

MINUTES
BUDGET, FINANCE & ADMINISTRATION COMMITTEE
WORKSHOP MEETING

January 23, 2010

COUNTY COUNCIL CHAMBERS, WALHALLA, SC



COMMITTEE MEMBERS

Mr. Reg Dexter, Chairman, District V

Mr. Paul Corbeil, District I

Mr. Wayne McCall, District II

Mr. Mario Suarez, District III

Mr. Joel Thrift, District IV

The Budget, Finance & Administration Committee on Saturday, January 23, 2010 at 10:00 AM in Council Chambers with all Council Members present [except Mr. McCall] along with Gene Klugh, Interim Administrator, Kendra Brown Assistant County Administrator and Elizabeth G. Hulse, Clerk to Council.

Press:

Pursuant to the Freedom of Information Act, notice of the meeting, date, time, place of meeting and agenda were posted on the bulletin board at the County Administrative Offices, 415 South Pine Street, Walhalla, SC, and the County Council website [www.oconeese.com/council]. In addition it was made available to the newspapers, radio stations, television stations and concerned citizens.

Members of the press present: Dick Mangrum – WGOG Radio, Carlos Galarza – Daily Journal & Ray Chandler – Anderson Independent.

Call to Order:

Chairman Dexter called the meeting to order at 10:00 a.m.

Budget Calendar:

Mr. Klugh reviewed with the Committee a proposed Budget Workshop/Ordinance Calendar. During the discussion of the budget process for FY 2010-2011, Mr. Klugh noted that he had recently attended a meeting at which the CPI factor was discussed as it related to millage. He noted that this year the CPI was a negative .4%, so the factor will be 0% whereas last year it was 3.8%. Discussion followed.

It was the consensus of the group that the proposed calendar be discussed for formal adoption by Council at the February 2, 2010 meeting.

Forms:

Ms. Brown addressed the Committee reviewing the various forms designed by Finance to streamline the budget process and at the same time designed to provide all necessary information in order for the Committee to make informed decisions. Ms. Brown reviewed the following forms [all filed with these minutes] with the Committee:

- Example Department Budget Worksheet
- New Position
- Reclassification
- Overtime
- Training
- Capital Revenue
- Direct Aid

Discussion followed. Mr. Corbeil asked that each department also as part of the budget process a one page [maximum] report outlining key activities, key systems they rely on, key functions of the department and any opportunities identified and key issues faced by the department.

July-December 2009 Revenue & Expenditures:

Ms. Brown reviewed with the Committee the Year to date Revenues & Expenditures through December 31, 2009. She stated that 26% of the property tax payments had been received by December 31st noting that this was in part due to the last mailing of the property tax bills. Mr. Nowell, Treasurer, informed Ms. Brown prior to the meeting that he expected most receipts by the March deadline. Various other departments were reviewed and discussed.

Break:

Council recessed for a lunch break at 11:15 a.m.

Council reconvened from break at 12:00 noon. It should be noted that the press left at the break and did not return for the second portion of the meeting.

Council Guidance & Discussion:

Mr. Corbeil opened the discussion stating that a goal of the committee to should be to take a hard look at ourselves and ask the following questions:

1. Are we doing the right things
2. Are we doing those things well
3. Are we doing those things in a cost effective manner

Mr. Corbeil suggested the hiring of a consultant to work with Council, Administration, Department Heads and staff to do an examination to determine what we are doing well and identify areas for improvement. Mr. Thrift suggested that additional department head training should be looked at to help staff identify areas needing work. Mr. Dexter voiced concerns with the employee evaluation process as it stands. He noted that goals for the County need to be established at the Council level and communicated to the department heads through the Administrator. Employee evaluations need to encompass the county's goals as part of the employee's performance. Mr. Thrift added that he saw as part of the role for each Council committee that they should be developing goals in their areas for full Council approval and Administration's implementation. Lengthy discussion followed.

Capital projects were discussed at some length. Mr. Thrift suggested renovation of the old courthouse to utilize the main courtroom for a new council chambers and the basement could be used as a possible EOC location if moving the EOC is practical. Mr. Corbeil noted that the Dryer Group had performed a county wide capital project study that could be utilized by this committee and other's to identify feasibility and appropriateness of some capital projects.

The Committee members discussed various options to include an 8% overall reduction in the general operating budget for the FY 2010-2011 budget. Mr. Dexter questioned how drug monies seized by the Sheriff's Department were accounted for and what laws regulated their expenditure. Mr. Suarez noted that asking departments to make cuts in areas they feel appropriate was better than Council micromanaging their budgets and approving items line by line.

Mr. Dexter asked the other Committee chairs to identify projects that will impact the FY 10-11 budget [either operating or capital] and provide their committee's recommendations back to this group for review.

Discussion also took place regarding Local Option Sales Tax [LOST] and one cent sales tax options for this and future fiscal years.

Lengthy discussion followed regarding the FY 2010-2011 budget process.

Mr. Klugh addressed issues related to property assessment noting that by law reassessment occurs every five years. With ongoing issues in the Assessor's office, Mr. Klugh recommended that Council investigate the possibility of engaging an outside contractor for the reassessment of approximately 62,500 parcels with approximately 40,000 structures, 7,000 farms, etc. Lengthy discussion followed. The Committee instructed Mr. Klugh to proceed with the development of an RFP for an external company to conduct the property reassessments.

GASB45:

Ms. Brown noted that Jack Beam, from Gabriel, Roeder, Smith & Company, the County's actuarial firm, has offered to hold a conference call workshop with the Committee in order to explain the county's options, etc. The Committee instructed Ms. Brown to work with the Clerk to Council to coordinate a meeting.

Next Meeting:

The next meeting scheduled for February 11, 2010 has been cancelled.

Adjourn:

Mr. Thrift made a motion, seconded by Mr. Corbeil, approved 4 – 0 to adjourn the meeting at 1:50 p.m.

Respectfully Submitted:

Elizabeth G. Hulse
Clerk to Council