



# City Council Worksession

## Meeting Minutes – Planning Conference Room – 1<sup>st</sup> Floor

May 13, 2025

### I. CALL TO ORDER

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5:00 PM

Philip Cromer, Mayor

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

### II. EMPLOYEE NEW HIRE RECOGNITION

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#### A. Municipal Court.

**JJ Sauv , Deputy City Manager**, introduced Dana Wessels.

#### B. Police Department.

**Stephenie Price, Police Chief**, introduced Nathan Mortimer.

### III. PRESENTATIONS

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#### A. Interviews of Applicants for Boards, Commissions and Committees.

Council held a question-and-answer session with Michael Andersen, Park and Tree Advisory Board applicant, Libby Anderson, Planning Commission applicant, Joanne Parrish, Tourism Development Advisory Committee applicant, and Parker Moore, Zoning Board of Appeals applicant.

#### B. County Composting Program Partnership proposal.

**Jared Fralix and Victoria Hoffman with Beaufort County** provided information on a proposed composting pilot program. The program will be funded in part through a \$273,600.00 United State Department of Agriculture (USDA) grant awarded to the county in June 2024 and is designed to reduce the volume of organic waste sent to regional landfills, extend landfill lifespan, improve soil health, and meet increasing community demand for environmentally conscious waste management options. The county has identified a site at 57 Schwartz Road to host the pilot facility, which will be operated by Oliver's Clean Burn. Since this site is owned by the City of Beaufort, the city would need to sign an agreement leasing this property. There would be no additional costs being made by the city.

**JJ Sauv , Deputy City Manager**, stated staff recommends the city finalize and bring forward a lease and/or formal operating agreement with Beaufort County.

**Councilman Lipsitz** likes the concept but is not sure if this is the right location, or the best use of this property. He inquired about the odor this might cause.

**Councilman Mitchell** inquired if residential bins would be provided for this purpose.

**Councilman Scallate**, inquired about adding a clause to the agreement about relocating the compost site if there were to be another company interested in coming in and utilizing this location. He loves the idea and is also concerned about the location.

#### **IV. DISCUSSIONS**

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A. Beaufort - Jasper Housing Trust Update.

**Claude Hicks, Executive Director of the Beaufort Jasper Housing Trust, and Dick Stewart, City's representative on the Board**, spoke about the 5 main points of the amended Intergovernmental Agreement (IGA). This included the removal of Mescher Act Language, Establishment of an Oversight Board, Jurisdictional withdrawal, Dissolution Clause, and Fiscal Agent clarification. Beaufort County has passed the IGA. The IGA will be sent to all partners for signature.

B. IGA for Indigent Defense Services with the Town of Bluffton.

**JJ Sauv , Deputy City Manager**, stated currently, the City of Beaufort, Town of Port Royal, and Town of Bluffton each contract with the Beaufort County Public Defender's Office to provide indigent defense services in municipal court. The annual cost for each municipality under the current arrangement is \$87,814.16. The City of Beaufort began evaluating a range of service delivery options, including continuing with contracted services, hiring part-time or full-time public defender staff, and partnering with nearby municipalities. The City coordinated with the Towns of Bluffton and Port Royal to jointly solicit proposals for indigent defense services. The goal was to identify an equitable and effective delivery model that meets statutory requirements while controlling costs and ensuring continuity in legal representation. The Town of Port Royal elected to contract independently with attorney David Bartholomew, who also serves as a Beaufort County Council Member and liaison to the City of Beaufort. To avoid any appearance of conflict of interest, Mr. Bartholomew did not bid to serve the City of Beaufort. The Town of Bluffton selected The Law Office of Carol Miller as the most qualified provider and negotiated a shared contract structure. Under the proposed agreement, the City and Town will each contribute \$70,000.00 annually toward a flat-rate \$140,000.00 contract managed by Bluffton. Staff will bring forward a Resolution to move forward with this agreement.

**Councilman Scallate** asked if a bullet point should also be included to protect the City of Beaufort, like number 4 does under Scope of Work for the Town of Bluffton. Mr. Sauv  stated that this has been addressed, and language has already been added.

C. Parking Ordinance update.

**JJ Sauv , Deputy City Manager**, started off my saying that after first reading on April 8, 2025, staff became aware of changes made to the ordinance back in 2015 had not been codified. Due to this, we are going to start the process again and take this back to first reading. This will allow for proper reconciliation of previously adopted but uncodified provisions with new policy and operational recommendations. Staff recommends acknowledging the administrative oversight back in 2015 and reviewing and reconciling the current draft.

**Councilman Lipsitz** inquired about being compliant with Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) laws, and should our ordinance reference them.

**Councilman Scallate** stated all references to town should be changed to city. He inquired about vehicle towing regarding someone parked on private property. Does this city have any responsibility in this case. He pointed out other scrivener's errors.

D. Short-Term Rental Regulations.

**Mayor Cromer** mentioned he is the one who asked this to be placed on the agenda. There have been complaints and concerns. He inquired if there is a software program that is tracking the number of short-term rentals. These rentals are capped at 6 percent per neighborhood and is based on platted lots. He inquired if a parcel has three short term rentals on the property, do they require 3 separate business licenses, or are they considered to be one. **Scott Marshall, City Manager** thinks the cap is per parcel and not per rooftop. **Councilman Scallate** stated each should be handled separately and if they are not, then that would be the appropriate direction. If there are three dwellings being used, they should all require their own business license, and count toward the 6 percent cap. Exemptions that were previously made, need to also be addressed, like the number of short-term rentals in the T4-N zone that he does not think are capped at all. He mentioned using a software program to help keep track of these. **Alan Eisenman, Finance Director**, stated that "Host Compliance" is already being utilized. Regulations for short-term rentals falls under Chapters 2 and 4 in the Development Code. New regulations/changes can always be incorporated and sent to the Planning Commission for review. **Mayor Cromer** also inquired about clustering of these rentals and would like to see distance be placed between them.

The following addressed Council with their comments and concerns on topics discussed:

Dennis Erickson, 901 McTeer Circle  
Jessie White, Coastal Conservation League  
Eve Fleming, 113 S. Hermitage Road  
Dick Stewart, Chair of the Higher Education Trust  
Michael Andersen, McTeer Circle  
Kaina Robinson, 6 Mystic Circle  
John Lemieux, 2308 McTeer Circle  
Cheryl Martin, 2308 McTeer Circle  
Carolina Coslick, 410 Bayard Street  
Debbie Youmans, 2306 Scheper Lane

V. **ADJOURN**

**7:04 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](http://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](mailto: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](http://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

