



**REGULAR MEETING OF FLORENCE CITY COUNCIL
MONDAY, SEPTEMBER 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 Chaquez 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; Mrs. Casey Moore, Municipal Clerk; Ms. Patrice Rankin, Assistant City Clerk; Mr. Clint Moore, Assistant City Manager of Development; Chief Shannon Tanner, Florence Fire Department; Chief Allen Heidler, 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; Mr. Joshua Whittington, Director of Utilities; Mrs. Victoria Nash, Director of Parks, Recreation, and Sports Tourism; Mr. Glenn Bodenheimer, Interim Finance Director

MEDIA PRESENT

Deirdre Weaver-Currin with the Post and Courier 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 September 8, 2025 Regular meeting of Florence City Council to order at 1:02pm.

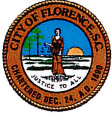
INVOCATION

Councilman Braddock gave the invocation for the meeting. The pledge of allegiance to the American Flag followed the invocation.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

Pro tem Jebaily made a motion to adopt the minutes of the August 11, 2025 Regular Meeting and Councilman Smith seconded the motion. The minutes were unanimously (7-0) adopted.

Pro tem Jebaily made a motion to adopt the minutes of the August 13, 2025 Special Meeting and Councilman McCall seconded the motion. The minutes were unanimously (7-0) adopted.



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SERVICE RECOGNITIONS

Mr. Joshua Whittington, Director of Utilities, recognized Mareco Windom for 30 years of service with the City of Florence.

APPEARANCES BEFORE COUNCIL

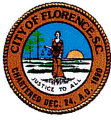
Suzanne La Rochelle

Ms. Suzanne La Rochelle appeared before Council regarding concerns over the recusal process. Mayor Barnes asked Mr. Ronald Scott, City Attorney, to share information from prior conversations with Ms. La Rochelle regarding her appearance before Council. Mr. Scott said that Ms. La Rochelle had expressed concerns about potential violations of the State Ethics Act, specifically regarding property transfers to the Housing Authority of Florence, due to the family relationship between the Mayor and the Housing Authority's Executive Director. Mr. Scott clarified that the Ethics Commission was consulted, and it confirmed there was no ethics violation, as there is no personal economic interest for the Mayor or the Executive Director. He emphasized that votes on related matters were legally sound and did not benefit either party financially. He also noted that Ms. La Rochelle was informed of the Ethics Commission's guidance beforehand, though the full legal correspondence remains confidential. Mr. Scott reassured Council that the City's legal counsel followed proper procedure and that public entities, like the City and Housing Authority, operate under clear laws and regulations. He concluded by stressing the importance of accurate and fair representation of facts, especially when suggesting legal or ethical violations.

Ms. La Rochelle spoke on concerns with Mayor Barnes voting on Bill No. 2025-28, which transferred city property to the Housing Authority of Florence. She said Dr. Alphonso Bradley, the Mayor's brother, holds the position of Executive Director of the Housing Authority and she expected the Mayor to recuse herself due to family ties and questioned how recusals are handled under the South Carolina Ethics Law. Ms. La Rochelle clarified that she did not accuse anyone of violating the law but sought clarity on procedures, specifically, the filing of recusal statements and documentation in Council minutes. She said her initial request to speak was denied by the City Attorney, who suggested the issue was too legal in nature for public comment. After further communication, she was later permitted to speak. She was informed by Mr. Ron Scott, City Attorney, that the South Carolina Ethics Commission was consulted and concluded no recusal was required, since the Housing Authority is not a business and there was no economic interest involved. However, Ms. La Rochelle disagreed, saying that Dr. Bradley's salary and professional standing depend on the Housing Authority's financial condition, which she argued could be considered an economic interest. She emphasized that state law prohibits public officials from participating in matters involving the economic interest of immediate family members, including employment or salary benefits. She also requested that the exact Ethics Commission opinion be released for transparency, asserting that citizens deserve to see the guidance in full if it truly supports the City's position.

Mr. Ron Scott, City Attorney, clarified that Ms. La Rochelle's request to appear before Council was not denied. He explained that her inquiry regarding Council's recusal practices was more appropriate for discussion with legal counsel, and he provided her with a detailed written response.

Councilman McCall expressed frustration over recurring opposition to affordable housing projects in North Florence, citing the national affordability crisis and the need for local action. He characterized the objections as politically motivated and emphasized that even if the Mayor recused herself, the ordinance would still pass. He voiced strong support for the project, noting its benefits to the community and the need to revitalize a long-abandoned property. Councilman McCall reiterated his commitment to moving



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the project forward and said that concerns could have been addressed privately rather than used to delay progress.

Mayor Barnes noted that the project outlined in Bill No. 2025-28 was approved by a 6-1 vote and will move forward to benefit the lives of residents in North Florence and beyond. She affirmed the City's commitment to partnering with the Housing Authority of Florence and using all available resources to support the community.

Fanika George-DeWitt

Ms. Fanika George-DeWitt appeared before Council to address several community concerns. She raised issues regarding the removal of her city-issued trash cans and requested more frequent sanitation service or alternatives to the current trash policy. She suggested expanding the Pearl Moore Basketball Center or constructing an additional indoor recreation facility. Ms. George-DeWitt requested transportation assistance for youth participating in city league sports and emphasized the need for community police officers familiar with local residents. She proposed the City seek state approval for a municipal penny tax to increase funding and requested implementation of the Food Share Program in Florence. Additionally, she encouraged collaboration among local hospitals and Prisma Health to establish a facility for children with developmental delays. She highlighted the need for truly affordable housing and requested that Camp F.E.V.E.R. retain its name and allow younger participants. Lastly, she advocated for term limits and a community voting process for City league sports board members.

ORDINANCES IN POSITION

Bill No. 2025-35 - Second Reading

An Ordinance to annex and zone NC-15 the lot located at 2507 West Andover Road, Florence County Tax Map Number 01221-01-090.

Councilman McKay made a motion to adopt Bill No. 2025-35 on second reading and Councilman Smith seconded the motion.

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

Bill No. 2025-36 – Second Reading

An Ordinance to rezone from CA to NC-6.3 two lots at 235 East Howe Springs Road, Florence County Tax Map Numbers 00152-01-127 and 00152-01-017.

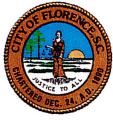
Councilman Smith made a motion to adopt Bill No. 2025-36 on second reading and Councilman McKay seconded the motion.

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

Bill No. 2025-37 – Second Reading

An Ordinance to amend Sections 1-2.7.2-A, 1-2.7.2-B, 1-2.8.2, 1-2.10.1-B, and 7-25.2 of the Unified Development Ordinance regarding accessory dwelling units.

Pro tem Jebaily made a motion to adopt Bill No. 2025-37 on second reading and Councilwoman NeSmith-Jackson seconded the motion.



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Councilman McCall made a motion to amend the ordinance by removing the requirement that an Accessory Dwelling Unit (ADU) must provide one improved parking space in addition to the required parking for the principal structure.

Pro tem Jebaily requested clarification on the amendment, and Councilman McCall restated that the amendment removes the language requiring the additional improved parking space for ADUs.

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

Councilman McCall then made a motion to increase the maximum size of detached ADUs from 50% of the principal structure's footprint or 800 square feet, to a maximum of 1,000 square feet.

Mr. Scotty Davis, City Manager, asked whether the increase would apply to both attached and detached ADUs. Councilman McCall clarified that the change would apply only to detached ADUs.

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

Council voted unanimously (7-0) in favor of the motion, as amended. Bill No. 2025-37 was adopted, as amended.

INTRODUCTION OF ORDINANCES

Bill No. 2025-38 - First Reading

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

Councilman McCall made a motion to pass Bill No. 2025-38 on first reading and Councilman McKay seconded the motion.

Mr. Glenn Bodenheimer, Interim Finance Director, explained that this ordinance is part of the City's annual process to carry forward unspent funds from the previous year's budget, specifically for approved projects or capital purchases. He emphasized that none of the items listed are new; all were previously approved either in last year's adopted budget or through the early purchase amendment. In many cases, construction projects weren't completed, or there were delays in receiving capital items. As an example, Mr. Bodenheimer mentioned the \$2 million fire truck, which has already been paid for but will not be delivered until later this month. Since the City has not yet taken possession, it remains an outstanding expenditure. Mr. Bodenheimer also noted that the ordinance has been reviewed by the Finance, Audit and Budget Committee.

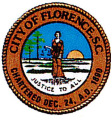
Council voted unanimously (7-0) in favor of the motion. Bill No. 2025-38 was passed on first reading.

INTRODUCTION OF RESOLUTIONS

Resolution No. 2025-28

A Resolution committing the City of Florence to providing a local match for Municipal Association of South Carolina Big Idea Grant and following its procurement policy when securing services and products with grant funds.

Councilman McCall made a motion to pass Resolution No. 2025-28 and Councilman McKay seconded the motion.



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Mr. Clint Moore, Assistant City Manager of Development, presented a new Resolution originally introduced at the previous month's meeting. At that time, the City planned a project along the East Palmetto Corridor. However, due to anticipated future improvements in that area, the focus has shifted to the South Church Street Corridor for gateway beautification enhancements. As part of the application process, Council is required to adopt a Resolution committing to matching funds, allocation of staff time, and compliance with procurement policies.

Pro tem Jebaily inquired on the vision for the South Church Street Corridor. Mr. Moore explained that the project will focus on beautification efforts and emphasized the opportunity to enhance the entrance into the city using multiple City-owned properties in the area. Pro tem Jebaily commended staff for their efforts and expressed support for the project.

Council voted unanimously (7-0) in favor of the motion. Resolution No. 2025-28 was passed.

Resolution No. 2025-29

A Resolution to adopt the City of Florence Water Distribution System Master Plan.

Councilman McCall made a motion to pass Resolution No. 2025-29 and Councilwoman NeSmith-Jackson seconded the motion.

Mr. Clint Moore, Assistant City Manager of Development, reported that city staff, in collaboration with AECOM, has been developing the Water Distribution System Master Plan over the past several years. The plan outlines a 20-year strategy to address aging infrastructure, improve water quality, and support future growth. It includes capital improvement projects that may be funded through City resources or grants and is a key requirement for pursuing major grant opportunities, reflecting the City's proactive planning efforts.

Council voted unanimously (7-0) in favor of the motion. Resolution No. 2025-29 was passed.

Resolution No. 2025-30

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

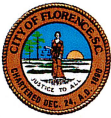
Mr. Clint Moore, Assistant City Manager of Development, explained that this plan is similar to the Water Distribution System Master Plan but focuses on the City's sewer infrastructure. It provides a comprehensive assessment of the existing sewer collection system, including outfalls, system requirements, and future needs based on projected growth. The Sewer Collection System Master Plan offers a 20-year outlook on capital improvements and serves as a strategic guide for the City as it continues to develop and upgrade its sewer infrastructure.

The record reflects that although Council proceeded to vote on the Resolution, no formal motion or second was made; therefore, under parliamentary procedure, the Resolution did not pass.

Resolution No. 2025-31

A Resolution to adopt the City of Florence Stormwater Master Plan.

Councilman McKay made a motion to pass Resolution No. 2025-31 and Councilman Braddock seconded the motion.



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Mr. Clint Moore, Assistant City Manager of Development, stated that City staff has been working on the Stormwater Master Plan for several years, examining both areas within and outside the City limits. The plan takes a comprehensive look at the overall stormwater infrastructure and proposes future projects to address various concerns throughout the community. Unlike the water and sewer systems, stormwater infrastructure involves multiple owners within the municipal limits. This master plan helps identify responsible parties, promotes coordination among them, and provides a framework for implementing solutions. The study was partially funded through a \$250,000 grant from the South Carolina Office of Resilience.

Pro tem Jebaily spoke in favor of the Water Distribution System Master Plan, Sewer Collection System Master Plan and the Stormwater Master Plan. He thanked city staff, AECOM and everyone involved for all of their efforts and shared that the master plans will be available on the city's website.

Council voted unanimously (7-0) in favor of the motion. Resolution No. 2025-31 was passed.

Resolution No. 2025-32

A Resolution authorizing the City Manager to execute a stormwater infrastructure program subrecipient agreement between the City of Florence and the SC Office of Resilience to fund a stormwater infrastructure improvement project that will mitigate the impact of future disasters.

Pro tem Jebaily made a motion to pass Resolution No. 2025-32 and Councilman McCall seconded the motion.

Mr. Clint Moore, Assistant City Manager of Development, reported that the City received a grant from the South Carolina Office of Resilience to support major stormwater improvements along the Oakland Avenue Corridor. He noted that the area currently lacks adequate infrastructure, and what does exist is insufficient. The grant will fund engineering and design work, and as cost estimates have increased in coordination with the South Carolina Department of Transportation (DOT), the Office of Resilience has awarded the City an additional \$400,000, bringing the total grant award to \$3.4 million. Mr. Moore also highlighted that in addition to the \$7 million received through the 2021 bond, the City has secured approximately \$14 million in additional stormwater grant funding by partnering with various agencies. He provided updates on current projects: construction is underway at Cedar and McQueen Streets, as well as at the Pennsylvania Street outfalls. Work on the Oakland Avenue project is pending the final DOT encroachment permit.

Councilman Braddock said he has received public inquiries about the work on Coit Street, and also between Second Loop Road and Palmetto Street. He asked if the City could provide project timelines and updates on its website. Mr. Moore responded that a stormwater page exists and will be updated to include project start and completion dates.

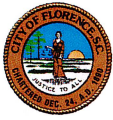
Pro tem Jebaily expressed support for the Oakland Avenue project.

Council voted unanimously (7-0) in favor of the motion. Resolution No. 2025-32 was passed.

Resolution No. 2025-33

A Resolution recognizing September as Spinal Cord Injury Awareness Month in the City of Florence.

Councilman McKay made a motion to pass Resolution No. 2025-33 and Councilman McCall seconded the motion.



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Councilman McKay thanked Council for recognizing Spinal Cord Injury Awareness Month and announced that he would be presenting the Resolution later this month to the Spinal Cord Injury Group of the Pee Dee. He expressed his enthusiasm about serving on an ad hoc committee focused on addressing the needs of individuals with disabilities within the community.

Council voted unanimously (7-0) in favor of the motion. Resolution No. 2025-33 was passed.

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.

CITY MANAGER'S REPORT

Mr. Scotty Davis, City Manager, provided an overview of the City's long-standing commitment to community policing, which has been in place for approximately 20 years. Over the past 12 years, the approach has been expanded to include all divisions within the Florence Police Department. He highlighted several key community-focused programs, including the Citizen's Police Academy, National Night Out, youth engagement initiatives, and the Victim Advocacy Program. The Police Department also collaborates with approximately 40 neighborhood and crime watch associations and maintains a Chief's Citizen Advisory Board to foster community input. Mr. Davis recognized the efforts of officers who work directly with residents, specifically Officer Jordan Williams for his outreach and engagement. He shared a video clip of Officer Williams participating in a dance-off at a Florence After 5 event, commending his positive interaction with the community and emphasizing the value of strong relationships between law enforcement and the public.

Councilman McCall also commended Officer Williams, expressing appreciation for his dedication and active involvement in the community.

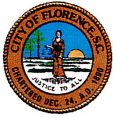
MAYORAL REPORT

Mayor Barnes announced that Judge Haigh Porter will be honored by The School Foundation on September 23rd. She also noted that the Manna House will host the 2nd Annual Singing for Suppers Karaoke Competition Fundraiser on September 25th. On October 9th at 6:00pm, an event will take place at Dr. Iola Jones Park to unveil a historical marker honoring Dr. Iola Jones, in partnership with Francis Marion University. Additionally, the Sounds of the Pee Dee Concert Series will be held at Dr. Iola Jones Park on September 20th. Mayor Barnes encouraged the community to attend these events.

COMMITTEE REPORTS

Business Development Committee, Chaired by Pro tem Jebaily

Pro tem Jebaily reported that the committee received updates on city projects and reviewed the master plans presented earlier in the meeting. He shared that the developer for Urban Square has secured the construction loan for the apartment complex and has hired Weaver Cook from Greensboro, North Carolina, as the general contractor. City staff recently held an onsite meeting to discuss logistics such as laydown areas and site access. He noted that building construction will begin once the "final lift" is



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completed. Pro tem Jebaily asked Mr. Clint Moore, Assistant City Manager, to clarify the term “final lift,” to which Mr. Moore explained it refers to adding approximately six inches of soil. Pro tem Jebaily also mentioned that a large vacant lot next to Seminar Brewing has been cleared and will be the new location for Faith Nursing Home, which will relocate and operate under the name Pecan Healthcare and Rehabilitation Facility by Wellspring Health.

Community Development Committee, Chaired by Mayor Barnes

Mayor Barnes said that the committee is initiating the City’s first comprehensive housing study. She noted ongoing collaborative efforts with community partners to enhance and revitalize the area and announced that four properties on Brunson Street are planned for development by local developers. Additionally, the committee discussed the possibility of conducting a youth study.

Finance, Audit and Budget Committee, Chaired by Councilman McCall

Councilman McCall reported that the committee reviewed the carryforward ordinance and the July 2025 financial packet. He added that the committee will next focus on evaluating how the City can finance proposed projects.

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 regarding city judges.

Pro tem Jebaily made a motion to enter into Executive Session and Councilman Smith seconded the motion. Council voted unanimously (7-0) to enter into Executive Session at 2:07pm.

Councilwoman NeSmith-Jackson made a motion to resume open session and Councilman McKay seconded the motion. The motion carried. Council resumed open session at 2:36pm 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 deferred his nomination to the Board.

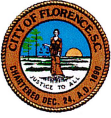
Councilman McKay deferred his nomination to the Board.

Board of Zoning Appeals

Councilman McKay made a motion to appoint William Edwards to the Board of Zoning Appeals and the motion carried unanimously. William Edwards was appointed to the Board of Zoning Appeals for a term to begin immediately and expire on June 30, 2028.

Design Review Board

Councilman McCall deferred his nomination to the Board.



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Construction and Maintenance Board of Adjustments and Appeals

Mayor Barnes deferred remaining nominations to the Board.

Parks and Beautification Commission

Councilman McKay deferred his nomination to the Board.

Resilience and Sustainability Advisory Committee

Councilman Smith deferred his nomination to the Board.

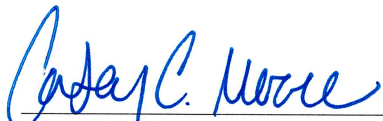
Public Safety Citizen's Review Board

Councilman McKay deferred his nomination to the Board.

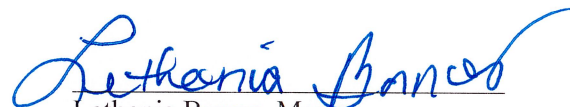
ADJOURN

Without objection, the September 8, 2025 Regular meeting of City Council was adjourned at 2:38pm.

Dated this 13th day of October 2025.



Casey C. Moore, Municipal Clerk



Lethonia Barnes, Mayor