

RICHLAND COUNTY COUNCIL

SOUTH CAROLINA

SPECIAL CALLED MEETING MINUTES

October 6, 2015
3:00 PM
4th Floor Conference Room

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

CALL TO ORDER

Mr. Rush called the meeting to order at approximately 3:00 PM

Richland County Emergency Services Update and Next Steps

Mr. McDonald stated:

- There are relief sites and shelters throughout the County, which are staff with water and supplies
- In critical areas the shelters are staffed with portable kitchens
- County is working with sister agencies and State government
- The City and County are in constant contact with each other
- A briefing was held prior to this meeting with Governor Haley

Mr. Byrd stated:

- This is an ongoing event and will not be over for some time
- There are several phases the County will go through
- At this time the County is still in the "Emergency and Rescue Phase"
- There were a number of fatalities in the County
- The County will be transitioning to an "Assessment Phase" and then a "Recovery Phase" in the near future
- The "Recovery Phase" will be a very length process
- The Gills Creek Reporting Station reported 21 inches of rain
- The Gills Creek area is where the majority of the damage and infrastructure damage seems to have occurred
- During the first 24-hour period of this event there was a record 2,400 calls for assistance received
- Currently there are approximately 1,400 every 24 hours
- EOC and field personnel are currently being stretched beyond their limits; additional resources have been requested through the State
- Assistance from the State (i.e. water, personnel, etc.) is not granted immediately
- One person in EOC is dedicated to requesting assistance and maintaining contact with State
- The areas of Eastover, Gadsden, Forest Acres and the Northeast were hit very hard and continue to be treacherous



Committee Members Present

Torrey Rush, Chair
Greg Pearce, Vice Chair
Joyce Dickerson
Julie-Ann Dixon
Norman Jackson
Damon Jeter
Paul Livingston
Bill Malinowski
Jim Manning
Kelvin E. Washington, Sr.

Others Present:

Tony McDonald
Daniel Driggers
Sparty Hammett
Warren Harley
Beverly Harris
Monique McDaniels
Kimberly Roberts
Rob Perry
Roxanne Ancheta
Cheryl Patrick
Ismail Ozbek
Ken Aucoin
Brad Farrar

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- Approximately 100 roads have bridges or portions of the roadway closed, which are preventing or delaying response into some areas
- SCDOT will be assessing the roads and bridges to determine their integrity
- Due to the age of the interstate bridges, SCDOT shut them down until the waters had receded and they could be assessed
- Several of the dams in the County will continue to be monitored
- DHEC and the Corp of Engineers are responsible for monitoring and assessing the integrity of the dams
- Cary Lake, Arcadia Lake, Upper and Lower Ford Dams have either broken or are breached
- Beaver Dam, Spring Lake and Forest Lake Dams are being closely monitored
- National Guard are presently at Spring Lake and Forest Lake Dams attempting to keep them intact with the use of sandbags
- Coordinating with the school districts and USC regarding classes and road conditions
- Dealing with several hazardous situations, including an overturned tractor trailer on Garner's Ferry Road that has begun to leak the fuel it was carrying
- Thousands of citizens have been displaced
- The following shelters have been established: (1) A. C. Flora High School – 165 citizens; (2) Lower Richland High School – 100 citizens; and (3) St. Andrews Middle School – 95 citizens
- The shelters are being closed monitored; additional shelters will be opened if needed to accommodate the residents that have been displaced
- The Sheriff's Department, Fire/Rescue and other strike team members are going door-to-door to assess the areas that are isolated.
- Forest Acres lost their Police Department to the flooding; therefore, they are presently dispatching out of the County's EOC until other arrangements could be made.
- The short-term goal is to insure residents have food, water and shelter
- Water distribution sites have been set up (Convention Center, Forest Drive Wal-Mart, Landmark Drive Office Park, Eastover Park and Gadsden Community Center). Other water distribution sites will be opened as they are needed.
- The City has crews working around the clock to restore water pressure to the nked Richland County Staff for their assistance with the community festival.
- Mobile kitchens have been deployed in several areas. Additional kitchens will be going to Eastover and Gadsden where they will prepare meals at Eastover Park and distribute them to the area.
- The mobile kitchen set up at the City's Public Water Facility on Harden Street is providing meals for the public safety workers
- The hospitals are stable at this time.
- The Columbia Fire Service has been providing water to the hospital for water suppression, as well as, maintaining sanitary conditions. The water is also being used for the chillers at the hospitals.
- There has been an influx of volunteers and goods; the Ombudsman's Office is receiving all calls for volunteers goods and services
- Garbage Service has been suspended, but alternate plans for reinstatement of refuse services is being discussed at this time
- Emergency housing needs and requirements will need to be discussed
- Before the "Recovery Phase" can be undertaken a damage assessment will need to be done to determine residential and commercial structures that may have been damaged, as well as, infrastructure damage
- The cost of this storm will be tremendous to the County

- Residents in the Northeast should avoid the Sesquicentennial State Park and Gills Creek Water Basin at this time.

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- Ms. Dixon requested an electronic map of the areas the residents should avoid that she could forward to her constituents
- Ms. Dixon requested the “stand in place” request be explained more in depth for the citizens, so they are less likely to venture out on the roadways
- Ms. Harris is going to station PIO staff in the EOC in order to update the Council members with the most up-to-date information regarding road closures and pertinent information
- Mr. Perry and Mr. Ozbek will be giving an update on the conditions of the roads in the near future
- Ms. Dixon requested an update on Polo Road, the roads in the Pontiac/Elgin area and emergency management assess to all of District Nine
- Mr. Byrd stated the State plan has the Red Cross as the lead agency for shelters.
- The Red Cross has criteria that designates where the shelters are going to be.
- The County notifies the Red Cross that a shelter needs to be opened and they spend the resources to open the shelter.
- There were several issues with opening shelters because the Red Cross could not get the resources in and it delayed the opening of shelters. DSS was able to assist with opening shelters until the Red Cross was able to open up shelters.
- The delay in the Red Cross opening the shelters was brought to the Governor, the Adjutant General and the Director of SC Emergency Management’s attention at a meeting earlier today.
- Mr. Jeter suggested that Richland County, if faced with a similar event, have a process wherein the County can provide temporary shelter until the Red Cross or State can put their shelters in place
- Mr. McDonald stated there is a process and resources available to the government entities to do recovery, as well as, assistance offered through FEMA to homeowners who have losses who may not be insured and/or adequately insured.
- Mr. McDonald recommended beginning in a disaster recovery contractor/consultant on an emergency basis to walk the County through the process to insure all available funding is received.
- Mr. Pearce stated his frustration has been with who to call and who is in charge of what
- In response to Mr. Pearce’s frustration, Mr. Byrd stated as an example that the Fire Department is responsible for rescue efforts. If the Fire Department puts in a request stating they are overwhelmed and need additional resources, the request is processed and sent to the State. The State is then responsible for finding those requested assets. The agency (i.e. the Fire Department) requesting the resources are then responsible for those assets. The self-responding individuals/groups that have no direction are the ones that cause issues.

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- Mr. Pearce is concerned that citizens are leaving the shelters and going back to homes that may not be safe and habitable.
- Mr. Byrd stated the insurance companies will likely inspect dwellings. The County will try to assist with the inspections, but because this is not a mandatory evacuation the County cannot prevent citizens from returning to their homes.
- Each flood victim is qualified for over \$33,000 through FEMA whether they're insured or not insured. If they are insured, they have to pay the monies back like a loan.
- Disaster Recovery Center sites will be set up by FEMA and the State.
- The County Assessor's Office and Fire Marshals will serve as the assessment team for the County. The County's assessment team will be deployed along with the State Emergency Management Division as a team of assessors. FEMA has a team of assessors.
- These "strike teams" will go out to the devastated areas with GPS equipment that calculates accurately the longitude and latitude
- Mr. McDonald stated GIS is drafting a map of the troubled spots that must be avoided or are dangerous that will be released to the media.
- Mr. McDonald stated in many cases the money received from the Federal and State government will be reimbursement for monies spent by the County. In many cases, it won't be a 100% reimbursement.
- Mr. McDonald suggested tapping into the Fund Balance temporarily and to reimburse the monies as they become available.
- Another option to replenish the Fund Balance and/or repay the funding FEMA doesn't cover would be to utilize Act 388 and the tax millage rate. During the duration of a disaster situation, the millage cap can be exceeded without penalty.
- Mr. Jackson stated because of the criteria the Red Cross has some of the citizens were forced to leave the shelter because they did not meet the Red Cross's criteria.

Mr. Hammett stated:

- Building Inspections is pulling together information regarding permitting requirements and other related issues for the citizens as they begin repairing their homes
- Jim Hamilton-LB Owens Airport reported no major problems; only minor leaks
- Richland County Utilities reported no major problems; Utilities was able to maintain the Broad River Wastewater Treatment Plant; the Hwy. 76 pump station reported a spill of less than 1,000 gallons; the Shady Grove pump station reported a spill of 10,000 gallons; Eastover Wastewater Treatment Plant is

operational and there were no spills; Hopkins Water System is also operational and no indication of water breaks and water pressure is stable

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- The Transportation Department started working closely in conjunction with Public Works; centralized command center, with 3 PW employees, has been set up at Powell Road; teams have been created to inspect and do assessment of the 560 paved roads, 217 of unpaved roads, and 6 County maintained bridges, as well as, various culvert crossings.
- Currently there are 39 employees broken up into 5 crews conducting inspections and providing access to the citizens where access cannot be maintained
- Mr. McDonald stated the County is not listed as a dam owner.
- Mr. Jeter requested an assessment of how the County can make the private dam owners accountable for affecting the lively of the citizens.

Mr. Perry stated:

- The 6 County maintained bridges were inspected; 3 of those bridges are closed
- The 3 bridges that are open are Hawkins Creek, Boyd Bridge Road and Carolina Pine Drive
- The culverts will be inspected on Tuesday, October 6th

Mr. Harley stated:

- The Solid Waste Department is currently assessing how quickly they will be able to reestablish services
- In the meantime, they have expanded the drop off sites in Lower Richland and on Monticello Road; and evaluating areas to strategically place drop roll offs to allow household garbage to be brought to those locations

Ms. Ancheta stated:

- Of the 25 County facilities that have been inspected are 100% operational
- Support Services will continue to inspect the remaining facilities; the evaluations of these facilities should be completed by the end of the week
- Some of the facilities in the Lower Richland area are without water; port-a-potty have been brought into those facilities
- There was no runoff at the Decker Center
- There was minimal flooding at Pinewood Lake; the basement of the house sustained some flooding
- The CIGNA Luncheon with Council has been rescheduled

- Flu Shots and Biometrics has been cancelled and will be rescheduled in the near future

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- Public Information has over 1,200 new followers on Twitter
- A 5-page update was sent out earlier today and has also been placed on the County's website
- GIS and Assessor's Office are trying to compile information in regard to the 500 year flood layer
- Building Inspections is going to have an appraiser sent out to assess damage to the homes
- The Ombudsman's Office has received over 600 calls
- Mr. Livingston requested that staff compile a list of resources they will need in order

Major Cowan stated:

- The Sheriff's Department is working collectively with the Columbia Police Department, Columbia Fire Department and Emergency Service
- Over 100 personnel from the South Carolina Law Enforcement Development, Columbia Police Department and Sheriff's Department are working in search and rescue capacity, as well as, on strike teams
- In the last 48 hours have been attempting to identify areas that are of concern and filter that information through Emergency Management
- Law Enforcement from Tennessee is assisting the Sheriff's Department
- Assisting with water distribution centers and insuring that resources are available to County/volunteer workers

Mr. Byrd stated that anyone that wishes to volunteer is being forwarded to the Ombudsman's Office and they are then put in touch with the employee in EOC that has been designated to coordinate volunteer services.

Ms. Dixon requested a centralized location to be set up to bring donations of food, clothing, etc.

Mr. Kelly with the EOC stated there are plans in the works to set up donations centers in the various districts.

Major Cowan stated those individuals that are not abiding by the curfews will be asked to stay off the roads, but if they become belligerent or refuse to adhere to the curfew they will be arrested.

During the mandatory evacuations there were several messages sent out and the Sheriff's Department went door-to-door informing citizens that they needed to evacuate immediately.

Mr. Washington inquired if any of the staff had been to do an aerial assessment of the County.

Mr. McDonald stated County staff has not done an aerial overview of the County.

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Mr. Aucoin stated there are gauges at each of the creeks and the National Weather Service sends out advisories to the public if there are a potential for flooding and the notices are very specific as to the creeks that could overflow.

Mr. Byrd stated if there is a pending dam break, an Everbridge notification is sent out to that particular area.

Mr. Washington feels that on a local level more needs to be done to alert citizens to impending flood conditions to prevent citizens from becoming trapped in flooded areas.

Mr. Perry stated there are no plans to repair SCDOT roads for connectivity purposes, but the County can partner with them to help them in assessing their road conditions.

Mr. Washington was upset that his emails were not answered in a timely manner and he did not know what was going on in his district.

Mr. Jackson suggested that Council attend the Legislative Delegation briefing on Wednesday and express to them the Council's concern regarding the SCDOT roads.

Ms. Dickerson stated there needs to be a more efficient way to get information disseminated to Council members during an emergency situation.

Mr. McDonald stated there was a flood of information coming in and being able to read through the emails and pull out pertinent information became very difficult. It was not a matter of staff not taking the situation seriously, but being able to weed out what was important and deal with the high priority matters.

Mr. Manning inquired if the lobbyist the County employs would not be responsible for lobbying on the County's behalf to insure that the SCDOT roads concerns were relayed to the Legislative Delegation.

Mr. McDonald will review the lobbyist's contract to assure that is a part of their contract.

POINT OF PERSONAL PRIVILEGE – Ms. Dixon thanked the Northeast Community, International First Church of God, Pastor Roberts, Brookland Baptist – Northeast, Pastor Chris Johnson, Richardson Insurance and Investigation, and Imperial Transportation for helping her gather donations.

Mr. McDonald stated the County plans to coordinate schedules with the City of Columbia.

Mr. McDonald stated a provision needs to be made to address the situations that come up and are uncovered as the water recedes. The provision would assist with not having to wait for resources from the State and Federal government. In order to do that, an emergency ordinance would need to be enacted to allow the County to spend money from the Fund Balance. Those dollars will be reimbursed once the County receives reimbursement from the State and Federal government. In addition, the Administrator will need contracting authority in excess of what is allowable at this time.

An Emergency Ordinance in Response to Catastrophic Flooding in Richland County – Mr. Manning moved, Mr. Livingston, to proceed with the ordinance as distributed and to allow the County Administrator or his designee be provided the contractual power with the consent of the Chair of Council or his designee.

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Mr. Livingston inquired as to the amount the County Administrator would be authorized to expend since it was not designated in the ordinance provided.

Mr. McDonald stated Mr. Byrd has suggested up to \$500,000; therefore, that is the least amount that he would recommend approving.

Mr. Manning amended the motion to authorize the County Administrator to expend up to \$1,000,000.

Mr. Pearce stated he wants to insure that the Chief Financial Officer appraises Council on a periodic basis of the status of the Fund Balance as it is spent due to the Fund Balance not being as healthy as it has been in the past. Once the \$1 million amount has been spent, the matter needs to be brought to the Budget Ad Hoc Committee or Administration & Finance Committee for further discussion.

Mr. McDonald stated if the amount of \$1 million is approached the matter will be brought back to Council at a regularly scheduled Council meeting and another emergency ordinance will be presented to Council for consideration.

Mr. Pearce inquired as to when the CAFR will be received.

Mr. McDonald stated it is usually received by the end of the year.

Mr. Pearce requested that receipt of the CAFR be expedited, so that Council will have accurate information to rely on when making these financial decisions.

Mr. McDonald stated Mr. Byrd and Ms. Patrick have spoken with a company regarding disaster relief services, but the County has not entered into a contract with them.

Mr. Washington inquired if the contract will be brought back to Council.

Mr. McDonald stated it can be discussed at today's meeting or Council can approve it open ended as outlined in the emergency ordinance.

Mr. Rose stated he doesn't believe that the \$1 million limit is going to be enough to address the needs of the County.

Mr. Rose made a substitute motion to approve the emergency ordinance and give the County Administrator the authority to expend up to \$1.5 million.

Mr. Manning stated he will allow Mr. Rose's motion to replace the original motion. Mr. Livingston seconded the motion.

Mr. Pearce inquired of the County Administrator and Mr. Byrd how much funding was needed.

Mr. Byrd stated approximately \$20 million before this event is over.

Mr. Jeter inquired about the Act 388 option for funding.

Mr. McDonald stated Act 388 caps the amount the County can raise the millage unless one of the six exceptions exist. One of the exceptions to the millage cap is a natural disaster and recovery. If Council wanted they could exceed the millage cap and raise the millage without penalty to bring in funding to reimburse the Fund Balance.

Mr. Jeter stated he believes utilizing Act 388 may be the better route to address the funding needs of the County at this time.

Mr. McDonald stated he would likely consider the use of Act 388 as a Phase II. "Phase I" would be to utilize Fund Balance. If the money is not reimbursed from FEMA as soon as we hoped, then the County could look at utilizing Act 388 as Phase II.

EXECUTIVE SESSION

*Council went into Executive Session at approximately 5:30 p.m.
and came out at approximately 6:00 p.m.*

Mr. Jeter stated the ordinance referred to procuring other services.

Mr. McDonald stated that is correct. The County will be procuring a lot of services, which is what the \$1.5 million is intended to be used for.

Mr. Farrar stated there are (4) components to the ordinance: (1) and (2) pertain to authorizing the County Administrator or Chair to retain the services of Emergency Response Provider to coordinate various relief, mitigation and recovery efforts and monitoring to ensure compliance with all requirements. The second part includes the discussion of the "up to amount" and also to seek reimbursement through the Federal relief process.

Mr. Jackson inquired if the ordinance pertains to only the unincorporated areas of Richland County or does it cover the entire County.

Mr. Farrar stated it would allow for "piggy backing", which will allow for the expedited procurement. It would include the geographical limits of Richland County, including all municipalities; however, the task orders from the County would control where the work would be done. Council would have the flexibility to do work in the municipalities, if in the judgment of Council that were the appropriate thing to do. The County would retain the services of the companies and then task them on their individual duties.

Mr. Jackson inquired if the County's Fund Balance will be used to assist the City of Columbia.

Mr. McDonald stated the funding for the contractor is not to be used for projects, but more in a capital projects construction role. The contractor will advise and insure that the County does everything right.

Mr. McDonald stated if it's the Council desire, staff will approach the City about joining the County in the agreement for disaster relief services.

Mr. Washington stated he is concerned about providing redundant services in certain parts of the County.

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Mr. Farrar the ordinance has boilerplate language that states the County cannot grant or extend a franchise. The County would not be paying this type of company until they are sent on a mission. There could be multiple companies the County would have to make a policy judgment about whether that is operationally what you want, but legally you could do that. The County can restrict their service area. A company could be hired for Richland County and have them repair Charleston.

Mr. Byrd stated the consultant is not being retained to conduct engineering or construction services. They will have the ability to coordinate the engineering and/or construction services

Mr. Washington inquired in the agreement what triggers the engineering and construction services.

Ms. Patrick stated she will be coordinating all recovery (i.e. engineering, construction, and transportation) services for the County.

FOR

Dixon
Malinowski
Jackson
Rose
Pearce
Rush
Livingston
Dickerson
Washington
Manning
Jeter

AGAINST

The vote in favor was unanimous to approve the emergency ordinance as presented, to give the County Administrator the authority to expend up to \$1.5 million, and to enter into the contract with Ash Britt Environment as discussed in Executive Session.

ADJOURNMENT

The meeting adjourned at approximately 6:15PM.

Torrey Rush, Chair

Greg Pearce, Vice-Chair

Joyce Dickerson

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Julie-Ann Dixon

Norman Jackson

Damon Jeter

Paul Livingston

Bill Malinowski

Jim Manning

Seth Rose

Kelvin E. Washington, Sr.

The Minutes were transcribed by Michelle M. Onley, Deputy Clerk of Council