



Richland County Council  
Regular Session  
**MINUTES**  
April 16, 2024 – 6:00 PM  
Council Chambers  
2020 Hampton Street, Columbia, SC 29204

COUNCIL MEMBERS PRESENT: Jesica Mackey, Chair; Jason Branham, Paul Livingston, Allison Terracio, Don Weaver, Gretchen Barron, Overture Walker, Cheryl English, and Chakisse Newton

NOT PRESENT: Derrek Pugh and Yvonne McBride

OTHERS PRESENT: Michelle Onley, Aric Jensen, Leonardo Brown, Anette Kirylo, Stacey Hamm, Susan O’Cain, Dale Welch, Ashiya Myers, Kyle Holsclaw, Angela Weathersby, Andrew Haworth, Tamar Black, Patrick Wright, Michael Maloney, Ashley Fullerton, Judy Carter, Jackie Hancock, Jennifer Wladischkin, Chelsea Bennett, Maddison Wilkerson, Lori Thomas, Tish Gonzales, Michael Byrd, John McKenzie, Quinton Epps, and Sandra Haynes

1. **CALL TO ORDER** – Chairwoman Jesica Mackey called the meeting to order at approximately 6:00 PM.
2. **INVOCATION** – The Invocation was led by Senior Pastor Don Brock, Gateway Baptist Church.
3. **PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE** – The Pledge of Allegiance was led by the Honorable Jason Branham.

**POINT OF PERSONAL PRIVILEGE** – Ms. Mackey acknowledged that Mr. Pugh and Ms. McBride were not in attendance at tonight’s meeting. In addition, she noted that former Councilwoman Bernice Scott, Richland School District II Superintendent Dr. Kim Moore, and former Treasurer David Adams were in the audience.

**POINT OF PERSONAL PRIVILEGE** – Ms. English noted the shirt she was wearing was in honor of ADA Day at the Statehouse. AbleSC, along with a plethora of supporters, came out to talk about transportation, housing needs, the sub-minimum wage bill, and changing the lives of those with disabilities.

4. **RATIFICATION OF RESOLUTION**

- a. Resolution Recognizing the University of South Carolina’s 2024 NCAA Women’s Basketball National Championship – Ms. Barron moved to ratify the resolution, seconded by Ms. English.

In Favor: Branham, Livingston, Terracio, Weaver, Barron, Walker, Mackey, English, and Newton

Not Present: Pugh and McBride

The vote in favor was unanimous.

Ms. Mackey read the resolution into the record.

5. **PRESENTATION OF PROCLAMATIONS**

- a. A Proclamation Recognizing April 14-20, 2024, as Animal Care and Control Appreciation Week [WEAVER, BARRON and NEWTON] – Ms. Newton read the proclamation into the record.
- b. A Proclamation Recognizing Lower Richland High School JROTC Drill Team on their 2024 State Championship [NEWTON and ENGLISH] – Ms. Newton read the proclamation into the record.

**POINT OF PERSONAL PRIVILEGE** – Ms. Newton stated she was the Principal for the Day at Lower Richland High School and witnessed these students’ hard work in practicing for these competitions.

6. **APPROVAL OF MINUTES**

- a. Special Called: April 9, 2024 – Ms. Barron moved to approve the minutes as distributed, seconded by Ms. English.

In Favor: Branham, Livingston, Terracio, Weaver, Barron, Walker, Mackey, English, and Newton

Not Present: Pugh and McBride

The vote in favor was unanimous.

7. **ADOPTION OF AGENDA** – Ms. English moved to adopt the agenda as published, seconded by Ms. Barron.

In Favor: Branham, Pugh, McBride, Livingston, Terracio, Weaver, Barron, Walker, Mackey, English, and Newton

The vote in favor was unanimous.

8. **REPORT OF THE ATTORNEY FOR EXECUTIVE SESSION (Pursuant to SC Code 30-4-70)** – There were no items for the Executive Session.

9. **CITIZENS' INPUT**

- a. For Items on the Agenda Not Requiring a Public Hearing – No one signed up to speak.

10. **CITIZENS' INPUT**

- a. Must Pertain to Richland County Matters Not on the Agenda (Items for which a public hearing is required or a public hearing has been scheduled cannot be addressed at this time.) – No one spoke during Citizens' Input.

Ms. Mackey pointed out that if an item on the agenda has a public hearing scheduled, citizens would have to speak at the public hearing, not during "Citizens' Input."

11. **REPORT OF THE COUNTY ADMINISTRATOR**

a. Updates for Consideration

1. *Strategic Planning Dashboard* – Ms. Mackey stated this dashboard is a longtime work in progress of Council to showcase transparency, which was one of the focuses of the Strategic Plan. The dashboard is the commitment, in a visual form, to the public.

The Budget Director, Maddison Wilkerson, expressed that the public dashboard is a comprehensive tool for tracking key performance indicators and metrics vital to our community's success and well-being. As you know, the vision for the dashboard has been about a year and a half in the making. In August 2022, the County engaged with Envisio to bring the strategic planning vision to life and promote transparency to all stakeholders. Over the next year, Council and Administration worked to develop measurable and concise goals, objectives, and initiatives. The Council ultimately approved six overarching goals, broken down further into objectives and initiatives. The public dashboard highlights each area of the plan and provides visuals, narrative updates, and progress reports.

- b. Richland Two Superintendent Presentation – Dr. Kim Moore, Richland School District II Superintendent, indicated she was a retired military officer. She retired as a Lieutenant Colonel from the Pentagon, and her expertise was nuclear, biological, and chemical warfare weapons of mass destruction. She was a part of the negotiating team to ban chemical weapons. She is also a high school teacher with a degree in Science (Biology with a minor in Chemistry) and certification in Chemistry.

- Total enrollment of 28,853 students
  - African-American – 62.5%
  - White – 15.5%
  - Hispanic – 13% (expected to be larger than the white population within two years)
- Poverty has emerged as one of the leading indicators of the academic achievement gap.
  - 17,991 of the students, a staggering 62.4%, are living in poverty
  - Up 8.6% over the last five years
  - African-American – 71%
  - Hispanic – 14.2%
  - White – 7.2%
- 18.6% of Richland II students changed schools during the last
  - Elementary School – 28.8% (Joseph Keels Elementary)
  - Middle School – 24% (Dent Middle)
  - High School – 26.7% (Westwood High)
- One in five Richland II students misses more than 18 school days yearly.
  - The district absenteeism rate has dropped from 21% to 12.3%
- Richland II School District's Priorities:
  - Fiscal Accountability
  - Human Resources Systems Overall
  - Academics
  - Safety and Security

Dr. Moore noted that she started a podcast, "The Moore You Know," when she came on board to educate the parents and equip them with information. She meets with the Sheriff and his team quarterly. Lastly, she mentioned that she joined Leadership Columbia to ensure she integrated herself into the community.

12. **REPORT OF THE CLERK OF COUNCIL** – No report was given.

13. **REPORT OF THE CHAIR**

- a. Transportation Penny Advisory Committee Appointment – Ms. Mackey noted approximately a month ago, the Council passed a resolution regarding the Transportation Penny Advisory Committee and its functions moving forward. At that time, several municipality vacancies on the committee were identified. The municipalities were notified to fill their vacancies by April 5<sup>th</sup>. All municipalities, except Arcadia Lakes, were able to meet the deadline. At this point, the Chair of the Rules and Appointments Committee, the Chair of the Transportation Penny Advisory Committee, and herself are recommending the appointment of Mr. Donald Vanvranken.

Ms. Barron moved to accept the recommendation to appoint Mr. Donald Vanvranken to fill the Arcadia Lakes vacancy on the Transportation Penny Advisory Committee, seconded by Mr. Walker.

In Favor: Branham, Livingston, Terracio, Weaver, Barron, Walker, Mackey, English, and Newton

Not Present: Pugh and McBride

The vote in favor was unanimous.

14. **APPROVAL OF CONSENT ITEMS**

- a. An Ordinance authorizing the easements to Dominion Energy South Carolina, Inc. to construct, extend, replace, relocate, perpetually maintain and operate an overhead or underground electric line or lines; located on property owned by Richland County at 1364 Northpoint Blvd.; and as is more fully described herein [SECOND READING] – Mr. Livingston moved to approve this item, seconded by Ms. Barron.

In Favor: Branham, Livingston, Terracio, Weaver, Barron, Walker, Mackey, English, and Newton

Not Present: Pugh and McBride

The vote in favor was unanimous.

15. **SECOND READING ITEMS**

- a. An Ordinance Amending the Richland County Code of Ordinances; Chapter 18, Offenses; by adding Section 18-10, so as to prohibit the desecration of a gravesite, cemetery, or burial ground and to provide penalties – Mr. Branham moved to approve this item, seconded by Ms. Newton.

In Favor: Branham, Livingston, Terracio, Weaver, Barron, Walker, Mackey, English, and Newton

Not Present: Pugh and McBride

The vote in favor was unanimous.

- b. An Ordinance Amending the Richland County Code of Ordinances, Chapter 5, Animals and Fowl – Ms. Mackey acknowledged Council members had received emails concerning this item. She noted this item requires three readings and a public hearing. The public hearing will be held at the upcoming meeting.

Ms. Sandra Haynes, Animal Care Director, stated county staff met with interested animal care community stakeholders at a quarterly collaboration meeting on February 12, 2024. During the meeting, stakeholders expressed concerns about the removal of the “Community Cat Diversion Program.” The “Community Cat Diversion Program” was established pursuant to the 2017 Animal Care Ordinance amendment. This program allowed community cats to be trapped by Animal Care officers or picked up by citizens and taken to the City shelter to be spayed/neutered, vaccinated, and ear-tipped. Shortly after the ordinance was enacted, the shelter lost its veterinarian. The “Community Cat” language no longer allows our officers to take the cats to the shelter to have them spayed/neutered, vaccinated, and ear-tipped. Animal Mission provides vouchers citizens can obtain from the Animal Care Division. The citizens can then take the community cats to Pawmetto Lifeline or the Humane Society to have them altered. The current ordinance draft reflects this in the “Trap, Neuter, Release” language. The draft language protects community cats by making it illegal to poison them. State law prevents community cats from being cruelly treated or killed by making such actions a misdemeanor or felony.

She reiterated that removing the “Community Cat Diversion Program” language means the county no longer traps these cats and takes them to the shelter. However, citizens are still allowed to have the cats altered at non-Richland County facilities that perform these services. In addition, it is still a violation of the law to cruelly treat or kill community cats.

Ms. Terracio said it had come to her attention there were not enough vouchers available or the vouchers did not cover the total cost.

Ms. Haynes noted she had been made aware of this. In the past, the vouchers did cover the total cost of the spay/neuter. No costs were passed on to the citizens because the County was doing some of the work. Now, citizens have to pay for a trap. She also understands there may not be enough available appointments, so they cannot take as many cats at one time.

Ms. Terracio reiterated that no part of our ordinance prevents community partners from participating in a “Trap, Neuter, and Release” program.

Mr. Wright asserted that the “Community Cat Diversion Program” no longer exists. It has not existed since 2017. Individuals can avail themselves of the voucher program that does exist.

Mr. Weaver requested that staff contact as many stakeholders as possible to allay their concerns about the "Community Cat Diversion Program" going away.

Ms. Newton inquired if the passage of the ordinance changes anything about how community groups are having cats spayed/neutered and released back into the community or how animal cruelty is prosecuted in the County.

Mr. Wright responded it does not.

Ms. Barron inquired how it is that we no longer have a program, and have not had it since 2017, but many think we do. She noted it concerns her that people are upset about something we have not done for a long time, and we did not tell them we were not doing it.

Ms. Mackey stated staff addressing this issue is the quickest form of communication that can be provided at the time.

Mr. Branham stated he does not understand why this section needs to be removed from the ordinance. He inquired if the "Community Cat Diversion Program" was ever actively implemented.

Ms. Haynes replied that it was implemented from July 2017 to 2019, when the shelter lost its veterinarian.

Mr. Branham inquired if there would be a legal concern with not removing the "Community Cat Diversion Program" language from the ordinance.

Mr. Wright responded that this was not a County Attorney ordinance. Administration recommended this ordinance. Legally, the County Attorney's Office has no concerns about the ordinance.

Mr. Livingston inquired why we were removing the "Community Cat Diversion Program" language if it does not change how we operate.

Mr. Brown stated operationally that community members who wished to participate in the program would still be able to, but the Animal Care Division would not be tasked with administering the program.

Mr. Livingston moved to defer this item until the May 7<sup>th</sup> Council meeting, seconded by Mr. Weaver.

In Favor: Branham, Livingston, Terracio, Weaver, Barron, Walker, Mackey, English, and Newton

Not Present: Pugh and McBride

The vote in favor was unanimous.

#### 16. **REPORT OF THE ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE**

- a. Authorizing the expansion of the boundaries of the I-77 Corridor Regional Industrial Park jointly developed with Fairfield County to include certain property located in Richland County; the execution and delivery of a public infrastructure credit agreement to provide for public infrastructure credits to Silver Hills Huger LLC; and other related matters [FIRST READING] – Mr. Livingston stated the committee recommended approval of this item.

Ms. Terracio stated she has some concerns about what the community may or may not be looking for.

In Favor: Branham, Livingston, Weaver, Barron, Walker, Mackey, English, and Newton

Opposed: Terracio

Not Present: Pugh and McBride

The vote was in favor.

- b. Committing to negotiate a fee-in-lieu of ad valorem taxes agreement between Richland County and Project Charge; identifying the project; and other matters related thereto – Mr. Livingston stated the committee recommended approval of this item.

In Favor: Branham, Livingston, Terracio, Weaver, Barron, Walker, Mackey, English, and Newton

Not Present: Pugh and McBride

The vote in favor was unanimous.

- c. Authorizing the execution and delivery of a fee-in-lieu of ad valorem taxes and incentive agreement by and between Richland County, South Carolina and Project Charge to provide for payment of a fee-in-lieu of taxes; authorizing certain infrastructure credits; and other related matters [FIRST READING] – Mr. Livingston stated the committee recommended approval of this item.

In Favor: Branham, Livingston, Terracio, Weaver, Barron, Walker, Mackey, English, and Newton

Not Present: Pugh and McBride

The vote in favor was unanimous.

17. **REPORT OF THE COMMUNITY IMPACT GRANS COMMITTEE**

a. **Fiscal Year 25 Grant Application Requests** – Ms. Mackey stated the committee’s recommendation is as follows:

- Healthy Learners - \$50,000
- Goodwill Industries of Upstate/Midlands South Carolina, Inc. - \$50,000
- Harvest Hope - \$50,000
- SC UpLift Community Outreach - \$50,000
- Latino Communications CDC - \$50,000
- Communities in Schools of South Carolina - \$50,000
- Serve and Connect - \$50,000
- Koinonia Foundation/Youth & Teens Ministry - \$50,000
- Reconciliation Ministries SC - \$43,800
- Sistercare, Inc. - \$26,000
- Alston Wilkes Society - \$25,000
- Epworth Children’s Home - \$25,000
- YMCA of Columbia - \$25,000
- Career Development Center at Saint Johh, a Division of Community Development Corporation - \$20,000
- The Cooperative Ministry - \$20,000
- The Therapy Place - \$15,000
- Mary L. Jacobs Life Center – \$15,000
- South Carolina Philharmonic – \$14,000
- Greenview Swim Team - \$10,000
- Greater Waverly Place - \$10,000
- Olympia Granby Historical Foundation - \$10,000

In Favor: Branham, Livingston, Terracio, Weaver, Barron, Walker, Mackey, English, and Newton

Not Present: Pugh and McBride

The vote in favor was unanimous.

Ms. Mackey moved to reconsider this item, seconded by Ms. Newton.

Opposed: Branham, Livingston, Terracio, Weaver, Barron, Walker, Mackey, English, and Newton

Not Present: Pugh and McBride

The motion for reconsideration failed.

18. **OTHER ITEMS**

a. **Award of Construction – Atlas Road Widening** – Ms Newton moved not to accept the bid, which was seconded by Ms. Terracio.

Ms. Newton noted at the last meeting, we approved a re-scope of Atlas Road restoring it to what was in the 2012 referendum. The re-scope is a larger project than what is accounted for in this bid. Due to the scope of the project being expanded, she would like to allow staff an opportunity to review the bid that was put out to ensure that what we are doing makes sense.

Ms. Barron stated, for clarification, this motion does not eliminate the existing vendor from being a part of what staff is doing. She does not want to give the appearance we are refusing business with local vendors.

Mr. Patrick stated the motion is not to award the contract and to allow staff to go back and determine what is necessary for the new scope of the project. If staff determines a new bid is required, that will happen.

Ms. Barron stated it is rejecting what was brought to us, but is it eliminating what was already done through the procurement process? For instance, does the vendor brought to Council have another chance and be the #1 choice, or would we start from scratch?

Mr. Wright responded we would start over. Basically, it is a different project. The vendor would not be eliminated from bidding again.

Mr. Walker inquired if it would necessitate Executive Session to inquire if there were legal ramifications to approving this motion.

Mr. Wright noted a response would require Executive Session.

In Favor: Branham, Terracio, Weaver, Walker, English, and Newton

Opposed: Livingston, Barron, and Mackey

Not Present: Pugh and McBride

The vote was in favor.

b. **FY24 – District 2 Hospitality Tax Allocations (Black Pages International - \$5,000)**

- c. FY24 – District 8 Hospitality Tax Allocations (Delta House, Incorporated - \$4,500)
- d. FY24 – District 9 Hospitality Tax Allocations (Delta House, Incorporated - \$2,500)

Ms. Newton moved to approve Items 18(b) – 18(d), seconded by Ms. Terracio.

In Favor: Branham, Livingston, Terracio, Weaver, Barron, Walker, Mackey, English, and Newton

Not Present: Pugh and McBride

The vote in favor was unanimous.

Ms. English moved to reconsider this item, seconded by Ms. Newton.

Opposed: Branham, Livingston, Terracio, Weaver, Barron, Walker, Mackey, English, and Newton

Not Present: Pugh and McBride

The motion for reconsideration failed.

19. **EXECUTIVE SESSION** – There were no items for Executive Session.

20. **MOTION PERIOD** – No motions were submitted.

21. **ADJOURNMENT** – Ms. Newton moved to adjourn the meeting, seconded by Mr. Weaver.

In Favor: Branham, Livingston, Terracio, Weaver, Barron, Walker, Mackey, English, and Newton

Not Present: Pugh and McBride

The vote in favor was unanimous.

The meeting adjourned at approximately 7:32 PM.