



**JASPER COUNTY COUNCIL
EMERGENCY SERVICES COMMITTEE
TRAINING ROOM, 3RD FLOOR
358 THIRD AVE., RIDGELAND, SC 29936
MARCH 8, 2011, 5:00 P.M.
MINUTES**

OFFICIALS PRESENT – COMMITTEE CHAIRMAN SAULS, COMMITTEE MEMBER DRAYTON

STAFF PRESENT- ADMINISTRATOR ANDREW FULGHUM, CLERK TO COUNCIL JUDY FRANK, ADMINISTRATIVE SERVICES DIRECTOR RONNIE MALPHRUS, EMERGENCY SERVICES DIRECTOR WILBUR DALEY, DETENTION CENTER DIRECTOR ARTHUR BENJAMIN

OTHERS PRESENT – DOUG GRAHAM, NELVIN GRAHAM

IN ACCORDANCE WITH THE FREEDOM OF INFORMATION ACT THE ELECTRONIC AND PRINT MEDIA WERE NOTIFIED.

DURING PERIODS OF DISCUSSION AND/OR PRESENTATIONS MINUTES ARE TYPICALLY CONDENSED AND PARAPHRASED.

CALL TO ORDER – COMMITTEE CHAIRMAN SAULS CALLED THE MEETING TO ORDER AT 5:02 P.M.

INVOCATION – COMMITTEE CHAIRMAN SAULS GAVE THE INVOCATION.

MONTHLY REPORTS – MR. FULGHUM EXPLAINED THE VARIOUS DEPARTMENTS THAT FELL UNDER THE EMERGENCY SERVICES COMMITTEE. THE DEPARTMENTS LISTED WERE FIRE, RESCUE, IT, DETENTION CENTER, DISPATCH, E-911 AND EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT.

FIRE SERVICE – MR. FULGHUM SAID THEY WOULD LIKE TO DISCUSS THE BEST WAY TO HANDLE FIRE SERVICE AND THE THREE CONTRACTS THAT THE COUNTY CURRENTLY HAS WITH THE TOWN OF RIDGELAND, THE CITY OF HARDEEVILLE AND LEVY FIRE DEPARTMENT. MR. FULGHUM SAID THAT THE

CHERRY POINT FIRE DISTRICT HAS A SEPARATE MILLAGE TO COVER FIRE PROTECTION AND THOSE TAXES ARE COLLECTED AND TURNED OVER TO HARDEEVILLE SINCE THEY PROVIDE THE FIRE SERVICE. MR. FULGHUM SAID THE COUNTY PROVIDES AMBULANCE SERVICE IN CHERRY POINT. MR. FULGHUM SAID THERE WERE FIVE FIRE DISTRICTS IN THE COUNTY AND PROVIDED THE COMMITTEE WITH A MAP OF THE DISTRICTS. MR. MALPHRUS PRESENTED THE FINANCIALS REGARDING FIRE SERVICE AND EXPLAINED THAT CURRENTLY ONLY CHERRY POINT HAS 31 MILLS ASSESSED FOR FIRE COVERAGE. MR. MALPHRUS SAID THE CONTRACT WITH HARDEEVILLE TO COVER RURAL FIRE IS IN THE AMOUNT OF \$195,000 AND THE SPECIAL TAX FOR FIRE COVERAGE IN CHERRY POINT COMES TO ABOUT \$700,000 A YEAR AND THIS MONEY IS PAYED TO HARDEEVILLE SINCE THEY PROVIDE THE FIRE COVERAGE. MR. MALPHRUS SAID THE FIRE CONTRACT FOR THE LEVY FIRE DISTRICT IS \$280,000 AND THE CONTRACT WITH RIDGELAND IS FOR \$195,000. MR. MALPHRUS SAID ALL THE OTHER AREAS OF THE COUNTY ARE IN THE JASPER FIRE DISTRICT. MR. MALPHRUS SAID THE COUNTY FIRE COSTS \$812,000 AND THERE IS NO MILLAGE CHARGED. COMMITTEE CHAIRMAN SAULS SAID THE COUNTY NEEDS TO HAVE AN EFFICIENT SYSTEM. COMMITTEE CHAIRMAN SAULS ASKED IF THE \$812,000 ONLY COVERS FIRE AND MR. MALPHRUS SAID THAT WAS CORRECT. MR. MALPHRUS SAID THE FIRE COVERAGE IS NOT REALLY WHERE IT NEEDS TO BE, DUE TO THE CUTS IN STAFF AND THE NEED FOR MORE MANPOWER. MR. MALPHRUS SAID THE 11 FIRE FIGHTERS ARE COSTING THE COUNTY \$812,000 AND THIS DOES NOT INCLUDE THE AMBULANCE SERVICE. COUNCILMAN DRAYTON ASKED IF HARDEEVILLE RECEIVED \$895,000 FROM THE COUNTY FOR FIRE COVERAGE IN RURAL HARDEEVILLE AND CHERRY POINT. MR. MALPHRUS SAID THAT WAS FOR THE CONTRACT AND THE MILLAGE COLLECTED IN THE CHERRY POINT FIRE DISTRICT.

COMMITTEE CHAIRMAN SAULS ASKED MR. BENJAMIN FOR HIS REPORT AND THEN THE COMMITTEE WILL CONTINUE THE DISCUSSION OF FIRE SERVICE. MR. BENJAMIN INFORMED THE COMMITTEE OF A GRANT THAT HE RECEIVED FOR FOUR NEW VEHICLES THAT WAS USED TO PURCHASED VANS. MR. BENJAMIN SAID THE SHERIFF'S DEPARTMENT LET THEM USE ONE OF THEIR OLDER VANS AND HE WAS GOING TO GIVE IT BACK. MR. FULGHUM SAID CURRENTLY THERE IS NO POLICY REGARDING TRADING VEHICLES. COUNCILMAN DRAYTON SAID IF IT CAN BE DONE, TO DO IT. MR. FULGHUM SAID THEY FOLLOWED A PROCESS TO ASSIGN THE EXTRA VEHICLES WHERE NEEDED. MR. BENJAMIN SAID THE VANS HAVE ARRIVED AND ARE CURRENTLY HAVING THE DECALS PUT ON. MR. BENJAMIN SAID THERE WAS ALSO ENOUGH MONEY FOR RADIOS. COUNCILMAN DRAYTON ASKED IF MR. BENJAMIN APPLIED FOR THE GRANT HIMSELF AND MR. BENJAMIN RESPONDED THAT HE DID. MR. FULGHUM PROVIDED THE COMMITTEE WITH A MONTHLY REPORT THAT HE RECEIVES FROM MR. BENJAMIN.

COUNCILMAN DRAYTON ASKED ABOUT FIRE COVERAGE IN THE AREA PAST THE POWER PLANT IN HARDEEVILLE. MR. DALEY SAID IT IS COVERED BY THE TILLMAN FIRE DEPARTMENT.

MR. FULGHUM SAID THAT EMS IS A SIGNIFICANT PART OF THE BUDGET AND HE PROVIDED THE COMMITTEE WITH A MAP OF THE FIRE DISTRICTS THAT

HAD THE MILLAGE NEEDED TO COVER THE EXPENSES. MR. FULGHUM SAID IT HAS BEEN CONSIDERED TO CHARGE A MILLAGE FOR COVERAGE IN EACH DISTRICT. MR. FULGHUM SAID THE STATE ALSO CAPS THE AMOUNT THE COUNTY'S MILLAGE CAN INCREASE. MR. FULGHUM SAID ONE WAY TO REDUCE THE COUNTY'S OPERATING MILLAGE IS TO PUT IN FIRE DISTRICT MILLAGE. MR. FULGHUM SAID THAT ATTORNEY JONES IS CURRENTLY CONTACTING THE ATTORNEY GENERAL FOR AN OPINION ON THIS. COUNCILMAN DRAYTON SAID AN OPINION IS NOT THE LAW. MR. MALPHRUS SAID THAT THERE IS A LOT TO TAKE INTO ACCOUNT FOR THE AMOUNT OF MILLS TO PUT ON. MR. MALPHRUS SAID CURRENTLY THE COUNTY IS AT 131 MILLS. DOUG GRAHAM SAID HE THOUGHT CHERRY POINT RECEIVED ABOUT \$400,000 AND IN REALITY THEY ARE RECEIVING \$700,000 AND THE LAND THAT HAS BEEN ANNEXED IS NOT TAXED. MR. GRAHAM SAID THAT HARDEEVILLE IS GETTING \$895,000 AND THE SERVICE OF 2 AMBULANCES AND FOUR FIREMEN COMING FROM THE COUNTY'S EMS BUDGET. DOUG GRAHAM SAID THAT HARDEEVILLE IS NOT ACTUALLY COVERING THAT MUCH COUNTY PROPERTY. MR. FULGHUM SAID THE MILLAGE CAN BE REDUCED. MR. GRAHAM SAID HE FELT LEVY SHOULD PAY FOR THE SERVICE THEY RECEIVE AND IF ANYONE IN THE COUNTY GETS A SERVICE, THEY SHOULD PAY FOR IT. MR. GRAHAM SAID THE LEVY ISO RATING IS A 5 AND THEY ARE WORKING TOWARDS A 4 ISO RATING WHICH GREATLY REDUCES THE COST OF INSURANCE. MR. FULGHUM SAID IF IT TAKES MORE FIREMEN TO REDUCE THE ISO RATING, IT MAY BE CHEAPER TO PAY THE HIGHER INSURANCE PREMIUM AS MORE FIRE FIGHTERS MAY COST MORE THAN THE INSURANCE.

MR. FULGHUM SAID THE COUNTY NEEDS TO LET THE CONTRACT HOLDERS KNOW BY THE END OF MARCH IF THE COUNTY IS GOING TO RENEW THE CONTRACTS AS THEY HAVE PEOPLE WORKING. MR. GRAHAM SAID THAT ONE YEAR NOTICE IS REQUIRED FOR THE LEVY CONTRACT. MR. GRAHAM SAID LEVY HAS 3 YEARS LEFT ON THEIR CONTRACT. COMMITTEE CHAIRMAN SAULS ASKED MR. GRAHAM IF HE KNEW HOW MUCH MONEY HE WOULD NEED THIS YEAR. MR. FULGHUM SAID THEY WOULD NEED \$670,000 IF THEY WERE GOING TO RENEW ALL THE CONTRACTS, BUT HE WOULD HAVE A BETTER IDEA AT THE END OF THE MONTH. MR. FULGHUM SAID IF THE CONTRACTS ARE CUT, THE COUNTY WOULD STILL HAVE TO PROVIDE THE SERVICE AND THE ISO RATINGS WOULD GO UP. MR. FULGHUM ASKED THE COMMITTEE TO CONSIDER RENEWING THE CONTRACTS FOR ANOTHER YEAR AND TO LOOK INTO CHARGING TAXES PER DISTRICT. COMMITTEE CHAIRMAN SAULS SAID THEY HARDLY HAD A CHOICE AND HE DIDN'T KNOW WHY THE COUNTY WOULD NOT RENEW THE CONTRACTS, BUT THE COUNTY NEEDED TO COME UP WITH A FIVE YEAR PLAN. MR. MALPHRUS SAID HE FELT THE VERBAGE IN THE CONTRACT WITH THE MUNICIPALITIES NEEDED TO BE CHANGED. COMMITTEE CHAIRMAN SAULS SAID HE FELT THE COMMITTEE SHOULD RECOMMEND RENEWING THE CONTRACTS IF THE COUNTY CAN FINANCIALLY AFFORD TO DO IT. COUNCILMAN DRAYTON SAID HE COULD NOT MAKE A RECOMMENDATION PRIOR TO KNOWING WHAT THE BUDGET WILL BE. MR. FULGHUM SAID THAT THE MUNICIPALITIES NEED TO BE NOTIFIED ABOUT THE CONTRACTS AND HE RECOMMENDED PURSUING THAT MILLAGE CAN BE

ADOPTED IN THE FUTURE. MR. FULGHUM SAID THEY MAY WANT TO HAVE A FULL COUNCIL WORKSHOP REGARDING THIS. COUNCILMAN DRAYTON SAID THAT IS WHAT HE WOULD RECOMMEND. COMMITTEE CHAIRMAN SAULS SAID THAT THE COUNCIL CHAIRMAN WANTED THE COMMITTEES TO BRING BACK RECOMMENDATIONS. MR. FULGHUM ASKED IF THE COMMITTEE WOULD LIKE A STAFF RECOMMENDATION. COMMITTEE CHAIRMAN SAULS SAID HE WOULD LIKE THAT AND A BUDGET FOR THE COMING YEAR. MR. MALPHRUS SAID THEY WILL NOT KNOW WHAT THE BUDGET WILL BE UNTIL IT PASSES. MR. FULGHUM SAID THEY NEEDED TO LET THE CONTRACT HOLDERS KNOW WHAT THEY PLANNED TO DO. MR. MALPHRUS SAID THE PREVIOUS FIRE COMMITTEE HAD TO MAKE A RECOMMENDATION IN MARCH. COUNCILMAN DRAYTON SAID WILL THEY HAVE A DRAFT OF THE BUDGET BEFORE THE END OF MARCH. MR. FULGHUM SAID THAT BY LAW HE HAS TO PROVIDE THE COUNCIL WITH A BALANCED BUDGET AND THEN THE COUNCIL DISCUSSES WHAT THEY WANT TO APPROVE AND WHAT THEY WANT CHANGED. COUNCILMAN DRAYTON ASKED IF THE DEPARTMENT DIRECTORS WOULD PRESENT THEIR BUDGET REQUESTS. MR. FULGHUM SAID HE WOULD PRESENT THE ENTIRE BUDGET AND THEN THE COUNCIL CAN DECIDE WHO THEY WANT TO TALK TO.

COMMITTEE CHAIRMAN SAULS ASKED WHO PRESENTED LEVY FIRE DEPARTMENTS BUDGET. MR. GRAHAM SAID HE WORKS THROUGH WILBUR DALEY. MR. GRAHAM SAID THE TWO TOWNS GET THEIR CONTRACT MONEY DIRECTLY IN TWO PAYMENTS. MR. GRAHAM SAID THE COUNTY MANAGES THE LEVY FUNDS AND THEY REQUEST PURCHASE ORDERS FOR WHAT THEY NEED. MR. MALPHRUS SAID THAT FOR THE LONG TERM FOR THE NEXT THREE YEARS THE COUNTY COULD RENEW THE CONTRACTS AND PUT MILLAGE IN THE BUDGET FOR FIRE TO PAY FOR THE CONTRACTS. COMMITTEE CHAIRMAN SAULS SAID THAT WILL NOT LEVEL THE PLAYING FIELD, BUT IT WOULD HELP. MR. DALEY SAID THE COUNTY HAS TO HAVE FIRE SERVICE. COMMITTEE CHAIRMAN SAULS ASKED IF THAT WOULD IMPROVE THE ISO RATINGS AND MR. DALEY SAID THEY WOULD REMAIN THE SAME. CHAIRMAN SAULS ASKED IF EMS WAS OPERATING IN THE BLACK AND MR. MALPHRUS SAID IT DID NOT PAY FOR ITSELF, BUT IT IS WITHIN ITS BUDGET. MR. FULGHUM SAID THAT HE WAS CHARGED WITH GIVING THE STAFF RECOMMENDATION FOR THE BUDGET ON MARCH 23, 2011. COMMITTEE CHAIRMAN SAULS SAID HE WOULD LIKE ALL THE FIRE CHIEFS AT THE NEXT COMMITTEE MEETING. MR. DALEY SAID THEIR MAIN CONCERN IS THE CONTRACT. MR. FULGHUM SAID HE WOULD HAVE ATTORNEY JONES WORK ON A NEW CONTRACT.

FUTURE MEETING DATES – COMMITTEE CHAIRMAN SAULS SAID THAT RATHER THAN SET A SPECIFIC DAY AND TIME, THE COMMITTEE WOULD MEET AS NEEDED.

ADJOURN- COMMITTEE CHAIRMAN SAULS ADJOURNED THE MEETING AT 6:00 P.M.M.

RESPECTFULLY SUBMITTED BY:

APPROVED BY:

JUDITH M. FRANK, ccc
CLERK TO COUNCIL

L. MARTIN SAULS, IV
COMMITTEE CHAIRMAN