



**JASPER COUNTY COUNCIL
358 THIRD AVE., RIDGELAND SC. 29936**

**COUNCIL CHAMBERS
JANUARY 28, 2013, 7:00 P.M.
MINUTES**

Officials Present: Chairman Etheridge, Vice Chairwoman Clark, Councilman D. Thomas Johnson, Councilman Theodus Drayton, Councilman L. Martin Sauls, IV

Staff Present: Administrator Andrew Fulghum, Deputy Administrator Dr. George Hood, Atty. Marvin Jones, Clerk to Council Judith Frank, Director of Administrative Services Ronnie Malphrus

In accordance with the freedom of information act the electronic and print media were notified. During periods of discussion and/or presentations minutes are typically condensed and paraphrased.

Call to Order- Chairman Etheridge called the meeting to order at 7:00 p.m.

Pledge of Allegiance – Chairman Etheridge led the Pledge of Allegiance.

Invocation- Vice Chairwoman Clark gave the invocation.

Approval of the Agenda- Councilman Sauls motioned and Councilman Drayton seconded the motion to approve the agenda. The motion carried with all members present voting in favor.

Ordinance -Marvin Jones -3rd Reading of the Ordinance to Amend the FY 2012-13 Budget of Jasper County so as to Repeal Funding for the Position of Deputy County Administrator and to Delete from the Approved Job Descriptions for Jasper County the Position of Deputy County Administrator Both Effective Upon Approval of County Council- Mr. Jones explained the ordinance and said there were no changes to the ordinance since the last reading. Mr. Jones provided the dates of the other readings of the ordinance. Chairman Etheridge opened the public hearing. **Arthur Murphy** said that the elimination of the position was not shared by 80% of the citizens who put the Council in office. Mr. Murphy said the people will not go away anytime soon and he was going to ask for a recount of the votes if this position is eliminated. Mr. Murphy said he had a breakdown of the last election and who put them in office. Mr. Murphy asked what was the rush to eliminate the position. **Lorraine White Bond** discussed the CBDG grant that brought water and sewer to 41 families. Ms. Bond said other grants were needed and without the deputy administrator position who will be experienced enough to apply and monitor the grants. Ms. Bond said the position was funded for this fiscal year and why was it being eliminated now. Ms. Bond asked why the Council did not use the retreat to review all the positions if the County was not fiscally sound. **Dr. McBrayer** said he has lived in the County for 3 years and he moved here because of the potential of this town. Dr. McBrayer said his taxes have doubled and the council cannot continue to

tax the citizens out of business. Dr. McBrayer said he felt the Council's decision to eliminate the deputy administrator was a good decision and asked the Council to look at other ways to cut the budget. **Mary Van Cenburg** said that times were hard and she had nothing against Dr. Hood, but she was glad the Council reconsidered the position and she thanked the Council for eliminating the position. **Freddy Brantley** said he was concerned that the position was deleted and it was his understanding that position was funded in the budget and it was needed to free up the administrator so he could attract businesses. Mr. Brantley said the County hired someone else to do that and the County was at risk to lose money. Mr. Brantley asked why hire a liaison person and eliminate the deputy administrator. Mr. Brantley said the position should be kept to free up the administrator so that he can go after more jobs and more revenue. Mr. Brantley said he heard about this ordinance after the 2nd reading and the other meetings were held at 8:30 a.m. Mr. Brantley said he needed a reason and a purpose as to why the Council was doing this. **Richie Reed** stated that she was concerned about the elimination of the deputy administrator position on the organizational chart. Ms. Reed said the deputy administrator played an important role in serving the people. Ms. Reed said that Jasper County Citizens pay more taxes and they are getting fewer services. Ms. Reed said the deputy administrator heard the plea of Ms. Brown in Purrysburg for safe water and sewer in 1990 and that dream was realized in 2008. Ms. Reed asked the Council to reconsider the deputy administrator's position because it can help to bring assistance quicker to the people. Ms. Reed said the deputy administrator position was originally established in 1990 and nothing warrants the elimination of the services and she wanted to know what the hurry was and she asked the Council to remember that Jasper County has a population with general service needs and she asked the Council not to eliminate the position. **Rev. Samuel Gregory** said the position was not a hardship on the citizens of Jasper County and there was not a shortfall when it was placed in the budget. Rev. Gregory said that the Council has a right to do what they want to do, but it will never be over and he will be watching. Rev. Gregory said that Mr. Fulghum did a good job and Dr. Hood raised money. Rev. Gregory said certain people say they represent us and he wanted everyone to know that those people do not represent him, they represent themselves and they want this position removed. Rev. Gregory said that in 2014 the people will have to do what needs to be done and he believes the deputy administrator position is needed. Rev. Gregory said the Council could have let this position ride until the end of June, but the Chairman campaigned that he was going to get rid of Hood. **Leslie Jones Hart** commended the Council for making the brave move and reevaluating the need for the deputy administrator position. Ms. Hart said that countless people asked that it not be added in the first place and it was agreed to regardless of that the people were against it. Ms. Hart said she heard Mr. Blackshear say the voters will get over it, but they did not get over it and the people voted people in who would take care of it. Ms. Hart quoted Vice Chairwoman Clark's statement that Dr. Hood was not qualified for the job and Ms. Hart thanked the Council for looking out for the citizens of Jasper County. **Dr. George Hood** said he is the current deputy administrator and he stood to make remarks and to ask the Council to set up a formal process to respond to a divided community. Dr. Hood said that he was disappointed by the unprofessional behavior of some of the employees. Dr. Hood said it was a big mistake to eliminate this position and who was going to work with the employees and community groups. Dr. Hood said that it takes hours to investigate the information for the grievance committee. Dr. Hood said the issue was bigger than one person or one position. Dr. hood said there are serious issues that must be responded to and that growth is slow and people can't sell their homes and there

are issues with taxes and one department must not be funded more than another. Dr. Hood said he was committed to advise the Council and some self-appointed people may not cover the concerns of everyone. Dr. Hood said he was sure some other citizens have great ideas and they needed to solicit ideas. Dr. Hood said he was ready to help and will tell the Council of some of his findings. Dr. Hood said he stood ready to help. **Rev. Thomas McClary** said that years ago he was seating where the current Council is sitting and he was on Council when a group of people got together to get rid of the County Administrator, Henry Moss. Rev. McClary said he thought it was bad then and now he is witnessing the Council getting rid of another one. Rev. McClary said he planned on coming to a previous meeting and he asked the Council to think long and hard before coming to a decision. Rev. McClary said everyone pays taxes and this will be remembered in years to come if the Council does not do the right thing. **Andrea Smallwood** said she was not at the meeting to plead for Dr. Hood's job, she continued that he had money, education and a wealth of information. Ms. Smallwood asked that the Council look at what they were doing. Ms. Smallwood said she started working on budgets in 1967 and she has never seen anything like this where one position is cut with 5 months remaining in the budget. Ms. Smallwood predicted that in the future another deputy administrator will be needed. Being no further comments, Chairman Etheridge closed the public hearing. Vice Chairwoman Clark motioned and Councilman Johnson seconded the motion that this be the 3rd Reading of the Ordinance to Amend the FY 2012-13 Budget of Jasper County so as to Repeal Funding for the Position of Deputy County Administrator and to Delete from the Approved Job Descriptions for Jasper County the Position of Deputy County Administrator Both Effective Upon Approval of County Council. Councilman Drayton commented that an individual said that this was not a personal vendetta, and Councilman Drayton said that the Chairman said he did not like George Hood and they needed to get rid of him. Councilman Drayton said this has been going on for 2-3 years. Councilman Drayton said he met with this individual and was told he did not like George Hood and he was going to get rid of him. Councilman Drayton said that the Council sets policy and does not handle personnel. Councilman Drayton said that Mr. Fulghum never said he did not need the position, but County Council said they don't need the position. Councilman Drayton said there are 252 jobs in the County and the Council has decided to get rid of this one position. Councilman Drayton recommended that each division supervisor come before Council to see if more positions can be gotten rid of, not just one person that they do not like. Councilman Drayton said there are ways to save money and the Council needed a list of what people do and don't do and see if anything can be eliminated. Councilman Drayton said that South Carolina has three types of government and Jasper County is a level 4 county that pays the employees like a level 2 and 4; Councilman Drayton said to take those people and put them all at 1, but he added that won't be done because the Council doesn't want to touch those people because they are their friends or their relatives. Councilman Drayton said there are ways to save money without targeting one person. Councilman Drayton said this was a personal vendetta against George Hood. Councilman Drayton said that the Chairman said they don't need an attorney so where is the ordinance to get rid of the attorney. Councilman Drayton said this may be the first time the attorney heard this. Councilman Drayton said this is a personal vendetta to get George Hood. Councilman Drayton asked why have the administrator or the personnel director. Councilman Drayton said they needed to get rid of Andy and the personnel director if they are not doing their job. Councilman Drayton asked why overlook everyone but Dr. Hood. Councilman Drayton said it is a

personal vendetta. Chairman Etheridge said he disagreed with some things Councilman Drayton said and he wants the citizens to come together and work together. Chairman Etheridge added that he has tried to help everyone. Chairman Etheridge said he has opposed the position since it was introduced. Chairman Etheridge said the Mr. Fulghum never asked for the position to be eliminated, but he never asked for it to be created. Chairman Etheridge said there has been a 23% increase in taxes and this position was created and there were many other critical needs and he was going to vote to adopt this ordinance and he will continue to work and nothing will change if this vote is carried. The motion carried with Chairman Etheridge, Vice Chairwoman Clark, Councilman Sauls and Councilman Johnson voting in favor. Councilman Drayton voted against.

Chairman Etheridge announced that he, Vice Chairwoman Clark, Mr. Fulghum and Mr. Malphrus would be going to Columbia to meet with the delegation. Chairman Etheridge thanked the citizens for their comments and for attending the meeting.

ADJOURN – Councilman Sauls motioned and Vice Chairwoman Clark seconded the motion to adjourn. The motion carried with all members present voting in favor.

The meeting ended at 7:45 p.m.

Respectfully Submitted By:

Approved by:

Judith M. Frank, ccc
Clerk To Council

Henry Etheridge
Chairman