



City Council Regular Meeting
Meeting Minutes – City Hall Council Chambers, 2nd Floor

June 10, 2025

I. CALL TO ORDER

7:07 PM

Philip Cromer, Mayor

Members of Council in attendance - Philip Cromer, Neil Lipsitz, Michael McFee, Mitch Mitchell, Josh Scallate.

II. INVOCATION AND PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

Mayor Pro Tem, Michael McFee.

III. PUBLIC COMMENT – AGENDA ITEMS

Megan Morris, Beaufort Chamber of Commerce, requested Council table the discussion on Old Business, Item A. regarding updates to the Development Code, Chapters 7 and 9 until the next meeting.

Roger Bright, Forino Company, concurred with Megan Morris and would like to see this matter tabled.

IV. MEETING AGENDA APPROVAL

Motion to approve the Meeting Agenda was made by Councilman Lipsitz and seconded by Councilman Mitchell.

All were in favor, motion carried.

V. PRESENTATIONS

A. Presentation of the Order of the Palmetto to former City of Beaufort Mayor Billy Keyserling.

Representative Shannon Erickson presented Billy Keyserling with the Order of the Palmetto. This is the State of South Carolina's highest civilian honor.

VI. PROCLAMATIONS/COMMENDATIONS/RECOGNITIONS

A. Character Education Proclamation - Mateo Celada, Joseph S. Shanklin Elementary School.

Motion to approve was made by Mayor Pro Tem, McFee and seconded by Councilman Lipsitz.

All were in favor, motion carried.

- B. Proclamation proclaiming July 27 - August 2, 2025, as Gullah/Geechee Nation Appreciation Week.

Motion to approve was made by Mayor Pro Tem, McFee and seconded by Councilman Mitchell.

All were in favor, motion carried.

VII. CONSENT AGENDA

Motion to approve the Consent Agenda was made by Councilman Lipsitz and seconded by Mayor Pro Tem, McFee.

All were in favor, motion carried.

Items approved are listed below:

- A. Capital Projects Monthly Report.
- B. Community Development Monthly Report.
- C. Downtown Operations Monthly Report.
- D. Finance Department Monthly Report.
- E. Fire Department Monthly Report.
- F. Human Resources Monthly Report.
- G. Municipal Court Monthly Report.
- H. Police Department Monthly Report.
- I. Public Works Monthly Report.
- J. Request from Beaufort Area Hospitality Association for bridge/street closures to host the Oyster Boogie 5K Run/Walk on Saturday, January 17, 2026, from 6:30 am - 11:00 am.
- K. Request for co-sponsorship of the Henry C. Chambers Waterfront Park for the Beaufort Area Hospitality Association's New Year's Eve Fireworks Display, December 31, 2025, at 9:00 pm.

VIII. MINUTES

- A. Special Worksession - April 22, 2025.

Motion to approve was made by Councilman Lipsitz and seconded by Councilman Scallate.

Minutes approved as presented.

- B. Special Worksession - April 29, 2025.

Motion to approve was made by Councilman Mitchell and seconded by Councilman Lipsitz.

Mayor Pro Tem, McFee abstained as he was not present for this meeting.

Minutes approved as presented.

- C. Worksession and Regular Meeting - May 13, 2025.

Motion to approve was made by Mayor Pro Tem, McFee and seconded by Councilman Scallate.

Minutes approved as presented.

D. Special Worksession - May 20, 2025.

Motion to approve was made by Councilman Mitchell and seconded by Councilman Lipsitz.

Minutes approved as presented.

E. Quarterly Capital Improvements Workshop - May 27, 2025.

Motion to approve was made by Mayor Pro Tem, McFee and seconded by Councilman Lipsitz.

Minutes approved as presented.

IX. OLD BUSINESS

A. PUBLIC HEARING AND SECOND READING - Ordinance amending Chapter 7 (Land Development) and Chapter 9 (Development Review Procedures) of the Beaufort Development Code.

Councilman Lipsitz made a motion to postpone the discussion until next month. Mayor Pro Tem, McFee seconded the motion.

Councilman Lipsitz withdrew his motion. Mayor Pro Tem, McFee withdrew his second.

Councilman Lipsitz made a motion to postpone the Public Hearing until next month. Mayor Pro Tem, McFee seconded the motion.

All were in favor, motion carried.

Councilman Lipsitz made a motion to postpone the second reading of Chapter 7 and Chapter 9 until next month. Councilman Mitchell seconded the motion.

All were in favor, motion carried.

B. An ordinance to amend the City of Beaufort Zoning District Map by changing the zoning designation of real property located at 30 Cougar Drive, identified as Beaufort County Tax Map Number R123 015 000 0110 0000, from T3-Suburban District (T3-S) to Institutional and Campus District (IC) - Second Reading.

Motion to approve was made by Mayor Pro Tem, McFee and seconded by Councilman Lipsitz.

Curt Freese, Community Development Director, provided a brief overview. There have been no changes made since first reading.

All were in favor, motion carried.

C. Ordinance to approve for the levy of taxes for the City of Beaufort for Fiscal Year beginning July 1, 2025, and ending June 30, 2026; to provide for execution of and to put into effect the consolidated budget; to provide budgetary control of the City's fiscal affairs - Second Reading.

Motion to approve was made by Councilman Lipsitz and seconded by Mayor Pro Tem, McFee.

Scott Marshall, City Manager, provided an overview. He stated that no changes have been made since first reading.

Councilman Scallate inquired about the American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA). At last reading the amount was \$1,486,698.00 and now it is \$1,586,698.00. Alan Eisenman, Finance Director, stated this amount was from the Housing Repair program that was moved over from the General Fund.

Councilman Scallate made a motion to amend by reallocating \$77,000.00. \$42,000.00 from the Beaufort County Economic Development Corporation, \$30,000.00 from the Downtown Operations budget designated specifically for the Downtown Master Plan, and \$5,000.00 from the South Carolina Nursing Retention Initiative. These funds would be redirected to provide for a millage rollback reducing the current millage rate of 73.9 mills where the value of a mill is \$131,885.00., or they could be added to the 2 mill reserve that has been set aside for aging infrastructure, therefore prioritizing fiscal relief in critical public assets. Mayor Cromer seconded the motion.

Councilman Scallate provided his justifications for these proposed changes. He feels the payment to the Beaufort County Economic Development Corporation is double taxation on municipal residents, since they are also county residents. For the Downtown Master Plan, he feels enough studies have been done already. He mentioned the funding for the Tiger Team and stated no recommendations have been seen as of yet. He would like to see the additional funds spent on an appreciation dinner for those who have volunteered their time to the city.

Mayor Cromer supports the reallocation regarding the Beaufort County Economic Development Corporation. Also feels this is double taxation. Would like to speak with the county regarding this and the possibility of consolidating other services as well.

Mayor Cromer and Councilman Scallate voted in favor of the amended motion.

Mayor Pro Tem, McFee, Councilman Lipsitz, and Councilman Mitchell voted against.

The amended motion failed by a vote of 3 - 2.

Mayor Pro Tem, McFee, Councilman Lipsitz, and Councilman Mitchell voted in favor of the main motion.

Mayor Cromer and Councilman Scallate voted against.

The main motion carried by a vote of 3-2.

X. NEW BUSINESS

- A. Request from Beaufort Area Hospitality Association to host the Watermelon Sip and Stroll on Saturday, August 23, 2025, from 10:00 am to 4:00 pm, waiver of police fees, permission to serve alcohol, waivers of open container, public drinking, loud and unseemly noise.

Motion to approve was made by Councilman Lipsitz and seconded by Councilman Scallate.

Sarah Sutton, Downtown Operations Manager, provided an overview of the event. There was a discussion about the waiving of the police fees.

Mayor Pro Tem, McFee made a motion to amend by not waving the Police Fees. Mayor Cromer seconded the motion.

Mayor Cromer, Mayor Pro Tem, McFee, and Councilman Lipsitz voted in favor of the amended motion.

Councilman Mitchell, and Councilman Scallate voted against.

The amended motion passed by a vote of 3 - 2.

Mayor Cromer, Mayor Pro Tem, McFee, and Councilman Lipsitz voted in favor of the main motion.

Councilman Mitchell, and Councilman Scallate voted against.

The main motion passed by a vote of 3 - 2.

- B. Request from Main Street Beaufort for street closures for Bay Street from Charles to Carteret, West and Scott Streets from Bay to Port Republic, and drinking in public for First Friday on September 5, 2025, from 4:00 pm - 8:30 pm.

Motion to approve was made by Mayor Pro Tem, McFee and seconded by Councilman Scallate.

Ms. Sutton provided an overview of the event.

All were in favor, motion carried.

- C. Request for co-sponsorship of the Henry C. Chambers Waterfront Park by the Beaufort Area Hospitality Association to host the 2026 Oyster Festival, January 17 and 18, 2026, also requested is access to Public Works resources, including fencing, water, and electrical support, request to sell beer and wine during the festival, and waiver of fees for Police and Fire.

Motion to approve was made by Councilman Lipsitz and seconded by Councilman Mitchell.

Ms. Sutton provided an overview of the event.

Mayor Pro Tem, McFee made a motion to amend by not waving the Police and Fire Fees. Councilman Lipsitz seconded the motion.

Mayor Cromer, Mayor Pro Tem, McFee, and Councilman Lipsitz voted in favor of the amended motion.

Councilman Mitchell, and Councilman Scallate voted against.

The amended motion passed by a vote of 3 - 2.

Mayor Cromer, Mayor Pro Tem, McFee, and Councilman Lipsitz voted in favor of the main motion.

Councilman Mitchell, and Councilman Scallate voted against.

The main motion passed by a vote of 3 - 2.

- D. Ordinance to annex 1.72 acres of real property identified as Beaufort County Tax Map Number R100 026 000 0151 0000, 3659 Trask Parkway, to the City of Beaufort Pursuant to S.C. Code Ann 5-3-150(3) - First Reading.

Motion to approve was made by Mayor Pro Tem, McFee and seconded by Councilman Mitchell.

Curt Freese, Community Development Director, stated this is the old location of the Greyhound Bus Station. Currently it is zoned C3-Neighborhood Mixed-Use. He mentioned that in the beginning the applicant was requesting a split zoning of T-5UC/RMX. At the May 19, 2025 Planning Commission meeting, the commission felt an RMX only zoning classification would be more appropriate. This was accepted by the applicant. Mr. Freese stated the Public Hearing and Second Reading will be held next month.

All were in favor, motion carried.

- E. Ordinance to amend the City of Beaufort Zoning District Map to include real property identified as Beaufort County Tax Map Number R100 026 000 0151 0000, 3659 Trask Parkway, to be zoned Regional Mixed Use (RMX) - First Reading.

Motion to approve was made by Councilman Lipsitz and seconded by Councilman Scallate.

All were in favor, motion carried.

- F. Resolution regarding the composition and terms of the Beaufort Housing Authority Board of Commissioners.

Motion to approve was made by Mayor Pro Tem, McFee and seconded by Councilman Lipsitz.

Scott Marshall, City Manager, provided an overview why this reset of the terms of the Beaufort Housing Authority Board of Commissioners is necessary.

Councilman Scallate inquired why the Town of Bluffton has never been on this board.

All were in favor, motion carried.

- G. Resolution allowing the City Manager to enter into an Intergovernmental Agreement for Indigent Services with the Town of Bluffton.

Motion to approve was made by Councilman Lipsitz and seconded by Mayor Pro Tem, McFee.

JJ Sauvé, Deputy City Manager, provided an overview. This item was discussed in Worksession on May 13, 2025. The city and town will both pay \$70,000.00 for this service to the Law Office of Carol Miller. She was selected as the most qualified provider. The agreement is for an initial one-year term that will start on July 1, 2025. There is an option to renew annually for up to four additional years.

The City of Beaufort will be added as well under Attachment 1, Scope of Work and Fee Schedule, Number 4. Attorney shall not have any conflicts of interest with any criminal case where the Town of Bluffton or the City of Beaufort is the prosecutorial or arresting agency.

All were in favor, motion carried.

- H. Resolution allowing the City Manager to enter into an amended Intergovernmental Agreement with the Beaufort-Jasper Housing Trust.

Motion to approve was made by Councilman Lipsitz and seconded by Councilman Mitchell.

JJ Sauvé, Deputy City Manager, provided an overview. This item was discussed in Worksession on May 13, 2025. There are 5 main points of the amended Intergovernmental Agreement (IGA). Included is the removal of Mescher Act Language, Establishment of an Oversight Board, Jurisdictional Withdrawal Clause, Dissolution Procedures, and Fiscal Agent redefinition.

All were in favor, motion carried.

- I. Ordinance to amend, Part 8 - Motor Vehicles and Traffic, and Chapter 2 - Parking, of the City of Beaufort Code of Ordinances - First Reading.

Motion to approve was made by Councilman Lipsitz and seconded by Councilman Mitchell.

JJ Sauvé, Deputy City Manager, provided an overview how we ended back up at First Reading. This item was rediscussed in Worksession on May 13, 2025.

All were in favor, motion carried.

- J. Consideration of a Resolution opposing the inclusion of new offshore oil and gas leasing off the coast of South Carolina in the 11th National Continental Shelf Oil and Gas Leasing Program.

Motion to approve was made by Mayor Pro Tem, McFee and seconded by Councilman Scallate.

Scott Marshall, City Manager, stated the program is being advocated for by the Carolinas Field Representative for Oceana, Michelle Bivins. Oceana is the largest international advocacy organization focused exclusively on ocean conservation. The US Department of the Interior's Bureau of Ocean Energy Management (BOEM) announced it will initiate the development of a new National Outer Continental Shelf Oil and Gas Leasing Program. This is a 5-year plan. He stated Representative Nancy Mace is opposed to this as well.

All were in favor, motion carried.

- K. Appointment to the Cultural District Advisory Board.

Mayor Pro Tem, McFee made a motion to appoint Cherimie Weatherford as the representative for the Freedman Arts District to the Cultural District Advisory Board for a 3-year term expiring on June 30, 2028. Councilman Lipsitz seconded the motion.

All were in favor, motion carried.

XI. PUBLIC COMMENT – NON-AGENDA ITEMS

Martin Galvan, 1217 Windswept Oak Lane, thanked the Police Department for the proactive policing they have been doing at Garden Oaks Apartments.

Erin Heath, 1184 Salty Hammock Court, spoke about the increasing crime in the Salem Bay area. Wants to be sure their concerns are being heard.

Ashlee Houck, Beaufort Area Hospitality Association, spoke about a program they are working on called "From our Waters". She stated that SEAD (Seafood Development) Consulting will be going around to local restaurants to ensure if they label their seafood as local, that it is indeed local. Restaurants in Charleston were found to be stating that their seafood was local, but were actually imported, farm-raised shrimp.

XII. REPORTS

City Manager's Report

Congratulated former Mayor Keyserling on being awarded the Order of the Palmetto by the Governor.

Wished RJ Heape the best as he will be leaving Congresswoman Nancy Mace's Office.

Congratulated Peter Dontje on being promoted to Deputy Fire Chief of Operations.

Stated there will be 15 participants in the "Sparkling Embers" program with the Fire Department and 22 participants in the "Future Guardians" program with the Police Department.

There will be a Police Department Open House on Saturday, June 28, 2025 from 10:00 am - 1:00 pm.

Touch A Truck will be held this Saturday, June 14, 2025, from 9:00 am - 1:00 pm at Southside Park.

Unity in the Community will take place on June 21, 2025, from 5:30 pm - 8:00 pm at the Charles Lind Brown Activity Center. This event is hosted by the Beaufort County Department of Parks and Recreation.

On June 25, 2025, at 1:30 pm, the Police Department will host a movie at the Charles Lind Brown Activity Center. Kids can enjoy a movie with free popcorn and treats.

Mayor's Report

Reported on meetings/events he had attended which included handing out awards at the annual Beaufort River Swim and Run.

Stated he would like to see a Tourism Management Advisory Committee stood up to study the number of events/tours that are happening in town which impact the community both positively and negatively. We need a set of rules regarding co-sponsorships for our parks. Need to charge for basic wear and tear caused by having these events.

Councilman Mitchell

He introduced General Lloyd "Fig" Newton at the Memorial Day Remembrance held at the National Cemetery.

Reminded all about the Unity in the Community Event at the Charles Lind Brown Community Center.

Mayor Pro Tem, McFee

Reported on meetings/events he had attended. He stated he will be giving the welcome address at the Dragon Boat Races on June 28, 2025.

Councilman Scallate

Thanked staff for all they did during the preparation of the budget. There are items that he does and does not support. He stated that fiscal responsibility is extremely important to him.

Thanked Chief Price and the Police Department for the extra patrols, handling of recent events at Garden Oaks Apartments.

Councilman Lipsitz

Reported on meetings/events he had attended which included the Beaufort Chamber of Commerce Legislative Reception.

Council congratulated former Mayor Billy Keyserling on receiving the Order of the Palmetto.

Council wished RJ Heape with Congresswoman Nancy Mace's office well.

XIII. EXECUTIVE SESSION

- A. Pursuant to Title 30, Chapter 4, Section (70) (a) (2) of the South Carolina Code of Law: Discussion regarding the purchase or sale of property - A. Commerce Park, B. Property adjacent to the Public Works Complex, C. Old Caffino location, 2153 Boundary Street.
- B. Pursuant to Title 30, Chapter 4, Section (70) (a) (1) of the South Carolina Code of Law: Discussion regarding personnel appointed by Council - City Attorney.

Councilman Lipsitz made a motion to go into Executive Session and seconded by Councilman Mitchell.

All were in favor, motion carried.

Councilman Lipsitz made a motion to come out of Executive Session and seconded by Mayor Pro Tem, McFee.

All were in favor, motion carried.

No actions from Executive Session.

XIV. ADJOURN

9:48 PM

Motion to adjourn was made by Councilman Lipsitz and seconded by Mayor Pro Tem, McFee.

All were in favor, motion carried.

Disclaimer: This document captures all actions taken by Council and summarizes discussions. All City Council Worksessions and Regular Meetings are recorded. Live stream can be found on the City's website at www.cityofbeaufort.org (Agenda section). Any questions, please contact the City Clerk, Traci Guldner at 843-525-7024 or by email at tguldner@cityofbeaufort.org.

In accordance with South Carolina Code of Laws, 1976, Section 30-4-80 (a)(d)(e), as amended, notification of regular meetings was given at the beginning of the calendar year. A copy of the agenda was posted on the City's bulletin board and website www.cityofbeaufort.org twenty-four hours prior to the meeting. A copy of the agenda was given to the local news media and requested public on file.