

**COMMITTEE of the WHOLE COMMITTEE
MINUTES
APRIL 27, 2010**

The Committee of the Whole met on Tuesday, April 27, 2010 in the Committee Room, located on the second floor of the Administration Building, beginning at 2:15 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
Debra B. Summers	Bobby C. Keisler
Johnny W. Jeffcoat	John W. Carrigg, Jr.
M. Todd Cullum	

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.

EngenuitySC Economic Development Update - EngenuitySC - Greg Hilton, Senior Project Manager – Mr. Hilton presented a Power Point presentation on EngenuitySC's economic development. EngenuitySC is a regional based economic development group focused on the Greater Columbia region's knowledge based economy and works in conjunction with public and private sector partners. Investors include City of Columbia, University of South Carolina, Midlands Technical College, Richland County, BlueCross BlueShield, SCANA, Wachovia, AT&T, Carolina First, Chernoff Newman, DP Professionals, Navistar, IBM, Nelson Mullins, SCB&T, Nexsen Pruet, and many others. He highlighted some of the programs they have been involved in during the last year and new programs to be launched. Most recent programs launched have been USC – Columbia Fuel Cell Collaborative, Artists as Entrepreneurs Institute, and Midlands Entrepreneurial Resource Network. Mr. Hilton said they have plans to launch Lexington County's first official FastTrac Program deploying the Kauffman's Foundation FastTracTM entrepreneurial education curriculum. He provided information on Columbia Talent Magnet and COR (Columbia Opportunity Resource) as they relate to Lexington County. For information only, no action taken.

Regional Homeless Plan - Midlands Housing Alliance Inc. - Larry Arney, Ex. Director - Mr. Arney presented information on the Midlands Housing Alliance's new Midlands Transition Center under construction in Columbia. He reported on the homelessness problem in the Midlands' area and the need for a regional solution. Mr. Arney provided posters of the

proposed transition facility to be located on the corner of Elmwood and Main streets in downtown Columbia. The new facility would provide a day center, respite center, and emergency housing for homeless individuals. He reported the South Carolina Department of Housing and Urban Development and the South Carolina Department of Health and Human Services conducted a homeless study in 2009 that recorded 1,368 homeless people in the Midlands area; 853 identified Richland County as their last known address and 153 listed Lexington County. The Midlands Housing Alliance is requesting assistance from local government entities to help fund a portion of the operating costs for the first year. Mr. Arney said the center's annual operational budget is estimated between \$2.5 and \$2.7 million per year and anticipate half will come from federal, state, or local government funding with the rest from private contributions. The Committee asked how many of the homeless have mental health problems. Mr. Arney responded 20 percent are identified with mental health issues and 24 percent are identified as veterans eligible for benefits but not receiving them; the new center plans to address these issues. The Alliance is requesting \$125,000 from the County. The Committee requested Mr. Ron Scott, Community Development Director, to investigate funding that may be available through the Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) program. Mr. Scott reported homeless service center operations are an eligible activity for CDBG funding based on certain restrictions by HUD. Funding would have to be based on the actual number of those identified and documented as Lexington County residents. This would also be considered a public service which is capped at 15 percent on the annual allocation of CDBG funds. The FY10/11 HUD allocation is \$1.6 million with no more than \$244,000 committed to public service activities that is already committed to the current budget. For information only, no action taken.

New Business - Public Transportation - CMRTA - Tommy Windsor, Vice Chairman and Mitzi Javers, Executive Director - Councilman Bill Banning, a member of the Central Midlands Regional Transit Authority (CMRTA) Board for Lexington County, reported Saturday, May 1, CMRTA will hold a public meeting to discuss changes to the public transit system that will have an impact on the current County bus routes. Mr. Windsor presented a request from CMRTA for funds to continue public transportation in Lexington County. He reported in 2009 CMRTA entered into an intergovernmental agreement with Richland County in order to secure a source of temporary funding to keep buses operational. One of the provisions of the agreement was CMRTA must end service to counties and municipalities that do not contribute to the funding of CMRTA by no later than September 30, 2010. Changes to the system will take place on July 12, 2010 and will include ending all fixed routes and DART (Dial-A-Ride-Transit) services in Lexington County. Mr. Windsor said the CMRTA's current annual estimated cost to operate the existing public transit system in Lexington County is approximately \$302,000. After passenger fares and other operating revenues are applied to the total operating costs, the current annual subsidy needed from the County to continue and maintain the current level of service is \$193,006. CMRTA provides three transit routes for the Lexington area at 61,000 trips for last year and 6,000 trips for DART. DART is primarily utilized by the elderly and disabled citizens that allows those

eligible to call the day before to make arrangements for transportation to a medical appointment or work. It provides smaller buses that are ADA (Americans with Disabilities Act) accessible and equipped with wheelchair lifts. Mr. Windsor reported there are over 600 people in Lexington who depend on DART for transportation to and from work. The Committee asked if CMRTA could charge a higher bus fare, currently at \$1.50, for the regular bus service, to \$4.50 per ride, to compensate for the \$193,006. Ms. Javers said CMRTA would have to do some research on increasing bus fares and be compliant with ADA. Currently, CMRTA provides bus services only in the Cayce, West Columbia and Springdale areas. The Committee discussed working with the municipalities to assist with keeping public transportation operational for their areas. Ms. Javers reported it would take \$24,000 to maintain the current service from July 12 through September 30, 2010 for Lexington County. The CMRTA Board will make a final decision on ending service for Lexington County after the May 1st Public Hearing. For information only, no action taken.

Old Business - Local Contractors Procurement, Fire Service Volunteer Incentives -
None.

Possible Executive Session if Time Permits - Executive Session/Legal Briefing - A motion was made by Mr. Jeffcoat, seconded by Ms. Summers to go into Executive Session to discuss two contractual and five 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