



**Minutes**  
**Special Meeting**  
**Sumter County Council**  
**Tuesday, September 28, 2021 - Held at 5:30 p.m.**  
**County Administration Building -- Third Floor**  
**County Administration Conference Room**  
**13 E. Canal Street, Sumter, SC**

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*Social Distancing Is Required At All of County Council's Meetings,  
And Seating Is On A First Come First Serve Basis.*

**COUNCIL MEMBERS PRESENT:** James T. McCain, Jr., Chairman; James Byrd, Jr., Vice Chairman; Artie Baker, Eugene R. Baten, Charles T. Edens, Vivian Fleming McGhaney, and Carlton B. Washington.

**COUNCIL MEMBERS ABSENT:** None

**STAFF MEMBERS PRESENT:** Gary Mixon, Mary W. Blanding, Helen Roodman, Keysa Rogers, Johnathan Bryan, Joe Perry, and two Sheriff Deputies.

**MEMBERS OF THE PUBLIC PRESENT:** No members of the public were in attendance at this meeting.

**MEDIA PRESENT:** The Item Newspaper, Shelby Goulding.

**CALL TO ORDER** – Chairman of County Council. the Honorable James T. McCain, Jr., called the meeting to order.

**INVOCATION** – The Clerk to Council gave an invocation at one of the earlier committee meetings.

**APPROVAL OF AGENDA** – September 28, 2021

Chairman McCain asked for a motion to approve the agenda of this Special meeting of Sumter County Council.

**ACTION:** MOTION was made by Councilman Baker, seconded by Councilman Baten, and unanimously carried by Council to approve the agenda as presented.

**NEW BUSINESS:**

- (1) Further Discussions And Possible Actions Concerning Funds From The American Rescue Plan Act.

**MINI GRANT PROGRAM:**

Mr. Mixon reported to Council that staff opened the Mini Grant Program Process on September 20, 2021, and will close on October 22, 2021. There will be three weeks for the citizens to apply for the grant.

On November 5, 2021, the grant applications will be reviewed by staff with an anticipated date of November 19, 2021, to make awards to those that have been approved for the Mini Grant Program.

As of this meeting, there are only two applicants that have applied. However, there has been a number of inquiries about the program. It is projected that more applications will be received prior to the November 5, 2021, cut-off date.

Councilman McGhaney asked the Administrator to remind Council about the monetary portion of the Mini Grant Program. Mr. Mixon said that the Grant is in \$15,000 increments, with \$500,000 being the appropriated amount for this program.

It was further stated by Councilman McGhaney, that the County Administrator said those figures were not etched in stone. With that in mind, she said that with the County receiving \$10,000,000, it would be worthy that 10% of those funds be used for programs such as the Mini Grant Program and other needs of the Community. Therefore, she requested that it be considered that \$500,000 more be placed in this program or a similar program.

Councilman McMghaney stated that once the County gets to the point of approving grant funding and there may not be enough funds to cover all the applications, she asked for the Administrator to bring that back to Council for review. The Administrator stated that he and staff would certainly bring that concern back before Council. If there are more quality programs than anticipated and additional funds are needed, then that will be brought back to Council for consideration of appropriating additional funds.

Additionally, Councilman McGhaney stated that she understands that there are other needs of the County; however she is concerned that if the County already have funds obligated to projects of the County and there are not enough funds to satisfy vital proposals submitted by non-profits which may cause issues for those mini-grant programs. She further stated that she would hate for the funds that the County may want to use to be obligated in such a way that those Mini-Grant agencies that have turned in applications for the Mini Grants are not granted funds because of the County's obligation to its projects.

Councilman Washington stated that a lot of good people are working on some very good projects. He supported Councilman McGhaney's comments. Councilman Baten stated that he supports the concept of Councilman McGhaney's statement; however, the County must have a budget limitation for the Mini Grant Program. He further stated that although some Council members support the concept of an agency receiving more than one Mini Grant, it is his desire to allow for each agency to receive one Mini Grant and then if funds are left over, then let those that need more funds to provide the additional information for another grant. The application was not limited to one project per agency.

**MOBILE HOME REPAIR GRANT PROGRAM AND OTHER NEEDS:**

Mr. Mixon informed Council that since the last meeting and the request for help to fix mobile homes that are over 20 years old, he and the staff have been working together to develop a Mobile Home Repair Grant Program.

He stated that the first step is to ask Council to allow staff to develop a Request For Qualifications (RFQ). There are currently two entities in Sumter County that may be able to handle this grant program, however, there may be others. Therefore, the RFQ's will be developed to see who would be qualified to provide this service for the Mobile Home Repair Grant Program and to meet ARPA reports. Based on the Request For Qualifications, staff will come back to Council to report their findings to Council so that recommendations can be made and authorizations from Council can be approved.

It was stated that approximately \$500,000 will be appropriated for this program with a limit of \$5,000 to \$7,000 per mobile home unit to have work done to the mobile home. Staff will report back to County Council once the RFQ is completed.

Councilman Washington thanked Mr. Mixon for his work on this matter. He stated that there are many mobile homes in his Council District that need help with repairs because they cannot afford the funds to pay for this needed work.

Mr. Mixon said there are other grant requests such as expanding Broad Band in the rural area. A request has come to allow Board Band into the Rembert area approximately nine miles of Broad Band from Dinkins Mill Road to Ellerby Road. This request would help the Community Center as well as the School in this vicinity. The request for funds for this project is \$50,000. Mr. Mixon said that he will be meeting with FTC, to find out how Sumter County might partner with them to extend Broad Band in the needed areas. He also said that FTC has Broad Band in Clarendon County, Williamsburg County and he believes that Sumter County would like to see how a partnership might help the area in Rembert and other areas throughout the County.

Additionally, there is a request from Elyane Brunson concerning having a meeting with Sumter County Council and the Black Chamber of Commerce to discuss the needs of small businesses in the area.

Lastly, the County has received a request from the Sumter County Community Development Corporation (CDC) for \$445,000 to restore a historic house that has been granted to the CDC with the intent to renovate the house to be used for veterans. It was noted that the architect of the home is very unique and historic in nature.

Mr. Mixon reminded Council that there are \$16,000,000 worth of great projects just from the needs of the County. The needs of the community and the County must be coordinated to allow for the Community to receive some grant funds and then some of the projects that the County needs will be taken care of as well.

Also, Mr. Mixon said that the Special Meetings will not be held every week. However, as the staff continues to work on the Mini Grant Program, and developing the RFQ's as well as looking at the priority needs of the County, the Special Meetings may be scheduled once a month or at other times on a quarterly basis as needed.

Councilman Washington stated that he went along with Council during the budget and other funding meetings during the appropriations of ARPA funds; however, the County

must start funding basic service needs. He said that if basic services are not being considered or funded at some level, Council will see a lot of push back from him. The rural citizens have many needs such as more recreation, Broad Band, and road repairs, etc.

The Chairman asked Mr. Mixon if there was any action that needed to be taken. Mr. Mixon said that his report was for Information Only. He and staff will bring additional information to Council concerning the Request For Qualification at a future meeting.

It Necessary To Hold An Executive Session For Council To Discuss One Or All Of The Following: Contractual Matter, Legal Briefing, Employment/Personnel Issue, etc. And Take Appropriate Actions After The Executive Session As Necessary.

(1) No executive session was held.

OLD BUSINESS

(1) None

ADJOURNMENT: Motion was made by Councilman Baten, seconded by Councilman Baker, and unanimously carried by Council to adjourn the meeting at 5:48 p.m.

Respectfully Submitted,

*Mary W. Blanding*

Mary W. Blanding, Clerk  
Sumter County Council

Approved: October 12, 2021