



Minutes
Sumter County Council
Regular Meeting
Tuesday, June 25, 2019 -- Held at 6:00 p.m.
County Administration Building -- County Council Chambers
13 E. Canal Street, Sumter, SC



COUNCIL MEMBERS PRESENT: James T. McCain, Jr., James R. Byrd, Jr., Eugene R. Baten, Artie Baker, Charles T. Edens, Vivian Fleming McGhaney, Chris Sumpter

COUNCIL MEMBERS ABSENT: None

STAFF MEMBERS PRESENT: Mary W. Blanding, Gary Mixon, James Michaelson, Lorraine Dennis, Johnathan Bryan; Allan Dailey, Joe Perry, three Sheriff Deputies; and the Honorable Lauretha McCants

MEMBERS OF THE PUBLIC: Approximately 38 members of the public were in attendance.

MEDIA: The Item Newspaper, Television Station WIS-TV

CALL TO ORDER: Chairman Or Vice Chairman Of Sumter County Council

INVOCATION: Dr. Rev. Canty, Chairman of Sumter School Board who is a local businessman, gave the invocation.

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE: All in attendance repeated the Pledge of Allegiance to the American Flag.

APPROVAL OF AGENDA: Regular Meeting Tuesday, June 25, 2019

Chairman McCain stated that he would entertain a motion to approve the agenda for the June 25, 2019, meeting of Sumter County Council.

Prior to presenting the motion for approval of the Agenda, Councilman McGhaney stated that since the School District has come prepared to offer the County some new information about the District's budget, and because the School Resolution is the only item on Council's agenda for action, to consider adding the new information to the agenda.

ACTION: MOTION was made by Councilman McGhaney, seconded by Councilman Baten to amend the agenda by adding Sumter School District's new information for its 2019-2020 Budget request. Council members McCain, Baten, and McGhaney voted in the affirmative. Council members Baker, Byrd, Edens, and Sumpter voted in opposition. The motion failed.

ACTION: MOTION was made by Vice Chairman Byrd, seconded by Councilman Sumpter, to approve the agenda as written; Council members Baker, Byrd, Edens, and Sumpter voted in the affirmative. Council members Baten and McGhaney voted in opposition. The Chairman did not vote.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES: Regular Meeting Tuesday, June 11, 2019

Chairman McCain stated that he would entertain a motion concerning the adoption of the minutes of Council's July 11, 2019, meeting as presented.

ACTION: MOTION was made by Vice Chairman Byrd, seconded by Councilman Baker, and unanimously carried by Council to approve the minutes of its June 11, 2019, meeting as presented.

**LAND USE MATTERS AND REZONING REQUESTS:
Planned Development/Rezoning Requests**

- (1) None

OTHER PUBLIC HEARINGS:

- (1) None

NEW BUSINESS:

- (1) **R-19-01 -- A Resolution By Members Of Sumter County Council Adopting Council's Actions On The 2019-2020 Budget Request From Sumter School District.**

The Chairman introduced the Sumter School District Budget Resolution; he stated that this Resolution will provide for the millage collection for the School District.

The following motion was offered:

ACTION: MOTION was made by Councilman Sumpter, seconded by Councilman Baker to maintain the millage for the School District as it was last year.

NOTE: Councilwoman McGhaney asked for discussion on the motion prior to taking the vote on the motion that was offered.

Councilman Baten asked what the millage figure was for last year. The Chairman clarified the motion by stating that there will be no increase in millage from last year. Chairman McCain then asked Councilman Sumpter to restate the motion.

ACTION: (RESTATED) MOTION was made by Councilman Sumpter, seconded by Councilman Baker to maintain the millage for the School District as it was last year.

Councilman Baten asked that the information for the millage from last year be shared with the audience. Mr. Mixon stated that he would provide that and the Clerk will provide a copy of the ordinance to Council electronically.

ACTION: (RESTATED A SECOND TIME) MOTION was made by Councilman Sumpter, seconded by Councilman Baker to maintain the millage for the School District as it was last year with a millage figure of 160.1.

Councilwoman McGhaney stated that it is necessary for Council to place a figure in the draft resolution so that it can be prepared with the figures prior to Council taking action on the resolution.

The Finance Director informed the County Administrator that the current millage for the School District is 160.1.

Councilman McGhaney also asked for the approximate amount of money that will be generated by the 160.1 mills. The Chairman asked the Attorney if it is necessary to place the dollar amount in the Resolution. Councilman McGhaney stated that it may not be necessary, but it is appropriate to have the figures listed in the Resolution as it has been done in past years. The Attorney stated that it is not necessary, but as long as Council is passing the exact same Resolution for 2019-2020 that it did for 2018-2019, then it would just be a matter of the Clerk to County Council filling in the blanks of the Resolution the same as she has done in the past. Mr. Bryan also stated that there may be a difference in the dollar amount, because the countywide value has gone up by 2.0%; therefore, the number of dollars will increase. The millage will not increase based on the motion that is before Council.

Councilman McGhaney stated that since the information that the School District brought tonight for Council's review was not presented, she wanted the public to be aware that the Chairman had spoken to someone at the School District who informed Chairman McCain that the school district reviewed its budget request and reduced the request from 9.0 mills to 1.5 mills increase. The 1.5 mills increase equates to \$206,000. Councilman McGhaney offered a substitute motion as listed below.

ACTION - SUBSTITUTE MOTION: MOTION was made by Councilman McGhaney, seconded by Councilman Baten to increase the School District's budget request by 1.5 Mills increase which equates to \$206,000.

NOTE: During the discussion period of this Motion, Councilman Baten asked that the following be placed on record: The schools in this district have a large number of minority students and the district needs the money to help these students. He also said that the elementary schools need help; they are failing. Sumter County Council seems as if they will take money from these low income kids and give it to the rich business people in this County. Council is taking money from the schools that the kids need so that the County does not have to tax the business people which are obligated to pay the tax by law. Councilman Baten then asked the question, is that the kind of community we want?

Chairman McCain stated that he must agree to disagree with Councilman Baten. He stated that the businesses that he has talked to are in favor of supporting the School District.

The Chairman restated the motion so that action could be taken.

ACTION - SUBSTITUTE MOTION: MOTION was made by Councilwoman McGhaney, seconded by Councilman Baten to increase the School District's budget request by 1.5 Mills increase which equates to \$206,000. Council Members McGhaney, McCain, and Baten voted in the affirmative. Council members Baker, Byrd, Edens, and Sumpter, voted in opposition. The MOTION failed.

The Chairman then called for a vote on the restated motion given by Councilman Sumpter.

ACTION: (RESTATED A SECOND TIME) MOTION was made by Councilman Sumpter, seconded by Councilman Baker to maintain the millage for the School District as it was last year

with a millage figure of 160.1 equaling approximately \$3,900,000 in value. Council members Baker, Byrd, Edens, and Sumpter, voted in the affirmative. Council members McCain, McGhaney, and Baten voted in opposition. The motion carried.

- (2) **It May Be Necessary To Hold An Executive Session To Discuss An Economic Development Matter, An Employment Matter, A Legal Briefing, Or Other Matters Pertaining To An Executive Session, And Take Appropriate Actions Thereafter If Required.**

No executive session.

OLD BUSINESS:

- (1) None

COMMITTEE REPORTS:

- (1) **Report From Council Members On Other Meetings, Trainings, And/Or Conferences; And Any Other Council Comments.**

Councilman Baten read the following statement:

Tuesday, June 25, 2019, is a day of infamy in Sumter, South Carolina. It is the day "Team Sumter" died. We are a divided County. The unit we displayed in 2011, when we attracted Continental Tires (a 500 million dollar economic development project that created 1,600 jobs) no longer exists. To attract future business and industry, we must rebuild "Team Sumter" by resolving our emotional and disruptive disagreements that brought this County down.

MONTHLY REPORTS

None

COUNTY ADMINISTRATOR'S REPORT

None

PUBLIC COMMENT

1. **Brenda Williams** - Stated that she is a retired medical doctor and she is representing her 501c3 organization, The Family Unit, Inc. Dr. Williams said that we, as a community, appreciate the fact that you all have some difficult decisions that you have to make on a lot of different topics. She further stated that the community also appreciates the complexity of your job. There is much concern about the students and the schools. Dr. Williams said that on behalf of her organization that the group appreciates the new HVAC systems being installed at the Sumter Career and Technology Center. She also asked Council members if they could consider providing one time funding for the entire Career Center to ensure that all the students, staff, and visitors will be in a more comfortable location when they work, learn, and visit the Center.

Dr. Brenda Williams asked that as construction continues are the Courthouse, she asked Council to be mindful of the needs of the voters and to please try to have all construction completed prior to the election.

2. **Jay Linginfelter** a District #6 resident. Mr. Linginfelter gave the following statement: "When you invest in yourself, people will invest in you." That quote is from Councilman Gene Baten on the Sumter Economic Development Website.

He further read the following: "As controllers of the purse strings of the Sumter School District - are you investing in yourself? (Sumter County) Education is the foundation of society and how business and industry will succeed and continue to choose Sumter --**IF** the talent pool is available. If you do not have a solid foundation, the building will not stand. Sumter County Schools are underfunded. Period. No way around it. Sumter County School District is below the State average and most of our neighboring districts when it comes to local funding by \$20-30 million total."

Minutes - Budget Workshop - Page 21, 2019 - page 5 - "Council members and the Administrator, Mr. Mixon, discussed the need to increase the Road User Fee in Sumter County. It was stated that Sumter County has one of the lowest Road User Fees in the state of counties that have a Road User Fee. After all comments, Council took the following actions on the increase in the Road User Fee"

...and increased the fee from \$15 to \$30. It's OK for Sumter to be one of the lower funded School Districts, but not OK to have low funding for our roads? How can you put roads ahead of children? It's OK to double the Road User Fee, but not OK to increase the millage rate? It's OK to raise road taxes \$1 million but not raise \$1 million in taxes for children's education? It's not about the district balancing the budget, but about **INCREASING** it budget. Ask them how they are balancing the budget. How many employees, teacher positions will go unfilled next year compared to this year, and the year prior? It is time to turn the page on the past and look to the future. Many of you have said at some point everything is great and moving forward in Sumter except our schools. I say stop complaining and **be part of the solution!**

3. **Shawn Reardon** stated that he is a Sumter native. He said that he is disappointed in Council's actions about the School District's budget. He said that he would hope that Council would reconsider the vote and fund the School District and help the education system in Sumter County. He also stated that several members of Council said that they needed an itemized summary report of how the funds would be used and that the funds would be going directly to the teachers. Although that information was prepared for Council and handed to each Council member, the vote was denied to grant additional funding. Mr. Reardon also stated that tonight has been the first time that he has heard Council members address the issue about the children. He suggested that some of the Council members are more worried about their elections, that making sure that the children of Sumter School District are taken care of. He also said that we have excellent resources and programs in Sumter, but what about education? When will County Council and other leaders in the Community truly value the educational system in Sumter? When will County Council step out from the shadows and be proactive in funding the schools of Sumter? When will educating the children become a priority? When will the School District have to stop requesting money that is in fact actually owed to them? Once again, I ask that Council members find it in your hearts to properly fund the schools of Sumter County. Put the children first and foremost.

- 4. **Rev. Dr. Ralph W. Canty** - stated that Sumter School District remains resolved to create one of the finest School Districts in the State of South Carolina and in this Country. The District will not give up, it's noble, it's what the community deserves, and it is certainly what our children need. Therefore, I want to extend an olive branch to you tonight because we must find ways, to move beyond this impasse. This must not continue to be a tradition in this County. We must work together, and so I want to invite you as Chairman McCain has, to meet us, the School Board, at the table and let us join hands, hearts, and minds, and do what is good for this County. We will never be the progressive community that we can be without a quality public education system. I beg, I plead, and I pray, that we move beyond this night and get to the point where we understand that economic development for Sumter County hinges on the intellectual uplift of every young mind.
- 5. **Jackie Hughes** -- said that it is her hope that our County can move beyond this money issue and concentrate on educating students. This can be done by requiring parents to do their job and requiring their children to learn. Parents are the most important people in a child's life. The parents can do much to help our education improve for the good of all.

ADJOURNMENT

After all discussion and all comments from the public, motion was made by Councilman Baker, seconded by Councilman Sumpter to adjourn the meeting of Sumter County Council at 6:38 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

James T. McCain, Jr.
Chairman or Vice Chairman
Sumter County Council

Mary W. Blanding
Clerk to County Council
Sumter County Council

Approved: July 9, 2019

I certify that public and media notification of the above-mentioned meeting was given prior thereto as follows required by Freedom of Information:

- Public Notified: Yes
- Manner Notified: Agendas posted on bulletin board on third floor of the Administration Building.
- Date Posted: June 24, 2019
- Media Notified: Yes
- Manner Notified: Agenda Information is listed on Sumter County's Home Page, and E-mailed to The Item, The Chamber, WIS-TV, WBTW, and Time Warner Cable.
- Date Notified: June 21, 2019

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Respectfully submitted,

Mary W. Blanding

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