

Statement of Calhoun County, South Carolina

June 13, 2019

Calhoun County has issued the following statement regarding incorrect information that was presented during the June 10, 2019 meeting of the Calhoun County Council regarding the funding of the Sandy Run Fire Department:

During the June 10, 2019 meeting of the Calhoun County Council, incorrect information was provided to the public concerning funding for the Sandy Run Fire Department. This incorrect information has subsequently been reported in the media. The County wishes to provide an accurate account of the discussions and the need for additional funding for the Sandy Run Fire Department in order to ensure that the citizens of the County remain well-informed.

For several years, the Sandy Run Fire Department has made use of money held in a reserve fund to pay a portion of the Fire Department's annual operating and maintenance costs and to meet certain smaller capital needs. During this time, the Fire Department's financial needs have increased as basic operating costs and call volumes have risen. The Fire Department has also recognized the need to plan for increases to certain operating costs to operate and maintain the new Sandy Run Fire Substation and fire trucks that were approved at the successful 2018 capital projects sales tax referendum.

In March 2019, County officials met with the Fire Department's Board to discuss options for increasing funding to meet these increased costs. On April 24, 2019, members of the Fire Department Board and Fire Department officials appeared at a County Council budget workshop to request additional funds and an increase in the millage of the Sandy Run Fire District that is necessary to generate these funds. Throughout these discussions, the Fire Department has consistently stated that its request for additional funding is based upon its need to replenish the Fire Department's reserve fund, as well as the need to fund increased operating and maintenance costs and the costs to repair and replace equipment that is essential to the Fire Department's operations and fire fighter safety. County staff offered contrary information at the June 10, 2019 meeting of County Council that the Fire Department's requested increase in funding was related to a lawsuit concerning the 2018 capital projects sales tax referendum. That information was incorrect.

The County continually strives to keep its citizens well-informed by being as transparent as possible, and its citizens should expect no less. While Calhoun County and its staff may occasionally make mistakes, the County will always strive to correct those mistakes and set the record straight.

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