

**COMMITTEE of the WHOLE COMMITTEE  
MINUTES  
FEBRUARY 9, 2010**

The Committee of the Whole met on Tuesday, February 9, 2010 in the Committee Room, located on the second floor of the Administration Building, beginning at 2:40 p.m. Mr. Kinard, Committee Chairman, presided.

Members Attending:

James E. Kinard, Jr., Chairman	William B. Banning Sr., V Chairman
William C. Derrick	George H. Davis
Bobby C. Keisler	John W. Carrigg, Jr.
Johnny W. Jeffcoat	M. Todd Cullum

Absent:

\* Debra B. Summers

\*Ms. Summers was not present due to a family illness.

Also attending: Katherine Hubbard, County Administrator; Joe Mergo, Deputy County Administrator; Larry Porth, Finance Director/Assistant County Administrator; other staff members, citizens of the county and representatives of the media.

In accordance with the Freedom of Information Act, a copy of the agenda was sent to radio and TV stations, newspapers, and posted on the bulletin board located in the lobby of the County Administration Building.

**Proposed Equipment Cost for Reorganization of Precincts - Registration and Elections**  
**Dean Crepes, Director** - Mr. Crepes presented the proposed equipment cost for the reorganization of four new precincts for Lexington County. The precincts are: Barr Road, Pine Ridge, Park Road, and Red Bank South. The total cost is estimated at \$15,474.65. The Committee requested the number of active voters within each precinct before the new additions and the number of those who voted in the last two primaries and general elections. The Committee inquired about the possible consolidation of precincts, especially those in Council District 9 - West Columbia area. Mr. Crepes responded that he has addressed consolidation of precincts with State mapping and they have checked with the Delegation members in that area. They do not recommend consolidating. He said precincts are run based on the number of registered voters within the precinct and turn out has nothing to do with the number of active voters in the precincts and indicated that a bill has been passed by the House and Senate but not by the governor mandating these precinct changes. Mr. Crepes said the funds would be needed to purchase equipment by April in order to have the new precincts running for the June primaries. Concerns were expressed about the unfunded mandate and the costs to the County prior to the County's FY2010/11 budget process. Mr. Crepes reported ten of the larger precincts would be utilizing the new Electronic Voting

Registration List (EVRL) which should allow the voting lines to move faster. The Committee recommends holding off on the precinct changes until after the census is completed then verify registration numbers. Staff requested to draft a letter to all members of the Lexington County Legislative Delegation with Council's comments and concerns and request the Delegation to delay the split. Item delayed until further notice. No action taken.

**Tax Installment Payments - Treasurer Department - Jim Eckstrom, County Treasurer -**

Mr. Eckstrom presented information on tax installment payments which is provided for in the South Carolina Code of Laws under Section 12-45-75 - Installment Payments of Property Tax. He reported Section 12-45-75 essentially deals with allowing prepaid options and does not deal with delinquent taxes, does not extend or alter the due dates; it is a prepaid option of current taxes. The amount is based on last year's taxes. Mr. Eckstrom said they have talked with the following counties, in population order, to find out whether or not they offer this service. Greenville County does not accept tax installment payments; Richland County has a program that was in effect prior to the law; Charleston County does not accept; Spartanburg County does not accept; Lexington County - in Committee now; Horry County does accept and has 2,500-3,000 citizens participating; and Beaufort County does accept installment payments and has approximately 2,500 citizens participating. Mr. Eckstrom said the prepaid payments are made in six payments paid every two months. The first five payments are based on 16.66 percent of the previous year's taxes and the catch-up is in the final payment. Mr. Eckstrom said he met with the County's Finance Department to discuss the feasibility of the program and has met with Beaufort and Horry counties who both said it was successful because it gave taxpayers assistance in handling their personal finances. Mr. Eckstrom reported that the Treasurer's office could handle the program without additional staffing; however, the cost would involve coupon booklets at one dollar each. He said the counties currently using the program have 2.5 - 3 percent participation. He also reported Beaufort and Horry counties solicit the business but did not think Lexington County would want to do this. He said taxpayers will receive a paid receipt after the taxes have been paid in full and if taxes are not paid in full before the deadline, the amount submitted will be refunded. If there is an overage, the individual would be paid the overage amount with interest (except that if the overpayment is issued to the taxpayer within forty-five days of the installment payment that resulted in the overpayment, the treasurer may retain the interest earned). He said his office can handle up to 2,500; however, if it reached up to 10,000 he would have to come back to Council. The opt-in dates are December 1<sup>st</sup> to January 15<sup>th</sup> and would not go into effect until the 2011 taxes. Mr. Eckstrom said he would need a sixty-day notice prior to December first to begin the program. If the program was approved, it was requested that the Treasurer immediately write a check to the payee should he decide to opt out of the program. Once an individual opts out, he would not be able to continue to participate in the program. The Committee will continue discussions at the next meeting. For information only, no action taken.

**Approval of Minutes - Meeting of January 12, 2010** - A motion was made by Mr. Derrick, seconded by Mr. Davis to approve the January 12, 2010 minutes as submitted.

The vote in favor was unanimous.

**Old Business/New Business - Local Contractors Procurement** - None.

**Possible Executive Session if Time Permits - Executive Session/Legal Briefing** - A motion was made by Mr. Davis, seconded by Mr. Derrick to go into Executive Session for one personnel, two contractual, and six legal matters.

The vote in favor was unanimous.

Mr. Kinard reconvened the meeting in open session with no motions to be considered.

There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned.

Respectfully submitted,

Judy R. Busbee  
Assistant to the Clerk

James E. Kinard, Jr.  
Chairman

Diana W. Burnett  
Clerk