



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

April 8, 2025

I. CALL TO ORDER

7:15 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

Sam Levin, 224 Harborview Drive, spoke regarding the Consent Agenda, Item K dealing with Whitehall Park. He would like to see events there stay within a reasonable timeline when it comes to the noise ordinance being approved. He referenced a wedding that had been held there previously.

Deborah Gray, 1300 Barnwell Bluff, spoke in favor of New Business, Items A and B, the annexation and zoning of 3492 Trask Parkway.

IV. MEETING AGENDA APPROVAL

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

All were in favor, motion carried.

V. PRESENTATIONS

- A. Mayoral Proclamation proclaiming March 18, 2025, shall now and forever be known as Lafayette Bicentennial Celebration Day.

Mayor Cromer presented a Mayoral Proclamation to members of the Beaufort Lafayette Bicentennial Planning Committee establishing March 18, 2025, as Lafayette Bicentennial Celebration Day. The Mayor thanked everyone for their participation. He read from a letter received from the Executive Director, Chuck Schwam, of The American Friends of Lafayette.

VI. PROCLAMATIONS/COMMENDATIONS/RECOGNITIONS

- A. Character Education Proclamation - Luca Thompson, Broad River 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 April 2025 as Child Abuse Prevention and Awareness Month.

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

All were in favor, motion carried.

- C. Proclamation proclaiming May 5 - 9, 2025, as Teacher Appreciation Week.

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

All were in favor, motion carried.

- D. Proclamation proclaiming April 2025 as Fair Housing Month.

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

All were in favor, motion carried.

VII. CONSENT AGENDA

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

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 to host the 2025 Halloween Celebration in the Henry C. Chambers Waterfront Park on Saturday, October 18, 2025, from 10:00 am - 2:00 pm and twenty (20) complimentary parking passes.

- K. Request for co-sponsorship from Meadowbrook Church for the use of Whitehall Park to host a Sunrise Service on Sunday, April 20, 2025, from 6:00 am to 8:30 am.

- L. YMCA is requesting co-sponsorship for the 19th Annual Beaufort River Swim on Saturday, May 31, 2025, use of the Marina/Henry C. Chambers Waterfront Park from 5:00 am - 1:00 pm.

VIII. MINUTES

A. Worksession and Regular Meeting - March 8, 2025.

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

Minutes approved with correction.

IX. OLD BUSINESS

A. PUBLIC HEARING AND SECOND READING - Ordinance to amend the City of Beaufort's Zoning Map to include Parcel R120 002 000 0045 0000, Christensen Park, rezoning from T3-S (Suburban District) to T-1 (Natural Preserve).

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

Mayor Cromer opened up the Public Hearing.

No public comment.

Mayor Cromer closed the Public Hearing.

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

All were in favor, motion carried.

B. PUBLIC HEARING AND SECOND READING - Ordinance to amend the City of Beaufort's Zoning Map to include Parcel R120 001 000 0293 0000, Cuthbert Park, rezoning from T3-S (Suburban District) to T-1 (Natural Preserve).

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

Mayor Cromer opened up the Public Hearing.

No public comment.

Mayor Cromer closed the Public Hearing.

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

Councilman Scallate spoke about possibly planting some Live Oak Trees in Cuthbert Park.

All were in favor, motion carried.

C. Ordinance amending the Business License Ordinance of the City of Beaufort to update the Class Schedule as required by Act 176 of 2020 - Second Reading.

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

Alan Eisenman, Finance Director, provided an overview. There have been no changes made since first reading.

All were in favor, motion carried.

X. NEW BUSINESS

- A. **PUBLIC HEARING AND FIRST READING - Ordinance to annex 2.8 acres of real property located at 3492 Trask Parkway, R100 025 000 012A 0000 into the City of Beaufort pursuant to S.C. Code Ann. 5-3-150(3).**

Curt Freese, Community Development Director, stated this is a 2.8-acre parcel of undeveloped land except for the placement of an existing billboard sign alongside Trask Parkway. It is also adjacent to the Spanish Moss Trail. This request is from Graham Trask / Beautiful Beaufort Open Land Trust Inc. It is currently in Beaufort County, on a gateway in an Industrial District. The existing billboard on site would retain a legal, non-conforming status should the annexation be approved, since we do not allow billboards. This would be a privately owned and maintained parcel. The owners would like to see the land preserved as a passive park. Mr. Freese stated that T-1 is recommended in any area throughout the zoning classifications.

The Planning Commission voted 7-0 to recommend approval of the annexation. They also voted 7-0 to recommend approval of the T-1 Natural Preserve District zoning.

Mayor Cromer opened up the Public Hearing.

The following spoke during the Public Hearing.

William Cook, Board member of Beautiful Beaufort Open Land Trust, LLC.

Mayor Cromer closed the Public Hearing.

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

Councilman Scallate inquired about the adjacent zoning areas being compatible with T-1 zoning.

Councilman Lipsitz asked if the Beaufort County Open Land Trust was approached by the applicant to see if the parcel could be taken over by them. He asked what kind of benefit there would be for them coming into the city.

Councilman Mitchell inquired if the annexation were to be approved, could the city ask for the billboard to be removed.

The motion passed by a vote of 3 - 2. Councilman Lipsitz and Councilman Scallate voted against.

- B. **PUBLIC HEARING AND FIRST READING - Ordinance to amend the City of Beaufort's Zoning Map to rezone real property identified at 3492 Trask Parkway, R100 025 000 012A 0000 to Natural Preserve District (T-1).**

Mayor Cromer opened up the Public Hearing.

No public comment.

Mayor Cromer closed the Public Hearing.

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

The motion passed by a vote of 3 - 2. Councilman Lipsitz and Councilman Scallate voted against.

- C. **Ordinance to amend Sections 1-9031 and 1-9032 of the Code of Ordinances of the City of Beaufort, South Carolina to change the composition of the Cultural District Advisory Board - First Reading.**

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

Linda Roper, Downtown Operations Director, provided a summary from the discussion held on March 11, 2025, during the Worksession.

All were in favor, motion carried.

D. Resolution authorizing the City Manager to enter into a contract for Benefits Brokerage Services.

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

Alan Eisenman, Finance Director, reported they received 7 proposals. The committee scored NFP, an Alon Company, the highest based upon their industry expertise and their experience working with the city. Bid amount was \$25.00 per employee for approximately \$49,500.00 per year. He noted that the company has saved the city an estimated \$440,824.00 over the past 5 years negotiating with our healthcare provider.

All were in favor, motion carried.

E. Ordinance to amend Fiscal Year 2025 Budget for Revenues of General Fund - First Reading.

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

Alan Eisenman, Finance Director, provided some background information on the purchase of 1100 Boundary Street for \$2,300,000.00. This was done through a General Obligation Bond in 2021. The State of South Carolina General Assembly appropriated \$1,500,000.00 to facilitate the purchase of the Cyber Security Education Facility. The city is required to accept the one-time State Appropriation by June 30, 2025.

All were in favor, motion carried.

F. Ordinance to amend Sections 8-2001, 8-2001.4, 8-2002, 8-2003, 8-2005, 8-2006, 8-2009, 8-2010, 8-2012 of the City of Beaufort Code of Ordinances and to add a new Section 8-2015.1 - First Reading.

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

JJ Sauvé, Deputy City Manager, reported all these amendments deal with the City's Parking Ordinance. Staff started to look at them late last year because the private parking enforcement contract was coming up for renewal this year. While doing so, the South Carolina Attorney General's Office issued an opinion regarding the legality of private parking enforcement in Isle of Palms, SC. Since this opinion was published, he, along with the City Attorney, Ben Coppage, the Municipal Association of South Carolina, The State Attorney General's Office, and other municipalities, have been working together to better understand the opinion and the best path moving forward regarding parking enforcement.

Several lawsuits have been filed against municipalities across the state that use private companies for parking enforcement. The City of Beaufort was one of them. Staff recommends these changes to update the ordinance, as well as the explicit clarification that private persons engaging in parking enforcement on behalf of the City of Beaufort are formally appointed as Codes Enforcement Officials, if they are not a Police Officer.

Councilman Scallate wants to ensure that section 8-2003, Vehicles and Property may be removed, gets updated to include the language dealing with Commercial Wrecker and Towing Company language that was recently adopted last month. In Section 8-2005, Parking of vehicles containing dangerous substances, the use of the word "town " needs to be changed to "city".

All were in favor, motion carried.

G. Resolution Adopting Priority Community Development Needs.

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

JJ Sauvé, Deputy City Manager, provided information by comparing the list of needs this year with those of 2024. Reasons for the changes were provided.

All were in favor, motion carried.

H. Resolution authorizing the City Manager to enter into a Security Screening Warranty and Maintenance Agreement.

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

JJ Sauvé, Deputy City Manager, provided information on the agreement. The 6-year warranty agreement cost is \$22,050.00.

All were in favor, motion carried.

I. Resolution authorizing the City Manager to enter into the Modified Grant Award Agreement for the Charles/Craven Stormwater Project.

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

JJ Sauvé, Deputy City Manager, stated this is the second amendment to the South Carolina Office of Resiliency (SCOR) grant award for the Charles/Craven project. The original grant amount was for \$7,527,351.00, and the new grant award is for up to \$11,962,093.51 to cover the updated cost estimates for the project. Staff recommends that Council adopt the resolution authorizing the City Manager to enter into the amended grant award. The original amendment was approved by Council on November 4, 2024.

This amendment formally takes the Port Republic Stormwater Project out of the scope of the SCOR funding. There are no changes to funding in this amendment. The City continues to work with RIA/SCIIP on funding the Port Republic Stormwater Project with funds originally allocated solely for the King Street Stormwater Project. Both the King Street and Port Republic Projects will be bid together and if the construction bids come back within budget, the Port Republic Project will formally be added to the RIA/SCIIP Award. If the project bids come in over budget, the Port Republic Project will remain a shovel ready priority project as the CIP Team moves into the CIP Planning process and grant funding exploration.

All were in favor, motion carried.

J. Appointment to Boards, Commissions and Committees - Park and Tree Advisory Committee (PTAC) and the Waterfront Advisory Committee (WAC).

Mayor Pro Tem, McFee made a motion to appoint Shay Mikell to the Parks and Tree Advisory Committee for a 3-year term expiring on June 30, 2028. Councilman Lipsitz seconded the motion.

All were in favor, motion carried.

Mayor Pro Tem, McFee made a motion to appoint the following to the Waterfront Advisory Committee:

Joseph Oliver, David Russell, and Josh Schott, as Citizen Representatives.
Howell Beach and Perry Dukes, as alternates to the Citizen Representatives.
Josh Scallate, as the representative for City Council.

Bill Suter, as the representative for the Planning Commission.
Mike Sutton, as the representative for the Historic District Review Board.
David Bartholomew, as the representative for Beaufort County Council.

Councilman Lipsitz seconded the motion.

Councilman Scallate made a motion to amend by adding 4 more Citizen Representative Seats to the Board to make a total of 11 seats. The motion was seconded by Mayor Cromer.

The motion did not carry by a vote of 2 - 3. Mayor Pro Tem, McFee, Councilman Lipsitz and Councilman Mitchell were against.

All were in favor on the main motion.

XI. PUBLIC COMMENT – NON-AGENDA ITEMS

Michael Barrett, 18 Ridge Road, spoke against development on Cane Island.

Randy Mikals, 80 Dolphin Road, support a moratorium of development and spoke about the development on Cane Island.

Christopher Kinsler, 78 Dolphin Road, spoke against development on Cane Island.

Ken Goldsmith, 108 Dolphin Point Drive, spoke against development on Cane Island.

Dick Geier, 32 Petigru Drive, spoke about growth in Northern Beaufort County.

XII. REPORTS

City Manager's Report

Municipal Court will be closed on April 11, 2025, for staff training.

April 22, 2025, at 5:00 pm there will be a Special Worksession to look at the first draft of the Fiscal Year 2026 budget.

The Police Department is hosting a Movie during the day on Wednesday, April 16, 2025, from 1:30 - 3:00 pm in the Charles Lind Brown Center.

Reported that Deputy Chief Matt Bowsher's last day with the Fire Department will be on May 1, 2025. He has been with the department for 17 years.

The Taste of Beaufort will be downtown on May 2 - 3, 2025.

The next addition of The Beacon should be going out mid-May.

Mayor's Report

Thanked all that helped with the Lafayette Celebration.

Reported on meetings/events he had attended which included a Neighborhood Outreach Connection Meeting.

Councilman Mitchell

Reported on meetings/events he had attended which included the Freedman Arts District "Chalk It Up" Festival.

Mayor Pro Tem, McFee

Reported on meetings/events he had attended which included CAPA's "Dancing with Our Stars".

Councilman Scallate

Reported on meetings/events he had attended which included the Junior Achievement of Greater South Carolina event on budgeting.

Invited all to attend the City of Beaufort - Town of Port Royal Joint Council meeting on Thursday, April 24, 2025.

Councilman Lipsitz

Reported on meetings/events he had attended, which included the Executive Legislative Committee meeting where they are advocating for legislation on various bills and short-term rentals.

XIII. EXECUTIVE SESSION

- A. Pursuant to Title 30, Chapter 4, Section (70) (a) (2) of the South Carolina Code of Law: Legal advice regarding litigation.
- B. 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 for the Green space Program.
- C. Pursuant to Title 30, Chapter 4, Section (70) (a) (1) of the South Carolina Code of Law: Discussion regarding personnel - Boards, Commissions and Committees - Tourism Development Advisory Committee.
- D. Pursuant to Title 30, Chapter 4, Section (70) (a) (1) of the South Carolina Code of Law: Discussion regarding personnel appointed by Council - City Manager.

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

10:53 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.

approved: May 13, 2025
Traci Guldner



