



**REGULAR MEETING OF FLORENCE CITY COUNCIL
MONDAY, OCTOBER 13, 2025 – 1:00 P.M.
CITY CENTER – COUNCIL CHAMBERS
324 WEST EVANS STREET
FLORENCE, SOUTH CAROLINA**

MEMBERS PRESENT

Mayor Lethonia Barnes, Mayor Pro Tempore George Jebaily, Councilman Chavez T. McCall, Councilman Bryan A. Braddock, Councilwoman LaShonda NeSmith-Jackson, Councilman J. Lawrence Smith, II and Councilman Zach McKay

ALSO PRESENT

Mr. Scotty Davis, City Manager; Mr. Ronald Scott, City Attorney; Mr. Luke Carter, City Attorney; Mrs. Casey Moore, Municipal Clerk; Ms. Patrice Rankin, Assistant City Clerk; Mr. Clint Moore, Assistant City Manager of Development; Deputy Fire Chief Alex McGovern, Florence Fire Department; Chief Allen Heidler, Florence Police Department; Captain Stephen Starling, Florence Police Department; Mr. Michael Hemingway, Director of Utility Planning and Economic Development; Mr. Jerry Dudley, Director of Planning; Mr. Adam Swindler, Director of Public Works; Mrs. Jennifer Krawiec, Director of Human Resources; Mrs. Amanda Pope, Director of Marketing/Communications and Municipal Services and Mr. Joshua Whittington, Director of Utilities

MEDIA PRESENT

Deirdre Weaver-Currin with the Post and Courier and Sydney Ryan with WMBF News were present for the meeting.

Notices of this regular meeting of City Council were provided to the media and individuals requesting a copy of the agenda informing them of the date, location, and time of the meeting.

CALL TO ORDER

Mayor Barnes called the October 13, 2025 Regular meeting of Florence City Council to order at 1:01pm.

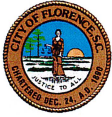
INVOCATION

Pastor Chris Handley gave the invocation for the meeting. The pledge of allegiance to the American Flag followed the invocation.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

Councilwoman NeSmith-Jackson made a motion to adopt the minutes of the September 8, 2025 Regular Meeting and Councilman McKay seconded the motion. The minutes were unanimously (6-0) adopted, with Councilman McCall having not yet arrived.

[Councilman McCall arrived at 1:08pm.]



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ORDINANCES IN POSITION

Bill No. 2025-38 - Second Reading

An Ordinance to amend the budget for Fiscal Year beginning July 1, 2025 and ending June 30, 2026.

Pro tem Jebailly made a motion to adopt Bill No. 2025-38 on first reading and Councilwoman NeSmith-Jackson seconded the motion.

Councilman McKay inquired about recent expenditures related to providing sanitation services to the City of Lake City. He questioned which budget funds were used and why the City was operating outside its jurisdiction. Mr. Davis explained that the City of Lake City requested assistance with commercial trash pickup, which had been delayed for several weeks. The City agreed to provide a one-time pickup at an estimated cost of \$4,000 for labor, equipment, and disposal. Two sanitation trucks were sent, and an invoice will be issued to the City of Lake City for reimbursement. Councilman McKay expressed concern regarding the City of Lake City's financial position and asked if payment was expected, and whether Florence County would be responsible if payment was not received. Mr. Davis clarified that Florence County is not liable for such debts and reaffirmed that the invoice would be sent directly to the City of Lake City. Councilman McKay sought further confirmation that the City would not expect Florence County to cover the cost if payment was not received. Mr. Davis confirmed that was correct. Councilman McKay then asked whether similar matters in the future should be presented to Council for approval. Mr. Davis noted that the assistance was provided on a Saturday to avoid disrupting City services and emphasized that this was a one-time response to an urgent situation.

Council voted unanimously (7-0) in favor of the motion. Bill No. 2025-38 was adopted.

INTRODUCTION OF ORDINANCES

Bill No. 2025-39 – First Reading

An Ordinance to amend Chapter 17 of the City Code of the City of Florence to add Article IV and provisions related to regulating improper use of public place and urban camping and other matters related thereto.

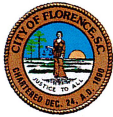
Mayor Barnes said this item may be discussed in Executive Session. Without objection, this item will be discussed in Executive Session.

Bill No. 2025-40 – First Reading

An Ordinance to annex and zone RG-3 the third phase of Smith's Field subdivision, identified as Florence County Tax Map Numbers 00100-01-384 to 00100-01-443 and 00100-01-093.

Councilwoman Nesmith-Jackson made a motion to pass Bill No. 2025-40 on first reading and Councilman Smith seconded the motion.

Mr. Jerry Dudley, Director of Planning, reported that the property is part of the third phase of the Smith's Field subdivision, located off Smith Drive. As each phase was developed, it was annexed into the city limits, and this final phase includes the annexation of a storm pond. This phase contains about 60 lots. Planning Commission unanimously voted (6-0) to recommend the annexation and zoning designation.



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Councilwoman NeSmith-Jackson inquired about the total number of lots in the subdivision. Mr. Dudley estimated that each phase includes around 60 lots, so the total number would be between 180 and 200 lots.

Council voted unanimously (7-0) in favor of the motion. Bill No. 2025-40 was passed on first reading.

Bill No. 2025-41 – First Reading

An Ordinance to annex and zone NC-6.2 the parcel located at 922 West Sumter Street, identified as Florence County Tax Map Number 90060-09-037.

Councilwoman NeSmith-Jackson made a motion to pass Bill No. 2025-41 on first reading and Councilman Smith seconded the motion.

Mr. Jerry Dudley, Director of Planning, reported that the property on Sumter Street is an infill lot currently vacant with a small rear accessory structure and will be annexed into the city as an existing nonconformity. The property owner intends to develop the site under city standards, with a recommended zoning designation of Neighborhood Conservation-6.2 (NC-6.2).

Pro tem Jebaily referenced nearby properties that remain outside the city limits and inquired whether city water and sewer services are available to those lots. Mr. Dudley confirmed that city water and sewer are available to the subject parcel but noted he would need to review the maps to verify service availability for the surrounding properties. However, he added that water and sewer service is generally available in this area. Pro tem Jebaily discussed the presence of various “doughnut holes” throughout the city and expressed interest in whether access to city water and sewer services could encourage property owners to annex into the city limits. Mr. Dudley responded that most properties within the city’s infill areas do have access to water and sewer services.

Council voted unanimously (7-0) in favor of the motion. Bill No. 2025-41 was passed on first reading.

INTRODUCTION OF RESOLUTIONS

Resolution No. 2025-30

A Resolution to adopt the City of Florence Sewer Collection System Master Plan.

Pro tem Jebaily made a motion to pass Resolution No. 2025-30 and Councilman McCall seconded the motion.

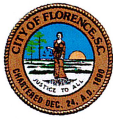
Mayor Barnes said Resolution No. 2025-30 was on the agenda last month. Although Council proceeded to vote on the Resolution, no formal motion or second was made; therefore, under parliamentary procedure, the Resolution did not pass.

Council voted unanimously (7-0) in favor of the motion. Resolution No. 2025-30 was passed.

Resolution No. 2025-34

A Resolution recognizing October as Domestic Violence Awareness Month.

Councilman McCall made a motion to pass Resolution No. 2025-34 and Councilwoman NeSmith-Jackson seconded the motion.



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Mayor Barnes presented the Resolution to Ellen Hamilton, Executive Director of Pee Dee Coalition. Ms. Hamilton thanked Council for the recognition and presented the City of Florence with framed pictures of the Pee Dee Coalition's various facilities.

Council voted unanimously (7-0) in favor of the motion. Resolution No. 2025-34 was passed.

Resolution No. 2025-35

A Resolution of Recognition for Reverend Dr. Ralph W. Canty, Sr., honoring his dedicated service as one of the longest-serving pastors in the Florence area.

Councilman McCall made a motion to pass Resolution No. 2025-35 and Councilwoman NeSmith-Jackson seconded the motion.

Mayor Barnes presented the Resolution to Rev. Dr. Ralph W. Canty, Sr. Rev. Dr. Canty thanked Council for the recognition.

Council voted unanimously (7-0) in favor of the motion. Resolution No. 2025-35 was passed.

Resolution No. 2025-36

A Resolution pledging to practice and promote civility in the City of Florence.

Councilman McKay made a motion to pass Resolution No. 2025-36 and Councilman McCall seconded the motion.

Mr. Scotty Davis, City Manager, said the City of Florence pledges to practice and promote civility within the governing body. The elected officials of the City Council enact this civility pledge to build a stronger and more prosperous community by advocating for civil engagement, respecting others and their viewpoints and finding solutions for the betterment of the City of Florence. This pledge ensures all communication, both spoken and written, to be open, honest and transparent as this is vital for cultivating trust and relationships. This pledge ensures mutual respect to achieve municipal goals, recognizing that patience, tolerance and civility are imperative to success. This pledge ensures opportunities for finding common ground and engaging in civil discussions to seek solutions while actively listening and thoughtfully participating. Mr. Davis noted that this Resolution will be signed by all members of Council.

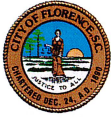
Council voted unanimously (7-0) in favor of the motion. Resolution No. 2025-36 was passed.

Resolution No. 2025-37

A Resolution certifying buildings as an abandoned building site pursuant to the South Carolina Abandoned Buildings Revitalization Act Section 12-67-100 of the South Carolina Code of Laws, as amended, regarding the property located at 262 West Cheves Street, Florence County Tax Map Number 90087-01-015.

Pro tem Jebaily made a motion to pass Resolution No. 2025-37 and Councilwoman NeSmith-Jackson seconded the motion.

Mr. Clint Moore, Assistant City Manager of Development, explained that when a developer is using abandoned building tax credits for redevelopment, one of the required steps is for the local municipality or government to pass a Resolution confirming that the building has been vacant for at least five years. Mr. Moore noted that this particular property has been vacant for several years.



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Council voted unanimously (7-0) in favor of the motion. Resolution No. 2025-37 was passed.

Resolution No. 2025-38

A Resolution to approve a Conditional Grant and Development Agreement located within the Downtown Redevelopment District for a development located at 262 West Cheves Street.

Mayor Barnes said this item may be discussed in Executive Session. Without objection, this item will be discussed in Executive Session.

Resolution No. 2025-39

A Resolution and Conditional Grant and Development Agreement to provide an incentive for the development of new housing within East Florence as part of the ongoing Neighborhood Redevelopment Project.

Mayor Barnes said this item may be discussed in Executive Session. Without objection, this item will be discussed in Executive Session.

Resolution No. 2025-40

A Resolution authorizing Staff and the City Attorney to utilize the eminent domain process to the extent necessary to acquire ownership of the property described on Exhibit “A” hereto for the public purpose of the expansion of the existing fueling facility.

Mayor Barnes said this item may be discussed in Executive Session. Without objection, this item will be discussed in Executive Session.

REPORT TO COUNCIL

Appointments to Boards and Commissions

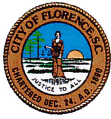
Mayor Barnes said this item may be discussed in Executive Session. Without objection, this item will be discussed in Executive Session.

Appointment to the PDRTA Board of Directors

Mayor Barnes made a motion to reappoint Pro tem Jebaily to the PDRTA Board of Directors and the motion carried unanimously. Pro tem Jebaily was reappointed to the PDRTA Board of Directors for a term to begin September 2025 and expire August 2028.

Appropriation of Accommodations Tax funds for Fiscal Year 2025/26.

Mr. Tim Norwood, Chairman of the Accommodations Tax Advisory Committee, presented on behalf of the Accommodations Tax Advisory Committee and provided the recommendation of the Committee for distribution of Accommodations Tax funds for FY 2025-26. The committee received proposals from 24 organizations, with funding requests totaling \$1.4 million. The committee was able to fund \$880,750 of the requests between 22 organizations, and is distributed among initiatives related to sports tourism, art, culture, convention and quality of life festivals. The appropriations report is attached to and made a part of the minutes.



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Pro tem Jebailly made a motion to accept the Accommodations Tax Advisory Committee's recommendation of the FY 2025-26 distribution of Accommodations Tax funds and Councilwoman NeSmith-Jackson seconded the motion.

Council voted unanimously (7-0) in favor of the motion. The motion passed.

CITY MANAGER'S REPORT

Mr. Scotty Davis, City Manager, recognized Mr. Allen Heidler, Police Chief, for 42 years of distinguished service as he retires from the Florence Police Department.

Sheriff TJ Joye, Florence County Sheriff's Office, and Mrs. Allison Carraway, widow of Sergeant Terrence Carraway both recognized Chief Heidler for his dedicated service and wished him the best in his retirement.

Chief Heidler thanked city staff, Council and everyone for the recognition and reflected on his career with the Florence Police Department.

Mr. Davis also recognized Councilman McCall, Councilman McKay and Councilman Smith for being named among the 2025 Best and Brightest 35 and Under by the Pee Dee Business Magazine. This recognition highlights young leaders across South Carolina who are making a meaningful impact early in their careers.

MAYORAL REPORT

Mayor Barnes acknowledged that the Pee Dee Ice Cats hosted their inaugural game on October 10th. She also recognized the event held on October 9th to honor Dr. Iola Jones, which was presented in partnership with Francis Marion University and the Housing Authority of Florence. Mayor Barnes noted that the Community Empowerment Walk, originally scheduled for October 11th, was canceled due to inclement weather. However, she commended the dedication of community members who still showed up despite the rain.

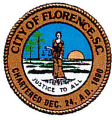
COMMITTEE REPORTS

Business Development Committee, Chaired by Pro tem Jebailly

Pro tem Jebailly reported that the committee received a presentation from Andrew and Nicole Agha regarding the site work at the location of the old Gamble Hotel, where the new Urban Square apartments will be developed. Several artifacts discovered during the work will be donated to the City and Florence County Museum, with some potentially displayed inside the new apartment building. The committee also received an update on Urban Square, noting that the contractor has turned on the lights at the adjacent warehouse building.

Community Development Committee, Chaired by Mayor Barnes

Mayor Barnes said that the rescheduled date for the Community Empowerment Walk is Saturday, November 8th at 11:00am.



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Finance, Audit and Budget Committee, Chaired by Councilman McCall

Councilman McCall reported that the committee received a presentation from the Accommodations Tax Advisory Committee on their recommendations for Fiscal Year 2025/26. The committee also received a presentation from First Tryon Advisors about the city's plans for the bonds it will receive between now and November 2025. Additionally, there was a discussion regarding the airport and its potential expansion.

EXECUTIVE SESSION

Mayor Barnes said Council will be entering into Executive Session to receive legal advice on the unauthorized camping ordinance, Bill No. 2025-39, for a discussion of an economic development project as referenced in Resolution No. 2025-38, for a discussion of an economic development project as referenced in Resolution No. 2025-39, to receive legal advice on the eminent domain process relation to Resolution No. 2025-40, for a discussion regarding appointments to city Boards and Commissions, to receive information on an economic development project for property located in a downtown overlay district, to receive legal advice regarding a potential lawsuit, to receive an update on an ongoing economic development project and for a personnel matter.

Councilman McKay made a motion to enter into Executive Session and Councilwoman NeSmith-Jackson seconded the motion. Council voted unanimously (7-0) to enter into Executive Session at 2:06pm.

Pro tem Jebaily made a motion to resume open session and Councilwoman NeSmith-Jackson seconded the motion. The motion carried. Council resumed open session at 3:43pm and took action on the following items:

Bill No. 2025-39 – First Reading

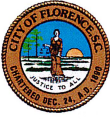
An Ordinance to amend Chapter 17 of the City Code of the City of Florence to add Article IV and provisions related to regulating improper use of public place and urban camping and other matters related thereto.

Pro tem Jebaily made a motion to pass Bill No. 2025-39 on first reading and Councilman McKay seconded the motion.

Mr. Clint Moore, Assistant City Manager of Development, informed Council that similar ordinances have been enacted in other municipalities, including Columbia and North Myrtle Beach. He explained that the proposed ordinance would allow the City of Florence to manage the overuse or obstruction of public rights-of-way and public spaces. In cases where items or personal belongings are found to be encumbering these areas, the City would be able to connect individuals with appropriate services, while also ensuring that such spaces remain accessible for general public use. The ordinance will apply to all public rights-of-way, downtown plazas, and city parks.

Councilman Braddock inquired whether the ordinance would apply to all public spaces. Mr. Moore confirmed that it would.

Pro tem Jebaily made a motion to amend the motion to provide that the City Manager shall meet with No One Unsheltered and that the City Manager conduct a study that shall address education, service needs and enforcement matters as it pertains to the homeless population, along with the inclusion of homeless court as an option to address potential infractions under the ordinance and further move that following



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this review the ordinance will then be placed on the December 8th Council meeting agenda for consideration of second reading and Councilman Braddock seconded the motion.

The motion to amend carried unanimously (7-0).

Council voted unanimously (7-0) in favor of the motion, as amended. Bill No. 2025-39 was passed on first reading, as amended.

Resolution No. 2025-38

A Resolution to approve a Conditional Grant and Development Agreement located within the Downtown Redevelopment District for a development located at 262 West Cheves Street.

Pro tem Jebailly made a motion to pass Resolution No. 2025-38 and Councilwoman NeSmith-Jackson seconded the motion.

Council voted unanimously (7-0) in favor of the motion. Resolution No. 2025-38 was passed.

Resolution No. 2025-39

A Resolution and Conditional Grant and Development Agreement to provide an incentive for the development of new housing within East Florence as part of the ongoing Neighborhood Redevelopment Project.

Councilman Smith made a motion to pass Resolution No. 2025-39 and Councilwoman NeSmith-Jackson seconded the motion.

Council voted unanimously (7-0) in favor of the motion. Resolution No. 2025-39 was passed.

Resolution No. 2025-40

A Resolution authorizing Staff and the City Attorney to utilize the eminent domain process to the extent necessary to acquire ownership of the property described on Exhibit “A” hereto for the public purpose of the expansion of the existing fueling facility.

Councilwoman NeSmith-Jackson made a motion to pass Resolution No. 2025-40 and Councilman McKay seconded the motion.

Mayor Barnes inquired whether the property could only be used to expand the fueling facility or if it could also be used for greenspace. She pointed out that having fueling pumps visible from the road might not be aesthetically pleasing. She then asked if this issue needed to be addressed before approving the Resolution or if it could be handled afterward. Mr. Ron Scott, City Attorney, clarified that Council could certainly amend the language to allow for fueling facilities or other related components. Mayor Barnes reiterated her concern about the visibility of fuel pumps from the road. Mr. Scotty Davis, City Manager, responded that while there are buffer requirements for the property, any use of the land through eminent domain must also serve a public purpose.

Council voted unanimously (7-0) in favor of the motion. Resolution No. 2025-40 was passed.

Appointments to Boards and Commissions

Mr. Davis presented the packet of appointments to Boards and Commissions to Council.



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Accommodations Tax Advisory Committee

Pro tem Jebaily deferred his nomination to the Board.

Councilman McKay made a motion to appoint Jennifer Hunt to the Accommodations Tax Advisory Committee and the motion carried unanimously. Jennifer Hunt was appointed to the Accommodations Tax Advisory Committee for a term to begin immediately and expire on June 30, 2028.

Design Review Board

Councilman McCall deferred his nomination to the Board.

Construction and Maintenance Board of Adjustments and Appeals

Mayor Barnes deferred remaining nominations to the Board.

Parks and Beautification Commission

Councilman McKay made a motion to appoint Ross McMillan to the Parks and Beautification Commission and the motion carried unanimously. Ross McMillan was appointed to the Parks and Beautification Commission for a term to begin immediately and expire on June 30, 2030.

Resilience and Sustainability Advisory Committee

Councilman Smith deferred his nomination to the Board.

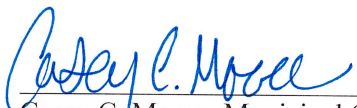
Public Safety Citizen's Review Board

Councilman McKay deferred his nomination to the Board.

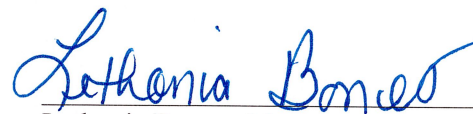
ADJOURN

Without objection, the October 13, 2025 Regular meeting of City Council was adjourned at 3:50pm.

Dated this 10th day of November 2025.



Casey C. Moore, Municipal Clerk



Lethonia Barnes, Mayor

**CITY OF FLORENCE, SC
ACCOMMODATIONS TAX REQUESTS, RECOMMENDATIONS AND APPROPRIATIONS REPORT
FISCAL YEAR 2025-26**

ORGANIZATION	Appropriated 2024-2025	Requested 2025-2026	Committee Recommended ¹	Appropriated 2025-2026
A. 30% Funds for Tourism Promotion				
1. Florence Convention & Visitors Bureau	<u>\$355,000</u>	<u>\$406,500</u>	<u>\$406,500</u>	
B. 65% Funds				
1. Florence Regional Arts Alliance & Pee Dee Arts	\$5,300	\$14,000	\$3,750	
2. The Masterworks Choir, Inc.	\$1,400	\$2,500	\$700	
3. Florence Little Theatre	\$7,400	\$12,500	\$5,250	
4. Florence Symphony Orchestra	\$3,660	\$8,000	\$2,200	
5. Arts International Festival	\$11,200	\$25,000	\$6,450	
6. Kickin' Chicken Wing and Chili Cookoff	\$3,960	\$10,000	\$3,550	
7. Florence Museum	\$38,000	\$80,000	\$31,250	
8. Carolina Classic Basketball Tournament - Boys & Girls Clut	\$12,400	\$25,000	\$8,400	
9. Freedom Florence, FTC, Soccer Complex & Gym	\$137,000	\$175,000	\$153,350	
10. Florence Convention & Visitors Bureau	\$250,600	\$400,000	\$255,300	
11. Florence Tennis Association	\$22,200	\$23,000	\$20,950	
12. South Carolina Pecan Festival	\$41,000	\$75,000	\$44,900	
13. Florence Center	\$144,000	\$175,000	\$152,350	
14. Florence International Basketball Tournament	\$14,200	\$30,000	\$8,050	
15. Florence Area Sports Council	\$24,000	\$35,000	\$29,700	
16. Pee Dee Tourism Commission	\$11,600	\$0	\$0	
17. Hwy 52 Frontage Road Beautification	\$20,000	\$67,000	\$0	
18. Wilson High Alumni Assn Homecoming Event	\$59,600	\$100,000	\$76,200	
19. Eastern South Carolina Mustang Club	\$1,580	\$2,000	\$0	
20. Florence County Parks & Recreation	\$12,800	\$25,000	\$20,950	
21. Nickelson Media	\$8,100	\$20,000	\$4,250	
22. South Carolina Ballet	\$0	\$10,000	\$3,250	
23. Florence Wine & Food Festival	\$0	\$75,000	\$46,500	
24. Florence Athletic Hall of Fame	\$0	\$10,000	\$3,450	
Total - 65% Funds	<u>\$830,000</u>	<u>\$1,399,000</u>	<u>\$880,750</u>	<u>\$0</u>

Note 1: Including carryover funds from FY 2024-25, it is anticipated that the amount available for distribution to the requesting agencies of "65% funds" will be approximately \$880,750. The "30% funds" for tourism promotion is estimated to be approximately \$406,500.

Note 2: The "30% funds" appropriation to the Florence Convention & Visitors Bureau includes \$15,000 designated specifically to the Florence Center for tourism marketing and promotion expenses, and an additional \$9,000 for a Business Development Fund to help promote the Florence Center for educational, religious, and other conferences.