



City Council Special Worksession Meeting Minutes – Planning Conference Room – 1st Floor

April 29, 2025

I. CALL TO ORDER

5:00 PM

Philip Cromer, Mayor

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

Absent - Michael McFee.

II. PRESENTATION

A. Department Director presentations for the recommended Fiscal Year 2026 Consolidated Budget.

Department Heads went over their individual department's recommended budgets as they relate to the Strategic Plan. The budgets showed current Strategic Plan initiatives along with what will be needed to help achieve these goals. The expenditure report showed a comparison between FY 2024 Actual, FY 2025 Original and Revised, and the FY 2026 Recommended Budget figures. Each department presentation concluded with the reasons for any requested increases. They answered questions from Council.

Mayor Cromer would like to see slip and mooring fees collected at the Downtown Marina be put into an Enterprise Fund, or a portion of it, to help pay for any maintenance to the facilities.

He would like to see Pride of Place promoted to receive donations to help pay for Christmas decorations.

He is in favor of the Risk/Emergency Manager position. In the long term, it will definitely bring savings to the city.

He would like the budget to be as "Lean and Mean" as possible.

Councilman Mitchell is appreciative of all the efforts the Police Department is making on engaging the community.

Councilman Lipsitz inquired about how the percentage rate amounts concerning costs for the Fire Department budget between the City of Beaufort and the Town of Port Royal were calculated.

Councilman Scallate stated Police, Fire, Public Works, Transportation and Resiliency are major concerns for him. Also, Fiscal Responsibility. His goal was to save \$500,000.00 in the budget. He came up with a figure of \$603,536.00. He then went through each department's budget, as well as the non-departmental expenditures, to identify where those figures came from. His figures are based on operating expenditures that were included in the presentations. Personnel and Benefits were not factored into his figures. **Mr. Marshall** explained the figures on the slides in the presentations are not inclusive of all the costs associated with the department's budget.

A discussion was held on the condition of the restrooms near the playground. The building should be pressure-washed and repainted in a lighter color. Possibly increase the lighting inside the restrooms as well.

Franchise Fees were also discussed. **Councilman Scallate** wants to make sure we are following the State Statute when it comes to the use of these funds. He inquired if Franchise Fees can be used to pay for right of way maintenance.

There was an extensive discussion about giving employees a Cost-of-Living Adjustment of 3 percent which is based on their current salary, versus giving each employee a flat dollar raise with \$2,000.00 as an example. **Councilman Scallate** would like to see the costs associated with each method, to be able to fully understand each option better. He wants to focus on getting base salaries up. He stated all of the Fire Departments he is aware of are giving a flat \$3,000.00 raise to each employee. Beaufort County is giving a flat \$1,800.00 raise to each employee, with the mind set of trying to build up the employee salaries of those that are on the lower end. Since we are not aware of what the compensation study is going to reveal, he would like to error on the side of providing more for those on the lower end who are not making a hefty salary. A percentage raise is always going to mean less money for the lower end employees. The impact is not the same for all employees when a percentage raise is given. **Mr. Marshall** advocated for going with the 3 percent Cost of Living Adjustment. This maintains the purchasing power of all employees. Once the study has been completed, the identified positions whose salaries should be adjusted will then be discussed. Just to throw a flat rate at each employee at this time, without any data, he feels is not a responsible form of management. **Councilman Mitchell** does not want to see anything done until after the Compensation Study comes out, make the adjustments at that time and ensure that the date is made retroactive back to the start of the Fiscal Year of July 1, 2025. **Councilman Lipsitz** stated every employee is essential, and he is in favor of going ahead and giving the 3 percent COLA until the study comes back, then we can make the necessary adjustments as warranted.

The following addressed Council:

Patrick Canning, 212 Burroughs Avenue.

You can visit the City's Financial Transparency Portal by using this link:
<https://www.cityofbeaufort.org/161/Financial-Transparency>



III. ADJOURN

6:59 PM

Disclaimer: This document is a summary. 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: June 10, 2025
Traci Guldner