



County Administrator

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July 19, 2023

Dear Chairman Tripp and Members of County Council:

Thirty years ago, County Council placed in motion a financial framework on which future operating and capital budgets could be met. A means to achieve Council's vision, goals and objectives. That framework, approved in fiscal year 1994, was a twelve and one-tenth (12.1) mill increase of the tax levy. In the following year's budget message, the administrative team expressed confidence that "provided county government complies with its own business plan, which this budget proposal does, a tax increase to fund general county government operations should not be required until fiscal year 2000. As I see things today, our exposure to the possibility of a tax increase is restricted to two areas: 1. Remediating, siting, acquiring, and constructing landfills; and, 2. requirements that we expand county government to offer services not included in the existing portfolio of services." With that, the "no tax pledge" began.

Staff has worked relentlessly over the last thirty years to meet that pledge. Resources have been allocated between programs and funds in order to operate within our means and accomplish council's priorities for this community. Over the last ten years, our population has risen over 14% to approximately 545,775. Greenville County has also experienced consistent, strong capital investment and job growth during the same period. Subsequently, a greater demand for County programs such as law enforcement, planning and codes enforcement, emergency medical and judicial services has emerged. The demand for augmented services along with an increase in the cost of doing business and rising consumer prices has diminished our ability to allocate resources effectively to meet the expected needs of our community.

I present Greenville County's biennium budget for Fiscal Year 2024 and Fiscal Year 2025. This document provides the financial structure for Greenville County's programs and services over the next two years and encompasses a fiscally responsible allocation plan for the resources and services necessary to maintain our County's acclaimed quality of life. The budget includes a millage adjustment for operations and maintenance allowable for CPI and population growth pursuant to S.C. Code § 6-1-320. This will allow for the continuation of the sound management and financial practices Greenville County government has established and maintained over the years, which have resulted in the County's retention of triple A bond ratings for the past 20 years.

DEVELOPMENT PHILOSOPHY

The recommended budget aligns the County's resources with the Council's proposed governing priorities as discussed at its retreat in March:

Priority 1 – Public Safety:

Support progressive procedures and enhanced processes to serve citizens by providing necessary funding for Emergency Medical Services, Detention Center, and Sheriff's Office.

Priority 2 – Fiscal Responsibility and Transparency:	Maintain triple A bond ratings and provide for long-term fiscal viability and fiscal management of fund balance reserves through operating efficiencies, cost savings, and revenue enhancement.
Priority 3 – Infrastructure:	Provide for County infrastructure that gives mobility and access for diverse community.
Priority 4 – Economic Development:	Promote long-term financial stability and provide a livable community for citizens.
Priority 5 – Strategic Growth and Land Management:	Balance the future needs of the County with preservation of green space.

Short Term Factors and Budget Guidelines

The budget provides the necessary resources to address the ongoing needs of our citizens and the delivery of public services. To reach the desired level of services with minimal growth in revenues while making progress towards implementing the County's long term goals, the following factors and guidelines were considered:

- **Conservative, but realistic projections of revenues and expenditures.** Conservative projections help ensure that adequate resources will be available to meet budgeted obligations.
- **Maintenance of target fund balances to preserve financial integrity.**
- **Review of all significant fees.** Major fees are reviewed along with the budget preparation to see if any adjustments are needed.
- **Wage adjustments.** Maintaining a competitive workforce is tantamount to quality service provision.
- **Employee benefits.** The cost of employee benefits increases for the two budgeted years.

OVERVIEW

The preparation of the biennium budget has been focused on addressing Council's main areas of concentration as developed at its retreat on March 13 and 14: public safety, fiscal responsibility, infrastructure, economic development, and strategic growth. Greenville County has worked diligently to develop solid fiscal planning, strong financial management, and conservative budgeting principles which have demonstrated financial vitality and excellent government performance in the past, and exhibit the aptitude for continued success.

County-wide, staff has worked together to review levels of service and budgets in order to streamline services, reduce unnecessary expenses and best realign resources. Savings measures have been instituted and operating expenditures reduced; and, continued emphasis will be placed on additional improvements to efficiency and cost reductions as feasible. This budget reflects minimal increases in General Fund operating expenditures.

The following are some of the major accomplishments of the FY2024/FY2025 budget:

- **Average General Fund Balance of \$65 Million.** Due to the current economic uncertainty, it is imperative to follow our established financial policies and maintain sufficient fund balances, which is reflected in the County's average General Fund Balance of \$65 million for the biennium
- **Expenditures reflect the top governing priorities of Greenville County Council.** Expenditures in this budget invest largely in public safety personnel and resources. Expenditures will continue to

improve the quality of life in Greenville County, responsibly grow the tax base, and maintain the County’s sound fiscal condition today and for the foreseeable future.

- **One of the Leanest Counties in staffing per capita within the State.** Greenville County, the most populous County in the State of South Carolina, ranks sixth from the bottom in full-time employees per 1,000 residents when compared to the other 46 counties. We offer quality and innovative services to our residents and have nationally recognized tourism and economic development draws while maintaining this lean staff presence. In this vein, this budget emphasizes streamlined services and continual realignment of resources to improve efficiency and minimize operational costs.

BUDGET IN BRIEF

Greenville County’s biennium budget for FY2024 and FY2025 totals \$785,680,170. The FY2024 budget totals \$386,363,355, which is 17.60% greater than the FY2023 budget of \$328,537,459. The FY2025 budget totals \$399,316,815, which is 3.35% greater than the FY2024 budget. The following chart provides an overview of the County’s overall biennium budget for Fiscal Years 2024 and 2025 with comparison to the last biennium budget. The County’s total budget includes the General Fund, selected Special Revenue Funds, Debt Service, and Enterprise Funds.

	ADOPTED BUDGET FY2022	ADOPTED BUDGET FY2023	ADOPTED BUDGET FY2023-2024	ADOPTED BUDGET FY2024-2025
GENERAL FUND	\$ 205,859,228	\$ 213,676,673	\$ 242,740,106	\$ 251,432,463
SPECIAL REVENUE FUNDS	\$ 69,127,665	\$ 69,276,184	\$ 82,947,221	\$ 86,090,545
DEBT SERVICE FUND	\$ 17,305,074	\$ 17,679,169	\$ 32,218,726	\$ 32,563,516
ENTERPRISE FUND	\$ 26,661,146	\$ 27,905,433	\$ 28,457,302	\$ 29,230,291
TOTAL BUDGET	\$ 318,953,113	\$ 328,537,459	\$ 386,363,355	\$ 399,316,815
Percent Change			17.60%	3.35%

The General Fund operating and capital budget for the two-year period of FY2024 and FY2025 totals \$494,172,569. The General Fund operating budget for FY2024 (including salaries, operating, contractual, and capital line items) totals \$242,740,106. This represents an increase of \$29,063,433 or 13.60% from the FY2023 budget. The General Fund operating budget for FY2025 (including salaries, operating, contractual, and capital line items) totals \$251,432,463. This represents an increase of \$8,692,357 or 3.58% as compared to the FY2024 budget. These increases are attributed to salary increases, increases for health insurance, and the addition of public safety positions.

BUDGET PROCESS

The two-year budget process is similar to the process in prior years. Budget workshops are proposed to review the budget with County Council. In order to comply with section 4-9-140 of the State Code, a staggered ordinance adoption process is followed. As in previous years, the budget ordinances will be reviewed concurrently. The schedule is as follows:

- May 16, 2023 First Reading
- June 6, 2023 Second Reading and Public Hearings
- June 23, 2023 Third Reading for FY2024
- July 18, 2023 Third Reading for FY2025

HIGHLIGHTS

REVENUE ASSUMPTIONS

- Ad Valorem Taxes – The County’s base property valuation is estimated to be \$2.98 billion. The proposed millage consists of the current millage plus a portion of the adjustment allowable for CPI and population growth for FY2023-2024 pursuant to S.C. Code § 6-1-320(A)(1) and operating millage

allowed but not imposed for the three preceding property tax years pursuant to S.C. Code § 6-1-320(A)(2). Over 63% of Greenville County’s budgeted revenue is derived from local ad valorem property taxes.

- County Office Revenue – Fees related to property development have stabilized throughout the current fiscal year. Overall, county office revenue is projected to experience minimal growth.
- Intergovernmental Revenues – State shared revenues for the Fiscal Year 2024 and Fiscal Year 2025 biennium budget is projected to account for 12% of General Fund revenue.

EXPENDITURES

The County’s expenditures are divided across several major service areas. The total County budget is projected to increase by 17.60%, with the General Fund increasing by 13.60%. Noteworthy changes to expenditures include:

Priority 1 Public Safety

Sheriff’s Office – Funding is included in the biennium budget for additional deputy and administrative positions. The budget adds twelve (12) law enforcement positions for both years of the biennium. The budget also includes three (3) additional administrative positions in FY2024 and three (3) additional communication positions in FY2025.

Coroner’s Office – Funding is included in the biennium budget for two (2) additional deputy coroner positions in both years of the biennium and for operational increases to acquire ballistic vests for each deputy coroner.

Emergency Medical Services – Funding is included in the biennium budget for five (5) new positions for EMS. One (1) Support Services Supervisor and one (1) Clinical Services Manager will be added in FY2024. One (1) Communication Quality Improvement Specialist, one (1) Data Specialist, and one (1) Administrative Coordinator will be added in FY2025.

Emergency Management – The biennium budget includes funding for increases in operational for training and fuel.

Forensics - Funding is included in the biennium budget for operational increases for the DNA lab. The biennium budget also includes funding for two (2) Firearms Examiner positions to be added.

Circuit Solicitor – Funding is included for two (2) Legal Services Specialists positions.

Circuit Public Defender – Funding is included to support various positions in both years of the biennium for personnel services within the Public Defender’s Office.

Clerk of Court – Funding is included in the budget to increase juror compensation and for contractual obligations of the department.

Priority 2 Fiscal Responsibility Transparency

Maintenance of Current Operating Expenditures - As part of the budget development process, staff conducted a line item review of departmental operations and service delivery. Through this review, it was determined that current expenditures levels were conservatively increased to reflect any inflationary costs. Any other increases in operating expenditures are a result of the inclusion of expansion packages for enhanced services.

Employee Benefits – The budget includes funding for health and dental insurance to keep pace with the rising costs of health care.

Salary Adjustment – The proposed budget anticipates an average 3.0% increase for FY2024 and for FY2025. These salary adjustments reflect the County’s commitment to pay for performance for our employees, our most valuable resource.

Vehicle Replacements/Additions – The budget includes funding to continue vehicle replacements for both fiscal years. A total of \$7 million for vehicles and equipment is scheduled in both years of the biennium utilizing the master lease program. This budget also includes additions to Fleet Services to support operations.

Grants – Funding for matching grants in the amount of \$200,000 for each of the fiscal years is included in the budget.

Capital Projects – A total of \$15,387 million for FY2024 and \$13.436 million for FY2025 is included in the Capital Improvement Program to support technological enhancements, equipment replacement, facility improvements, and Parks and Recreation projects.

Priority 3 Infrastructure

Stormwater – The budget includes funding for neighborhood drainage improvement projects in the amount of \$600,000 in each year of the biennium budget. Funding for water quality retrofit projects in the amount of \$2,300,000 is also included for each year of the biennium budget. Funding will be provided from the current stormwater utility fee.

Road Program - A total of \$11 million is programmed for each year of the biennium. Funds are included for road paving, sidewalks, bridge replacement, road improvements, and traffic calming. The County’s local government revenue sharing program with municipalities is proposed to continue at the current level of \$700,000 annually.

Waterline Installation – A total of \$100,000 for FY2024 and \$100,000 for FY2025 is included in the budget for waterline assistance projects.

Public Safety Interoperable Communications – A total of \$2,000,000 for both FY2024 and FY2025 is included in the budget for operations/maintenance of the South Carolina State side 800 MHz Radio and Mobile Data System, known commonly as Palmetto 800 system.

Priority 4 Economic Development

Economic Development – The proposed budget includes funding for economic development programs in the amount of \$3,008,977 for FY2024 and \$3,045,369 for FY2025.

Affordable Housing – A total of \$2,000,000 for FY2024 and \$3,000,000 for FY2025 is included in the budget to induce the creation of workforce and affordable housing within the County.

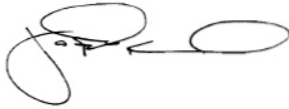
Priority 5 Strategic Growth and Land Management

Parks, Recreation, and Tourism – A total of \$4,100,000 for FY2024 and \$2,700,000 for FY2025 is included in the Capital Improvement Program for parks, recreation, and tourism projects.

Natural Resources Funds – A total of \$4,500,000 for FY2024 and FY2025 is allocated in the budget for support of the Historic and Natural Resources Trust and to match state funds to build a new dam 10 feet downstream from the existing Conestee dam, a stone masonry structure built in the late 1880's and regulated under the South Carolina Dams and Reservoir Safety Act.

As we conclude another budget development process, it has been my honor to work with the County Council in allocating public resources to accomplish the County's goals. It has also been a great privilege serving with the professionals who comprise the entire County organization as we strive to provide the level of services needed and desired by our citizens. I genuinely appreciate the commitment of our staff in serving our citizens and conducting the County's business.

Sincerely,



Joseph M. Kernell

PROPOSED LONG-TERM GOALS AND PRIORITIES

Consistent with the County's financial policies of providing a financially stable fiscal plan, budget development directives from County Council call for goals and priorities that are based on transparency and quality of life; data-driven and taxpayer focused. The five long-term goals that have shaped budgetary decisions for the upcoming biennium include:

- ◆ Public Safety
- ◆ Fiscal Responsibility and Transparency
- ◆ Infrastructure
- ◆ Economic Development
- ◆ Strategic Growth and Land Management

PRIORITY AREA I: PUBLIC SAFETY

Provide a safe community for citizens

Provide funding necessary to maintain public safety functions of Emergency Medical Services, Detention Center, and Sheriff's Office.

PRIORITY AREA II: FISCAL RESPONSIBILITY AND TRANSPARENCY

Operate within a fiscally responsible and transparent framework

Maintain Triple A Bond Ratings and provide for long-term fiscal viability and fiscal management of fund balance reserves through operating efficiencies, cost savings, and revenue enhancement. Maintain fiscally responsible framework by reviewing service levels and services provided by County departments, their current levels, any mandated levels, and opportunities for streamlining.

PRIORITY AREA III: INFRASTRUCTURE

Provide for County infrastructure that gives mobility and access for diverse community

Study public infrastructure and appraise current infrastructure to prioritize projects aimed at stemming congestion and expanding utility services into underserved areas. Support infrastructure to meet the community's traffic and growth.

PRIORITY AREA IV: ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

Develop diverse economic development opportunities

Promote long term financial stability and provide a livable community for citizens. Continue to support the economic development arm of the County, the Greenville Area Development Corporation and increase ties with other key stakeholders in economic development, such as the chambers of commerce, Department of Commerce, schools, and Upstate Alliance.

PRIORITY AREA V: STRATEGIC GROWTH AND LAND MANAGEMENT

Balance the future needs of the County with the preservation of green space

Enhance strategic growth opportunities and preserve green space. Develop expansion strategies and safety enhancements for greenways.

STRATEGIC GOALS AND ACTION PLANS

