

MINUTES
Special Meeting
Sumter County Council
Friday, December 17, 1999 - 9:00 a.m.
Sumter County Council Chambers
County Administration Building

Council Member Present: James A. Campbell, Chairman; Louis Fleming, Vice Chairman; Carol Burr, Charles T. Edens, Naomi Sanders, Rudy Singleton, and Frank E. Williams, Jr.

Staff Members Present: William T. Noonan, Mary W. Lewis, Joe McElveen, John Duffie, Jeanette Mixon, Simon Major, Tony Criscitiello, and Carolina Richardson.

Media: The Item and WIBZ

Public: Approximately 20 members of the public were in attendance.

Call to Order: The Chairman of Council called the meeting to order and the invocation was given by Rev. McCants.

ITEMS FOR DISCUSSION:

Comments From The Public Concerning The Correctional Center:

The Chairman and Council allowed time for the public to speak and the following persons spoke to this issue.

- Bill Britton stated that he is a long time taxpayer for Sumter County. He complimented Council on the staff that has been hired. He stated that there is 690 square miles in Sumter County. Runnymede has one square mile within Sumter County. He stated that the people that he has spoken with in Sumter wants Council to spend the least amount of money for the jail. He asked Council to fix the Correctional Center's overcrowding problem at North Main Street and spend less money instead of spending extra money at any other location for the correctional center.
 - Dr. Agnes Burgess stated that she does not live in Runnymede, but was one of the first property owners in the North Main Street area. She stated that her home is immediately across the street from the Correctional Center. Dr. Burgess asked that the Correctional Center not be expanded at the North Main Street location but at another location that is more acceptable to Council and the community.
 - Chief Justice Ernest Finney stated that he is speaking for himself as a taxpayer of Sumter County. He asked Council to review a letter that he had sent to Council members earlier. He sincerely urged Council to consider the options and steps outlined in his letter, which could be done as economically possible.
- (1) Discussion Concerning A Proposal for the Construction of New Sumter County Correctional Center to be Constructed at the New Site To Include A Funding Formula.

The Administrator, Mr. Noonan, stated that the staff used as its foundation for presenting recommendations to Council on the information that Council had voted to move the Correctional Center from the North Main site to East Calhoun.

Phase I would include:

- The acquisition of the land
- Preparation of the land
- Infrastructure to the site
- Core structure for 500 inmates and four pods of 56 each

The Administrator stated that the figures provided are cost estimates for construction.

Phase I will cost approximately \$8,000,000 to \$8,500,000 to be completed.

Mr. Noonan added that if Council follows the outline previously presented by Councilman Singleton (to implement a one cents local option sales tax) to complete phase two, then this would accomplish the goals of Council to complete this project in two to three years.

However, if the referendum is not successful, then Sumter County would face the additional expenditures without immediate bond capacity to complete the project and would be operating two facilities for approximately five years before bonding capacity was available to the County.

The Administrator and staff recommended that Council sell bonds for \$8,500,000 to begin and complete Phase I of this project. Also to move forward with the referendum to complete Phase II and retire the remainder of the bond.

Councilman Edens noted that in February of 1999, the staff made a recommendation to Council concerning alleviating the Correctional Center's overcrowding conditions by building on the existing site at North Main. He asked the Administrator what was to happen to this recommendation.

After discussions by Council about which recommendation to implement, Council then took action on a recommendation.

ACTION: MOTION was made by Vice Chairman Fleming, seconded by Councilwoman Sanders, and carried by Council to develop the proper documents for Council's consideration to purchase the property on East Calhoun Street for use as the new Correctional Center Site at a cost of \$168,000. Councilmen Burr and Edens voted in opposition.

Councilman Burr then stated that he has a plan that would allow the County to only spend \$2,200,000 to solve the 100 inmate overcrowding problem, if the County kept the Correctional Center on North Main Street. This plan would include expansion of the kitchen, build two dorms, upgrade the air conditioning system, and improve the electronic monitoring system. He then offered a motion on this matter.

ACTION: MOTION was made by Councilman Burr and seconded by Councilman Edens to authorize the Administrator to develop the proper documents in order for the County to spend \$2,200,000 to build two dorms, upgrade the air conditioning system, expand the kitchen, and improve the electronic monitoring system at the

current Correctional Center. The motion did not carry. Councilman Burr and Edens voted in the affirmative. Council members Campbell, Sanders, Fleming, Singleton, and Williams voted in opposition.

Then Councilwoman Sanders offered the following motion for Council's consideration.

ACTION: MOTION was made by Councilwoman Sanders, seconded by Councilman Fleming, and carried by Council to accept the recommendation of the Administrator by floating \$8,500,000 worth of bonds to construct the Correctional Center on East Calhoun Street. Councilmen Burr and Edens voted in opposition. Council Members Campbell, Sanders, Fleming, Singleton, and Williams voted in support of the motion. The motion carried.

(2) Council to Discuss Receiving Information From Staff Concerning Correctional Center Facility Needs and To Discuss Answering Letter From Blake Taylor, Representative From South Carolina Department Of Corrections.

The Administrator asked Council for directions on how to answer the letter from Mr. Blake Taylor concerning the overcrowding conditions at the Correctional Center. Also, the County Attorney, Mr. McElveen, informed Council that during conversations with Mr. Taylor, it was stated that Mr. Taylor wants Council to address short term, intermediate, and long-term solutions and document those solutions in the letter to him. The main emphasis is to reduce the population. Some solutions to that could include moving parole violators to the State correctional facilities and possibly moving some of the County's inmates to the Florence correctional facility. Additionally, Mr. McElveen asked that all correspondence be shared with the County's delegation members.

ACTION: MOTION was made by Councilman Williams, seconded by Councilman Fleming, and unanimously carried by Council to direct the Administrator, the Attorney, and appropriate staff to draft the letter in response to Mr. Taylor in regard to actions taken by Council during this meeting.

ACTION: MOTION was made by Councilman Burr that Council include in the letter to contract 55-60 inmate beds to another Correctional Center to help alleviate the overcrowding conditions. The motion did not carry due to a lack of a second.

(3) If Necessary Council May Suggest To Hold An Executive Session To Receive a Legal Briefing, And/Or To Discuss Contractual/Personnel Matters. (The Executive Session, If Approved By Council, Will Be Held After All Business Matters Have Been Completed.)

None was held.

IV. Additional Items -- None

V. Adjournment - There being no further business, the meeting adjourned at 11:40 a.m.