



**REGULAR MEETING OF FLORENCE CITY COUNCIL  
MONDAY, NOVEMBER 10, 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; Mr. Luke Carter, 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; Interim Police Chief 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. Victoria Nash, Director of Parks, Recreation, and Sports Tourism; Mrs. Amanda Pope, Director of Marketing/Communications and Municipal Services; Mr. Glenn Bodenheimer, Interim Finance Director and Mr. Joshua Whittington, Director of Utilities

**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.

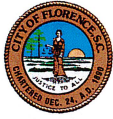
**CALL TO ORDER**

Mayor Barnes called the November 10, 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 and was led by Master Sergeant Reggie German of the United States Air Force and South Carolina Air National Guard.

Mayor Barnes acknowledged the 50<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of the end of the Vietnam War and honored those who served our country.



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**APPROVAL OF MINUTES**

Councilman McCall made a motion to adopt the minutes of the October 13, 2025 Regular Meeting and Councilman Braddock seconded the motion. The minutes were unanimously (7-0) adopted.

**ADDENDUM TO THE AGENDA**

Pro tem Jebaily made a motion to add Resolution No. 2025-46 to the November 10, 2025 regular meeting agenda and Councilman Braddock seconded the motion. This item was added to the agenda by unanimous vote (7-0).

**SERVICE RECOGNITIONS**

Mr. Shannon Tanner, Fire Chief, recognized Robert Holland for 30 years of service with the Florence Fire Department.

Mr. Stephen Starling, Interim Police Chief, recognized Conchetta Burroughs for 10 years of service with the Florence Police Department.

**FALL 2025 YOUTH CITY UNIVERSITY GRADUATION**

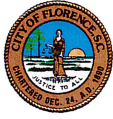
Mrs. Amanda Pope, Director of Marketing/Communications and Municipal Services and Mayor Barnes presented the Fall 2025 Youth City University participants with their certificates of completion. Mrs. Pope said this is the third year for City University. City University was established in 2023 and is held in the spring and fall of each year. Each session lasts seven weeks and is held once a week. Participants have the opportunity to learn about city operations and visit different city facilities.

**APPEARANCES BEFORE COUNCIL**

**Gina Gilliard**

Ms. Gilliard appeared before Council to address ongoing drainage issues on her property. She explained that she has been trying for two years to get help with water flowing onto her property from nearby drainpipes. She noted that she has previously spoken with both Mr. Scotty Davis, City Manager and Mr. Clint Moore, Assistant City Manager of Development about the problem. Ms. Gilliard said that she owned the home for seven years before selling it to her daughter in 2021. According to her, a neighbor behind the property built a structure or bridge that now causes the nearby drainpipes to clog, leaving the water in her yard with nowhere to go. She shared photos with Council and emphasized that the issue is depreciating the value of the home every time it rains. She also mentioned that she is a Veterans Affairs caregiver for her daughter, a 100% disabled veteran, and had to use \$3,600 from her daughter's fiduciary to install a barrier to address the erosion. Ms. Gilliard requested that the City unclog the drain and send someone to fix the problem, as she cannot afford additional repairs. She expressed frustration over the lack of resolution, saying the issue has been ongoing since 2024 and that it is worsening. Ms. Gilliard also reported that water from other properties is flowing onto her land, damaging the grass, and said she has plans to have the water tested. Ms. Gilliard said although this is not a glamorous home, it is still their home. She noted that the City did send someone out during the summer but they were unable to resolve the issue.

Mayor Barnes inquired whether the issue is related to the connection between the property and the system lines, or if the problem is located behind the property. Ms. Gilliard explained that when she purchased the



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home, no barrier was necessary. However, she now faces water leaking from a hole with no place for it to go.

Pro tem Jebaily asked Ms. Gilliard for her address, which she provided.

**ORDINANCES IN POSITION**

**Bill No. 2025-40 – Second 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.**

Pro tem Jebaily made a motion to adopt Bill No. 2025-40 on second reading and Councilwoman NeSmith-Jackson seconded the motion.

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

**Bill No. 2025-41 – Second 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 adopt Bill No. 2025-41 on second reading and Councilman Smith seconded the motion.

Council voted unanimously (7-0) in favor of the motion. Bill No. 2025-41 was adopted.

**INTRODUCTION OF ORDINANCES**

**Bill No. 2025-42 – First Reading**

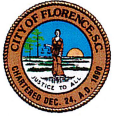
**An Ordinance to annex and zone NC-6.3 South Irby Street, identified as Florence County Tax Map Number 00152-01-029.**

Councilman McCall made a motion to pass Bill No. 2025-42 on first reading and Pro tem Jebaily seconded the motion.

Mr. Jerry Dudley, Director of Planning, reported the property, located near the intersection of Irby Street and Rosemount Drive, is proposed for Neighborhood Conservation 6.3 (NC-6.3) zoning, which allows for a variety of residential housing types, including single-family and multifamily developments. Planning Commission approved a townhome complex contingent on annexation and zoning. City water service is currently available to the parcel, however, the developer will be responsible for installing a private lift station and providing the necessary easement for sewer access. An existing home on the site will be demolished before construction.

Council voted unanimously (7-0) in favor of the motion. Bill No. 2025-42 was passed on first reading.





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**INTRODUCTION OF RESOLUTIONS**

**Resolution No. 2025-41**

**A Resolution of Recognition for sculptor Alex Palkovich and his contributions to the City of Florence.**

Pro tem Jebaily made a motion to pass Resolution No. 2025-41 and Councilwoman NeSmith-Jackson seconded the motion.

Mayor Barnes and Pro tem Jebaily presented the Resolution to Mr. Alex Palkovich. Mr. Palkovich thanked Council for the recognition.

Council voted unanimously (7-0) in favor of the motion. Resolution No. 2025-41 was passed.

**Resolution No. 2025-42**

**A Resolution of Recognition for the Wilson High School Marching Band for being named the 2025 SCBDA High-Stepping Band State Champions.**

Councilman McCall made a motion to pass Resolution No. 2025-42 and Councilman Braddock seconded the motion.

Mayor Barnes and Councilman McCall presented the Resolution to Mr. Jarrod Deas, Band Director of the Wilson High School Marching Tiger Pride Band. Mr. Deas thanked Council for the recognition.

Council voted unanimously (7-0) in favor of the motion. Resolution No. 2025-42 was passed.

**Resolution No. 2025-43**

**A Resolution to proclaim December 5, 2025 as Arbor Day in the City of Florence.**

Councilwoman NeSmith-Jackson made a motion to pass Resolution No. 2025-43 and Councilman McCall seconded the motion.

Mayor Barnes presented the Resolution to Mrs. Victoria Nash, Director of Parks, Recreation and Sports Tourism. Mrs. Nash announced that Arbor Day will be celebrated on Friday, December 5<sup>th</sup> at 10:00am at Dr. Iola Jones Park. The event will feature participation from the City of Florence Parks and Beautification Commission, as well as Francis Marion University's Environmental Studies Club. A Magnolia tree will be planted at the park in honor of the occasion.

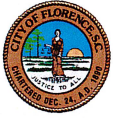
Council voted unanimously (7-0) in favor of the motion. Resolution No. 2025-43 was passed.

**Resolution No. 2025-44**

**A Resolution authorizing the City Manager to reappropriate funds to local food banks in response to the federal government shutdown and the ending of SNAP benefits.**

Councilman McCall made a motion to amend Resolution No. 2025-44 to increase the total amount from \$60,000 to \$65,000 and to allocate \$15,000 to the following four local organizations: The Manna House, Harvest Hope Food Bank, Senior Citizens Association and My Brother's Keeper, and the remaining \$5,000 shall be left to the discretion of the City Manager to distribute to other community organizations directly affected by the federal government shutdown. However, in light of reports this morning that an agreement has been reached in principle to end the federal government shutdown, the City Manager is





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further authorized to suspend or reallocate these funds as appropriate if the shutdown does not persist. Councilman Smith seconded the motion.

The motion carried unanimously (7-0).

Council voted unanimously (7-0) in favor of the motion, as amended. Resolution No. 2025-44 was passed, as amended.

**Resolution No. 2025-45**

**A Resolution approving downtown redevelopment grants for 2<sup>nd</sup> Quarter, Fiscal Year 2026.**

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

**Resolution No. 2025-46**

**A Resolution of Recognition for Pastor Bill Monroe honoring his dedicated service as one of the longest serving pastors in the Florence area.**

Pro tem Jebaily made a motion to pass Resolution No. 2025-46 and Councilwoman NeSmith-Jackson seconded the motion.

Mayor Barnes and Councilman Braddock presented the Resolution to Pastor Bill Monroe. Pastor Monroe thanked Council for the recognition.

Council voted unanimously (7-0) in favor of the motion. Resolution No. 2025-46 was passed.

**REPORT TO COUNCIL**

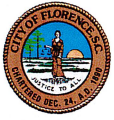
**Appointments to Boards and Commissions**

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

**Report on the Towing Ordinance**

Councilman McCall reported ongoing concerns about predatory towing practices in the city, noting that complaints have increased over the past two years and surged after his recent Facebook post. He said some tow companies are charging well above the \$170 legal cap, often \$250 to \$300, and that many of those affected are young women. Councilman McCall emphasized that, given the affordability challenges facing the city and the nation, these practices cannot continue. He called for a review of the city's towing ordinance to end predatory practices and thanked city staff for their work, emphasizing that the City must take proactive steps to ensure such behavior is not tolerated.

Mr. Clint Moore, Assistant City Manager of Development, reported that two amendments to the City's towing ordinance were discussed at the Finance, Audit and Budget Committee meeting. The amendments address notification requirements between towing companies and the Florence Police Department and bring the ordinance into closer alignment with state law. City staff is preparing the revisions, which will be reviewed by the Finance, Audit and Budget Committee before being presented to Council.



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Councilman McCall noted that a towing company, not engaged in predatory practices, contacted him and the Chairman of Florence County Council to confirm that such practices are occurring, emphasizing the City's responsibility to protect its citizens.

Councilman Smith inquired about the Police Department's procedures for towing ordinance violations. Interim Police Chief Stephen Starling explained that upon citizen complaints of overcharging or predatory towing, the towing company and/or business owner can be charged. Businesses with agreements with towing companies must still follow established standards, and both the tow operator and the business could be held responsible if guidelines are violated. Interim Chief Starling confirmed that the maximum daytime towing fee is \$135, with an additional \$35 allowed after hours, and agreed with Councilman Smith that charging \$300 would be a violation.

Councilwoman NeSmith-Jackson asked whether the City has identified any towing companies engaged in predatory towing practices. Interim Chief Starling replied that he is not aware of any specific companies.

Councilman Braddock sought clarification on towing fees and procedures. Interim Chief Starling explained that the ordinance applies to private and commercial-property tows, not law enforcement-directed tows, which follow the South Carolina Department of Public Safety fee schedule. He noted that towing fees listed in the ordinance are set by Council, that companies may choose whether to accept those rates, and that the fee schedule may be due for review. He added that predatory practices such as towing vehicles and returning them without proper storage violate both city ordinance and state law.

Councilman Smith also confirmed that towing companies from outside the City must obtain a City of Florence business license to operate within city limits.

### **CITY MANAGER'S REPORT**

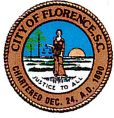
Mr. Scotty Davis, City Manager, announced that the City will sponsor a Clemson vs. Carolina Canned Food Drive Competition. Nonperishable food items will be collected and donated to the Harvest Hope Food Bank to support community members in need. He encouraged the public to participate and noted that donation bins will be located on the first floor of the City Center. Pro tem Jebailly asked whether monetary contributions would be accepted, and Mr. Davis confirmed that they would. Pro tem Jebailly then pledged a \$1,000 donation on behalf of the South Carolina Gamecocks.

Mr. Davis also announced that the Government Finance Officers Association (GFOA) of the United States and Canada has awarded the Certificate of Achievement for Excellence in Financial Reporting to the City of Florence for its Annual Comprehensive Financial Report for the fiscal year ending June 30, 2024. This prestigious honor is the highest form of recognition in governmental accounting and financial reporting. He stated that the award reflects the City's commitment to transparency, accuracy, and excellence in communicating its financial history. The award recognizes the hard work of the City's Finance Department and management team in meeting GFOA's high standards for clarity, completeness, and public accountability. Mr. Davis formally recognized the Finance Department and commended its staff for their dedication and outstanding performance.

### **MAYORAL REPORT**

Mayor Barnes invited everyone to attend the Veterans Day ceremony that will take place tomorrow at 11:00am. Due to the cold weather, the ceremony will take place inside of the Florence Center. A monument in memory of Colonel Barry Wingard will be dedicated during the ceremony, which was made by Mr. Alex Palkovich. Mayor Barnes shared that the South Carolina Pecan Music and Food Festival held





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on November 1<sup>st</sup> was a huge success. Mayor Barnes said that she, Mr. Davis and Councilman McCall attended the Municipal Association of South Carolina Regional Advocacy Meeting that was held in Florence and shared a report from the session with Council.

### **COMMITTEE REPORTS**

#### **Business Development Committee, Chaired by Pro tem Jebaily**

Pro tem Jebaily highlighted the success of the South Carolina Pecan Music and Food Festival, thanking city staff for their hard work and support. This year's event drew more than 50,000 attendees and featured approximately 280 vendors. He also reported that the committee received an update from Julie Tuttle with STYX Corporation regarding Project Urban Square. Equipment is now on site, and the long-awaited development is officially underway. Pro tem Jebaily noted that the apartments will be named The Gamble Apartments, in honor of the historic Gamble Hotel. The committee also received updates on additional city projects.

#### **Community Development Committee, Chaired by Mayor Barnes**

Mayor Barnes reported that the Community Empowerment Walk on November 8<sup>th</sup> drew a large turnout. She thanked all who attended and noted the community's excitement about positive change. She also shared that the committee will be exploring future initiatives in both the West Florence and East Florence areas. Mayor Barnes announced that the Housing Authority of Florence will hold a grand reopening for the Creekside Apartments and invited everyone to attend.

#### **Finance, Audit and Budget Committee, Chaired by Councilman McCall**

Councilman McCall reported that the committee discussed establishing standard procedures for documenting community aid under the Good Neighbor Policy and noted that an internal policy is being drafted regarding assistance to neighboring cities. The committee also reviewed possible updates to the towing ordinance to protect residents from predatory practices and considered whether the community services fund could be used to support local nonprofits during the federal government shutdown.

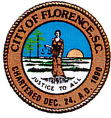
### **EXECUTIVE SESSION**

Mayor Barnes said Council will be entering into Executive Session for a discussion regarding an Economic Development project as indicated in Resolution No. 2025-45, for a discussion regarding appointments to city Boards and Commissions, for a discussion on a contractual matter regarding Ultra Processed Foods, to receive an update on a pending legal matter, for a discussion on a contractual matter regarding the Palmetto Housing Corporation, to receive legal advice on the current curfew ordinance and for a personnel matter.

Councilwoman NeSmith-Jackson made a motion to enter into Executive Session and Councilman McKay seconded the motion. Council voted unanimously (7-0) to enter into Executive Session at 2:13pm.

Councilman Smith made a motion to resume open session and Councilwoman NeSmith-Jackson seconded the motion. The motion carried. Council resumed open session at 4:07pm and took action on the following items:





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**Resolution No. 2025-45**

**A Resolution approving downtown redevelopment grants for 2<sup>nd</sup> Quarter, Fiscal Year 2026.**

Councilwoman NeSmith-Jackson made a motion to pass Resolution No. 2025-45. The motion failed due to lack of a second.

Mr. Clint Moore, Assistant City Manager of Development, reported that the Selection Committee met to review the application submitted by Smartphone Repair, located at the corner of West Evans Street and Irby Street. Based on the proposal and scoring criteria, the committee does not recommend approving the upfit grant.

Pro tem Jebaily asked for clarification that, if there is no motion or second, the resolution would not pass. Mr. Moore confirmed that was correct.

Councilman McCall asked whether alternative grants or incentives were available for applicants who do not meet the requirements for the upfit grant. Mr. Moore said that the City offers several programs to support commercial development in the H1 District, including design and sign grants, a first-year business license discount, and five years of free trash service. He encouraged prospective downtown businesses to meet with the Downtown Development Office for guidance and noted that additional information is available on the Downtown Florence website. Mr. Moore emphasized the City's commitment to supporting the success of downtown and citywide businesses.

Resolution No. 2025-45 was not passed.

**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.

**Design Review Board**

Councilman McCall deferred his nomination to the Board.

**Construction and Maintenance Board of Adjustments and Appeals**

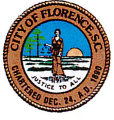
Mayor Barnes deferred remaining nominations to the Board.

**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.



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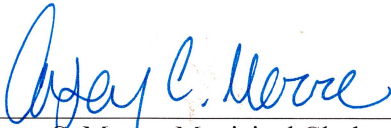
**Board of Zoning Appeals**

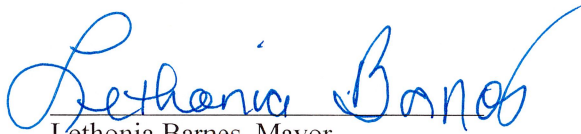
Mayor Barnes deferred her nomination to the Board.

**ADJOURN**

Without objection, the November 10, 2025 Regular meeting of City Council was adjourned at 4:13pm.

Dated this 8<sup>th</sup> day of December 2025.

  
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Casey C. Moore, Municipal Clerk

  
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Lethonia Barnes, Mayor