

**COMMITTEE of the WHOLE COMMITTEE
BUDGET WORKSESSION MINUTES
MAY 22, 2012**

The Committee of the Whole met on Tuesday, May 22, 2012 in the Council Chambers, located on the second floor of the Administration Building, at 12:00 p.m. to begin deliberations for the FY2012-2013 Recommended Budgets. Mr. Jeffcoat, V Chairman presided until Mr. Banning, Chairman, arrived.

Members Attending:

*William B. Banning, Sr., Chairman	Johnny W. Jeffcoat, V Chairman
James E. Kinard, Jr.	Frank J. Townsend, III
George H. Davis	*Debra B. Summers
Bobby C. Keisler	K. Brad Matthews
M. Todd Cullum	

*Mr. Banning and Ms. Summers arrived after the meeting was already in session.

Also attending: Joe Mergo, III, County Administrator; Larry Porth, Finance Director/Assistant County Administrator; John Fechtel, Public Works Director/Assistant County Administrator; Jeff Anderson, County Attorney; 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.

FY 2012-2013 Budget Discussions

Millage Agencies:

Lexington County Mental Health - *See Recommended Budget Book 2, Page 181* - Mr. Richard Acton, Executive Director, gave an overview of Mental Health services provided to County residents. He reported in May of 2008 the overall budget was at \$11.3 million and is now around \$8.8 million which includes staff cuts and increasing caseloads. They are requesting an adjustment in the millage.

Lexington County Recreation and Aging Commission - *See Recommended Budget Book 2, Page 182* - Mr. Randy Gibson, Executive Director, said they are not requesting a millage increase.

Irmo Chapin Recreation Commission - *See Recommended Budget Book 2, Page 183* - Ms. Elizabeth Taylor, Executive Director, said they are not requesting an increase in millage.

Midlands Technical College - *See Recommended Budget Book 2, Page 184* - Dr. Marshall "Sonny" White, President, said they are not requesting an increase in millage.

Riverbanks Zoo and Botanical Gardens - *See Recommended Budget Book 2, Page 186* - Mr. Satch Krantz, Executive Director, said they are not requesting an increase in millage or

funding from the County. Mr. Krantz said the Zoo continues to do well and is in the third year of a million plus visitors. The earned revenue the Zoo has been able to generate is more than making up for any additional funds that it needs.

Irmo Fire District - *See Recommended Budget Book 2, Page 187* - Chief Mike Sonfield, Irmo Fire Chief, said they are not requesting an increase in millage.

Motion: A motion was made by Mr. Kinard, seconded by Mr. Cullum to accept the recommended budgets for the Millage Agencies as presented.

Mr. Jeffcoat opened the meeting for discussion.

Mr. Cullum thanked the agencies for controlling their costs and continuing year after year to deliver the services.

Mr. Davis said the Mental Health's commitment is a silent but important part of constituent services.

In Favor:	Mr. Jeffcoat	Mr. Kinard
	Mr. Cullum	Mr. Townsend
	Mr. Davis	Mr. Keisler
	Mr. Matthews	

Absent:	Mr. Banning	Ms. Summers
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General Fund:

Law Enforcement - *See Recommended Budget Book 1, Page 99* - Col. Allan Paavel, Sheriff's Department, presented the Department's recommended budget. Col. Paavel reported they have examined and reviewed the budget and made cuts wherever possible in order to put those that they do have in the priority areas. Staff requests Council's consideration of CPI or population and adjustment in the Sheriff's millage to begin implementation of the strategic plan and maintain levels of service. The recommended budget is balanced within the projected revenues.

Mr. Cullum said most of Council had the opportunity to meet with the Sheriff, Col. Paavel and Chief Kirchner regarding their strategic plan and said the Sheriff's Department has not been getting CPI for several years of which Mr. Porth can validate.

Mr. Porth responded the Sheriff's millage adjustment was less than other parts of the County for the last several years.

Mr. Cullum suggested we include CPI and growth towards the Sheriff's recommended budget.

Motion: A motion was made by Mr. Cullum, seconded by Mr. Davis to approve the population growth and CPI towards the recommended budget for the Sheriff's Department.

Mr. Jeffcoat opened the meeting for discussion.

Mr. Porth said he wanted to clarify when you say growth - you are talking about population.

Mr. Cullum said obviously the growth is coming on anyway, but the population number and the CPI number is what I would propose.

Mr. Keisler asked if Council needed to take action now or if we can wait until we have heard from all departments before we decide.

Mr. Townsend said back when he ran for office he regretfully spoke ill-advisedly without knowing anything about the county and that he would not vote for any increases in taxes. Therefore for the record, Mr. Townsend said he would not be able to vote for any tax increase of any kind because a man is known by his word.

Mr. Matthews asked Col. Paavel how much the CPI and population increase, just for the Sheriff's Department, would affect taxes on a \$100,000 home. From information provided by Mr. Porth, Col. Paavel said for a \$100,000 it is \$5.53.

Mr. Kinard said he agrees that the basic tenet of government is to provide public safety, fire service and EMS but asked to delay the vote in order to hear from the other departments.

Due to the absences of two members, Mr. Cullum thought it was important to have their input as well and, therefore, will withdraw the motion.

Motion withdrawn: Mr. Cullum withdrew his motion; Mr. Davis withdrew his second.

Mr. Jeffcoat said he was offended by Mr. Townsend's reasoning for not supporting the Sheriff and said it is your responsibility to do what is right for the people that you are elected to serve.

Fire Service - *See Recommended Budget Book 1, Page 59* - Chief Brad Cox, Fire Service Coordinator, presented the recommended budget with a Power Point presentation. Chief Cox reported on three main emphasis points; 1) Fire Service strategic plan, 2) additional financial impact incurred over the past year, and 3) Fire Service advancement plan. (The plan is based on a 3% increase per year.) Chief Cox said he is requesting a CPI increase, which is 3.16 for this fiscal year.

Mr. Mergo wanted to make sure the public was aware that a reduction in equipment will not reduce any services to its citizens.

Mr. Kinard said he would like to stretch the implementation of the strategic plan from five to ten years in order to lessen the impact on millage increases each year.

Mr. Keisler asked how much is the increase on a \$100,000 home?

Mr. Mergo replied \$3.84 on a \$100,000 home that gets legal residence, which is .96 mills.

County Ordinary:

EMS - *See Recommended Budget Book 1, Page 52* - Chief Brian Hood, EMS Coordinator, presented the recommended budget for EMS with three new programs; 1) in-house billing, 2) update of the Electronic Patient Care Recording software, and 3) position upgrades and a Power Point presentation. Chief Hood said EMS cut almost \$300,000 in their recommended budget. He said by bringing back in-house billing rather than outsourcing to a third-party provider it would decrease expenses by approximately \$400,000 a year, a \$35,000 savings in the first year. Much discussion was held regarding bringing back in-house billing.

Mr. Davis asked staff to provide Council what the billing clerk has collected then subtract out the total costs of that individual, including fringe, telephone, and whatever else is involved in that job.

Mr. Kinard said, like Mr. Davis, he would like to see more proof before he is willing to approve a new program but is willing to approve the recommended budget as is.

Motion: A motion was made by Mr. Cullum, seconded by Mr. Kinard to approve staff's recommendations for the EMS budget as submitted.

Mr. Banning opened for discussion.

Mr. Mergo said because EMS is part of the County Ordinary, he respectfully requests to do County Ordinary in its entirety before any action is taken.

Mr. Banning asked to withdraw the motions.

Motion withdrawn: Mr. Cullum withdrew his motion; Mr. Kinard withdrew his second.

Mr. Banning recessed Council for a ten minute break.

Mr. Banning reconvened the budget worksession.

Chief Hood said EMS is currently using the Electronic Patient Care Recording software (EPCR), mandated in 2008, that needs to be completely rewritten or consider a third party vendor because DHEC is requiring some 300 additional pieces of information that the current system was never designed to capture.

Coroner - *See Recommended Budget Book 1, Page 77* - Mr. Butch Reynolds, Part-time Special Deputy Coroner, requested the Coroner's forensic death investigator position be funded under General Funds because the grant funds will run out at the end of this fiscal year.

Mr. Banning asked if the grant was a federal or a state grant.

Mr. Reynolds replied it was federal money that came down through the state. The requested funds to be moved is \$61,094.

Council Contribution Agencies:

American Red Cross - *See Recommended Budget Book 1, Page 10* - Ms. Paula Thayer, Major Gifts Officer for the Columbia Region American Red Cross, is requesting \$7,500 for local disasters. She reported they have not received funds from Council since FY2008/09 when they received \$5,000. Mr. Davis asked Ms. Thayer if the Red Cross keeps the zip codes of major gift contributions.

Dickerson Center - *See Recommended Budget Book 1, Page 10* - Ms. Carol Yarborough, Executive Director, and Ms. Molly Taylor, Board Chairman, presented the Center's request of \$79,407. Ms. Yarborough explained what a child advocacy center is and how they assist in child abuse investigations. She noted of 275 forensic interviews that the Center provided in 2011, 204 were from Lexington County. The Center is requesting funds for forensic interviews and part of the pediatrician operating expenses.

Edventure Children's Museum - *See Recommended Budget Book 1, Page 10* - Ms. Catherine Horne, CEO, presented the Museum's budget request of \$100,000. She reported since 2003, they have served more than 300,000 Lexington County residents. The museum is seeking support from Lexington County, Richland County, City of Columbia and private sources to fund the remaining \$2 million portion of a \$5 million capital commitment and looking to Lexington County for a \$500,000 five-year commitment.

Burton Center - *See Recommended Budget Book 1, Page 10* - Mr. Linda Gault, Operations Director, and Ms. Wendy Derrick McKinley presented a budget request of \$15,000. Burton Center has been in operation in Lexington County for almost seven years.

Transitions - *See Recommended Budget Book 1, Page 10* - Mr. Craig Currey, Transitions' new COO and Interim Executive Director, presented Transitions' budget request of \$100,000.

Mr. Banning opening the meeting for discussion.

Mr. Banning asked Mr. Currey if he had any specific numbers on how many transients have been through the facility from Lexington County.

Mr. Currey responded eight percent.

Mr. Banning also asked how many transients come from Lexington Medical Center.

Mr. Mergo reported Transition's request is for \$100,000. He noted that the county made a one-time contribution of \$125,000 to help with building the facility and understood they would not return for additional funds.

RTA - *See Recommended Budget Book 1, Page 139* - RTA (Regional Transit Authority) - No representatives were in attendance for RTA.

Mr. Mergo noted the County Ordinary, Law Enforcement and Fire Service requested budget was \$115,696,721. However, it is being recommended at the revenue level of \$101,681,929, a reduction of \$14 million

Mr. Mergo said we do have one personnel matter that is budget related that needs to be taken up in executive session.

Executive Session - A motion was made by Mr. Matthews, seconded by Ms. Summers to go into Executive Session to discuss one personnel matter.

In Favor: Mr. Banning Mr. Matthews
 Ms. Summers Mr. Kinard
 Mr. Townsend Mr. Davis
 Mr. Keisler Mr. Jeffcoat
 Mr. Cullum

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

The next budget worksession is scheduled for Thursday, June 14, 2012.

There being no further business, the budget worksession meeting was adjourned.

Respectfully submitted,

Judy R. Busbee
Assistant to the Clerk

William B. Banning, Sr.
Chairman

Diana W. Burnett
Clerk