

**REGULAR MEETING OF FLORENCE CITY COUNCIL
MONDAY, DECEMBER 8, 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 Bryan A. Braddock, Councilwoman LaShonda NeSmith-Jackson, Councilman J. Lawrence Smith, II and Councilman Zach McKay

MEMBERS ABSENT

Councilman Chaquez T. McCall

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 Chief Alex McGovern, Florence Fire Department; Interim Police Chief Stephen Starling, Florence Police Department; Mr. Michael Hemingway, Director of Utility Planning and Economic Development; Mr. Jerry Dudley, Director of Planning; Mrs. Jennifer Krawiec, Director of Human Resources; Mrs. Victoria Nash, Director of Parks, Recreation, and Sports Tourism; Mr. Glenn Bodenheimer, Interim Finance Director and Mr. Joshua Whittington, Director of Utilities

MEDIA PRESENT

Eric Cooper with WBTW News 13 was 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

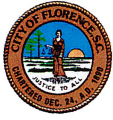
Mayor Barnes called the December 8, 2025 Regular meeting of Florence City Council to order at 1:02pm.

INVOCATION

Mayor Barnes 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 November 10, 2025 Regular Meeting and Councilman Smith seconded the motion. The minutes were unanimously (6-0) adopted.



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ADDENDUM TO THE AGENDA

Pro tem Jebaily made a motion to add Resolution No. 2025-49 to the December 8, 2025 regular meeting agenda and Councilwoman NeSmith-Jackson seconded the motion. This item was added to the agenda by unanimous vote (6-0).

Councilman Smith made a motion to add a Personnel Matter per SC State Code Section 30-4-70(a)(1) to Executive Session and Pro tem Jebaily seconded the motion. This item was added to the agenda by unanimous vote (6-0).

SERVICE RECOGNITIONS

Mr. Glenn Bodenheimer, Interim Finance Director, recognized Hazle Wilson for 20 years of service with the City of Florence.

GRANT PRESENTATION

Mrs. Mindy Taylor, Duke Energy, Director of Government and Community Relations, presented a \$10,000 grant to the City of Florence to assist with weatherization related projects through the City's Weatherization Program.

ORDINANCES IN POSITION

Bill No. 2025-39 – Second Reading

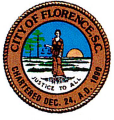
An Ordinance to amend Chapter 17 of the City Code of the City of Florence to add Article IV and provisions related to regulating improper use of public place and urban camping and other matters related thereto.

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

Mr. Tommy Campbell with No One Unsheltered (NOU) shared that he works part-time at the Salvation Army and has been assisting the homeless for approximately six years. He reported a 300% increase in homelessness over the past three years. Mr. Campbell spoke in support of Bill No. 2025-39, calling it a positive step forward, though he noted that there are still many challenges ahead. He emphasized that NOU supports the ordinance but urged that training and resources be provided to law enforcement officers when interacting with the homeless.

Councilman Braddock thanked Mr. Campbell and NOU for their dedicated work in supporting homelessness efforts in the community.

Pro tem Jebaily highlighted the community benefits of No One Unsheltered and asked Councilman Braddock to explain how it works. Councilman Braddock said NOU ensures that anyone experiencing homelessness has a place to sleep. Previously, multiple organizations worked independently, and limited communication made it difficult to know which shelters had available beds or to provide transportation. City staff encouraged these nonprofits to collaborate under one organization, with the City providing funding. When someone stays at a shelter through NOU, the City fully reimburses the cost. The City allocates \$75,000 annually to NOU, and any remaining funds at year's end are distributed as grants to participating organizations.



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Mr. Campbell confirmed that Florence has two shelters: House of Hope, which serves approximately 98% of the homeless population, and the Salvation Army Shelter, which operates as an emergency overflow facility. He said shelters are typically at full capacity, and when no beds are available, NOU places individuals in a hotel for one night. He noted that NOU consistently exhausts its funding each year and faces challenges managing resources quarter to quarter, particularly during summer and winter when extreme temperatures increase demand. He also reported an increase in families experiencing homelessness.

Councilman Braddock referenced discussions about potential funding for a community resource center, noting that further discussion is needed. Mr. Campbell expressed his support and willingness to assist.

Ms. Suzanne LaRochelle referenced the first reading of Bill No. 2025-39 and raised concerns about the amendment. She emphasized that criminalizing homelessness is a misuse of police resources, noting both local and nationwide crime concerns. She shared personal experiences assisting homeless individuals with basic needs and supported the idea of a day shelter or resource hub, citing successful models in other cities. Ms. LaRochelle said citations should not be issued when no shelter beds are available and advocated for law enforcement training, documented outreach, and a warning-first approach before issuing citations. She also stressed the importance of safeguarding homeless individuals' identification and medications if they are arrested, emphasizing the need for compassion, particularly for those with mental health issues.

Councilman Smith said Council wanted to ensure the ordinance aligns with the efforts of organizations serving the homeless. He asked Mr. Scotty Davis, City Manager whether city staff met with these organizations and if they had concerns. Mr. Davis confirmed that meetings were held and that the organizations did not oppose the amended ordinance, though they did request additional resources.

Councilman Braddock sought clarification on enforcement, asking whether an initial violation would result in a warning, with subsequent violations referred to Homeless Court, where individuals can complete a program in exchange for having charges dismissed. Mr. Davis confirmed this approach, emphasizing that arrest is a last resort, and that the City's intent is not to criminalize homelessness. He explained that the ordinance aims to prevent public spaces from being used for sleeping or housing while ensuring individuals receive warnings, information about available resources, and transportation to shelters when needed.

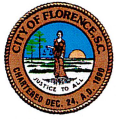
Council voted unanimously (6-0) in favor of the motion. Bill No. 2025-39 was adopted.

Bill No. 2025-42 – Second Reading

An Ordinance to annex and zone NC-6.3 South Irby Street, identified as Florence County Tax Map Number 00152-01-029.

Pro tem Jebailly made a motion to adopt Bill No. 2025-42 on second reading and Councilwoman NeSmith-Jackson seconded the motion.

Council voted unanimously (6-0) in favor of the motion. Bill No. 2025-42 was adopted.



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INTRODUCTION OF ORDINANCES

Bill No. 2025-43 – First Reading

An Ordinance to amend Section 14-21, Section 14-22, and Section 14-23 of the City of Florence municipal code regarding provisions related to regulating the curfew for juveniles and other matters related thereto.

Councilwoman NeSmith-Jackson made a motion to pass Bill No. 2025-43 on first reading and Councilman Smith seconded the motion.

Mr. Clint Moore, Assistant City Manager, explained that the original ordinance defined a juvenile as anyone 16 years of age or younger, with a curfew from midnight to 6:00am. The proposed amendment would raise the juvenile age limit to 17 years of age, aligning it with the state code definition. The curfew hours would also be revised to 10:00pm to 6:00am city-wide, with a stricter curfew of 9:00pm to 6:00am in the Downtown D1 Redevelopment District.

Councilman Smith inquired whether the difference in curfew times was already implemented in other municipalities, possibly Charleston. Mr. Moore confirmed that many municipalities have different curfew regulations for their downtown areas. This is typically due to the more urbanized, high-density nature of downtowns, where there are more businesses and greater potential for juvenile mischief compared to suburban areas. As a result, curfews tend to be tighter in these districts.

Councilman Smith further asked about exceptions to the curfew. Mr. Moore clarified that, like restrictions for new drivers, exceptions would apply for juveniles working during curfew hours.

Councilwoman NeSmith-Jackson raised a concern about whether there was an increase in violence between 10:00pm and midnight, and if the earlier start time was intended to address this. Mr. Moore affirmed that the goal was to reduce violence, explaining that many businesses close by 10:00pm, leaving only drinking establishments open. Since these venues are not allowed to admit anyone under 21, the curfew is designed to align with and support these existing restrictions.

Council voted unanimously (6-0) in favor of the motion. Bill No. 2025-43 was passed on first reading.

INTRODUCTION OF RESOLUTIONS

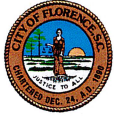
Resolution No. 2025-47

A Resolution of Recognition for Dr. John A. Keith, III in honor of his contributions to the revitalization and sustained growth of downtown Florence, South Carolina.

Councilwoman NeSmith-Jackson made a motion to pass Resolution No. 2025-47 and Pro tem Jebaily seconded the motion.

Mayor Barnes and Councilwoman NeSmith-Jackson presented the Resolution to Dr. John A. Keith, III. Dr. Keith thanked Council for the recognition. Pro tem Jebaily also thanked Dr. Keith for his contributions to downtown Florence.

Council voted unanimously (6-0) in favor of the motion. Resolution No. 2025-47 was passed.



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Resolution No. 2025-48

A Resolution of Recognition for Foster Care Crisis Awareness in the City of Florence.

Councilman Braddock made a motion to pass Resolution No. 2025-48 and Councilwoman Nesmith-Jackson seconded the motion.

Mayor Barnes presented the Resolution to Tyler Shackelford with South Carolina Youth Advocacy Program. Mr. Shackelford thanked Council for the recognition and spoke on the importance of foster care services.

Council voted unanimously (6-0) in favor of the motion. Resolution No. 2025-48 was passed.

Resolution No. 2025-49

A Resolution authorizing the City Manager to enter into a Facility Encroachment Agreement with CSX Transportation, Inc.

Councilman Smith made a motion to pass Resolution No. 2025-49 and Councilwoman NeSmith-Jackson seconded the motion.

Mr. Michael Hemingway, Director of Utility Planning and Economic Development, explained that this Resolution authorizes the City Manager to sign an agreement with CSX Transportation that will enable city staff to proceed with the Jeffries Creek Sanitary Sewer Project. This project will require construction within the CSX right-of-way along South Church Street to install a new 54-inch gravity sewer line.

Pro tem Jebaily asked Mr. Hemingway to clarify why the new gravity sewer line is necessary.

Mr. Hemingway explained that this is Phase I of a larger project to install a new sewer line along Jeffries Creek. The gravity sewer system will run from South Cashua Street to the Wastewater Treatment Plant. Phase II will extend the line along South Irby Street and Second Loop Road, with the addition of a new lift station. The overall goal is to improve the infrastructure originally designed to handle sewer flow along Jeffries Creek. The new system will take on the approximately 2.5 million gallons of new flow from the western side of the system that currently travels through Jeffries Creek, easing the load on the existing Jeffries Creek Interceptor.

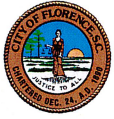
Pro tem Jebaily sought clarification on the total project cost, asking if it was around \$50 million. Mr. Hemingway confirmed, explaining that each phase is estimated at \$25 million. He added that the City has secured \$24 million in state funding to support Phase I.

Pro tem Jebaily raised concerns from the public about sanitary sewer overflows during stormwater events, asking if these issues were due to the high capacity of the current line running through Jeffries Creek. Mr. Hemingway confirmed this, explaining that the new sewer line along Second Loop Road would alleviate pressure on the existing line and allow for necessary upgrades and repairs, which would reduce leaks.

Pro tem Jebaily then inquired about the timeline for Phase I. Mr. Hemingway said that the project is tentatively scheduled for bidding in the first quarter of 2026, with a projected completion date in Fall 2028, though the timeline will be finalized once a contractor is secured.

Pro tem Jebaily concluded by commending city staff for their hard work and dedication to the project.

Council voted unanimously (6-0) in favor of the motion. Resolution No. 2025-49 was passed.



REPORT TO COUNCIL

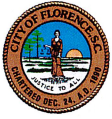
Steadman Group – Opioid Analysis and Recommendations

Mr. Glenn Bodenheimer, Interim Finance Director, reported that the City of Florence is expected to receive approximately \$4.5 million over the next 18 years from the \$360 million statewide opioid litigation settlements. To date, the City has completed two funding cycles. In the 2023 cycle, Council awarded \$582,860 to four organizations: Circle Park (\$55,860), Resurrection Restoration Center for the Homeless (\$105,000), Tenacious Grace (\$172,000), and House of Hope (\$250,000). In the 2024 cycle, Council awarded \$554,524 to five organizations: Potter House Recovery, Inc. (\$72,949), Tenacious Grace (\$73,220), Pee Dee Healthy Start (\$100,000), Circle Park (\$58,355), and House of Hope (\$250,000). Mr. Bodenheimer also noted that the South Carolina Opioid Recovery Fund allows political subdivisions to use \$25,000 of their allocation to develop a long-term community opioid remediation plan. The City issued a Request for Proposals and selected The Steadman Group to develop the City of Florence Community Action Plan. He then introduced Ms. Brianna Robles and Ms. Courtney Lange of The Steadman Group.

Ms. Brianna Robles and Ms. Courtney Lange presented the Opioid Settlement Community Action Plan to Council. Ms. Robles summarized the project, noting that it was informed by a gap analysis, focus groups, and community meetings. She outlined the three phases of the project: Phase I involved contracting with The Steadman Group to develop a community-informed, data-driven action plan for opioid settlement funds; Phase II focused on conducting a gap analysis to identify strengths and service gaps within Florence County; and Phase III resulted in the development of a data-informed Community Action Plan to support transparent, community-driven decision making in Florence. Ms. Robles said that the next step is implementation of the plan.

Ms. Robles also reviewed the inputs used to develop the plan, including qualitative data from community focus groups, independent interviews, and community action planning meetings, as well as quantitative data from publicly available sources and organizational data. Key findings included the need to expand prevention efforts, particularly in schools, limited treatment access for uninsured and underinsured individuals, fragmented resource navigation, strong but disconnected recovery supports, inconsistent naloxone access, and opportunities to improve governance of opioid funding. She concluded with recommendations to strengthen prevention and youth education, improve treatment access through better coordination and affordability supports, enhance recovery services through housing, peer support, and employment initiatives, integrate naloxone education and harm reduction into prevention strategies, and establish shared governance and communication structures to better coordinate opioid response efforts across the City and potentially Florence County.

Ms. Courtney Lange reviewed the Community Action Plan's three-strategy framework: Strategy I—Prevention, Community Awareness, and Harm Reduction; Strategy II—Treatment Access and Navigation; and Strategy III—Recovery Ecosystem. She noted that the strategies were developed through three two-hour strategic planning sessions. Strategy I aims to reduce opioid misuse, stigma, and overdose risk through youth education, community outreach, naloxone training, and harm reduction efforts. It carries the largest allocation at \$200,000 and prioritizes prevention and awareness campaigns, youth and family education, naloxone distribution, and community harm reduction education. Strategy II focuses on improving timely access to treatment and behavioral health care, particularly for uninsured and high-risk individuals. The \$140,000 allocation supports initiatives such as a care navigation program, a centralized resource directory, and potential County-led efforts including expanded withdrawal management services and a treatment affordability pool. Strategy III seeks to strengthen housing, peer support, and long-term recovery pathways. With a \$160,000 allocation, priorities include recovery housing, expanded peer



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support, and potential County-led initiatives such as a Recovery Provider Compact and a Recovery-Friendly Workplace Initiative. Ms. Lange noted that these allocations cover a five-year period and are based on the approximately \$560,000 currently available in the City's opioid settlement funds.

Ms. Lange also outlined the Implementation Roadmap, which includes establishing a Florence Opioid Response Council for governance and ensuring transparency through public updates, community engagement, and a public dashboard; and evaluating outcomes through shared indicators and annual reports. The implementation timeline spans 2026–2030 with a total budget of \$60,000. She added that the City may consider hiring an opioid response coordinator to oversee implementation, evaluation, and proper use of funds.

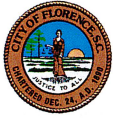
In closing, Ms. Lange summarized the proposed budget allocations: Strategy I—\$200,000 (36%), Strategy II—\$140,000 (25%), Strategy III—\$160,000 (29%), and Implementation—\$60,000 (11%). She also suggested exploring collaboration between the City of Florence and Florence County to better coordinate opioid response and recovery resources.

Councilman Braddock asked for clarification on how the approximately \$560,000 in opioid settlement funds would be distributed over the five-year period, expressing concern that dedicating funds to implementing the Community Action Plan could reduce support for organizations currently providing services. He emphasized the importance of allowing organizations to establish programs with the expectation that funding would taper as settlement revenues decline. Ms. Lange explained that funding decisions would be determined through the proposed governance model and noted that the \$60,000 implementation cost, primarily for a coordinator or facilitation support, would be spread over five years, or approximately \$12,000 annually. Councilman Braddock also inquired about detoxification solutions and best practices. Ms. Lange responded that The Steadman Group evaluated whether to expand the existing detox facility or develop a new one and concluded that expanding the current facility would be the most cost-effective and practical option for Florence, given the City's size and available funding.

Pro tem Jebaily thanked Ms. Robles and Ms. Lange for their presentation and referenced earlier discussions on homelessness and the new Leatherman Behavioral Health Center. He emphasized the importance of ensuring that these efforts work together cohesively and asked what steps would be needed to implement the plan. Ms. Robles stated that these issues are interconnected and align with the Community Action Plan, recommending the use of facilitators or a dedicated coordinator to lead the Opioid Abatement Council and bring stakeholders together. She also highlighted the positive impact of the Leatherman Behavioral Health Center. Pro tem Jebaily requested that the Opioid Community Action Plan be placed on the agenda for the January Council Budget Work Session for further discussion and direction.

Councilman Braddock asked whether the strategies outlined in the plan comply with opioid settlement funding requirements. Ms. Robles and Ms. Lange confirmed that all strategies are eligible and compliant, noting that the plan includes a detailed law enforcement co-response model to support deflection and de-escalation during crisis situations.

Councilman Braddock sought clarification on data indicating that overdose deaths in Florence are 40% higher than the state average. Ms. Robles attributed this in part to limited treatment and detox capacity. Ms. Lange added that the data was carefully reviewed and confirmed, noting that rural areas often face greater challenges due to limited resources and barriers to seeking help.



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Building Florence Together Annual Report

Ms. Michelle Morgan, Executive Director of Building Florence Together, presented the Building Florence Together Annual Report to Council, highlighting several key achievements. She shared that the organization successfully built two new homes this year and was awarded a \$500,000 line of credit to leverage its existing assets. Additionally, the City contributed 11 single family homes to the organization. Ms. Morgan pointed out that the initial \$400,000 investment from the City has grown to nearly \$4 million. She expressed her enthusiasm for the work the organization is doing, emphasizing that none of this would have been possible without the City's support. She also introduced various Board Members who were in attendance, and each board member took a moment to thank both Ms. Morgan and the City for their continued support. Finally, Ms. Morgan provided the audited financial statements to the Council, noting that the organization received a clean audit report.

Pro tem Jebaily and Mayor Barnes thanked Ms. Morgan and the Board for their hard work and dedicated service.

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.

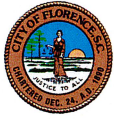
CITY MANAGER'S REPORT

Mr. Scotty Davis, City Manager, took the opportunity to highlight the remarkable contributions of City employees during the season of giving. He praised their generosity and service, which made a significant impact on the community throughout the year. Several community initiatives were mentioned, including the Carolina vs. Clemson Harvest Hope Food Drive, where 2,907 pounds of food were donated. He also noted the success of the Angel Tree program, which fulfills the Christmas wishes of 40 children with incarcerated parents, and the Annual Pee Dee Heart Walk, where City employees raised over \$7,000. Additionally, the City earned the Golden Sponsor Award for its strong participation in the United Way campaign, contributing more than \$49,000. The Florence Police Department and others participated in Greg's Grocery, packing 400 food boxes and distributing 425 turkeys. Mr. Davis also highlighted the City's involvement in the Adopt A Dorm program, supported by both the Fire and Police Departments, which provides toys to families in need. The City's Police Toy Giveaway was another initiative that brought joy to many local families. Mr. Davis acknowledged that all these contributions came from employees' personal finances, further emphasizing their strong commitment to uplifting the community.

In addition to recognizing these efforts, Mr. Davis announced that the City of Rock Hill will be visiting Florence to study the Fire Department's successful practices. He expressed pride in the department's achievements and noted that other cities are taking notice of the exceptional work being done by the City of Florence Fire Department.

MAYORAL REPORT

Mayor Barnes acknowledged that this would be the final Council meeting of the year and expressed her gratitude to everyone for the positive spirit they bring to the city. She extended warm wishes for a Happy Holiday season and thanked the community for their ongoing contributions and efforts throughout the year. Mayor Barnes also recognized the South Florence High School Football Team for reaching the State Championship. While they did not secure the title, she commended them for their outstanding season and hard work. Mayor Barnes announced that Florence 1 Schools will hold a ribbon-cutting ceremony this



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Thursday at 5:00pm to celebrate the new Poyner Healthcare Innovation Facility. Lastly, she took a moment to reflect on the success of the Annual Christmas Tree Lighting event.

COMMITTEE REPORTS

Business Development Committee, Chaired by Pro tem Jebaily

Pro tem Jebaily said the committee received an update from STYX Corporation regarding Project Urban Square. He announced the groundbreaking ceremony for The Gamble Apartments will take place on December 18th at 2:00pm, followed by a reception. The committee also received updates on various city projects.

Community Development Committee, Chaired by Mayor Barnes

Mayor Barnes said the committee did not meet due to the holiday season and will resume meetings in January.

Finance, Audit and Budget Committee, Chaired by Councilman McCall

Councilman Braddock reported the committee received a presentation from The Steadman Group regarding the opioid analysis and recommendations. The committee also discussed the declining business license rates and Councilman Braddock thanked Mr. Glenn Bodenheimer, Interim Finance Director, for bringing this initiative to the committee's attention.

EXECUTIVE SESSION

Mayor Barnes said Council will be entering into Executive Session for a discussion regarding appointments to city Boards and Commissions and for a personnel matter.

Councilman Smith made a motion to enter into Executive Session and Councilwoman NeSmith-Jackson seconded the motion. Council voted unanimously (6-0) to enter into Executive Session at 2:30pm.

[Councilman McKay left the meeting.]

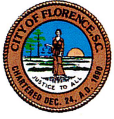
Pro tem Jebaily made a motion to resume open session and Councilwoman NeSmith-Jackson seconded the motion. The motion carried. Council resumed open session at 2:59pm and took action on the following items:

Appointments to Boards and Commissions

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

Accommodations Tax Advisory Committee

Pro tem Jebaily made a motion to appoint Jackie Travis to the Accommodations Tax Advisory Committee and the motion carried unanimously. Jackie Travis was appointed to the Accommodations Tax Advisory Committee for a term to begin immediately and expire on June 30, 2028.



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Design Review Board

Due to his absence, Councilman McCall's nomination to the Board was deferred.

Construction and Maintenance Board of Adjustments and Appeals

Mayor Barnes deferred remaining nominations to the Board.

Resilience and Sustainability Advisory Committee

Councilman Smith deferred his nomination to the Board.

Public Safety Citizen's Review Board

Due to his absence, Councilman McKay's nomination to the Board was deferred.

Board of Zoning Appeals

Mayor Barnes deferred her nomination to the Board.

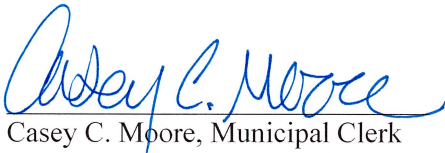
City-County Memorial Stadium Commission

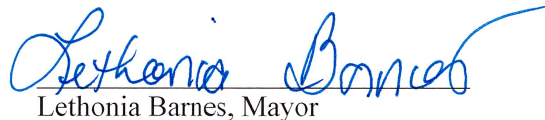
Councilwoman NeSmith-Jackson made a motion to recommend that Ondrea Shabazz be appointed to the City-County Memorial Stadium Commission. City Council unanimously voted (5–0) to recommend that Ondrea Shabazz be appointed to the City-County Memorial Stadium Commission for a term expiring June 30, 2030, subject to approval by Florence County Council.

ADJOURN

Without objection, the December 8, 2025 Regular meeting of City Council was adjourned at 3:01pm.

Dated this 12th day of January 2026.


Casey C. Moore, Municipal Clerk


Lethonia Barnes, Mayor