



REGULAR CITY COUNCIL MEETING Tuesday, August 19, 2025; 6:30 P.M. Bennettsville Public Safety Complex

Minutes

1. CALL TO ORDER Mayor Tyron Abraham
2. INVOCATION AND PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE Mayor Abraham
3. ROLL CALL
District 1-Wanda Weaver
District 2-Tyrone Davis (**Absent**)
District 3-Allen Taylor
Mayor Abraham
District 4-William “Bill” Jennings, Jr.
District 5-Cy’Heim McRae
District 6- Gregory Scott, Sr. (**Absent**)
4. APPROVAL/CORRECTION OF MINUTES
A. **Regular Council Meeting; Tuesday, July 15, 2025**-Mr. Taylor made a motion to approve the Regular City Council Meeting minutes of Tuesday, July 15, 2025. Mr. McRae seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.
5. PUBLIC REQUESTS/ PRESENTATION OF PETITIONS
A. **Employees Anniversaries**-- Mrs. Angela Ward announced our Employee Anniversaries for August: Jaharra Graves (TPR) 4 years; Tammy King (Human Resources) 28 years; Jerusha McArthur (TPR) 6 years; Donald Morgan (Water Treatment Plant) 4 years; Lori O’Tuel (Purchasing) 13 years; Samuel Sparkman (Finance) 1 year; Robert Tryon (Police) 3 years; Angela Ward (Administration) 27 years

- B. **New Hires & Promotions:** Nathan Jones, Utilities Apprentice (Electric); La’Jaeslyn Robinson , Part-time Custodian (TPR); Morgan Ridges , Part-time Animal Control (Planning/Zoning)
- C. **Main Street SC Inspiration Award-** Mr. Jonathan Eric, the Main Street South Carolina Associate, who presented the Main Street South Carolina Inspiration Awards. Explains the four points of the Main Street approach: design, organization, promotion, and economic vitality. The first award, the 2025 Outstanding Special Project, is given to Main Street Bennettsville for the creation of the pollinator planters program. The second award, the 2025 Master Merchant Award, was presented to Cindy Ayers of Gifts and More for her significant contributions to downtown Bennettsville.
- D. **NAACP-**Ms. Betty Joe Quick, President of the Marlboro County NAACP branch, presented a hate crime ordinance modeled after Florence, South Carolina, highlighting South Carolina's lack of statewide legislation. The ordinance aims to protect citizens against hate, intimidation, and bias, as South Carolina and Wyoming are the only two states without a statewide hate crime statute.
6. PUBLIC COMMENTS (Agenda Items Only)
No Business
7. SECOND READING AND PASSAGE IN FULL OF ORDINANCES
No Business
8. FIRST READING AND ADVERTISEMENT OF ORDINANCES
No Business
9. PASSAGE OF RESOLUTIONS
No Business
10. GENERAL BUSINESS DISPENSED BY MOTION
- A. **Building Services Contract (CCI)-**The City Administration wishes to enter into a contract with CCI for building services. Amended in the motion is to give a follow-up every quarter, and CCI will assume responsibility for permitting building projects on behalf of the city.
- Approving Action:** A motion to approve the Administrator to enter into a contract with CCI for building services. Moved by Mrs. Weaver. Seconded by Mr. Taylor. The motion passed unanimously.
- B. **Election Filing Fees-** Councilman McRae requested to discuss and take action on filing fees. The mayor requested that it be postponed.
- Approving Action:** Mayor Abraham made a motion to request that filing fees be postponed. Seconded by Mr. Taylor. Motion passed. Mr. McRae opposed.

- C. **Board Appointment (Planning Commission) (Vanessa Pearson)**- The City Administration has received an application from Ms. Vanessa Pearson to be placed on the Planning Commission.

Approving Action: A motion was made by Mr. McRae to approve the appointment of Ms. Vanessa Pearson to the Planning Commission. Seconded by Ms. Weaver. The motion passed unanimously.

- D. **Board Appointment (Board of Zoning & Housing Appeals) (Sheila Brewington)**- The City Administration has received an application from Mrs. Sheila Brewington to be placed on the Board of Zoning & Housing Appeals.

Approving Action: A motion was made by Mayor Abraham to approve the appointment of Mrs. Sheila Brewington to the Planning Commission. Seconded by Mr. McRae. Motion passed unanimously.

- E. **Board Appointment (Lake Authority Nomination) (Patricia Henegan)**- The City Administration has received a recommendation from Chairman Sully Blair of the Lake Authority to place Mrs. Patricia Henegan on the Lake Authority Board.

Approving Action: A motion to approve the nomination request of Mrs. Patricia Henegan to be placed on the Lake Authority Board. Moved by Mr. Taylor. Seconded by Mr. McRae. Motion passed unanimously.

11. PUBLIC COMMENTS (Non-Agenda Items Only)
No Business

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)**-provided an update on the city's financial status, noting improvements in financial reporting and revenue. He mentions the financial needs for the year and the positive outlook for the current budget. Lastly, he stated, "I'm real proud of the city finance department and revenue administration maintaining our budget."
B. **Public Services Committee (Chairperson Weaver)**-Highlighted the city's efforts to prepare for the Christmas holidays and the purchase of a new fire truck.
C. **Public Safety Committee (Chairperson Taylor)**- Stated that the committee wasn't able to meet due to his schedule conflicts recently. However, the committee does need to meet soon, he said.

14. REPORTS AND INFORMATION PRESENTATION

- A. **Finance Report (1st Quarter)**- Mr. Sam Sparkman provided an update on the city's finances, stating that revenues are on target.
- B. **Grants Report**-Ms. Lisa Jones discussed the progress of the South Carolina Housing Trust Disaster Assistance home repair grant, noting the high number of approved applications and ongoing repairs.
- C. **Upcoming Events**-Mrs. Graves was absent.

15. COMMUNICATION BETWEEN CITY COUNCIL AND CITY ADMINISTRATOR

- A. **Utility Billing Cycle**-We're sending out correspondence encouraging citizens to catch up on their bills. Many are struggling and end up far behind when they seek help, making it difficult to assist them. We want to encourage everyone to take action and know that we're here to help if needed, so we can move forward as a city.
- B. **Animal Control**- The city is addressing animal control issues.
 - Discussed the challenges with animal control, including capacity issues and the need for a team effort to address the problem.
 - Suggested involving local veterinarians and the Humane Society in finding solutions.
 - Emphasized the need for a collaborative approach involving the city, county, and other organizations.
- C. **Community Information Session**-
 - Announces the scheduling of a community information session to discuss city growth and operations.
 - The city has received recent recognition by PeeDee Cog for its efforts in utility upgrades and downtown projects.
 - Expresses pride in the city's achievements and looks forward to continued progress.

16. NON-AGENDA ITEMS FROM COUNCIL

Ms. Weaver -Expressed that everyone in the Utility Billing Office was very considerate when she mentioned her intention to file a complaint. She commended them for their services. Additionally, she hopes to see more progress regarding the brown water issue. Lastly, Ms. Weaver noted that she has received calls about noise from parties and would like to see revisions to the relevant ordinances. She believes that parties should not be held in residential neighborhoods, especially when guests are being charged to attend. She stated that there are facilities like the Community Center, outdoor spaces, and the Country Club available for rent. It is important to find a solution that prohibits parties in residential areas. She would like to explore the possibility of creating an ordinance to address this issue.

Mr. Taylor- Added to Ms. Weaver's concerns. He stated, "It's not a city ordinance, but in the lakeside subdivision ordinances. It can't be operated as a business, and if they're charging people to come there, and I've been told they're renting this property out for this party that makes their business, so they have to have a business license and all that kind of stuff and that can't happen anyway, because of the regulations and restrictions on the property, but we need to address that because there was a lot of illegal parking and stuff like that, And walking in the streets with alcohol."

Mr. Jennings- Stated that the town's beautification is much better. Next, he mentioned, "When the leaves fall from trees this fall, another vacuum truck would work perfectly. Following, he stated, "We really need to study the power lines running through these trees. It's just unreal in every neighborhood. I appreciate the effort in cleaning up the town streets, the sidewalk, the curbing, the trash, and the other burning public property in every district. I see it and appreciate it."

Mayor Abraham- Thanked City of Bennettsville staff and visitors for being at the meeting. He mentioned how community engagement is vital as we work to improve our city's quality of life. He truly appreciates how dedicated the staff is and how he looks forward to hearing feedback on how they can enhance the community. He also thanked the council for bringing forth citizen concerns, which help them strive for improvement. He ended by saying, " Good things are coming, and we're going to be better, and we are doing better."

17. ADJOURN
Meeting ended at 7:38 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.