



REGULAR CITY COUNCIL MEETING
Tuesday, September 16, 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 (**Absent**)
District 3-Allen Taylor
Mayor Abraham
District 4-William “Bill” Jennings, Jr. (**Entered at 7:29 pm**)
District 5-Cy’Heim McRae
District 6- Gregory Scott, Sr.
4. APPROVAL/CORRECTION OF MINUTES
 - A. **Regular Council Meeting; Tuesday, August 19, 2025** -Mr. Taylor made a motion to approve the Regular City Council Meeting minutes of Tuesday, August 19, 2025. Mr. Scott seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.
5. PUBLIC REQUESTS/ PRESENTATION OF PETITIONS
 - A. **Employees Anniversaries**-Mrs. Angela Ward announced our Employee Anniversaries for September: George Bailey (Public Works), 1 year, Patricia (Finance), 9 years, Jessica Chapman (Public Works), 3 years, Amber Hendrix (Police), 9 years, Joanne Jackson (Water Treatment Plant) 3 years, Audra Johnson (Public Works), 10 years. Christy Quick Water Treatment Plant, 6 years. Megan Robinson (Finance), 1 year. Amani Sinkler (Electric Department) 2 years.
 - B. **New Hires & Promotions**-Benny Miles (IT coordinator), Devonte Genwright (Director of Public Works), Mr. Joshua Rivers (Assistant Manager of Utility Billing).
 - C. **Chamber of Commerce (Denise Jones)**-Announced the Inaugural State of Marlboro event on September 25 from 6 to 8 pm at the Marlboro Civic Center. The event will feature a panel discussion moderated by Mr. Heath Harpe and Representative Pat Henegan, with questions submitted in advance via email. The entire panel will consist of Administrator Simon, Administrator Clyburn, Mayor McAllister, Mayor Outlaw, Mayor Abraham, and Mayor Pate. Light refreshments will be served afterward.
 - D. **Boys-Day-Out Event (Thomas Ocean)**-Discussed his passion for his community program aimed at guiding young men and promoting education and good home

living. The program has been running for 21 years and has seen significant participation, including people from Raleigh and Charlotte, NC.

- E. **Lake Authority (Sully Blair)**- Provided an update on the Lake Wallace Authority, including the status of the lake and dam repair following a breach on August 24, noting a \$25 million state allocation. He stated the authority is made up of seven members, including representatives from the city, county, and state, and is working closely with the Department of Natural Resources.

6. PUBLIC COMMENTS (Agenda Items Only)

Dr. Carolyn Prince- Wanted to know when, what time, and where the Finance Committee meets. She would like to meet with that committee.

7. SECOND READING AND PASSAGE IN FULL OF ORDINANCES

A. **Public Art Ordinance**

The Public Art Draft Ordinance Regulate Murals and Public Art in the Downtown Area for the City of Bennettsville, South Carolina. This version maintains the role of the Board of Architectural Review (BAR) in providing input but vests final authority with City Council to ensure alignment with city branding and planning goals. Ordinance received first reading on June 17, 2025.

Recommending Action: A motion to approve second reading of the Public Art Ordinance #25-09-001. Moved by Mr. McRae. Seconded by Ms. Weaver. The motion passed unanimously.

8. FIRST READING AND ADVERTISEMENT OF ORDINANCES
No Business

9. PASSAGE OF RESOLUTIONS

A. **Downtown Pavilion Project**

The City Administration wishes to apply for the Hometown Economic Impact Grant in the amount of \$100K with a \$5K match. If awarded this grant, the Administration will be able to create a pavilion feature downtown.

Approving Action: A motion to approve a resolution that allows the Administrator to apply for the Hometown Economic Impact Grant. Moved by Ms. Weaver. Seconded by Mr. McRae. The motion passed unanimously.

B. **PNC Financing (Fire Truck)**

The City Administration wishes to enter into a financing agreement with PNC to purchase a new fire truck. The agreement is for a portion of the funds needed to complete the purchase.

Approving Action: A motion to approve the Administrator entering into a finance agreement with PNC to purchase a new fire truck. Moved by Mr. Taylor. Seconded by Mr. McRae. Motion passed unanimously.

10. GENERAL BUSINESS DISPENSED BY MOTION

Mr. Scott made a motion to move Item 10 A&B after Item 15. Seconded by Mr. McRae. The motion passed unanimously.

A. **Real Estate Transaction** – Downtown (Executive Session)

B. **Real Estate Transaction** – Marshall Street & Railroad Avenue (Executive Session)

11. PUBLIC COMMENTS (Non-Agenda Items Only)
Hope Crane- Owner of Magnolia on Main, expresses concerns about the lack of communication from the city regarding the demolition of a building on Main Street, which affected her business.
Dr. Carolyn Prince- Congratulates Officer Walter Baker on his graduation from a prestigious college and emphasizes the importance of better communication from the city to businesses. Next, she encourages the city to use the local paper for advertising. Lastly, she encourages the Public Works Department to keep all areas in the city manicured.
12. BOARDS AND COMMISSIONS (Denise Miller)
Has one opening on the Planning Commission for a board member and two openings on the Board of Zoning Appeals.
 - 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)-Not in Attendance
 - B. **Public Services Committee** (Chairperson Weaver)- Stated they have not had a meeting since the last time they met. She, Mr. Simon, and a group of dear Bennettsville met discussing Christmas decorations for the town, and she was really impressed with this group, and thinks they're going to be a big asset to the city.
 - C. **Public Safety Committee** (Chairperson Taylor)-No update.
14. REPORTS AND INFORMATION PRESENTATION
 - A. **Finance Report** -Mr. Sparkman stated, "I would like to start by expressing my gratitude for the opportunity to work with the city and the fantastic team I have. However, we are in our third year, and we are currently in the second quarter. Our budget is at about 33%, which is approximately 2% above what we anticipated. As we approach the mid-year mark, we plan to conduct a thorough analysis of our department budgets with the department heads. We will discuss our current standing, what we have accomplished thus far, and our plans for the remainder of the year. This may involve some amendments and reallocations within our budget; however, we do not anticipate any significant increases or decreases overall. I am pleased to report that we have been careful with our spending in the first part of the year. We look forward to revisiting the budget at mid-year to ensure we stay on track with our goals. Overall, things are looking promising and optimistic."
 - B. **Grants Report**-Ms. L.Jones provided an update on the city's grant activities, mentioning the application for over \$2 million in additional funds and the administration of nearly \$16 million in grant funds. The Disaster Assistance Home Repair Program has around \$400,000 worth of approved repairs. Lastly, she discusses the importance of the city working with nonprofit organizations as grant partners to access more funding and complete projects. Ms. Jones invites nonprofit organizations to partner with the city to help with funding and project implementation.

- C. **Upcoming Events** Ms. Watson stated that on Saturday, the 3rd Annual Spiritual Praise event at Smith Park was held. Some talented individuals from Marlboro County and surrounding area performed. Our next event is the Trunk or Treat, happening on October 25. More details will be shared soon. We encourage any businesses or organizations interested in setting up a trunk to contact the Community Center. Following the Trunk or Treat, we will have our holiday events, so please stay connected for updates. You can follow us via Facebook and the city's website.
- D. **Animal Control Ordinance** (Steps Taken). An update was given to the public by City Administrator Mr. Simon. Next steps would be to hold a Workshop and work on an updated Ordinance.

15. COMMUNICATION BETWEEN CITY COUNCIL AND CITY ADMINISTRATOR

- A. **Administrator's Report-** Mr. Simon mentioned that he needed a bit more time. Some council members are inquiring about different projects, including their start and end dates. However, he shared information about some projects and expressed how well his team is performing. A brief update was given on a couple of ongoing projects. A few of the projects include upgrades for McLeod Street Park, which will include repaving and addressing maintenance needs. For North Marlboro Street Park, we agreed to replace some equipment and repaint what we can, as our budget doesn't allow for all new items. Holes will be fixed, and we will enhance security by installing cameras and better lighting. Regarding Fire Department renovations, moving forward with the bathroom project and a major renovation. Mr. Simon mentioned that he spoke with some firefighters who thought they had to wait for renovations to get their needs met. He assured them they could receive beds, mattresses, and other items immediately. He would be visiting the fire department this Friday to discuss their needs. For the Community Center renovation, we'll upgrade the audio-visual system, flooring, and tennis courts. Next year, with remaining ARPA funds, we'll also focus on parking lot renovations. These projects are extensive and involve collaboration with several teams. We completed the Visitor Center renovation, thanks to Mrs. Graves and her team, and we currently have seven infrastructure projects underway.
- B. **Community Information Meeting Update** (Scheduled)
The City of Bennettsville will be hosting a community charette on Saturday, November 15, 2025, at the Visitors Center. The meeting involves all stakeholders engaging in discussion on topics such as:
- Neighborhood Development
 - Downtown Revitalization
 - Workforce Development
 - Transportation
 - Housing
 - Blight
 - Etc.

16. GENERAL BUSINESS DISPENSED BY MOTION

Mayor Abraham made a motion to go into Executive Session at 7:58 pm. Moved by Mr. McRae. Seconded by Mr. Jennings. Motion passed unanimously.

A second motion was made to enter into Executive Session for two Real Estate Transactions. Moved by McRae. Seconded by Mr. Scott. Motion passed unanimously.

A motion was made by Ms. Weaver to exit the Executive Session by Ms. Weaver. Seconded by Mr. Taylor. No actions, no votes were taken. Motion passed unanimously.

A. **Real Estate Transaction** – Downtown (Executive Session)

Approving Action: Mr. McRae made a motion to approve the offer up to \$20,000 on the property identified at 230 East Main Street. Seconded by Mr. Scott. Motion passed unanimously.

B. **Real Estate Transaction** – Marshall Street & Railroad Avenue (Executive Session)

Approving Action: Mr. Taylor made a motion for Item 10B Real Estate Transaction to allow the Administrator to move forward with research on this property for consideration. Seconded by Mr. Scott. Motion passed unanimously.

17. NON-AGENDA ITEMS FROM COUNCIL

Mr. McRae thanked the Public Works Department for coming in and getting District Five up to par. He asked about the street sweeper and what streets does the street sweep go down. Does it go down all the streets? Are there just certain streets to certain streets? He ended by saying, Residents of District Five are very appreciative and thankful for the disaster relief, Disaster Assistance Program.

Mr. Scott stated that when discussing animal control, it's important to note the evolution of language—from "dog catchers" to "animal control." In the past, they responded to calls about various animals, including snakes and opossums. Many reports come from citizens who actually own the animals. For instance, one case involved a squirrel entering a home through an open door. In situations like these, we should consider whether to intervene with wildlife or suggest contacting pest control for help.

Mr. Jennings mentioned a Finance Meeting on Thursday of this week or after Tuesday of next week.

Mayor Abraham thanked all our employees. He read the reports and can see that everyone has been really busy this month with a variety of tasks. He genuinely appreciates the hard work. He mentioned as we approach our budget planning, he would like to remind the council to keep in mind the cost-of-living raise for employees. It has been two years since we last addressed the issue, and expenses are steadily rising without any cost-of-living adjustments for staff. He encourages the council to start considering this matter as they prepare the budget. He ended by mentioning we have outstanding employees, and it's important to take care of them, as I firmly believe that when you take care of your employees, they will thrive.

18. ADJOURN

Meeting ended at 8:50 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.