



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

May 20, 2025

I. CALL TO ORDER

5:00 PM

Philip Cromer, Mayor

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

II. DISCUSSION

A. Proposed Fiscal Year 2026 Budget.

Councilman Scallate asked for clarification on several items throughout the budget. Included was the Travel, Training and Per Diem line item increases mainly in the Police and Fire Departments. He also inquired how the Compensation Study line item materialized. He spoke about other items in the budget he is not in favor of, like the \$30,000.00 for a Downtown Master Plan.

There was a discussion about an additional \$250,000.00 funding request for the South Carolina Volunteer Park. **Councilman Scallate** feels he doesn't have enough knowledge on the subject and is finding it hard for him to justify this as a priority this year. There has already been \$100,000.00 reserved for design expenses. Federal and State Grants will also be looked into to help with providing funds and the \$250,000.00 can be used as a grant match. **Councilman Mitchell** said when you look at other figures for things the city is doing, \$250,000.00 seems like a relatively small amount. He can understand Councilman Scallate's point of view.

Mayor Cromer reported he added up all the requests under the TIF II Fund and came up with a figure of \$1,700,000.00 and \$1,840,000.00 was budgeted. He inquired where the other funds were going. For him personally, he would like to see all the items listed which make up the total figure.

Mayor Cromer inquired what is being collected on park fees. We are asked a lot of times to be co-sponsors, and if he is not mistaken this means the city collects no funds. Which was correct. **City Manager, Scott Marshall**, wants to bring forward a set of park rules that provides a criteria for consideration to waive fees. The criteria needs to be agreed to by Council. One criteria would be the entity should be a non-profit organization in good standing and the event must be open to the public, free of charge. The Mayor brought this up because these events produce "wear and tear" on the park and we need a funding source to fix issues.

Mayor Cromer feels our parking fees are too low as compared to areas like Charleston and Savannah. A slight increase could help cover the cost of Main Street. It could be used towards a Trolley system. **Councilman Scallate** responded saying he met with Jared Madison, who works downtown and came to our last Regular Meeting and addressed Council about free parking downtown for employees. There is the perception of parking having a negative impact on the employees downtown. Maybe a survey can be sent out to find out the real issues.

Linda Roper, Downtown Operations, reported there is reduced parking for downtown employees that costs \$20.00 per month. It is three blocks away. One issue is employees want to be right at the front door, but these spaces need to be left open for the patrons. Other ways can definitely be explored. It has been at least 6 years since fees were raised.

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 them, to help pay for any maintenance to the facilities or park.

Mayor Cromer inquired about how we are capturing Business License Fees for Virtual Businesses. There was an article in the latest Municipal Association of South Carolina (MASC) Magazine about them. Mayor Pro Tem, McFee stated that the entities that pay into AirBNB have to have business licenses. Mr. Marshall mentioned the company we contract with to find revenue sources regarding business licenses in the city. They are finding revenues. Mr. Eisenman reported they have found about \$100,000.00 in added revenue so far, \$50,000 goes to them the other to us.

III. EXECUTIVE SESSION

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

- A. Pursuant to Title 30, Chapter 4, Section (70) (a) (2) of the South Carolina Code of Law: Discussion of negotiations incident to proposed contractual arrangements with strategic partners.

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

No actions from Executive Session.

IV. ADJOURN

6:55 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

