



**REGULAR CITY COUNCIL MEETING
Tuesday, August 18, 2026; 6:30 P.M.
Bennettsville Public Safety Complex**

Minutes

1. CALL TO ORDER Mayor Pro Tempore Jennings
2. INVOCATION AND PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE Mayor Pro Tempore Jennings
3. ROLL CALL
All council members were in attendance with the exception of Mayor Abraham.
4. APPROVAL/CORRECTION OF MINUTES
 - A. **Regular Council Meeting; Tuesday, July 21, 2026** -Mr. Scott moved that we accept the meeting minutes for the Regular Council Meeting for Tuesday, July 18, 2026. Seconded by Mr. McRae. Motion passed unanimously.
5. PUBLIC REQUESTS/ PRESENTATION OF PETITIONS
 - A. **Employees Anniversaries-** Devonte Genwright (Public Works) 1 year; Jahara Graves (Tourism Parks and Recreation) 5 years; Tammy King (Human Resources) 29 years; Jerusha McArthur (Tourism Parks and Recreation) 7 years; Benny Miles (Administration) 1 year; Donald Morgan (Water Treatment Plant) 5 years; O'Tuel (Purchasing) 14 years; Joshua Rivers (Public Utilities Administration) 1 year; Samuel Sparkman (Finance) 2 years; Angela Ward (Administration) 26 years.
 - B. **New Hires-** Willie Spears (Public Works)
Promotions- Hayden Graham, Sergeant (Police)
6. PUBLIC COMMENTS (Agenda Items Only)
Rocky, Brown- Addressed Council regarding interpersonal respect and administrative conduct during meetings.
7. SECOND READING AND PASSAGE IN FULL OF ORDINANCES
 - A. **Annexation – Wallace Road Tract (Ordinance #26-06-001)**
The purpose of annexation is to promote the orderly growth and development of the municipality by extending city boundaries to areas that can be efficiently served by municipal utilities, infrastructure, and public services. Annexation helps ensure

consistent land-use planning, economic development opportunities, and the equitable provision of services for residents and businesses within the community.

Approving Action: Mr. Jennings stated, “A motion to send it back to the Planning Commission, hopefully with a quorum, hopefully at 6 o'clock, so we can really understand that it's an eight-acre tract. It's important to what happens in the city of Bennettsville, Commercial area, Residential area, and I really like to hear their recommendation and see their study on the zone before that line. That's my motion.” Seconded by Mr. McRae. Motion passed unanimously.

8. FIRST READING AND ADVERTISEMENT OF ORDINANCES

A. **Administrator Duties (Ordinance #26-07-005)-**

The City Council wishes to formally establish duties for the City Administrator.

Approving Action: A motion to approve Ordinance #26-07-005 for First Reading, the establishment of the Administrator’s duties. Moved by Mr. McRae. Seconded by Mr. Scott. Motion passed.

In favor: Ms. Weaver, Mrs. Harpe, Mr. Jennings, Mr. McRae, and Mr. Scott.

Opposed: Mr. Davis

B. **Equipment Purchase Agreement (Ordinance #26-08-001)**

The City Council wishes to purchase large equipment to sustain services for the City of Bennettsville. The set premium was approved during the budget process, which was set not to exceed an annual payment of \$200K.

Approving Action: A motion to approve Ordinance #26-08-001, an ordinance for the purchase of large equipment to sustain services. Moved by Mr. Davis. Seconded by Mr. Scott. Motion passed.

In favor: Ms. Weaver, Mr. Davis, Mrs. Harpe, Mr. Jennings, and Mr. Scott.

Opposed: Mr. McRae

9. PASSAGE OF RESOLUTIONS

No Business

10. GENERAL BUSINESS DISPENSED BY MOTION

A. **Meeting Format Change**

Councilman Scott wishes to modify the format of the meeting to combine the public comments section, creating “one” public comments section where citizens can speak on agenda items or non-agenda items.

Approving Action: A motion to approve the modification of the meeting format to combine the public comments sections creating “one” public comments section where citizens can speak on agenda-related and non-agenda-related items. This section will follow Section #5. Moved by Ms. Weaver. Seconded by Mr. Scott. Motion passed.

In favor: Ms. Weaver, Mr. Davis, Mr. Jennings, Mr. McRae, and Mr. Scott

Opposed: Mrs. Harpe

B. **Appointment to Housing Authority Board (Fred Thomas)**

Approving Action: A motion to approve the appointment of Mr. Fred Thomas to the Housing Authority Board of Directors. Moved by Mr. McRae. Seconded by Mr. Davis. Motion passed unanimously.

C. **Appointment to Housing Authority Board (Debbie Stewart)**

Approving Action: A motion to approve the appointment of Debbie Stewart to the Housing Authority Board of Directors. Moved by Mr. McRae. Seconded by Mrs. Harpe. Motion passed unanimously.

D. **Fire/Police Bonus Incentive & Plan Moving Forward**

Discussion Only

E. **Planning Commission Recommendation: Rename Lawson Street to Mary Dease Lane**

The Planning Commission recommended renaming Lawson Street to Mary D's Lane based on a successful petition process involving residents of an eight-acre tract area. Council confirmed that five out of nine residents signed the required petition to meet criteria standards. After reviewing, a possession plan wasn't required for immediate approval but was noted as available if needed locally/later in the context of presentation details provided.

Approving Action: A motion was made by Mr. Scott to officially approve renaming Lawson Street to Mary Dease Lane. Seconded by Mr. McRae. Motion passed unanimously.

11. PUBLIC COMMENTS (Non-Agenda Items Only)

Jermaine Purvis- Spoke about the recent groundbreaking ceremony at the McLeod Street Basketball Court. He was grateful for the decision to improve the courts, as it has been a vital space for young people to socialize and grow. For over 30 years. He commends the City for its efforts to enhance this park. He feels this park has a rich history, with local legends like the late Cozell McQueen, an NBA player who exemplified the talent nurtured here. He truly believes that enhancing this court will benefit our community and continue to unearth hidden potential. He ended by saying, "I love this city and see it as a gold mine; let's keep digging for the treasures within it."

Dr. Carolyn Prince- On behalf of the nonprofit that she started in 2015 to provide services, programs, and events for children and families in this community that didn't have certain things. Dr. Prince donated \$500 to Elder Purvis this year, and we'll make some annual donations to lighten his pocket. She thanked him for the service and what it does to help the young people in our community.

Pamela Best- Raised concerns regarding animal control effectiveness and population management for local cats and dogs.

Rocky, Brown- Provided documentation regarding potential negligence by contractors during infrastructure projects, specifically citing issues with power, water, and data lines.

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)-The Finance Committee is pleased with how the budget is being managed, especially regarding the support from Fire and Police Personnel, the Council, and the Mayor. They discussed Councilmember McRae's request for more detailed and frequent budget reports. It's crucial for us to stay informed about budgetary transfers. However, we aren't involved in day-to-day operations; he trusts our Administrator and Finance Team to keep us updated. He emphasized the need for clear communication about fund transfers, which often come from Department Heads. It's essential we understand these changes, especially since they occur regularly. They're committed to moving forward without cutting services and remain optimistic about future budgeting efforts. He's asking council if we can enhance the reporting from the Finance Team to better understand these transfers.
 - Fire/Police Pay Increase
 - Budgetary Transfers
- B. **Public Services Committee** (Chairperson Harpe)- Addressed some issues that were raised during their last meeting regarding personnel matters across the various departments under the Public Service Committee. She felt they had a productive discussion, but they did not reach a consensus on several points. Nonetheless, she believes the issues are important, and they will continue to work on them moving forward.
- C. **Public Safety Committee** (Chairperson McRae)- The committee has not met.

14. REPORTS AND INFORMATION PRESENTATION

- A. **Finance Report-** Mr. Sparkman stated that we have a positive finance report. Our revenues are above current projections by almost 5.5%. However, our expenditures have exceeded projections by less than 2%, specifically 1.7%.
- B. **Grants Report-**Miss. Jones updated some concerns about ongoing roadwork. We expect to complete these projects by the end of September. She asked Council to please inform their constituents that seven different crews are currently working on various infrastructure projects around town. As we approach the fall grant application season, we're focusing on strengthening relationships with organizations to bring more resources to Bennettsville. One of our key funding requests is for \$2.6 million for generators at the water treatment plant. We've also submitted a \$1.1 million application to support our Police Department through FEMA. Additionally, we submitted a \$60,000 request to DNR for Flood Management Assistance and are working with the Department of Environmental Services on a half-million-dollar application for water testing related to emerging contaminants. We're reaching out to major funders like the New Jersey Institute of Technology and the South Carolina Rural Water Association to help rebuild the surface water intake dam and improve our infrastructure.
- C. **Upcoming Events-** No Report

15. COMMUNICATION BETWEEN CITY COUNCIL AND CITY ADMINISTRATOR

- A. **Administrator's Monthly Report**-Mr. Simon stated, "Now, regarding the construction practices, and we know our community is. I know they think that we're overseeing a project regarding construction practices, but we're not. We signed an agreement with Hanna Engineering. At least all of you signed an agreement just before I was hired from Hanna Engineering to do your project management and project oversight for all of your skip projects, so we do speak with them on a daily basis. But contractually, we'll get out there, and we'll respond if there's issues. You know, community members may have complaints, but we're not the ones that's inspecting the project and providing oversight. Just wanted to be clear on that. One other update. Also, regarding the museum, I think I'm not sure if Miss. Jones answered the question, but bad wiring was the problem with the museum area, and just so you for our public, we have other areas of bad wiring in our downtown area that we're going to have to address. This is a situation where those wires and other infrastructure have been in the ground for decades, and in a lot of cases, the installation did not follow industry practices, and so now we're just really getting to a point where a lot of this stuff is sort of kind of bubbling to the surface. I will say this: we are getting through these improvement projects. It doesn't mean we're having problems throughout the city. Just want to be crystal clear with our community. We're getting through these improvement projects that's funded by our skip grant. That is to make improvements to our water lines, sewer lines, and other infrastructure. Doesn't mean that we're actually all these things are just breaking down on us, and we're having to fix those things now; you're just following through with projects. One other thing I'll update you on too is, and this is just conversation, so I want to make sure I frame this in a way where it's not a commitment. But I did speak with the South Carolina Office of Resilience, Mr. Ben Duncan, the Executive Director, and we talked about Crooked Creek specifically. If you can recall, there was some money that was placed in the budget to do some cleanup for Crooked Creek. Well, just so you know, he personally had met that day and continues to meet with the South Carolina Department of Natural Resources and in efforts to do the project at one time, that's the effort. He clearly told me that there's still more funding that's needed to do that, but I just told him thank you because at least the effort is on the table where they're not forgetting Crooked Creek. They're just concentrating on fixing the dam and then you know Crooked Creek was not in their scope of work. That has changed, so we certainly appreciate that agency for staying on top of that. That is not a commitment that could change. I'm just simply giving you an update on the conversation that we have, and that's really all we have for the administrator's report and the project updates."
- B. **SCIIP Updates** (Project Locations)-Information was given by Miss Jones during Item 14-B.

16. NON-AGENDA ITEMS FROM COUNCIL

Mr. Scott- Thanked all employees for their dedication, especially those who have been with us for over 20 years. It's rare to find such commitment these days. However, something happened recently that concerns me. There was a comment made about animal control that suggested our employees don't care about their jobs, based on the sight of a parked truck. This is unfair and hurtful. Our Animal Officer, who was recently buried, showed incredible dedication by coming to work when he was sick. Words matter, and we must be mindful of how we speak about our dedicated staff. Many employees work hard for the city, and they deserve our respect.

Mr. McRae- He inquired about Jennings and King Street and some repairs to fill in holes in the street. Also, we've had a lot of power outages lately—almost every week. I appreciate the "Text My Gov" service, which has been helpful in keeping everyone informed. He expressed his disappointment that this year's budget did not allocate funds for the Gospel in the Park and/or the Trunk or Treat Event. He hopes that in the next few weeks, some funding will be found somewhere to ensure that both of these initiatives can take place.

Ms. Weaver-No comment.

Mr. Davis- Thanked the Administrator and staff. He mentioned how sometimes it takes a while for the government to get things done, but he heard your concerns and is committed to working together as we move forward. Next, he mentioned colleagues who have been with us for a few years. Our teamwork has been very strong. He hopes that in the upcoming years, we can continue to improve and do even better. He ended by sending his condolences to the family of Cozell McQueen, who resided in his district.

Mrs. Harpe-Stated some Council members have discussed creative ideas to keep community events going, including partnerships with other agencies and seeking sponsorships. She has been talking with various City and County entities about planning activities for Halloween. Additionally, she asked for a follow-up with Mr. Simon on the progress of the road paving projects in the Henrietta, Jordan, Livingston, and McKellar areas.

Mayor Pro Tempore Jennings- Stated those two events, he hopes they can include them in the budget. Next, he said, Miss. Graves is excellent at raising funds, and she'll be sending out some letters soon. He believes council can find support for those two events. "So, Mr. Simon, could you please follow up on that? Let's work on those two events and make sure we secure the necessary support."

17. PERSONNEL MATTER **(EXECUTIVE SESSION) **

Mayor Pro Tempore Jennings made a motion to go into Executive Session. Mr. Scott suggested that we postpone the Executive Session until the Mayor is able to attend. He read a lot of texts that everyone likes to be in these meetings so their voices can be heard. The meeting adjourned. The motion wasn't voted on.

18. ADJOURN

Meeting ended at 8:09 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.