



**REGULAR CITY COUNCIL MEETING  
Tuesday, November 18, 2025; 6:30 P.M.  
Bennettsville Public Safety Complex**

**Minutes**

1. CALL TO ORDER Mayor Tyron Abraham
2. INVOCATION AND PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE Tyrone R. Davis
3. ROLL CALL  
District 1  
District 2  
District 3  
Mayor Abraham  
District 4  
District 5  
District 6

Mayor Abraham proposed moving items 10B, the Street Name Change Proposal, and 10C, the DAP Agreement, to Executive Session at the end of the agenda, following Non-Agenda Items. Moved by Mr. Davis. Seconded by Mr. Scott. Motion passed unanimously.

4. APPROVAL/CORRECTION OF MINUTES  
A. **Regular Council Meeting; Tuesday, October 21, 2025** -Mr. Taylor made a motion to approve the Regular City Council Meeting minutes of Tuesday, October 21, 2025. Mr. McRae seconded the motion. The motion passed.
5. PUBLIC REQUESTS/ PRESENTATION OF PETITIONS  
A. **Employees Anniversaries (November & December)**- Mrs. Angela Ward announced our Employee Anniversaries for November and December: Chief Sammy Crosland (Police), 27 years, Thomas Dew (Fire), 15 years, Danny Locklear (Wastewater), 14 years, Teddy Stubbs (Fire), 12 years, Jacob Stott (Water & Sewer) 10 years, Sierra Jones, (Utility Billing), 7 years, Richard Hayes, (Fire) 5 years, Frankie Cummins (Water & Sewer), 4 years, Caleb Herman, (Fire) 4 years, and David Hoover ( Wastewater), 4 year, William Callahan, (Police) 1year, Tyler Gulleddge (Utility Billing) 1 year, Harold Kessler (Police) 1 year, QuShika Lucas (Administration), 13 years; Frederica Miller

(Police), 14 years, Thomas Cato (Fire), 4 years; Brittany Jones (Business Development), 2 years; Garrett Sweat (Fire), 1 year and Whitney English (Police), 1 year

B. **New Hires & Promotions-** Daniel Blue (Police)

C. **Dash & Bash Presentation of Proceeds to Tri-County Mental Health-** Ms. Brittany Jones presented a portion of the proceeds from last month's Downtown Dash. Lester and Sernetta Quick from the County Nutrition Program, who have been instrumental in organizing our Dashing Bash for the past two years and the Saturday morning meetups, which had our largest team this year. As we planned for this year's event, we wanted to create something bigger than just a race. Inspired by the theme "Mind Over Miles," we decided to support mental health initiatives, pledging a portion of our proceeds to the Tri-County Community Mental Health Center. She was proud to say that our community rallied behind this cause, and we doubled our participation in the race this year. Every step and every dollar raised reflects the commitment of citizens wanting to uplift their neighbors. We were honored to have Ms. Teresa Meekins Land, the Executive Director of the Tri-County Community Mental Health Center, and Amy from the Marlboro County Clinic in attendance. A check for \$1,500 was presented to the Tri-County Community Mental Health Center to support critical mental health services in our community. On behalf of the City of Bennettsville, Mayor & City Council, and Employees, Miss. Jones thanked them for their vital work that changes lives every day.

Mayor Abraham recognized Councilman Allen Taylor's contributions by presenting him with an award on behalf of the city. This award acknowledges Councilman Taylor's eight years of dedicated service on the city council. His commitment to District Three has significantly contributed to the success and improvement of the City of Bennettsville.

6. PUBLIC COMMENTS (Agenda Items Only)

**Pamela Best-** She left during the comment period because her questions would not be answered during the meeting.

7. SECOND READING AND PASSAGE IN FULL OF ORDINANCES

A. **Business License Updates 2026-2028-** 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:** A motion to approve an ordinance adopting the latest standardized Business License Class Schedule. Moved by Mr. Taylor. Seconded by Mrs. Weaver. Motion passed unanimously.

B. **Annexation of Dollar General (039-12-04-003 & 001)-**The City Administration wishes to annex the Dollar General into 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. Taylor. Seconded by Mr. Davis. Motion passed unanimously.

8. FIRST READING AND ADVERTISEMENT OF ORDINANCES  
No Business

9. PASSAGE OF RESOLUTIONS  
No Business

10. GENERAL BUSINESS DISPENSED BY MOTION

- A. **2026 Holiday Schedule-** A motion to approve the Holiday Schedule for 2026 as presented by Mr. Taylor. Mr. McRae seconded. The motion passed unanimously.
- B. **Street Name Change Proposal –** A motion was made by Mr. McRae to table Item 10B until further review. Seconded by Ms. Weaver. Motion passed unanimously.
- C. **Disaster Relief Program Agreement (Revised)-** \*Executive Session\*
- D. **Real Estate Transaction (Executive Session)**

11. PUBLIC COMMENTS (Non-Agenda Items Only)

**Dr. Carolyn A. Prince-** Concerned about the usage of Facebook to store meetings, especially since she heard previous meetings have been erased and cannot be recovered. She feels as if Facebook isn't as reliable as YouTube. The city's webpage is outdated and lacks crucial information. Additionally, she's concerned about the location of the new Dollar General store and the potential traffic issues as people head to the beach.

**Pamela Best-** She had exited the meeting.

12. BOARDS AND COMMISSIONS (**Denise Miller**)

- 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 that the State Housing Authority grant has raised some questions, which Mr. Simon and his staff have addressed. They are back on track after some concerns and misunderstandings. He said Mr. Simon provided information, and we're hopeful for reimbursement for our reported projects with the authority. He also discussed the budget and ARPA funds for this year and next year. They aim to stay on budget; unexpected expenses may still arise. Next, he stated that Mr. Simon provided a great spreadsheet, and he looks forward to updates on the ARPA funds. He appreciates the staff, Simon, and the group for getting everything back on track with the SC State Housing Authority. The meeting was productive, and they received a positive follow-up report after their meeting last Wednesday. They discussed the importance of staying on budget over the next six months, and Mr. Sparkman and his team are effectively keeping

council updated. He ended by stating finances are in good shape, but they need to work hard to maintain our budget.

Mr. Scott mentioned he wanted to share some good news about the budget discussion from the last Finance meeting. He was truly amazed by the amount of money this team has saved the city. It was reported that the Finance Department has saved the city \$1.5 million over the past two years. This achievement is significant and should not be overlooked as we move into the new year. At the beginning of this year, many challenges related to finances were thrown at the Council and Administration. To overcome that hurdle by the year's end is commendable and deserves recognition, and I believe this should be highlighted, Mr. Scott said. He also ended by saying, "Every time we initiate a project, we either maintain it or improve upon it, and I can confidently say that we have maintained our efforts over these past two years, achieving significant savings of \$1.5 million."

- B. **Public Services Committee (Chairperson Weaver)**-She mentioned that they haven't had a meeting yet, but they hope to touch base next week.
- C. **Public Safety Committee (Chairperson Taylor)**- No report at this time.

#### 14. REPORTS AND INFORMATION PRESENTATION

- A. **Finance Report**-Mr. Sparkman provided the finance report, noting the importance of committee meetings in providing an overview of the city's financial status.
- B. **Grants Report**-Miss. L. Jones has been focusing on the DAP program and digitizing files for South Carolina Housing. Additionally, she has been working on a grant application for hazard mitigation. A pre-application has been submitted, and we are finalizing our submission. She also submitted a grant application to the U.S. Department of Justice and is in the process of submitting four applications to the Department of Parks, Recreation, and Tourism for projects related to parks and trails in our community. Furthermore, she's applying for grants from the Department of Energy related to energy efficiency, and also working on a Brownfields Grant from the EPA.
- C. **Upcoming Events**- Miss. Graves gave an update about Bennettsville and Company, our new local store featuring small business owners and tourism merchandise. We're located at 103 Broad Street. The ribbon-cutting ceremony will be on Tuesday at 12 PM. We currently have 16 vendors. Come check us out for a wide variety of holiday gift options. Also, our annual Christmas Tree Lighting will be on Tuesday, December 9, from 5:30 PM to 7:30 PM at City Hall, where we'll have pictures with Santa, hot apple cider, and Christmas carols. Finally, join us for the Christmas parade on Saturday, December 13, at 11 AM. We hope to see you there!

#### 15. COMMUNICATION BETWEEN CITY COUNCIL AND CITY ADMINISTRATOR

- A. **Administrator's Report**- Mr. Simon provided an Administrator's Report, highlighting the ARPA funds' allocation and ongoing projects. He took a moment to acknowledge and thank his incredible team for the outstanding job they are doing. He truly appreciates all their hard work and dedication. He also mentioned the Bennettsville & Co. Store on Broad Street. The goal is to revitalize downtown,

and he believes it's important to support small local businesses in this effort. He's excited about this project and confident that it will do a great job. The administrative report highlighted the ARPA funds' allocation and ongoing projects.

Next, in response to Mr. Taylor's request, Mr. Simon updated the public with information about our ongoing projects in Bennettsville, regarding the ARPA Funds process, a \$1.9 million check was deposited into the city's utility fund on October 22, 2021, and a second identical check on October 13, 2022, into a fund labeled "Cash and Cash Equivalent." We have identified projects that have been completed and those still pending. The list includes all completed projects, with highlighted yellow entries for those in progress or pending, along with their start dates to ensure federal compliance. A separate sheet detailing purchase orders (POs) for all expenditures related to completed projects, which will be submitted to the federal government. We have bank records confirming the funds received and project records showing how the money was spent. The budget for ARPA funds aligns precisely with the total amount received: \$3,848,333.82.

- B. **Animal Control (Update)**- Mr. Simon gave a brief update on animal control. A meeting is scheduled with Mrs. Hyduke for tomorrow. We have an ongoing issue with our animal population that requires attention. Recently, a joint meeting was held with Marlboro County Government, Town of Clio, and Town of McColl, which Administrator Clyburn attended. They discussed their partnership with the Humane Society and the need to update outdated ordinances to ensure alignment county-wide. Also, agreed on the importance of better enforcement of animal control laws, but effective laws need to be in place first. They will continue to communicate with Administrator Clyburn and share updates. Councilwoman Weaver, Councilman Scott, and Mayor Abraham were also present at the meeting.

16. NON-AGENDA ITEMS FROM COUNCIL

**Mr. Jennings**- Wanted to know where the council stands on the evaluation with the Administrator and the upcoming contract renewal? This is all coming up in a very short period of time, and I haven't heard anything about it. It's our first priority, and we need to take care of it.

**Mr. McRae**- Thank you, everyone, for coming tonight. He addressed public comments concerning Facebook videos being deleted after 30 days. He thinks we should switch to YouTube for streaming. Live streaming is essential, and he urges us to take action on this.

**Ms. Weaver**-Ms. Weaver raises concerns about the transparency of real estate transactions involving Mr. Simon and the city. She describes details of specific properties purchased by Mr. Simon on behalf of the city, including their prices and locations. Ms. Weaver questions the legality of these transactions, noting that council approval was not requested for each purchase. In addition, she emphasizes the importance of council involvement in real estate decisions, citing legal opinions and state laws. For the record, attached is Ms. Weaver's comment.

Administrator Simon responded to the allegation made during the meeting when Councilwoman Weaver alleged that the City Administrator illegally purchased three buildings without Council authorization. Following this allegation, City Council entered Executive Session for the purpose of receiving legal advice. During Executive Session, the City Attorney reviewed the actions taken related to the acquisition of the properties and advised Council that no illegal purchase occurred on behalf of the City Administrator.

The City Administrator maintains that Council authorization for the acquisition of the three buildings was provided during the adopted budget process, at which time, for the first time in the City's history, a specific budget account was established and approved by Council expressly for the purchase of these properties. The approved budget constituted Council's permission and direction to proceed.

The minutes reflect that the allegation of an illegal purchase was unsupported by the facts or the City Attorney's legal review, disregarded actions of the finance committee, did not include all of council's opinion, omitted several supporting steps towards these purchases, and gave the public the impression that an unknown and illegal purchase occurred. The City Administrator again maintains that he acted in compliance with Council-approved budgetary authority and established municipal procedures.

**Mr. Davis-** Thanked all the employees and committees for their ongoing work. He appreciates everyone who is working to clean up our downtown.

**Mr. Taylor-** Discussed revitalizing downtowns and how some significant progress has been made, but emphasizes the need for proper process and transparency. For the record, here is the comment made by Mr. Taylor:

“While I couldn't attend that meeting, I know promises were made, and there was general agreement. This was not an official meeting, so no notes were taken on commitments. Mr. Simon, your team's efforts to help the downtown area are appreciated and not in question. However, the process we follow raises concerns. This council must maintain its authority; for example, we need documentation and a vote for \$10,000 to research a property, while \$300,000 can be allocated without one.”

**Mr. Scott-** Took a moment to thank all our employees for their hard work throughout the year. He also expressed his gratitude to the council as they have navigated some challenging times together. He stated there have been instances where they didn't all agree, but he doesn't want this meeting to end on a negative note. Many goals have been accomplished, and great things have happened this year. If you reflect on our progress from the beginning of the year to now, it's clear we have made significant strides. While there were ideas that not everyone supported, he believes remarkable work has been made. He ended by saying, Just because he may not like something doesn't mean it's wrong; it simply reflects a difference of opinion. He wished everyone Happy Holidays.

**Mayor Abraham-** Expressed his appreciation to all employees who often go above and beyond. He thanked citizens for voicing their concerns, as it helps us improve. We aim to

grow our city and address issues, especially related to downtown. He spotlighted his appreciation for having a beautification worker, Mr. Mike, who has become a friendly presence for business owners. As Councilman McRae mentioned about staying current with technology, I want to ensure we reach all citizens, including those not on social media. Lastly, he stated that he would like to gather ideas from the Council on how we can connect with our citizens. He aims to keep the community informed and wishes everyone a Happy Holiday Season. He looks forward to working with all council members, including our new member, to make our community a better place we can all be proud of.

**\*Executive Session\***

**Entering 8:08 pm**

A motion to enter into an Executive Session for item 10 C, DAP Agreement, item 10 D, Real Estate Transaction, and to receive legal advice. Moved by Mr. Davis. Seconded by Mr. Scott. Motion carried.

**Opposed:** Mr. Allen, Ms. Weaver, and Mr. Jennings.

Concerns were raised about the broad nature of the motion. After clarification by the city Attorney the motion was amended to include "contractual agreement" as the specific reason for the Executive Session, which was then approved.

A motion to reconsider the motion that was just passed. An amended motion has been made to enter into Executive Session to discuss the contractual agreement regarding the DAP Assistance Agreement. Moved by Mr. Scott. Seconded by Mr. McRae. Motion carried.

**Opposed:** Mr. Jennings.

**\*Executive Session\***

**Existing 9:30 pm**

No actions or votes were taken. A motion to re-enter Regular Session. Moved by Mr. Taylor. Seconded by Mr. Davis. The motion passed unanimously.

A motion to approve the 1st amendment to the funding agreement between the City of Bennettsville and the SC Housing Related to Disaster Assistant Program. Moved by Mr. Taylor. Seconded by Mr. Scott. Motion passed unanimously.

17. ADJOURN  
Meeting adjourned at 9:31 pm.

**Ms. Wanda Weaver's comment during Non-Agenda Items at Regular City Council Meeting on November 18, 2025.**

“First, I want to thank all the citizens in District One for re-electing me. I'm going to try and hit that eight-year goal also. But while I was out talking to people, I ran into a lot of questions, and I don't mean any disrespect or anything with this, but I think it needs to be brought out for transparency purposes.

So, during the month of June 2025, council members, with the exception of Mr. Taylor, met with Mr. Simon to tour the buildings in our downtown area. Mr. Simon expressed an interest in purchasing the property. Council members told Mr. Simon that he could enter negotiations for the properties during the June 2025 meeting, a motion to go into executive session to discuss real estate transactions, moved by Mr. Davis, seconded by Mr. Taylor, and the motion passed. We went into Executive Session, came out, and no vote was made during regular meeting concerning the real estate transaction. So, I've had a lot of people asking me, Well, did y'all buy this? Did y'all buy that? And I'm like, No, not that I know of well, on August 19, Mr. Simon, on behalf of the city of Bennettsville, purchased property at 501 East Main Street for \$55,000, which was recorded in the courthouse on August 29, indeed. Book 840 pages 108 through 110 on the same date, Mr. Simon also purchased property at 109 South Marlboro Street for \$125,000, which was recorded in the courthouse. Indeed, book 840 pages, 105 through 107 again, on August 19, Mr. Simon, on behalf of the city of Bennettsville, entered into a mortgage agreement with the seller of 109 model Street in the amount of \$100,000 the mortgage states, whereas mortgage or in and by certain note bearing the date year of is justly indebted to mortgagee in the sum of \$100,000 together with interest as set forth in the note and payable according to the note and conditions thereof. Reference being here until had will more fully appear the note to have the maturity date no later than 10, 127 Then on September 25 Mr. Simon, on behalf of City of Bennettsville, will purchase property at 100 West Main Street, 425,000 Okay, during our meeting in September, we went into executive session to discuss real estate transactions, but we discussed property on Main Street, and Mr. McCray made a motion to offer up to \$20,000 on that property, and this was in regular session, and it was approved unanimously, another piece of property that was in that executive session, Mr. Taylor made a motion to allow Mr. Simon to move forward with research on this property for consideration during the June, July, August, and September 2025 council meeting, there was no vote taken by council to purchase 109 South Marlboro, 106 East Main Street, or 100 West Main Street.

Now, my understanding, Mr. Mason, is that you informed Mr. Simon that it was okay to go ahead and purchase the property without Council. Okay? Good. Because, according to the information from the Municipal Association, a city administrator cannot buy property without council approval. The City Council is responsible for adopting ordinances and authorizing contracts, which include buying property, while the city administrator may have some authority to act on behalf of the council, such as entering into a listing agreement for the sale of property. This authority is typically designated to the city administration through an ordinance of resolution the Council must approve final purchase agreement in any conditions attached to the property, then information from the Attorney General's Office states a city administrator generally cannot

purchase real estate without a council vote, because municipal authority over property is statutorily granted to the council, and any powers held by the administrator are delegated by the council. South Carolina's recall law requires a City Council to act via ordinance for the disposition of real property, and the city administrator's role is to assist the council, not to act independently or on major decisions like real estate purchases. So, with that being said, I hope that answers all the questions that my people have asked me, because when I go to Walmart and they say, well, y'all bought this. No, not that I know of. So bottom line is good intentions, but council should have voted on each piece of property in a regular meeting, and we didn't say Now, where do we go from there?"