

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

March 15, 2023

4:00 PM

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

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

AGENDA

1. **Call to Order - Vice-Chair Brian Carnes**
2. **Welcome and Recognition - Vice-Chair Brian Carnes**
3. **Pledge of Allegiance and Invocation - Council Member Jose Luis**
4. **Approval of Agenda**

[deletion and additions of non-substantive matter]

5. **Citizens Comments**

[Lancaster County Council welcomes comments and input from citizens who may not be able to attend Council meetings in person. Written comments may be submitted via mail to ATTN: Sherrie Simpson, Post Office Box 1809, Lancaster, SC, 29721, by email to Sherrie Simpson at ssimpson@lancastersc.net or by online submission by selecting the "Citizens Comments" quick link located on the County website homepage at <https://www.mylancastersc.org/>. Comments must be no longer than approximately 3 minutes when read aloud. Comments received will be acknowledged during the Citizens Comments portion of the meeting. Comments will need to be received prior to 4:00 p.m. on the day before the meeting. Please use the same link above in order to submit input/comments for Public Hearings.]

6. **Discussion and Action Items**

- a. Bonding Capacity and Overview regarding Funding for the Detention Center and Regional Park Projects - Brian Nurick, Municipal Advisors, and Frannie Heizer, Bond Counsel with Burr Forman
- b. Discussion of Potential Merger of the Pleasant Valley and Indian Land Fire Fee Boards and Potential Increase of Fire Fee - Dennis Marstall, Darren Player, Greg Nicholson, Chief of Pleasant Valley Fire Department, and Chris Miller, Chief of the Indian Land Fire Department

7. **Adjournment**

Anyone requiring special services to attend this meeting should contact 285-1565 at least 24 hours in advance of this meeting. Lancaster County Council agendas are posted at the Lancaster County

Administration Building and are available on the Website: www.mylancastersc.org

*Meetings are live streamed and can be found by using the following link:
https://mylancastersc.org/government/lancaster_county_council/County_Council_Meetings.php*

Agenda Item Summary

Ordinance # / Resolution #: N/A

Contact Person / Sponsor: Dennis Marstall / Administration

Department: Administration

Date Requested to be on Agenda: 3/15/2023

Council Action Requested:

Receive information from Financial Advisor and Bond Counsel about funding mechanisms for the Detention Center Project, Regional Park, and other capital projects.

Points to Consider:

The County has a sound financial position given its current credit rating scores, increasing revenues, dedicated funding streams, and current bonding capacity to approach the bond market to fund the large proposed capital projects.

As is typical in any year, the County has a fluid debt program with debt coming on and debt rolling off, or scheduled for refinancing, based upon how the debt is structured.

There are some options on how County Council may want to approach the funding for the capital projects, based upon the dedicated revenue streams for each project. The main options include, pay-as-you-go, installment revenue purchase bonds and general obligation bonds. All three will be discussed during the presentation, and debt payment schedules provided (over a 20-year period) for the options.

The decisions regarding the debt instruments chosen and the debt payment schedules with which County Council is comfortable will ultimately determine the amount of money Council is willing to expend for each capital project.

Funding and Liability Factors:

The project design for the Detention Center is estimated to cost \$90 million. Partial funding of \$30 million was approved for the Detention Center through the voter-adopted Capital Projects Sales Tax 3 process, with the assumption that remaining funding would be included in a Capital Projects Sales Tax 4 package.

The County has \$12 million on hand from excess funds from the Capital Projects Sales Tax 2 package that has already been committed by County Council to the Detention Center project.

The project design for the Regional Park is estimated to cost \$44 million, depending on final recreation center size and number of trails. Proceeds from the hospitality tax are dedicated to fund the park, but there is also limited funds for the project from a State of South Carolina Appropriation, Impact fees, and contributions from the Roselyn Development. The County has \$8 million on hand from proceeds that have already been generated from the hospitality tax.

County Administration has identified approximately \$8 million in capital projects, including a new fleet maintenance facility, land acquisition and large equipment, that also needs funding. The County currently has general obligation bonding capacity of \$22 million that is supported through the Capital Fund portion of the millage rate that could be utilized for these capital projects.

The financing proposals will outline a funding strategy that does not increase the County millage rate, allows bonding capacity for general obligation bond-related projects while also maintaining the County's sound financial position.

Recommendation:

Provide input for total capital project cost expenditures and bonding instrument preferences.

Agenda Item Summary

Ordinance # / Resolution #: N/A

Contact Person / Sponsor: Dennis Marstall / Administration and Darren Player / Fire Services/Emergency Management

Department: Administration

Date Requested to be on Agenda: 3/15/2023

Council Action Requested:

Receive information about the proposed merger between the Indian Land Fire Department and the Pleasant Valley Fire Department.

Points to Consider:

County Council has received preliminary information regarding the merger request of the two panhandle fire departments.

These two departments have some of the highest call volumes in the County and are both impacted by the increased developments and population in the suburban panhandle area of the County.

The increased calls for service and variety of office, commercial and residential structures in these fire service areas are demanding a different type of staffing and enhanced funding structure for both departments.

Both departments are not able to utilize volunteer firefighters like they used to and must now rely on a more structured staff model involving career county staff and paid part-time staff to help maintain call coverage.

The fire chiefs of both departments, Greg Nicholson and Chris Miller, will outline their proposal to approve the merger as a way for the County to prepare for enhanced fire department demands in the panhandle area for a more metropolitan structure that is supported with more staffing, and ultimately more stations and equipment.

A proposed timeline will be presented for the merger to be effective on July 1, 2023.

Funding and Liability Factors:

The two fire departments are each funded through the \$90 rooftop fee, plus private/volunteer fundraising.

Together, the two departments presently operate with a combined budget of \$2.3 million.

The proposed first-year budget of a merged department, with an enhanced staffing structure and increased number of paid staff, is \$3.7 million.

The current fee structure, and limited funds in reserve by both department is not adequate to fund the staffing model and \$3.7 million needed to address the calls for service of a merged department.

County Council has previously received information on different levels of increase that would be needed from a rooftop fee to support the enhanced budget proposal. Those scenarios, including raising the rooftop fee up to \$150 or \$175 from the current \$90 fee, will be presented again.

Recommendation:

Provide feedback for the proposed merger and input into the potential of increasing the rooftop fee for these two fire

departments.