

**HAMPTON COUNTY COUNCIL SPECIAL MEETING MINUTES
MONDAY; SEPTEMBER 19, 2005; 6:00 P. M.
COUNCIL CHAMBERS, B. T. DeLOACH BUILDING, HAMPTON, SC**

Hampton County Council held a special meeting on Monday, September 19, 2005, 6:00 p. m., Council Chambers, B. T. DeLoach Building, Hampton, South Carolina. Council Member(s) present: Lisa Ball, Lee S. Bowers, Virgin Johnson, Sr.; Margaret S. Parker, Chairman and Willard E. Wilson, Vice Chair. Staff present: Sabrena Posey-Graham, Administrator; Aline Newton, Clerk to Council and A. G. Solomons, Jr., County Attorney. Media present: Mr. Wayne Knuckles, The Hampton County Guardian. The meeting was advertised as prescribed by law.

CALL MEETING TO ORDER

CALL TO ORDER:

Chairman Parker called the meeting to order. Chairman Parker stated that there was a called meeting of the Hampton County Council for the purpose of voting on overriding the millage rate limitation to allow an increase above that of the Consumer Price Index (CPI) for the 2005-2006 Budget Year. She stated that public comments would be taken. Chairman Parker asked County Attorney Solomons to read the law. Attorney Solomons read from the South Carolina Code of Laws, Section 1-6-320. (See attachment #1).

Chairman Parker stated that it was very unusual this year. She stated that the millage rate would increase by 22% this year over the previous year. She stated that as Council was going over the budget process, they were aware that the millage would increase. The 35 mills or 22% over last year. She stated that the millage has not changed since 1998 - 2004. Chairman Parker stated that there is a substantial increase, but the County has not had an increase in some years. Administrator Graham listed some of the factors for the increase such as increases in operations, the class and comp study, 2% cost of living, Grants Manager, Expansion of the Detention Center (New Personnel), increased insurance premiums, workmen's compensation, loss of revenue from Homestead deficit of \$401,515 (four hundred one thousand, five hundred fifteen dollars) and EMS transport fees and Magistrates fines (See attachment #2). Administrator Graham stated that Council has adopted the budget and she asked that they adopt the millage to support the budget. Chairman Parker stated that nothing has changed since April when they started working on the budget. Council Member Johnson asked if there were two items with a loss of revenue. Chairman Parker stated that the Council was doing what the law said, and they were following as home rule outlines as a county government. She stated that they could not change procedures. Chairman Parker stated that Council would take public comments.

Mr. Thomas Owens

Chairman Parker read comments from Thomas Owens (See attachment #3). After reading comments from Mr. Owens, Chairman Parker stated that it is council's business to run services throughout the county. Council gives what the state tells them to give the schools. This council never decides that one school district is taxed one way and the other another. There is no discrimination of one or the other. She stated that the districts are given funding as is done in other counties.

Mrs. Polly Knight

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(See attachment #5).

Thomas Owens

Mr. Owens addressed Council and asked that they please not go over the 2.7% millage increase. He stated that he was pleading the Council not override the millage rate and impose the 22% increase. Mr. Owens stated that there was not two (2) Hampton Counties. He asked Council not to pass. Mr. Owens stated that if the Council imposes the 22% millage increase, then the battle has just begun. Chairman Parker stated that as Mayor of Estill, he should understand Council's position since the Town of Estill had to have a thirty (30) mill increase.

Mrs. Marcia Wood

Mrs. Wood came before Council and stated that her biggest disappointment was that there was no reduction in the budget. She stated that now is not the time to have the comp and class study, no new people to come in, etc. Mrs. Wood stated that if a business was faced with the same situation, then they would have to do what was doable. Mrs. Wood asked if Council meet or did Council just leave it up the Administrator. Council stated that they did not meet.

Mr. Al Roberts

Mr. Roberts stated that he could not understand why there was such a thoroughness to increase but no decreases. He stated that there was no consideration to decrease. He stated that this was questionable. Council Member Bowers stated that there was a decrease of the agencies. Mr. Roberts stated that he missed that.

Chairman Parker stated that from 1997 - 2004, there has only been a 8 mill increase over nine (9) years. She stated that Council has tried to explain how this came about. Council Member Parker called for a vote to override the millage rate for the 2005-2006 Budget Year.

Moved by Council Member Bowers, seconded by Council Member Parker, to override the millage rate limitation to allow an increase above that of the Consumer Price Index (CPI) for the 2005-2006 Budget Year. Council Member Wilson stated that there were some things that could be cut but they were not brought back to Council. Motion carried with Council Members Ball, Bowers and Parker voting "Yea" and Council Member Johnson and Wilson voting "Nay".

ADJOURNMENT

Moved by Council Member Bowers, seconded by Council Member Ball, to adjourn the meeting. Motion carried unanimously. Chairman Parker adjourned the meeting at 6:00 p. m.