agenda. Seconded by Charlene McGriff. Motion Passed 6-0.; Absent: Graham

Discussion and Action Items

Fiscal Year 2023-2024 County Administrator's Recommended Budget Presentation

Dennis Marstall and Kim Belk provided the presentation about the Administrator's Recommended Budget via the County power point presentation that is attached to the written minutes in the Clerk to Council's office. Dennis Marstall began the presentation by reviewing the budget goals. He noted that the budget was balanced and noted that he was presenting both his recommended budget, which has only a small millage increase for debt service, and an alternate budget, which includes a millage increase in order to fund salary increases and new positions. He also thanked staff, especially Kim Belk, Graham Shuford and Veronica Thompson and her staff, for their hard work on this year's budget.

Kim Belk explained that Dennis Marstall had already provided an overview of the the budget, so she moved on and reviewed the recommended county wide personnel adjustments across all funds that have salaries associated with them. Next, she discussed the general fund, which she noted was currently balanced without a tax increase. She provided an overview of projected revenue for the budget. She explained that, as far as the revenue, she did not have finalized estimates on vehicle assessments, so she explained that Council may see a variance in those numbers at the 1st Reading of the budget. She also noted that licenses and permit fees seem to be slowing down. She then provided an overview of proposed changes in County fees. She pointed out that one of the new fees that would be included in this year's budget was new language in regards to Freedom of Information Act (FOIA) fees and that the County would likely propose a new fire district fee. Next, she provided overviews of proposed general fund expenditures, proposed personnel adjustments, proposed additional funding for operating costs, and proposed additional funding for non-recurring expenditures. Council and staff discussed the proposed funding of an ERP system, which stands for Enterprise Resource Planning which is a financial software system that would help automate and manage core business/financial processes into one system for optimal performance.

Finally, Kim Belk provided an overview of the following Other Funds: (1) the Airport Fund, which would have no major changes; (2) the Capital Improvement Fund, which would increase by a 1/2 mil and which would allow the County to purchase two replacement ambulances, a replacement fire brush truck, ten replacement vehicles for the Sheriff's office, various equipment for roads, various equipment for solid waste, eleven replacement vehicles for fleet, and various equipment for the Parks and Recreation Department; (3) the Court Security Fund, which would have no major changes but would include a county wide pay adjustment; (4) the Victims Advocate Fund, which would have no major changes; (5) the E-911 Fund, which would include funding to upgrade the recording system, refurbish the call center, and replace the server and install a backup server; (6) the Hospitality Tax Fund, which would not be touched so that the fund balance can continue to build until the regional park plan is finalized; (7) the Stormwater Fund, which would include funding for a replacement truck and would carry forward funding for the Black Horse Run project and the Henry Harris culvert upsizing; (8) the Transportation Commission Fund, which would include two million for County roads, nine point six million for State roads, and four hundred thousand for contractual services; (9) the Local Accommodations Tax Fund, which would have no major changes; and (10) the State Accommodations Tax Fund, for which the County just advertised for grant submissions. Council and staff discussed the Local Accommodations Tax Fund versus the State Accommodations Tax Fund. Kim Belk also explained that some funds were still yet to be finalized with the budget staff, but that they would be finalized by 1st Reading of the budget. She concluded her presentation with a budget wrap up that included a year to year budget comparison since 2019 and other information about the overall budget.

Dennis Marstall provided and reviewed two handouts: (1) one that provided an overview of year to year budget and mil value comparisons, which is attached as Schedule A to the written minutes in the Clerk to Council's

office; and (2) a letter from the Auditor regarding the mil value, which is attached as Schedule B to the written minutes in the Clerk to Council's office. Next, Kim Belk reviewed, via the County power point, a possible budget alternative that Council could adopt IF they wanted to approve a 4.5 millage increase. This alternative budget would include funding for 8 new positions and a six percent pay adjustment for employees, as well as funding for an additional two percent pool to address market and retention pressures. Dennis Marstall opened the floor for discussion.

Council and staff discussed the proposed change of the \$75 recreation fee, which Kim Belk noted would mean that some fees would increase and some would decrease. John Bodner explained that Parks and Recreation was simply trying to standardize their fees. Council and staff discussed whether the County currently offered or should offer scholarships for children whose parents are unable to pay the fee. Council and staff also discussed whether the Sheriff's Department needed additional funds in order to stay competitive with compensation. Dennis Marstall discussed the Sheriff's Department compensation as compared in the region. Allen Blackmon stated that the County was not competitive for Sheriff's salaries and that public safety was the core function of government. He further noted that the County was behind in pay for fire services and for EMS. Dennis Marstall explained that in the alternate budget, the two percent pool would be able to address some of the specific positions that need to be increased, such as fire services. Steve Harper indicated that he would not support a soil scientist and expressed his concerns over County liability with that position. He also explained that he did not support another County Attorney. Charlene McGriff indicated that she was not in favor of the soil scientist position. Steve Harper said that he spoke with Terry Graham and that he stated that he was not in favor of a fee increase for the Stormwater fee. Dennis Marstall explained that there was no proposed increase to the Stormwater fee. Jose Luis expressed his concerns that the County does need a soil scientist and that he would also like to have a copy of the budget detail in excel format. He also asked what percentage of revenue increases were due to property values going up versus percentage of increases due to growth and Kim Belk explained that the majority was due to growth. Jose Luis expressed his concerns that the increases in revenue generated by growth were insufficient to cover the costs that growth is having on the County. Billy Mosteller explained that he was in favor of the new positions for EMS, Sheriff and Fire. However, he expressed concerns over the City firemen that were funded by the County getting raises while the County employees were not receiving equal compensation. He also advocated for higher pay for the Solicitor's office. He noted that he was not in favor of the Facilities Manager, the second County Attorney, or the soil scientist. He expressed his concerns over a possible grounds consolidation. He discussed the negative impacts of division directors versus department heads and consolidation of services. Steve Harper stated that he would like information and data to compare salaries within the region for public safety. Brian Carnes explained that the County needed more than one Sheriff's deputy when it comes to new positions for the year and that the County needed new Detention Center staff for the new Detention Center that was being built. Council and staff discussed how the solicitor positions were funded. Allen Blackmon explained that the solicitors did need higher pay but also needed more court time. Council and staff discussed the need for updating the entire Stormwater ordinance and whether or not the County needed a soil scientist. Allen Blackmon asked for clarification on the budget and whether the increase in property taxes matched the value of the mil increase. He also asked for clarification on the amount of interest income collected for the last year. Council and staff discussed the policy on the County Administrator having the capability to move \$20,000 per line item without Council's approval and the budget process regarding budget transfers.

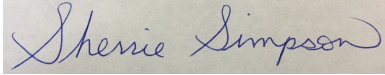
Dennis Marstall asked for feedback on the fund balance utilization. Council and staff discussed that once these projects were completed that the amount left in fund balance would exceed the policy on the required reserve amount, whether a new airport master plan was needed, return on investment (ROI) for departments and specifically for the airport, and whether Council wanted programs to be self-sustaining. After further discussion, Council asked that a budget discussion be placed on the agenda for the May 8, 2023, Council meeting. Dennis Marstall noted that the 1st Reading of the budget would be held at the May 22, 2023, Council meeting.

Adjournment

Charlene McGriff moved to adjourn. Seconded by Brian Carnes. Motion Passed 6-0.; Absent: Graham

There being no further business, the meeting adjourned at approximately 3:07 p.m.

Respectfully Submitted:

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Sherrie Simpson". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large initial 'S'.

Sherrie Simpson
Clerk to Council

Approved by Council on May 22, 2023

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Billy Mosteller". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large initial 'B'.

Billy Mosteller, Secretary