

May 23, 2013

The Marion County Council held its regularly scheduled meeting, public hearing and Strategic Plan Workshop on Thursday, May 23, 2013 at 5:00 P.M., at the Marion County Economic Development Office, Marion, South Carolina. Members present were Elista H. Smith, Chairperson; Buddy Collins, Vice Chairman; John Q. Atkinson, Jr., Allen W. Floyd, Simon Jenkins, Thomas E. Shaw, and Milton W. Troy, II. Also present were G. Timothy Harper, Administrator; Charles L. McLain, III, County Attorney; Sabrina Davis, Clerk to Council; and Ogleretta White, Grant Coordinator. A representative from the Star & Enterprise was not present and duly notified.

Vice Chairman Collins called the meeting to order and asked Councilman Simon Jenkins to lead the Invocation, after which he welcomed visitors and read the Freedom of Information Announcement.

The Administrator introduced Mr. Bill Tomes and Mrs. Adrienne Moody with the Institute for Public Service and Policy Research, University of South Carolina.

The Administrator turned the meeting over to the facilitators to update the Marion County Strategic Plan.

Council was asked to review the information and notes generated from the first session. The revised vision statement was accepted as proposed as was the additional values statement. Council also reviewed the list of external factors impacting Marion County as identified through a facilitated PEST scan and internal strengths and weaknesses.

Council reviewed the Vision and Mission Statement. They also added a value statement.

Vision: Marion County is vibrant communities where people want to live, work, and raise a family due to quality educational, employment, housing, and diverse cultural recreational opportunities that are available to all.

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Mission: The mission of Marion County government is to provide quality public services while creating an environment that is conducive to enhancing the quality of life and job creation for all citizens.

Values: (Added): Progressive- We are an organization that strives to be proactive, future-oriented, and innovative.

Using an affinity diagram and 10 point voting system exercise, Council identified the key issues that need to be addressed in order to get Marion County to its desired state. All issues are reflected in the following list:

1. County equipment
2. Infrastructure
3. Mission Awareness
4. Education/ Training
5. Collaboration
6. Economic Development/ Employment
7. Reduce government dependency
8. Wage and Salaries
9. Leadership
10. County perspective/ image
11. Quality of Life
12. Race Relations
13. County wellness/ fitness
14. Tourism
15. Economy/ Funding
16. Fire protection
17. Dilution of home rule
18. Weak legal understanding by citizens
19. Poor housing programs
20. More food and utility programs for seniors

The top six issues identified (education/ workforce development, economic development, county employee wages and salaries, infrastructure, leadership, and race relations) will be the focus of the strategic plan. Some of the issues are the same as the issues identified in the 2007 strategic plan. While progress has been made in several of these areas, there is still work to be done. Thus, they remain strategic issues.

The Council also discussed the following issues within the County.

Issue: Education/ Workforce Development

Goals

- Eliminate the negative stigma associated with technical and vocational schools
- Improve early childhood education

- Increase adult education opportunities
- Increase parental involvement

Strategies

- Collaborate with vocational and technical schools and assist in improving educational offerings and publicizing programs
- Foster and encourage communication within education system and stakeholders to develop a strategic plan focused on education and workforce development

Issue: Economic Development/ Employment

Goals

- Reduce unemployment to 9%
- Increase average wages to \$16/ hour

Strategies

- Develop a strong economic development plan
- Restructure economic development office; increase staffing in office
- Increase support to existing small businesses and developing new ones
- Develop agri-business
- Continued certification of industrial parks

Issue: County Employee Wages and Salaries

Goals

- Offer comparable and competitive wages relative to surrounding counties

Strategies

- Conduct wage and salary survey
- Identify funding source

Issue: Infrastructure

Goal

- Water and sewer throughout the county

Strategy

- Work with legislative delegation to alter or remove MARCO charter

Goal

- Attain broadband access throughout the county

Strategy

- Continue to work with AT&T to provide wireless towers

Goal

- Improve county roads and bridges

Strategies

- Continue support of I-73
- Upgrade gravel roads
- Work with COG to develop plan to pave roads

Issue: Leadership

Goal

- Leadership is focused on the mission of Marion County and results in positive growth

Strategies

- Continue to foster collaborative relationships with partners
- Provide education and training for Council and staff
 - Reinstatement “Leadership” Marion County
 - Council members will attend SCAC IOGCO
- Inform public and other entities about county leadership
 - Hire PR coordinator/ PIO

Issue: Race Relations

Goals

- Increased diversity throughout organizations, including leadership
- Increased inclusiveness

Strategies

- Reestablish diversity commission in partnership with municipalities
- Ensure a diverse workforce within county government and all organizations

After the Strategic Plan Workshop, Chairperson Smith reconvened the regular meeting.

Motion was made by Mr. Collins, seconded by Mr. Floyd, and carried unanimously, to approve as written, the minutes of the regular meeting held on May 14, 2013.

Motion was made by Mr. Shaw, seconded by Mr. Jenkins, and carried unanimously, to recess the regular meeting and open public hearing for Ordinance #2013-02.

The County Attorney opened the floor to the public for questions. There were no questions from the public regarding this ordinance.

Motion was made by Mr. Collins, seconded by Mr. Shaw, and carried unanimously, to close the public hearing and reconvene the regular meeting.

The County Attorney stated that second and third reading for the ordinances listed on the agenda as follows was ready: A. Third Reading of Ordinance #2013-02 An ordinance to amend the Marion County Procurement Code to provide for an increase in local vendor options; B. Second Reading of Ordinance # 2013-03 An Ordinance to Provide for the Issuance and Sale of a not Exceeding Three Hundred Eighty-Five Thousand Dollars (\$385,000) General Obligation Bond of Marion County, South Carolina, To Prescribe the Purposes for Which the Proceeds of said Bond Shall be Expended, To Provide for the Payment of said Bond, and Other Matters Relating Thereto.

The County Attorney told Council that item A. on the agenda; Third Reading of Ordinance #2013-02 An ordinance to amend the Marion County Procurement Code to provide for an increase in local vendor options was ready: Motion was made by Mr. Shaw, seconded by Mr. Floyd, and carried unanimously, to approve third reading of Ordinance #2013-02.

The County Attorney told Council that item B. on the agenda; Second Reading of Ordinance # 2013-03 An Ordinance to Provide for the Issuance and Sale of a not Exceeding Three Hundred Eighty-Five Thousand Dollars (\$385,000) General Obligation Bond of Marion County, South Carolina, To Prescribe the Purposes for Which the Proceeds of said Bond Shall be Expended, To Provide for the Payment of said Bond, and Other Matters Relating Thereto was ready: Motion was made by Mr. Floyd, seconded by Mr. Troy, and carried unanimously, to approve second reading of Ordinance #2013-03.

The Administrator told Council that the County has a vacancy on the Pee Dee Community Action Partnership Board. Motion was made by Mr. Atkinson to nominate Mr. Bobby Pearson, seconded by Mr. Troy, and carried unanimously.

The Administrator told Council that he would like to schedule two budget workshops. Mr. Harper requested Tuesday June 4th at 9:00 a.m. and Thursday June 6th at 6:00 p.m.

There being no further business to discuss, motion was made by Mr. Troy, seconded by Mr. Floyd, to adjourn the meeting at approximately 7:57 P.M.

Elista H. Smith, Chairperson

Buddy Collins, Vice Chairman

John Q. Atkinson, Jr.

Allen W. Floyd

Simon Jenkins, Chaplain

Thomas E. Shaw

Milton W. Troy, II

G. Timothy Harper, Administrator

Charles L. McLain, III County Attorney

Sabrina Davis, Clerk to Council