



City Council Worksession

Meeting Minutes – Planning Conference Room – 1st Floor

July 8, 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. EMPLOYEE NEW HIRE RECOGNITION

A. Municipal Court.

JJ Sauv , Deputy City Manager, introduced Spencer Wessel.

B. Police Department.

Stephenie Price, Police Chief, introduced Michael Byrd, Colin Etherington, and Nicolas Moreo.

III. PRESENTATIONS

A. Compensation Study.

Scott Marshall, City Manager, started off by saying the purpose of the meeting is to provide a chance to present the findings of the Compensation Study, and what the recommendations are. The recommendations do not equate to an implementation plan.

Ivette Burgess, Human Resources Director, introduced Steve Foster with Management Advisory Group International. Mr. Foster reported they performed a Compensation/Classification Study for all City positions. They created a Job Classification Tool which can be used by Human Resources to evaluate new or revise positions at a later date. The scope included 178 positions within 103 job titles. They then compared salary and compensation data with 13 competitors in our area which included Beaufort County, the Town of Bluffton, and the Town of Port Royal. Mechanics, Planner I, and various Fire and Police positions were further behind the market. He then went over three pay plans. Unified, Fire, and Police. It was noted the estimated annualized costs do not include overtime pay.

Mr. Marshall stated the City will take a very close look on how to prioritize suggested increases. He thinks the area of Public Safety needs to be addressed quickly. He stated the Beaufort County Sherriff's Office starting pay for a Deputy with no experience is now \$60,000.00 as compared to our \$52,000.00.

Councilman Lipsitz inquired about the Demotion Policy in the Study and wanted to know if it was consistent with the City's policy now. **Ms. Burgess** said yes.

Councilman Mitchell asked for an explanation about the statement written in the study regarding the system being hardwired to prevent any employee whose current salary exceeds the maximum of their proposed pay grade from receiving any type of adjustment.

Councilman Scallate inquired what Mr. Foster had stated about our competitors recently providing a flat raise and where we fall on the scale as to how competitive we are. Mr. Foster stated they were 75 percent through the study when some of the competitors started raising their compensation. Even though they included the three percent raise from the city, they did not want to change their approach, because if they did, then it would be starting off at a disadvantage. Councilman Scallate's concern back in the budget season was with the Sherriff's Office providing their raises and Beaufort County providing a flat raise across the board of \$1,800.00, we were going to further fall behind especially in regard to our starting salaries. He was eluding to this as being a potential problem down the road.

Mayor Cromer inquired about certificates/degrees being obtained by employees. Would these increase an employee's salary or just be a onetime bonus. **Ms. Burgess** stated at this time the City does not have anything like this in effect, but it would be a onetime bonus. She then spoke about how the Tuition Assistance Reimbursement Program works.

Staff will put together an implementation plan and bring it back to Council during a subsequent Worksession for discussion.

B. Ordinance to regulate the operation of golf carts in the city limits.

JJ Sauv , Deputy City Manager, stated at the June 10, 2025, City Council Worksession, **Councilman Scallate** led a discussion regarding adoption of a golf cart ordinance and requesting that staff review and bring forward a proposed ordinance to regulate golf cart operation within the City of Beaufort following recent amendments to South Carolina state law (Act No. 64, effective May 22, 2025) granting expanded municipal authority.

South Carolina Code 56-2-90, as amended by Act No. 64, allows municipalities to regulate designating roads for golf cart operation, establishing hours and methods of operation, permitting night operation with appropriate lighting, and authorizing separate golf cart paths.

The draft of the ordinance incorporates the state-required four-mile operational radius from the registered address, driver's license, insurance, and registration requirements, seatbelt usage requirements for passengers under 12, and optional municipal provisions for hours, night use, and street designation.

Mr. Sauv  then went over the key policy considerations. designated Street versus state default, night operations, public safety, and fiscal and operational impact.

Staff recommendation is to initially adopt an ordinance as drafted with any changes that are recommended this evening, utilizing the State Code language for operational streets unless Council desires specific street designations for enhanced traffic management.

Mr. Sauv  stated he has asked for some clarity regarding the language in the State Statute under Section 1, C-1 that does not specify secondary roads like it does in D-2. Gave an example of Ribaut Road being 35 miles per hour but is not considered a secondary road.

Councilman Lipsitz feels we should specify what roads are prohibited for golf carts.

Mayor Pro Tem, McFee does not think we should designate roadways, but use the speed limit and make it below 35 miles per hour. Nothing 35 and above.

Police Chief, Stephenie Price, from an enforcement perspective, it could be as easy as using language to state this does not include Ribaut Rd, Boundary Street, Trask Parkway, Carteret Street, and the section of Parris Island Gateway from Ambrose Run to Robert Smalls Parkway.

She reported there is no way for those that live in the Mossy Oaks area to get to downtown on a golf cart since there is a stretch from Allison Road to Reynolds Street where there are no secondary roads that can be used.

Councilman Scallate asked once we receive legal clarification and we were to default to it having to be a secondary highway, 35 miles per hour or less, is there any other good alternative option on how we can get people from Mossy Oaks to Downtown. He understands the concerns of having them go down Ribaut Road or putting them on the Spanish Moss Trail. Is there an alternative we could work towards that would make sense. **Mr. Sauv ** stated we could look into a golf cart path, but it would require land purchasing from point to point in some manner.

Some of the changes to be made to the ordinance include adding lighted turn signals to the golf cart as a requirement, eliminating the use of greater/less than signs throughout the document and using the language roadways within the city, instead of city roads. **Councilman Lipsitz** would still like to see seatbelts used by all passengers as a requirement.

Fire Chief, Tim Ogden, stated the Town of Port Royal has a similar ordinance. Would be beneficial for the language to be similar since sometimes citizens do not know if they are in the city or town limits.

Chief Price definitely has concerns about them being allowed down Ribaut Road.

Staff will proceed with making the necessary changes and bringing this to a regular meeting for first reading.

The following addressed Council with their comments and concerns:

Lise Sundrla, Historic Beaufort Foundation.
Robert Woodman, 801 Godfrey Street.
Mike Sutton, 949 Ribaut Road.

IV. ADJOURN

6:06 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: August 19, 2025
Traci Guldner

