



**REGULAR CITY COUNCIL MEETING
Tuesday, January 20, 2026; 6:30 P.M.
Bennettsville Public Safety Complex**

Approval Minutes w/Corrections

1. CALL TO ORDER Mayor Tyron Abraham
2. INVOCATION AND PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE Tyrone R. Davis
3. ROLL CALL
Wanda Weaver- District 1
Tyrone R. Davis-District 2
Caraline Harpe-District 3
Mayor Tyron Abraham
William “Bill” Jennings, Jr.-District 4
CyHeim McRae-District 5
Gregory Scott, Sr.- District 6

Mr. McRae made a motion to amend the agenda by moving items 10F, 10G, and 10H (all requiring executive session) to after item 16. Seconded by Mr. Davis. Motion passed unanimously.

4. APPROVAL/CORRECTION OF MINUTES
A. **Regular Council Meeting; Tuesday, November 18, 2025-** Mr. Scott made a motion to approve the Regular City Council Meeting minutes of Tuesday, November 18, 2025. Mr. Jennings seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.
5. PUBLIC REQUESTS/ PRESENTATION OF PETITIONS
A. **Employees Anniversaries-** Mrs. Ward wished these individuals a happy anniversary and thanked them for their dedication and their service for these years here at the city.
Larue Fine (Public Works) – 4 years
Evan Graham (Water/Sewer) 3 years
William Griggs (Fire) – 9 years
Kim Peterson (Police) – 9 years
Terry Terry (Electric) – 1 year
Tasha Townsend (Finance) – 24 years
B. **New Hires-** Mrs. Ward welcomed these individuals to the City of Bennettsville, and we look forward to having them with us for many years to come. No promotions at this time.
Joshua Dew – Police Corporal (Police)

James Cribb – Part-time Custodian (TPR)
Kimberly Cutchin – Customer Service Representative (Utility Billing)

- C. **Marlboro Pee Dee Presentation**-Representatives from MPD Electric Cooperative presented a utility tax credit check in the amount of \$50,000 to support community and economic development projects that strengthen local opportunities and enhance residents' quality of life.

Council Weaver and Mayor Abraham presented Brittany, Jaharra, and Lisa with a small token of appreciation, thanking them for their hard work on "The Bee City."

6. PUBLIC COMMENTS (Agenda Items Only)

Lucy Parsons-She discussed the pending sale of her property at 2009 West Main Street to Mr. Tommy Parker. This 8.73-acre site is ideal for a commercial truck stop, including a restaurant and multiple retail businesses. It features three road frontages, available utilities, compatible zoning, and high traffic counts. Its proximity to local meal establishments provides quick lunch access for employees who mostly live in Florence and surrounding areas. The property has passed environmental testing and contains no wetlands, making it a clean site. Over the past year, she, along with Mr. Tony McNeil and the development board, has worked on this project, codenamed "Fahrenheit," which holds personal significance for her. She recently learned that the Department of Transportation (DOT) is offering the City Council a one-time grant to approve a turning lane on my property, which could hinder its productive use. Mr. Dix from the DOT previously stated that he would halt this project; yet, we face new attempts to obstruct the sale. Any interference with this sale could be seen as tortious interference with a contract, leaving her no choice but to consider legal action against the City of Bennettsville, which she hopes to avoid. The DOT grant would provide only a one-time payment and would not contribute ongoing revenue, jobs, or revitalization to the area. The DOT claims a high number of accidents at this traffic light, which she finds untrue. In a previous meeting in 1999, the head of the DOT's pre-construction department described a turning lane as unnecessary and misguided.

7. SECOND READING AND PASSAGE IN FULL OF ORDINANCES
No Business

8. FIRST READING AND ADVERTISEMENT OF ORDINANCES

A. **Business License Ordinance 2026-2028 Revised-**

The Act No. 176, SC Business License Tax Standardization Act requires that by December 31st 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: Mayor Abraham entertained a motion to approve the revised ordinance adopting the latest standardized Business License Class Schedule. Moved by Mrs. Harpe. Seconded by Mr. Scott. Mr. Jennings opposed. Motion carried.

9. PASSAGE OF RESOLUTIONS

A. **Joint County Industrial & Business Park-**

A Resolution Pursuant to Section 4-1-170(C), Code of Laws of South Carolina, 1976, As Amended, Consenting to the Placement of Certain Property within the Corporate Limits of the City of Bennettsville in a Joint County Industrial and Business Park of Marlboro and Darlington Counties.

Approving Action: Mayor Abraham entertained a motion to approve a resolution consenting to the placement of the referenced property in a Joint County Industrial and Business Park. Moved by Mr. Jennings. Seconded by Mrs. Weaver. Passed unanimously.

B. **South Carolina Water Quality Revolving Fund Loan-**

A Resolution authorizing and approving the acceptance of certain loan assistance monies from South Carolina Water Quality Revolving Fund Authority: Authorizing the Mayor to Execute That Certain Loan Assistance Agreement Between the City of Bennettsville and South Carolina Water Quality Revolving Fund Authority; and Other Matters Relating Thereto.

Approving Action: Mayor Abraham entertained a motion to approve the Mayor to enter into an agreement with the South Carolina Water Quality Revolving Fund Authority. Moved by Mr. Davis. Seconded by Mr. McRae. Motion passed unanimously.

10. GENERAL BUSINESS DISPENSED BY MOTION

A. **Board Appointment to the Housing Authority of Bennettsville**

Due to the passing of Commissioner Mr. James R. Jenkins, the Housing Authority of Bennettsville is presenting Mr. Fred J.G. Thomas and Dr. James H. McCall Jr. as candidates to be considered to serve the remaining term of Commissioner Jenkins. The City Council will select one candidate for this appointment. Letters of interest from both candidates are included.

Approving Action: Mayor Abraham entertained a motion to approve the appointment of **Mr. Fred Thomas** to the Housing Authority of Bennettsville to serve the remaining term of Mr. James R. Jenkins. Moved by Mr. McRae. Seconded by Mr. Davis. The motion passed with a 5-2 vote. 5 in favor (Mr. Davis, Mrs. Harpe, Mayor Abraham, Mr. McRae, and Mr. Jennings), 2 against (Mrs. Weaver & Mr. Scott).

Mayor Abraham entertained a motion to approve the appointment of **Mr. James McCall, Jr.** to the Housing Authority of Bennettsville to serve the remaining term of Mr. James R. Jenkins. Moved by Mr. Scott. Seconded by Mrs. Weaver. The motion failed in a 2-5 vote. Mrs. Weaver and Mr. Scott in favor, 5 against (Mr. Davis, Mrs. Harpe, Mayor Abraham, Mr. McRae, and Mr. Jennings).

B. **South Carolina Water & Wastewater Agency Response Network Mutual Aid**

South Carolina Code of Laws Section 25-1-450 requires that State, county, and municipal governments cooperate in developing and maintaining a plan for mutual assistance in emergencies, and Section 6-11-1810 allows mutual aid assistance between municipalities, fire districts, fire protection agencies, and other emergency service entities.

“Execution of this agreement does not create any duty to respond to a request for assistance. When a member receives a request for assistance, the Authorized Official shall have absolute discretion as to availability of resources. An authorized Member’s decisions on the availability of resources shall be final.”

Approving Action: Mayor Abraham entertained a motion to approve the administrator entering into a mutual aid and assistance agreement with the South Carolina Water & Wastewater Agency Response Network. Moved by Mrs. Weaver. Seconded by Mr. Jennings. Motion passed unanimously.

C. **Budget Calendar**

Dates and events are subject to change with council approval.

Approving Action: Mayor Abraham entertained a motion to approve the Budget

Calendar as presented. Moved by Mrs. Harpe. Seconded by Mr. Jennings. Motion passed unanimously.

D. **City Council Compensation**- No action needed.

E. **SCDOT Project (US 15-401 SC/385 S-56 Intersection)**

The SCDOT and Pee Dee COG had an intersection improvement project at US 15/401 and SC 385 W Main St in the City of Bennettsville that was put on hold due to a conflict with some potential economic development in area. At the September COG board meeting, we were asked to revisit the project. SCDOT would need municipal consent from the City of Bennettsville to move forward.

Approving Action: Mayor Abraham entertained a motion to approve support for the project to move forward. Moved by Mrs. Harpe. Seconded by Mr. Scott.

A vote of 5 people in favor (Mrs. Weaver, Mr. Davis, Mrs. Harpe, Mayor Abraham, and Mr. Scott), 1 opposed (Mr. Jennings), and 1 abstaining (Mr. McRae).

Mr. McRae abstained. His reason for abstaining. "I'm a farmer, and I have a lot of stories, you know, where people, land is taken, and I just kind of think that this kind of, in a way, is getting into that, you know, because it doesn't seem like they worked out a deal or anything like that, so I will have to abstain for that reason."

F. **Employee Compensation** **[EXECUTIVE SESSION]**Moved to Item 17

G. **Real Estate Transaction #1** **[EXECUTIVE SESSION]**Moved to Item 17

H. **Real Estate Transaction #2** **[EXECUTIVE SESSION]**Moved to Item 17

11. PUBLIC COMMENTS (Non-Agenda Items Only)

Ray Southern- Have a concern about the traffic circle at Oakwood, specifically regarding a sign that says, "No 18 Wheelers." At 403 Oakwood, the owner has been bringing in 18-wheelers loaded with wood, which is damaging the intersections on Marlboro Street. and Mallard Street, both of which have been repaved multiple times in the past year. Pinewood Street has also suffered damage, as well as the north side of Thomas Street and the area near Palmetto. He wasn't aware that 18-wheelers were allowed in the city, and he's worried about the frequent presence of these trucks in the neighborhood.

Pamela Best- "It's the same thing; we got the same energy in 2026 that we got in 2025." She stated she has been working for two years with no help, and it's frustrating. She comes here every year and has addressed issues with three different mayors, yet nothing changes. Next, she read a post that was made by Chesterfield County about how they recently altered 86 cats, with 79 from the community. They had 277 people sign up to help catch cats. What efforts have you made? She stated she has been advocating for help in Richardson Park for two years, yet feels ignored. The need is real, and she hopes for ongoing support to help both the cats and their caregivers.

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)**- Mentioned we are currently facing a challenging budget, with revenues trailing behind expenses. Tax collections from the county will come through in January and February, which we hope will help balance our expenditures and revenues. During the Finance Committee Meeting,

they voted on an important budget calendar that includes ARPA (American Rescue Plan Act) funds for the last quarter of this year and throughout next year. Mr. Simon and Mr. Sparkman are aware of their responsibilities moving forward. The meeting was constructive, preparing them for the upcoming budget decisions. Lastly, they also received a positive report from our bonding attorney while discussing revenue options for this year.

- B. **Public Services Committee (Chairperson Harpe)-** She briefly discussed what they wanted to work on for the coming year, and how they plan to have monthly Regular Meetings.
- C. **Public Safety Committee (Chairperson McRae)-** His committee is planning to have a meeting tomorrow at 1 pm. They will run over some things. He has some ideas and some concepts. So, he believes it'll be a great year for the Public Safety Committee, and hopefully, you all will see something positive.

14. REPORTS AND INFORMATION PRESENTATION

- A. **Setoff Debt Report-** The Setoff Debt Status Report provides an update on the City of Bennettsville's participation in the South Carolina Setoff Debt Program, which allows the City to collect unpaid utility bills, fees, fines, and other receivables by intercepting state income tax refunds owed to delinquent individuals. The report summarizes the total number of accounts submitted, the dollar amount of outstanding receivables placed into the program, and collections received to date. It helps ensure transparency in revenue recovery efforts and demonstrates the City's continued actions to responsibly collect funds owed to taxpayers.
- B. **Finance Report-** Mr. Sparkman started by saying the city is in good shape. Next, He went saying we are in a good position to leverage our assets and acquire the equipment and resources we need to make a difference in our departments. Let's stay positive and continue working together, as we have been. We have plans in place, and you can expect to see positive results from that investment in the next few months, especially this calendar year. Lastly, he ended by saying we can aim for even bigger and better opportunities. Thank you all so much for your efforts, and he expressed his appreciation for the opportunity to work in this city.
- C. **Grants Report-** Miss. Lisa Jones stated that since our last meeting, the city has received two significant grants. The first is from the Southeast Crescent Regional Commission, which is intended for State Economic and Infrastructure Development and will support our Main Street Coaster Program. The second grant comes from the U.S. Department of Transportation's Safe Streets for All initiative, which focuses on planning and demonstration projects.
- D. **Upcoming Events-** Miss Graves gave an update on all upcoming events with the city.
- E. **Project List-** It will be published tomorrow shortly after 12 PM. This document will inform the public about the status of all ARPA projects, grant projects, and other city-funded initiatives.
- F. **Administrator's Annual Report-**The Administrator's annual report will also be published tomorrow at 12 PM, and we already have it in digital format from our retreat.

15. COMMUNICATION BETWEEN CITY COUNCIL AND CITY ADMINISTRATOR

- A. **Cheraw Street Bridge Project-** The City of Bennettsville hired KCI Consultants to assist with the design, permitting, and construction of the relocation of utilities as part of the bridge replacement by SCDOT. The money spent on construction for this project will be reimbursed 100%. Gas and Electricity infrastructure is an unexpected cost to the city. The administration secured the services of John Floyd

Industrial, Inc. for construction at a cost of \$90K (lowest bid). The project was designed by AECOM. The electric Department will use MPD to assist with the relocations, and this cost is unknown at this time.

- B. **Circle K Submission-** The Circle K, proposed to be located at the intersection of Highway 9 & 38, has submitted design plans to the City of Bennettsville for review. Those preliminary plans have been reviewed and approved to move forward with submission of engineering plans. Circle K is still working with SCDOT and the adjacent property owner. This business will contribute to the tax base and hospitality tax based on its proposed use.
- C. **Animal Control Update-** The City of Bennettsville, Marlboro County, Town of Clio, and Town of McColl held a joint meeting to discuss animal control challenges.

16. NON-AGENDA ITEMS FROM COUNCIL

Gregory Scott, Sr.- Started by saying thank you to all our employees for their dedication to the city. Your commitment during times of turnover is appreciated. In the Richardson Park area, we are making progress, but we still lack important information from engineers that we've been paying for. Mr. Scott said, despite promises to provide updates, we have not received anything. Access to this information would empower us to take further actions to support our community. The length of time we have waited without any results is unacceptable. Therefore, he has asked an Administrator to follow up and ensure that we receive this important information.

Tyrone R. Davis- Stated he hasn't received any updates about the creek yet. He appreciates the engineers' work, but we need them to provide us with information soon. He thanked all employees for their hard work in keeping our city running smoothly. The office atmosphere has definitely improved. However, the engineers have not delivered the promised updates despite the time we've given them. He asked an Administrator to follow up and ensure we get the information we need to help the community effectively.

CyHeim McRae- I want to speak on behalf of myself regarding District Five. We made several requests, and I'm happy to report significant improvements. Public Works has cleaned up the area, trimmed overgrown trees, and made the sidewalks more visible. He grew up in this neighborhood, and his great-grandma's friends, who have lived on that street for years, noted how much better it looks now. He's grateful to Asplundh and the Public Works Department for their hard work. Additionally, for Christmas, he sourced decorations from local stores and found a lovely wreath, supporting our community businesses. Next, I want to thank Chief Burks for inviting council members to their Christmas party. The Council Retreat was fantastic, and he enjoyed it very much. He learned a lot of valuable information during the event. He particularly enjoyed the team-building exercises and the opportunity to get to know one another better. Lastly, I would like to ensure that the IT person downloads the Facebook Live video and uploads it to our YouTube channel for future use. Since the video expires after 30 days on Facebook, we want to avoid having issues like we did last year when we ended up with only five videos. I don't believe I need to put a motion on the floor for this, but I want to make sure it gets done. Mr. Simon responded, "You don't need a motion because this is an operational matter, but I'll make sure it's up there."

Caraline Harpe- Just wanted clarification from Mr. Scott and the City Administrator on a city project.

Wanda Weaver- Stated she was happy to be back on council again this year, and she's looking forward to working with everybody.

Mayor Abraham- Thanked the staff for everything they do for the City of Bennettsville. He's hoping and praying that in 2026, great things are ahead. He also mentioned that council members might consider taking trips to nearby cities to gain insights into what

others are doing. Sometimes, stepping out of our usual surroundings can provide valuable information and inspiration. There are many great ideas and resources available, and he wants us to be part of that. Our goal is to bring back valuable experiences and initiatives to benefit our citizens and improve our city. Next, he thanked Aspen for what they have done throughout the city.

17. GENERAL BUSINESS DISPENSED BY MOTION

Entered Executive Session at 8:10 pm

Mayor Abraham entertained a motion to leave the Regular Session and go into Executive Session. Moved by Mr. Davis. Seconded by Mrs. Weaver. Motion passed unanimously.

Exited Executive Session at 10:09 pm. No actions or votes were taken.

Mayor Abraham entertained a motion to leave the Executive Session and return to the Regular Session. No actions or votes were taken. Moved by Mr. McRae. Seconded by Mr. Scott. Motion passed unanimously.

F. **Employee Compensation [EXECUTIVE SESSION]**

Approving Action: Mayor Abraham entertained a motion to approve the compensation request made by the City Administrator. Moved by Mr. Davis. Seconded by Mr. Scott. Motion passed unanimously.

G. **Real Estate Transaction #1 [EXECUTIVE SESSION]**

Approving Action: Mayor Abraham entertained a motion to approve the compensation request for 2024 made by the City Administrator. Moved by Mrs. Weaver. Seconded by Mr. Scott. Motion passed unanimously.

Approving Action: Mayor Abraham made a motion to approve the Administrator to make an offer on the property next to the Northside Fire Department. Moved by Mr. Davis. Seconded by Mr. McRae. Motion carried.

Voted in Favor: Mayor Abraham, Mrs. Weaver, Mr. Davis, Mr. William “Bill” Jennings, Jr., Mr. McRae, and Mr. Scott.

Opposed: Mrs. Harpe

H. **Real Estate Transaction #2 [EXECUTIVE SESSION]**

Approving Action: Mayor Abraham made a motion to approve the Administrator to make an offer on the property located at 238 East Main St. Moved by Mr. Davis. Seconded by Mr. McRae. Motion carried.

Voted in Favor: Mayor Abraham, Mrs. Weaver, Mr. Davis, Mrs. Harpe, Mr. McRae, and Mr. Scott.

Opposed: Mr. William “Bill” Jennings, Jr.

18. ADJOURN

Meeting ended at 10:13 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.