



**REGULAR CITY COUNCIL MEETING  
Tuesday, October 21, 2025; 6:30 P.M.  
Bennettsville Public Safety Complex**

**Minutes**

1. CALL TO ORDER Mayor Tyron Abraham
2. INVOCATION AND PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE Gregory Scott, Sr.
3. ROLL CALL  
District 1-Wanda Weaver  
District 2-Tyrone Davis  
District 3-Allen Taylor (**Not Present**)  
Mayor Abraham  
District 4-William “Bill” Jennings, Jr.  
District 5-Cy’Heim McRae  
District 6- Gregory Scott, Sr.
4. APPROVAL/CORRECTION OF MINUTES  
A. **Regular Council Meeting; Tuesday, September 16, 2025**-Mr. Scott made a motion to approve the Regular City Council Meeting minutes of Tuesday, September 16, 2025. Mr. Jennings seconded the motion. The motion passed, with Mr. Davis being the exception as he was not present at the last meeting.
5. PUBLIC REQUESTS/ PRESENTATION OF PETITIONS  
A. **Employee Anniversaries**-Mrs. Angela Ward announced our Employee Anniversaries for October: Robert Hamilton (Fire), 2 years; Tyler Smith (Police), 7 years; Donald McElveen (Public Works), 6 years; and Robert Cousar (Public Works), 4 years.  
B. **New Hires for September**-Ethan Smith (Water Treatment Plant) and Maddox (Fire)  
**Promotions for September-** Jeffery Sessoms (Police)  
C. **Pee Dee Coalition** – Mrs. Katrina Stephens highlighted activities for Domestic Violence Awareness Month, including Niya’s 10th Annual Lemonade Stand. She thanked everyone who came out to support.
6. PUBLIC COMMENTS (Agenda Items Only)  
**Dr. Carolyn Prince**- Addressed a comment to the finance department. She would like them to take a moment and review how citizens are being charged for services that are not being provided. She feels as if money is being collected without delivering the corresponding services.
7. SECOND READING AND PASSAGE IN FULL OF ORDINANCES  
**No Business**
8. FIRST READING AND ADVERTISEMENT OF ORDINANCES

A. **Business License Updates 2026-2028**

The Act No. 176, SC Business License Tax Standardization Act requires that by December 31<sup>st</sup> of every odd year, each municipality levying a business license tax must adopt, by ordinance, the latest standardized Business License Class Schedule as recommended by the Municipal Association of South Carolina.

**Approving Action:** A motion to approve an ordinance adopting the latest standardized Business License Class Schedule. Moved by Mr. Jennings. Seconded by Ms. Weaver. Motion passed unanimously.

B. **Annexation of Dollar General (# 039-12-04-003 & 001)**

The City Administration wishes to annex the Dollar General into the city limits to support the goals of the comprehensive plan.

**Approving Action:** A motion to approve the annexation of the Dollar General Store into the city limits. Moved by Mr. Jennings. Seconded by Mr. McRae. Motion passed unanimously.

9. **PASSAGE OF RESOLUTIONS**

A. **Bee City Grant Opportunity**

The mission of BEE CITY USA is to galvanize communities to sustain pollinators, responsible for the reproduction of almost 90% of the world's flowering plant species, by providing them with healthy habitat, rich in a variety of native plants and free to nearly free of pesticides.

**Approving Action:** A motion to approve a resolution designating the City of Bennettsville as a Bee City USA affiliate. Moved by Ms. Weaver. Seconded by Mr. McRae. Motion passed unanimously.

10. **GENERAL BUSINESS DISPENSED BY MOTION**

A. **Board Appointments (Mainstreet Board of Directors)**

The current Mainstreet Board of Directors have selected candidates to be considered for appointment.

**Approving Action:** A motion to accept the recommendation and approve the list of candidates presented to the Mainstreet Board. Moved by Mr. Jennings. Seconded by Mr. McRae. Motion passed unanimously.

11. **PUBLIC COMMENTS (Non-Agenda Items Only)**

**Quentin Stubbs-** Quentin Stubbs, a candidate running for City Council, District Three. He stated he was born and raised here in Bennettsville, and this community has played a significant role in shaping him into who he is today. He believes in hard work and service, and he is ready to get to work. He asked citizens to remember to vote on November 4<sup>th</sup>, and he appreciates everyone's time and support.

**Dr. Carolyn Prince-** Since February 2024, she stated she has been charged for utilities on a property owned by her family, despite needing only electricity for a renovation. She accrued over \$500 in charges for services not rendered, which feels like theft, she said. Utility bills vary drastically; some months it's \$15-\$20 for water and sewer, while other times it's over \$200. The practice is unfair to citizens, she added. Had she known about the policy earlier, she would have addressed it sooner. She gave the Mayor and the Assistant City Administrator a copy of the information that was discussed.

12. **BOARDS AND COMMISSIONS**

A. **Planning Commission** (No Cases)

B. **Board of Architectural Review/Tree Committee** (No Cases)

C. **Board of Zoning Appeals** (No Cases)

13. COUNCIL COMMITTEES

- A. **Finance Committee (Chairperson Jennings)**- Mr. Jennings stated, “Financially, we are doing very good. The committee is meeting. We do have concerns. The awesome policies being written, we might be getting, being asked to provide a few services that we're really not capable of doing, that will come out later. There's nothing alarming with that, either. But we are meeting. We are certainly involved. We certainly know what's going on, and we're trying to all as a committee, understand and tell the public we're okay. We're fine, but the timing is everything, okay.”  
Mr. Scott stated, “We also discovered that some practices that we have done in the past that were not good for the city's interests, the Finance Department had run across these issues, and they have corrected them. But it's good to know that the budget is in good hands, but also that they are finding things that really cost us a good amount of money, and we are trying to change from that practice, because sometimes when individuals that work for a period of time they go back or they don't know there was a bad habit. So, the committee has went in there, and they changed some things around, and once again, they have found those practices that were not good for the city and saved us a lot of money.”
- B. **Public Services Committee (Chairperson Weaver)**- Ms. Weaver stated that the Public Services Committee met, and it was a really good meeting, if you hadn't met with Miss Jones and Miss. Graves before. It was an interesting meeting, but I think everyone's going to be surprised with our Christmas downtown. I'm excited about it. Jahara and Brittany are on top of it. I mean, you get it out of your mouth, and we've got that taken care of. So, like somebody said earlier, don't want to spoil anything, but just stay on the lookout for Christmas this year, and that's all I've got.”
- C. **Public Safety Committee**- Chairperson Taylor was absent.

14. REPORTS AND INFORMATION PRESENTATION

- A. **Finance Report**- Mr. Sparkman gave an updated finance report, indicating a slight surplus in revenue, with a 41% expenditure rate by September, “so we are in good shape,” he stated.
- B. **Grants Report**- Ms. Lisa Jones gave an update; seven new grant applications were submitted. We were also awarded a Department of Public Safety Grant to buy more cameras. The Disaster Assistance Program which has 71 properties approved, with \$618,000 authorized for repairs. Seven new grant applications totaling over \$600,000 were submitted, including a \$100,000 grant for more cameras.
- C. **Upcoming Events**- Ms. Destiny Watson announced all upcoming events, which include a Truck or Treat (October 25th), Family Movie Night (October 25th), Scarecrow Fest (November 1st), Christmas Tree Lighting (December 2<sup>nd</sup>), and a Christmas Parade (December 13th).

15. COMMUNICATION BETWEEN CITY COUNCIL AND CITY ADMINISTRATOR

- A. **Administrator's Report**- Mr. Simon stated, “A series of activities that we are designing around our senior citizens and other citizens regarding getting them engaged. We do recognize that the community center, especially during the day and on some days, is available, and so we're starting to sponsor more free events for not only seniors, but just for anyone. We're trying to keep it diverse, and we're trying to keep it frequent. So, if any of you have any ideas on some things that we can do that just simply serves the community at no cost, we will help facilitate that, and we can do a lot of those activities at our community center. That is what our community center is designed for. We do rent it out. It does generate revenue for us, but at the end of the day, it is our community center as well. It serves nonprofits, other groups, sometimes churches, schools, and different groups that want to do activities there. We do allow them to do that.”  
Next, he provided a brief update on the Disaster Assistance Program. “My staff is doing a great job.” We are improving communication within the program, and overall, things are going well. However, there are areas where we need to enhance our communication to ensure that citizens are clearly informed. He mentioned that while we've had a slow start, we are set to pick up the pace soon, as we are receiving assistance from the agency. We have seven homes that are slated for completion shortly; those have been approved as

part of a total of 48 or 50 homes. To put it in context, there is still a lot of work ahead, and we will be administering this program through March and April next year. There are important deadlines approaching, so you can see that we are committed to being aggressive in our efforts. We will be increasing our pace very soon.

Following, one thing he's super proud of is how staff work with other agencies and even the county to recognize breast cancer, to bring awareness to breast cancer. We have participated in a number of events. We enjoy it. We do it ourselves, but we dress in our pink, and we took pictures. Mrs. Pearly Lawson was in attendance. He recognized her for doing so much around Breast Cancer Awareness Month and for how she keeps us involved. "I lost my mother to breast cancer, so it is near and dear to my heart, and I want to make sure that as long as I'm here, we're going to continue bringing awareness to breast cancer."

Lastly, he gave an update on our success story; our Downtown Dash & Bash was a success! If you missed it, catch it next year; it was awesome! This is our second time doing a 1k, 5k, and 10k fun run and race. We're able to enjoy each other and purchase items from our vendors and our food trucks, and we have music, and people are just gathering and having a good time. We really want to make it bigger and better. Next year, we're going to figure out how to advertise more beyond the county, to see if we can entice participants from the surrounding areas to come participate.

B. **Community Information Meeting Update**

We are constantly seeking ways to support small businesses downtown, recognizing that there isn't a single solution. Everyone has different opinions about what we should do, like lowering taxes, but revitalizing downtown is complex. It involves the economy, community, transportation, shopping habits, and attracting both residents and visitors. One exciting initiative is transforming our substation into a small business hub. This space will allow small businesses to sell their products and services, and we invite entrepreneurs to collaborate with us through a modest agreement, occupying the space for a few weeks or months. We are committed to serving the public and capitalizing on its prime location on Broad Street. We launched this project last weekend and received positive feedback. There's much more to come, so stay tuned!

Next, Mr. Simon announced the Center Street Village Affordable Housing Project, which has been awarded low-income housing tax credits from South Carolina Housing. This initiative addresses the critical need for housing in Bennettsville, a fact supported by community feedback and our Comprehensive Plan established five years ago. Despite some opposition claiming we don't need more housing, the demand for attainable homes is clear. Many existing homes are older and may not suit young professionals looking for modern living options. Our goal is to create diverse housing that accommodates various lifestyles. We're committed to making this project visually appealing in a prominent area of the city, with plans for a beautiful entrance and enhanced landscaping, while preserving existing trees. Additionally, we are actively looking for more opportunities to develop single-family residential projects in Bennettsville. We are taking actionable steps based on our Comprehensive Plan, and we aim to be strategic about housing and annexation.

Mr. Simon provided a brief update about our utility bill. Firstly, he thanked the public for their patience as we are implementing new software designed to streamline our processes. This software allows real-time communication between departments, which we haven't had in a long time. We appreciate your understanding as we adjust to this new system and undergo training, which may cause longer wait times at the counter. He also thanked Councilman Jennings, Finance Chair, and the rest of the committee for their efforts with the budget. We are managing about 40 to 50 projects, including infrastructure improvements and renovations, and these are spaced out to ensure we maintain cash flow for public services. Lastly, he shared that the MPD Electric Cooperative presented us with a check for \$81,000 as part of our contract. We value this partnership.

16. **NON-AGENDA ITEMS FROM COUNCIL**

**Mr. Scott** - Announced that every Wednesday at the Community Center, citizens play Bid Whist, and they are really enjoying it.

**Ms. Weaver** - Often hears concerns from citizens that no one wants to come to Bennettsville or

open a business here. However, Dollar General is coming, and a new mechanic shop just opened at the corner of Cheraw and West Main Street. Additionally, a woman purchased a building on Market Street and has plans for a new business there, and we have a convenience store opening on Cheraw Street. While these may not be the businesses everyone hopes for, they indicate progress, and she's optimistic about attracting more establishments to our community. She also acknowledged Brittany for her excellent work on the Downtown Dash and Bash. It was an inspiring event! Although we had fewer vendors than expected, she thought the turnout was great considering there were other events that day. She ended by saying, "Hats off to Brittany and her team!"

**Mr. Jennings-** Mr. Simon, I wanted to follow up on our discussion from last month regarding some critical new hires, particularly for the Assistant Administrator, Project Director, and Utility Director positions. The Utility Director role has been vacant for some time, and I believe it's essential to fill it soon, as I'm sure we all agree. Can you provide us with an update on the interviews for these roles? I know you've begun the process for the first two positions, and we've encountered some promising candidates in other areas as well. Additionally, I wanted to check on any other necessary salary positions. Congratulations on assembling such a strong board and team. I'm confident that we are making progress, especially in addressing zoning vacancies. This is a crucial area for any city, and the advancements happening here are encouraging.

**Mr. McRae-** Mentioned reviewing reports and noted the collaboration within the Public Works Department. He expressed his gratitude to Public Works for their recent efforts in District Five, addressing the concerns he had about various issues in the area. He also highlighted a significant development: a \$10 billion investment, the largest in history, for Amazon's data center in Rockingham. This investment ties back to the discussion on housing and growth, emphasizing that the new job opportunities could lead to increased housing demand, allowing more residents to live in the area. He concluded by urging everyone to "Please get out and go vote." Lastly, he gave a reminder to sign up for the Thanksgiving Parade.

**Mayor Abraham-** Thanked everyone for coming out. He thanked the City Administrator, "A City on the Move," "We're thriving and working to be better for our employees and our city, and I just appreciate everything that everyone does. And as mayor, I'm going to work on communication. I'm going to be developing a new level. I just want citizens to know what's going on in the city. Good or bad, I just want them to know because it's important that the citizens know what's going on."

17. ADJOURN  
Meeting adjourned at 7:32 pm.

#### **Public Comment Policy:**

Citizens desiring to speak at any regular meeting must make a written request to notify the City Clerk prior to the deadline. Citizens interested in commenting at a regular meeting shall sign in to speak and limit comments to no more than 3 minutes.

**Mission Statement:** To utilize all available resources for the development of plans, programs, and projects to improve services to the citizens of Bennettsville and establish and maintain an active role in economic and community development.