



**JASPER COUNTY COUNCIL
358 THIRD AVE., RIDGELAND SC. 29936**

**COUNCIL CHAMBERS
MAY 28, 2013, 4:00 P.M.
BUDGET WORKSHOP/MEETING
MINUTES**

OFFICIALS PRESENT: Chairman Henry Etheridge, Vice Chairwoman Barbara Clark, Councilman Theodus Drayton, Councilman D. Thomas Johnson, Councilman L. Martin Sauls, IV

STAFF PRESENT: Administrator Andrew Fulghum, Clerk to Council Judith Frank, Director of Administrative Services Ronnie Malphrus, Sheriff Jenkins, Verna Garvin, Joanne McDonald

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.

CALLS TO ORDER – Chairman Etheridge called the Budget Workshop to order at 4:06 p.m.

BUDGET DISCUSSION

SHERIFF JENKINS- Sheriff Jenkins discussed the need for more funding for overtime, travel and training, more vehicles and uniforms. The Sheriff explained that he does not target areas, but works for the safety of the entire County. Councilman Sauls discussed the vehicles purchased last year and that more vehicles were not needed. Councilman Sauls said at the agreement was to add two staff members and Sheriff Jenkins said it was a gentlemen’s agreement and no additional staff was added. Sheriff Jenkins said that he was requesting more vehicles to replace the vehicles that had over 150,000 miles. Sheriff Jenkins explained that the Animal Control van was totaled and had to be replaced. Sheriff Jenkins said that there were 6 new Chargers on the road. Vice Chairwoman Clark discussed that the Sheriff paid the County back in the past for any overtime that was not budgeted. Mr. Malphrus said that no overtime funds were reimbursed to date. Sheriff Jenkins explained that he no longer had the funds to reimburse the County. Vice Chairwoman Clark asked how much was brought in to pay for the new vehicles as agreed. Mr. Malphrus said that the Sheriff was asked to bring in \$390,000 and so far has brought in \$207,000. Mr. Malphrus explained that the State gets 60% of the \$207,000. Vice Chairwoman Clark asked if it was clarified how much was to be brought in to cover the vehicles. Mr. Malphrus said it was at the time and \$600,000 would be needed to generate the funds to pay for the vehicles. Councilman Drayton asked about the utilities and Sheriff Jenkins said the request was based on the previous year’s usage. Councilman Johnson asked about the \$10,000 for overtime and Mr. Malphrus said that is what is budgeted and if they go over they are to reimburse the County, but nothing has been reimburses to date. Councilman Johnson said he has received a lot of complaints about HVAC units being stolen and

he said the people would appreciate something being done about that. Vice Chairwoman Clark asked for an explanation for the \$6,000 in misc. Sheriff Jenkins said the funds would be used to cover any line that is overspent. Vice Chairwoman Clark said if something is needed it needs to be listed in the proper line and she did not want a misc. line in any budget request. Councilman Drayton discussed the radio maintenance and the overtime. Mr. Fulghum said that the Sheriff had money he could use to cover the overtime. Mr. Malphrus said that the Sheriff did this so that he would not lose any positions like the other departments. Chairman Etheridge said the crime is up and the fines are down and that the County needed to cut any out of state travel unless it is paid for by a grant. Sheriff Jenkins said the extra funds requested were not for out of state travel, but to educate the officers. Councilman Sauls discussed patrolling I-95 and the Sheriff said he patrols the entire County and he has no specific team for I-95, and Councilman Sauls said writing more tickets could pay for the cars. Chairman Etheridge said it was discussed in two meetings with the Sheriff and the Sheriff felt that his current staff could generate the \$240,000 needed to pay for the new cars. Councilman Sauls said he felt the cars should not have been purchased until the Sheriff generated the funds. Sheriff Jenkins said he did not say he would pull two personnel members to traffic patrol. Sheriff Jenkins said it was discussed in executive session and a motorcycle and 2 traffic officers were discussed. Chairman Etheridge asked about the money that would be used to reimburse the County for overtime. Sheriff Jenkins said that money is gone and he would not discuss it anywhere but in executive session and the Sheriff said that by law he does not have to discuss it. Councilman Drayton said that the Council had an open meeting and then went into executive session and what was said in open session was denied in executive session. Councilman Johnson commented that the discussion was with the previous Council and they were to be working as a partnership and the Sheriff was called in to executive session to clarify what was said at the meeting. Chairman Etheridge said he was under the impression that the Sheriff was to bring in \$240,000 plus what he needed for overtime and he cannot understand why the fees have gone down. Vice Chairwoman Clark asked where the fines went from a road check. Sheriff Jenkins said that 60% goes to the State and 40% goes to the County. Chairman Etheridge asked if money confiscated in a drug bust can go towards overtime. Sheriff Jenkins said as long as it is not part of an ongoing investigation and it does not always come back to the Sheriff since it is not legally theirs. Sheriff Jenkins said he was not trying to make things difficult, but he will not take people from their primary duties to do tasks and he cannot do that with the amount of staff that he currently has. Chairman Etheridge said that the safety and welfare of the citizens is the Council's main priority. Councilman Johnson said there needs to be teamwork and the budget busters are the jail and workers compensation. Councilman Johnson asked the Sheriff for suggestions to handle them. Councilman Johnson said that every dollar saved is money that can be applied next year. Councilman Johnson suggested the Sheriff coordinate a meeting with the detention center and the solicitor's office. Vice Chairwoman Clark asked about a forensic audit and having SLED come in. Sheriff Jenkins said that there needs to be a reason why they wanted SLED to come.

TREASURER VERNA GARVIN – Ms. Garvin requested \$7,500 for a part-time person. Ms. Garvin said she currently receives \$7,500 for contract labor and she could combine the two amounts so she could have one part-time person and she would be able to send someone to Hardeeville 1 day per week. Mr.

Fulghum said that the administration already recommended approval of Ms. Garvin's request. Mr. Fulghum said all other costs are already budgeted. Chairman Etheridge asked if the person could be contract labor and Mr. Malphrus said if the County would be audited it could create a problem and be questioned in the audit. Ms. Garvin thanked the Council.

MAGISTRATE JUDGE McDONALD – Mr. Malphrus explained that each magistrate received their own budget. Chairman Etheridge asked why the fines were down. Judge McDonald said the number of tickets being written are down and traffic and criminal fines are all down. Councilman Johnson said that annexation could play a part in that. Chairman Etheridge asked if she needed the same number of Magistrates and if they are based on the population. Councilman Sauls said the Council needs to talk with the Delegation regarding the number of Magistrates Jasper County needs. Judge McDonald said that the Sheriff's and the Highway Patrol tickets go to the Magistrates. Vice Chairwoman Clarks said they needed to check and see how many are found not guilty. Judge McDonald said the people come to court to reduce the number of points and fines, and that is done by the officers and she did not think the fines were down because the cases were thrown out of court. Councilman Sauls said the fines are based on the ticket. Councilman Drayton said the Sheriff is reluctant to write tickets in the municipalities and the Sheriff usually detains the individuals until the police from the municipality get there. Chairman Etheridge said he was concerned about the fines in general. The Council reviewed the reports for the Highway Patrol and the Sheriff's Department. Vice Chairwoman Clark asked about overtime and Judge McDonald responded that there is a little in the budget, but they never use it and they try to keep the use of the funds in the language line down. Judge McDonald discussed the necessary education for all the Magistrates and the staff has to have victim's training every year. Vice Chairwoman Clark asked about the staff and Judge McDonald said there were 6 members and Vice Chairwoman Clark said all the Magistrates should wear their robes when they are on the bench. Judge McDonald said that Judge Brown and Judge Badgett are both part-time Magistrates and all the Magistrates are appointed by the Delegation. Vice Chairwoman Clark asked if all funds were deposited daily and Judge McDonald responded that they were deposited daily by order of the Chief Justice. Councilman Johnson said that a budget buster was the detention center and said that anything that can be done to move the people out would be a help. Chairman Etheridge thanked Judge McDonald for the reports she provided and said they answered a lot of his questions.

COUNCIL DISCUSSION AND ACTION – Mr. Fulghum discussed the request if the Solicitor and he provided options he recommended the option that cut the budget 2 mils and the road maintenance tax by \$5.00. Mr. Fulghum said the budget he provided was ready for the June 3 meeting and he had copies for the public today. Chairman Etheridge discussed how the County has cut their budget since 2009 and that the School District was also asked to cut their budget, but they have increased theirs and this year they are requesting funds to put back in their fund balance because they spent some of their fund balance and the County replaced money, that was spent from the County's fund balance by previous Councils, by saving money and the County never budgeted money to increase the fund balance. Chairman Etheridge said if the School Budget is cut by 5 mils, they would still be funding \$199,520 for their fund balance. The Council discussed other avenues of revenue for the schools. Chairman Etheridge said that \$19,147,491 in addition to what they get from the State and Federal Government

and by cutting 5 mils they would not be cutting any services; they would only be cutting how much money goes into the fund balance. Vice Chairwoman Clark said she disagreed with the School's budget and said there was \$2,841,000 in purchased services and they don't explain what they money is for and there are a lot of hidden expenses and she served on the School Board and she knows they have taken money from the fund balance before and they should not always be taking money from the fund balance. Vice Chairwoman Clark said Dr. Washington wanted to change the pay scale in to affect because the \$443,000 taken from the fund balance was to give raises and only 8 teachers got raises and the rest went to central office increases. Vice Chairwoman Clark said they should not burden the taxpayers to give the School District more money for their fund balance and it is not fair to the County employees who have had 31 positions cut and the School Board adds more positions and there is no control as to where the money will go. Vice Chairwoman Clark said that \$47,000 for dues, \$419,000 for capital outlay is included in the School Board budget. Vice Chairwoman Clarks said she would give money if it is for the children, but the children are not getting it. Vice Chairwoman Clark said when they consolidated it was to save money and yet they are asking for an additional \$500,000 and this cannot continue and they cannot allow this to happen. Vice Chairwoman Clarks said the children deserve better and it needs to start this year. Vice Chairwoman Clark said her recommendation was to cut the road maintenance fee by \$10 and not to replenish the schools fund balance at all. Vice Chairwoman Clark said that they needed to cut 7.5 mils from the School's budget. Councilman Drayton said cut 5 mils from the schools and give them the \$199,000. Councilman Johnson said he did not disagree and invading the fund balance was totally irresponsible and there was no emergency for children. Councilman Johnson said that when the fund balance changes, financing also can change and the Council has been repeatedly told that they cannot tell the School Board what they can do with the money, the Council can only say what is budgeted. Chairman Etheridge said the County has worked to build up their fund balance by doing their homework and the school system has done nothing but get increases from the County. Vice Chairwoman Clark told the Council to look what the Superintendent is requesting for her office. Chairman Etheridge said he agreed to meet with the schools either Thursday or Friday. Councilman Johnson asked what the Chairman expected to accomplish. Vice Chairwoman Clark said she is not against giving public education what it deserves for producing better results, not worse.

The Council suggested 5 mil decrease for the school district budget; not funding the Sheriff's overtime; Vice Chairwoman Clark suggested cutting \$5,000 from each department because everyone asks for more than they need.

Mr. Malphrus said the County budget must be cut in order to reduce the road maintenance fee. Mr. Fulghum suggested a new ad in the newspaper reflecting the budget changes. Mr. Fulghum told the Council that the State approved funding the LGF at the same level as last year.

Councilman Johnson commented on the chart provided regarding the budget and he said a lot of people don't own homes and people who own rental property and businesses are affected by the budget and because something does not affect the home owners is not the end of the story.

OPEN THE FLOOR FOR 2 MINUTE COMMENTS FROM THE PUBLIC: - **Barbara Bartoldus** asked about an additional employee in the I-T Dept. Mr. Malphrus said the person was added last year and the position was included in the new budget. Ms. Bartoldus suggested including the Business License Dept. in the Planning Dept. and then that whole dept. would not be necessary. Mr. Malphrus said the Business License Dept. pays for itself. Ms. Bartoldus said that Keep Jasper Beautiful no longer exists and asked why it was still in the budget.

Chairman Etheridge asked the Council to review the new budget.

ADJOURN –Vice Chairwoman Clark motioned and Councilman Drayton seconded the motion to adjourn. The motion carried with all members present voting in favor.

The meeting ended at 6:10 p.m.

Respectfully Submitted By:

Approved by:

Judith M. Frank, ccc
Clerk to Council

Henry Etheridge
Chairman