



**JASPER COUNTY COUNCIL
COUNCIL CHAMBERS
358 THIRD AVE., RIDGELAND, SC 29936
MAY 26, 2010
MINUTES**

OFFICIALS PRESENT: GEORGE HOOD- CHAIRMAN, HENRY ETHERIDGE-
COUNCILMAN, REV. SAMUEL GREGORY- COUNCILMAN, HUBERT TYLER –
COUNCILMAN

OFFICIALS ABSENT: LEROY BLACKSHEAR – VICE CHAIRMAN

STAFF PRESENT:

ANDREW FULGHUM, ADMINISTRATOR
RONNIE MALPHRUS, DEP. ADM. ADMINISTRATIVE SERVICES
JUDITH FRANK, CLERK TO COUNCIL

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: CHAIRMAN HOOD CALLED THE WORKSHOP TO ORDER
AT 3:05 P.M.

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE: CHAIRMAN HOOD LED THE PLEDGE OF
ALLEGIANCE.

INVOCATION: COUNCILMAN ETHERIDGE GAVE THE INVOCATION

PRESENTATIONS:

USCB –DR. UPSHAW: DR. UPSHAW DISCUSSED THE VARIOUS WAYS THAT
USCB HAS HAD AN ECONOMIC IMPACT ON THE COUNTY THROUGH
SPORTING EVENTS, HOUSING AND SUPPORTING LOCAL BUSINESSES. DR.
UPSHAW EXPLAINED THAT EDUCATION IS A CRITICAL INVESTMENT TO THE
FUTURE WELL BEING OF A REGION. DR. UPSHAW TOLD THE COUNCIL
THAT THE UNIVERSITY OFFERS 16 BACCALAUREATE DEGREES. DR.
UPSHAW INFORMED THE COUNCIL THAT 222 STUDENTS GRADUATED IN
MAY AND THEY ARE EXPERIENCING THEIR HIGHEST ENROLLMENT. DR.

UPSHAW SAID THE NUMBER OF STUDENTS FROM JASPER COUNTY HAS INCREASED 21%. DR. UPSHAW SAID THE UNIVERSITY WORKS CLOSELY WITH THE LOCAL HIGH SCHOOLS. DR. UPSHAW EXPLAINED THAT THEIR BUDGET WAS CUT BY THE STATE AND ONLY 6 CENTS OF EVERY DOLLAR THEY RECEIVE COME FROM THE STATE. DR. UPSHAW SAID THEY ORIGINALLY REQUESTED \$150,000.00 FROM THE COUNTY; HOWEVER, THE STATE JUST CUT THEM AN ADDITIONAL \$400,000.00. DR. UPSHAW REQUESTED THAT THE COUNCIL APPROVE AN APPROPRIATION OF \$300,000.00. COUNCILMAN TYLER ASKED HOW MANY STUDENTS FROM JASPER COUNTY WERE ENROLLED AND DR. UPSHAW SAID THAT THE NUMBER OF JASPER COUNTY STUDENTS ENROLLED HAS INCREASED FROM 72 STUDENTS TO 96 STUDENTS. COUNCILMAN GREGORY ASKED ABOUT DROP-OUTS. DR. UPSHAW SAID THEY DID AN ANALYSIS OF THE DROP OUTS AND THE PROBLEM IS THE STUDENTS HAVE A PROBLEM WITH THE FREEDOM THEY HAVE. COUNCILMAN TYLER ASKED ABOUT JOB PLACEMENT. DR. UPSHAW SAID THEY HAVE ONE PERSON DEDICATED TO JOB PLACEMENT AND THEY ALSO HOLD JOB FAIRS. DR. UPSHAW DISCUSSED THE UNIVERSITY'S RELATIONSHIP WITH THE SCHOOLS AND DR. UPSHAW SAID THE SCHOOLS NEED DEDICATED TEACHERS WHO ARE EXCELLENT IN THE CLASSROOM. CHAIRMAN HOOD THANKED DR. UPSHAW FOR HER PRESENTATION AND TOLD HER THE COUNCIL WOULD DO ALL THAT THEY CAN. ANDREA SMALLWOOD, MEMBER OF THE HIGHER EDUCATION COMMISSION, COMPLIMENTED DR. UPSHAW ON HER DRIVE AND COMMITMENT. MS. SMALLWOOD SAID SHE WAS PROUD OF THE UNIVERSITY AND THE COUNTY. CHAIRMAN HOOD THANKED MS. SMALLWOOD FOR ALL THAT SHE HAS DONE FOR THE COMMUNITY.

COUNCIL DISCUSSION: MR. FULGHUM TOLD THE COUNCIL THAT THE LOCAL GOVERNMENT DOES A LOT OF WHAT STATES DO IN OTHER AREAS OF THE COUNTRY. MR. FULGHUM SAID THE COUNTY ONLY GETS FOUR CENTS OF EVERY DOLLAR FROM THE STATE. MR. FULGHUM SAID HE WAS APPROACHED ABOUT FUNDS FOR RENOVATION OF THE OLD RIDGELAND HIGH SCHOOL AND MR. FULGHUM SAID THAT THE COUNTY DID NOT HAVE ANY EXTRA FUNDS. MR. FULGHUM SAID THAT THERE WERE TWO PRESENTATIONS ONE TO RENOVATE THE HARDEEVILLE SCHOOL AND THE ONE TO RENOVATE RIDGELAND HIGH SCHOOL FOR RECREATION. COUNCILMAN GREGORY SAID THAT THE COUNCIL DISCUSSED THE RIDGELAND MIDDLE SCHOOL, NOT THE HIGH SCHOOL. CHAIRMAN HOOD ASKED IF THE SCHOOL DISTRICT HAD ANY ROOM IN THEIR GENERAL OBLIGATION DEBT. MR. FULGHUM SAID THEY ARE ABOUT AT THEIR LIMIT AND THEY HAVE ABOUT A \$9,000,000.00 DEBT CAPACITY. CHAIRMAN HOOD ASKED MR. MALPHRUS TO EXPLORE OPTIONS AND TO REPORT BACK TO THE COUNCIL. COUNCILMAN GREGORY SAID HE DISCUSSED THE MIDDLE SCHOOL FOR RECREATION FOR THE COMMUNITY. COUNCILMAN GREGORY SAID THE SCHOOL DISTRICT WANT TO USE HIGH SCHOOL FOR OFFICES. COUNCILMAN GREGORY SAID THERE ARE NO ACTIVITIES FOR THE STUDENTS THIS YEAR. MR. FULGHUM SAID THE BUILDINGS NEED TO BE RENOVATED FOR A PURPOSE. CHAIRMAN HOOD ASKED MR. FULGHUM

TO MEET WITH DR. WASHINGTON. MR. FULGHUM SAID THAT SOMEONE WOULD NEED TO TAKE ON DEBT TO RENOVATE THE BUILDINGS.

MR. FULGHUM SAID THAT THE NEW FINGERPRINTING AND SECURITY UPGRADE NEEDED A GREATER INTERNET CONNECTION AND IT IS GOING TO COST AN ADDITIONAL \$8,000.00 ANNUALLY. MR. FULGHUM SAID THE CONNECTION IS NEEDED SO THAT THE EQUIPMENT OPERATED PROPERLY. CHAIRMAN HOOD ASKED WHY THE COMPUTER PEOPLE DID NOT KNOW ABOUT THIS BEFORE THEY ORDERED THE EQUIPMENT. MR. FULGHUM SAID THEY THOUGHT IT WOULD WORK, BUT IT DOES NOT WORK OPTIMALLY. MR. FULGHUM SAID THAT IT NEEDED TO BE INCLUDED IN THE NEW BUDGET. MR. FULGHUM SAID THAT THE SECURITY UPGRADES PUT AN ADDITIONAL LOAD ON THE CONNECTION.

MR. FULGHUM DISCUSSED THE SIGNS FOR THE 911 ADDRESSING. MR. FULGHUM SAID THEY RECEIVED THE INITIAL FUNDING FROM THE TRANSPORTATION COMMITTEE AND THEY CURRENTLY HAVE ABOUT \$4,000.00 REMAINING. MR. FULGHUM SAID THE STATE REQUESTED THAT THE FUNDS BE USED OR RETURNED. MR. FULGHUM SAID HE WOULD LIKE TO REQUEST THE SAME AMOUNT FROM THE TRANSPORTATION COMMITTEE FOR THE NEXT FISCAL YEAR. COUNCILMAN GREGORY TOLD MR. FULGHUM TO FIND OUT HOW LONG THEY HAVE BEFORE THEY HAVE TO CLOSE THE PROJECT OUT. MR. FULGHUM ASKED THE COUNCIL TO RESOLVE THE ISSUE. MR. MALPHRUS SAID THE COUNTY ONLY GETS THE FUNDS AFTER THEY SEND IN DOCUMENTATION FOR REIMBURSEMENT. IT WAS THE CONSENSUS OF THE COUNCIL THAT MR. FULGHUM DO WHAT HAS TO BE DONE TO SECURE THE REMAINING \$4,000.00.

MR. FULGHUM TOLD THE COUNCIL THAT PROPERTY TAXES MAKE UP 65%-66% OF THE REVENUE. MR. FULGHUM INFORMED THEM THERE HAS BEEN A SLIP IN THE PAYMENTS AND THE COUNTY WILL EVENTUALLY GET THE FUNDS THROUGH DELINQUENTS TAXES, BUT THE PROBLEM IS THE TAXES ARE GETTING PAID SLOW AND THEY BUDGETED FOR 94% AND THE AUDITOR ADVISED TO MOVE IT AT 100%, AS THE REVENUE MAY NOT BE MET BY THE END OF JUNE, BUT THEY WILL GET IT IN THE NEW BUDGET YEAR. MR. FULGHUM SAID THERE WERE VARIOUS WAYS TO APPROACH IT AND HE RECOMMENDED TO REDUCE THE REVENUE. MR. FULGHUM RECOMMENDED OFFSETTING THE REVENUE ANOTHER \$500,000.00 AND THEY WILL NEED TO CARVE ANOTHER \$500,000.00 FOR THE BUDGET TO OFFSET THE PERCENTAGE OF TAXES NOT BEING PAID IN A TIMELY MANNER. MR. MALPHRUS SAID THAT THIS YEAR QUITE A FEW PROPERTIES CAME TO THE COUNTY FROM THE DELINQUENT TAX SALE. MR. MALPHRUS SAID THAT CURRENTLY 53 PROPERTIES HAVE NOT BEEN REDEEMED. CHAIRMAN HOOD ASKED HOW MANY WERE NOT REDEEMED FROM THE 2008 DELINQUENT TAX SALE AND MR. MALPHRUS SAID ONLY 4 OR 5 WERE NOT REDEEMED. MR. FULGHUM SAID IT IS NOT A FINANCIAL ISSUE AS TO GETTING THE MONEY, IT IS JUST A MATTER OF WHEN THEY GET THE MONEY. MR. MALPHRUS SAID THIS IS THE FIRST TIME IN 8-10 YEARS THAT THE COUNTY ENDED UP WITH SO MUCH PROPERTY. MR. MALPHRUS SAID THE FORFEITED LAND COMMISSION CAN SELL THE PROPERTY, BUT THEY DID NOT AND THE COUNTY IS COLLECTING THE INTEREST. COUNCILMAN TYLER ASKED

ABOUT THE INSTALLMENT TAX PROGRAM. MR. MALPHRUS SAID THE INSTALLMENT TAXES ARE FOR THE TAXES THAT WILL BE DUE THIS YEAR. MR. FULGHUM SAID THE MOST RESPONSIBLE THING FOR COUNCIL TO DO WOULD BE TO CUT AN ADDITIONAL \$500,000.00 IN REVENUE AND \$500,000.00 IN EXPENDITURES. MR. FULGHUM ASKED FOR DIRECTION FROM THE COUNCIL. MR. FULGHUM SAID THAT CURRENTLEY THE BUDGET HE PROVIDED HAS A 2.5 MILLS INCREASE AND THE SCHOOL BOARD REQUESTED A 6 MILLS INCREASE. MR. FULGHUM ASKED WHAT WERE COUNCIL'S GOALS SO THAT HE CAN GO BACK AND REWORK THE BUDGET. COUNCILMAN GREGORY SAID THE COUNTY COUNCIL MEMBERS NEED TO MEET AND REVIEW THE BUDGET. COUNCILMAN GREGORY STATED THAT THE COUNCIL CAN CUT MORE FROM THE BUDGET AND ONCE THE COUNCIL HAS MADE THEIR DECISION, THEY WILL PROVIDE THE STAFF WITH THEIR DECISIONS AND THE STAFF CAN INCORPORATE THEM INTO THE BUDGET. MR. FULGHUM SAID IF THE COUNCIL WOULD DIRECT HIM AS TO WHERE THEY WANT TO BE, HE CAN BRING THEM A PACKAGE. COUNCILMAN ETHERIDGE SAID HE DID NOT WANT ANY INCREASE IN MILLAGE OR TAXES. MR. FULGHUM SAID THAT COVERS A ZERO ON THE COUNTY SIDE AND HE ASKED WHAT THEY WANTED ON THE SCHOOL BOARD SIDE. CHAIRMAN HOOD ASKED FOR INFORMATION AS TO WHAT IT IS GOING TO COST THE CITIZENS. MR. FULGHUM SAID THAT HE HAS CUT OVER \$5,000,000.00 FROM THE BUDGET OVER THE LAST TWO YEARS AND TAXES STILL WENT UP. MR. FULGHUM SAID A HOME COSTING \$150,000.00 CURRENTLY IS PAYING \$56.58 PER MONTH FOR TAXES AND IN THE NEW BUDGET YEAR THAT SAME PERSON WOULD BE PAYING \$60.83 PER MONTH. MR. MALPHRUS SAID THAT THERE IS NO LIMIT AS TO HOW MUCH THE DEBT MILLAGE CAN BE INCREASED. MR. MALPHRUS SAID THE COUNTY INCREASED BY 3 MILLS AND THE SCHOOL INCREASED TO 6 WHICH IS MOSTLY DEBT SERVICE. MR. FULGHUM SAID THE CITIZENS ARE PAYING LESS TAX THAN THEY DID IN 2005-2006 DUE TO THE PEOPLE NOT HAVING TO PAY SCHOOL TAX. COUNCILMAN ETHERIDGE SAID THAT SINCE 2008 TO 2010 THE TAXES INCREASED 44% AND THE EMPLOYEES HAVE NOT GOTTEN RAISES OR EVEN THE COST OF LIVING INCREASE. COUNCILMAN GREGORY SAID THAT JASPER COUNTY'S TAXES ARE NOT AS HIGH AS THE TAXES IN OTHER AREAS AND COUNCILMAN ETHERIDGE ADDED THAT THE HOUSEHOLD INCOME IN JASPER COUNTY IS LOWER THAN THE AVERAGE HOUSEHOLD INCOME IN BEAUFORT COUNTY. MR. FULGHUM SAID IF THE COUNCIL DOES NOT WANT TO INCREASE THE MILLAGE, THEN \$788,000.00 WOULD NEED TO BE CUT FROM THE BUDGET HE PRESENTED TO COUNCIL. CHAIRMAN HOOD SAID THE COUNCIL WILL NEED TO DECIDE WHAT THEY WANT TO FUND. COUNCILMAN GREGORY SAID THE COUNCIL WILL MAKE THEIR RECOMMENDATIONS AND THE STAFF CAN GO BACK AND MAKE IT HAPPEN. COUNCILMAN GREGORY SAID THEY WANT TO CUT THINGS THAT HAVE THE LEAST IMPACT ON THE SERVICES. CHAIRMAN HOOD SAID HE WANTS QUALITY SERVICES. MR. FULGHUM SAID THAT THERE MAY BE SOME SERVICES THAT THEY DON'T WANT TO PROVIDE. MR. FULGHUM ASKED THE COUNCIL FOR POLICY DIRECTION OF WHERE THEY WANT TO BE AND FOR THEM TO ALSO LOOK AT THE SCHOOLS. COUNCILMAN GREGORY ASKED IF

THEY HAD TO GIVE THE SCHOOLS A SET AMOUNT. MR. MALPHRUS SAID THAT CHANGED AND THE COUNTY DOES NOT HAVE TO GIVE ANYTHING TO THE SCHOOLS. MR. MALPHRUS SAID THAT THE SCHOOLS WOULD NEED TO CUT \$500,000.00 FROM THEIR BUDGET AND THE COUNTY WOULD HAVE TO CUT \$788,000.00 IF THERE IS TO BE NO INCREASE IN MILLAGE. CHAIRMAN HOOD SAID THEY NEEDED TO LOOK INTO COMBINING SERVICES. MR. FULGHUM STATED THAT THE COUNCIL NEEDED TO ADOPT THE BUDGET AND WHILE IT IS UNDERWAY, THEY CAN DISCUSS SOME OF THE ISSUES. COUNCILMAN ETHERIDGE ASKED WHEN THE COUNTY WILL RECEIVE THE STATE AID. MR. MALPHRUS SAID THE STATE GENERALLY SENDS IT AT THE END OF THE YEAR IN MAY. MR. MALPHRUS SAID THE REVENUE IS REPORTED THROUGH APRIL AND FUNDS WILL CONTINUE TO COME IN THROUGH JUNE. COUNCILMAN GREGORY ASKED HOW CAN THE COUNCIL MAKE DECISIONS IF THEY ARE NOT PROVIDED THE TRUE FIGURES. MR. MALPHRUS SAID THE COUNCIL WOULD GET THE NUMBERS WHEN THEY ARE RECONCILED. COUNCILMAN GREGORY SAID THAT A LETTER NEEDED TO BE SENT TO THE TREASURER AS THE COUNCIL HAS NOT RECEIVED TRUE NUMBERS IN OVER A YEAR. COUNCILMAN GREGORY SAID THE COUNCIL NEEDED TO REQUEST THOSE NUMBERS AND THAT THINGS BE DONE QUICKLY. MR. MALPHRUS SAID THEY WANT TO BE SURE THAT THE NUMBERS ARE CORRECT. COUNCILMAN GREGORY ASKED HOW OFTEN DOES MR. MELLEEN COME TO THE COUNTY TO WORK ON THE BOOKS. MR. MALPHRUS SAID HE COMES EVERY MONTH. COUNCILMAN ETHERIDGE ASKED ABOUT THE REVENUE FROM MOTOR VEHICLES, AND MR. MALPHRUS RESPONDED THAT IT IS ALL LISTED UNDER TAXES. COUNCILMAN ETHERIDGE ASKED IF THE REVENUE IS ON MR. MALPHRUS'S SYSTEM ONCE THE TREASURER POSTS THE AMOUNTS. MR. MALPHRUS SAID THAT IT WAS. COUNCILMAN ETHERIDGE ASKED WHAT WAS MISC. INCOME AND MR. MALPHRUS RESPONDED THAT IT WAS A CATCHALL FOR ALL MONEY NOT SPECIFICALLY BUDGETED. MR. MALPHRUS SAID SOME OF THE MISC. INCOME WILL BE MOVED OUT WHEN THE AUDITOR GOES OVER IT. MR. FULGHUM SAID THAT THEY WILL NOT KNOW THE ACTUAL REVENUE UNTIL OCTOBER. MR. MALPHRUS SAID HE PRETTY WELL KNEW THE AMOUNTS THROUGH APRIL. CHAIRMAN HOOD ASKED HOW LONG IT TOOK THE AUDITOR TO RECONCILE. MR. MALPHRUS SAID IT TAKES ABOUT ONE WEEK EACH MONTH. MR. MALPHRUS SAID THE MISC. REVENUE LINE MAY NOT BE ADJUSTED UNTIL NEAR THE END OF THE YEAR. MR. FULGHUM SAID THERE IS NO PRACTICAL WAY TO START THE BUDGET. MR. FULGHUM SAID THE IDEAL WAY IS TO GIVE POLICY DIRECTION TO THE ADMINISTRATOR TO HELP HIM KNOW WHERE THEY WANT TO GO. CHAIRMAN HOOD SAID THE COUNCIL HAS HELD WORKSHOPS ON VARIOUS THINGS AND THE COUNCIL WILL NEED TO WORK TOGETHER ON THE BUDGET. CHAIRMAN HOOD SAID THEY RECEIVED A LOT OF REQUESTS AND HE HATES TO SEE EDUCATION CUT. COUNCILMAN GREGORY SAID EDUCATION IS DISCUSSED STATEWIDE AND THEY CAN'T KEEP CUTTING THE SCHOOL DISTRICT. MR. MALPHRUS SAID THAT IN GEORGIA THEY ENDED THE SCHOOL YEAR EARLY BECAUSE THEY DIDN'T HAVE THE FUNDS TO PAY THE TEACHERS. COUNCILMAN TYLER SAID THE COUNTY WAS NOT IN A POSITION TO CUT EDUCATION.

CHAIRMAN HOOD SAID HE WANTED TO IMPROVE THE SCHOOL DISTRICT AND THE NEW SUPERINTENDENT HAS APPLIED FOR A LARGE GRANT TO BUILD UP THE SCHOOLS. MR. FULGHUM SAID THAT IF THINGS ARE CUT TOO MUCH IT WOULD MAKE THEM INELIGIBLE FOR GRANTS. CHAIRMAN HOOD SAID THE COUNCIL WILL BE SCHEDULING MORE WORKSHOPS AND THEY WILL BE FOR A LONGER PERIOD OF TIME. MR. FULGHUM SAID THAT IF THE COUNCIL TOLD HIM WHAT THEY WANT, HE CAN PRESENT A BUDGET TO DO IT. MR. FULGHUM SAID THE ONLY OPTION THE SCHOOL DISTRICT HAS IS TO GO INTO DEBT.

THE NEXT BUDGET WORKSHOP IS SCHEDULED FOR JUNE 2, 2010 AT 1:00 P.M.

COUNCILMAN ETHERIDGE MOTIONED AND COUNCILMAN GREGORY SECONDED THE MOTION TO ADJOURN THE MEETING. THE MOTION CARRIED WITH ALL MEMBERS PRESENT VOTING IN FAVOR.

THE MEETING ENDED AT 5:20 P.M.

RESPECTFULLY SUBMITTED BY:

APPROVED BY:

JUDITH M. FRANK, ccc
CLERK TO COUNCIL

DR. GEORGE M. HOOD
CHAIRMAN