



**REGULAR MEETING OF FLORENCE CITY COUNCIL  
MONDAY, APRIL 13, 2026 – 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, Councilwoman LaShonda NeSmith-Jackson, Councilman Bryan A. Braddock, Councilman J. Lawrence Smith, II (arrived at 1:27pm) and Councilman Zach McKay

**ALSO PRESENT**

Mr. Scotty Davis, City Manager; Mr. Ronald Scott, City Attorney; Mr. Luke Carter, City Attorney; Mr. Clint Moore, Assistant City Manager of Development; Mrs. Casey Moore, Municipal Clerk; Ms. Patrice Rankin, Assistant City Clerk; Chief Shannon Tanner, Florence Fire Department; Chief Angela Greene, 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; Mrs. Jennifer Krawiec, Director of Human Resources; Mrs. Amanda Pope, Director of Marketing/Communications and Municipal Services; Mr. Adam Swindler, Director of Public Works; Mrs. Victoria Nash, Director of Parks, Recreation, and Sports Tourism and Mr. Glenn Bodenheimer, 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 April 13, 2026 Regular meeting of Florence City Council to order at 1:01pm.

**INVOCATION**

Pastor Brenda Deas gave the invocation for the meeting. The pledge of allegiance to the American Flag followed the invocation

**ADOPTION OF AGENDA**

Mayor Barnes requested to move Resolutions No. 2026-15, 2026-16, 2026-17, 2026-18, 2026-19, and 2026-20 after Honors and Recognitions.

Without objection, the agenda for the April 13, 2026 Regular meeting was adopted.



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**APPROVAL OF MINUTES**

Councilwoman NeSmith-Jackson made a motion to adopt the minutes of the March 9, 2026 Regular Meeting and Pro tem Jebaily seconded the motion. The minutes were unanimously (6-0) adopted, with Councilman Smith having not yet arrived.

**SERVICE RECOGNITIONS**

Ms. Angela Greene, Police Chief, recognized Anson Shells for 25 years of service with the Florence Police Department.

Mr. Scotty Davis, City Manager, recognized Jennifer Krawiec for 15 years of service with the City of Florence.

Mr. Adam Swindler, Director of Public Works, recognized Phillip Roth for 10 years of service with the City of Florence.

Mr. Shannon Tanner, Fire Chief, recognized Jeremy Miller for 10 years of service with the Florence Fire Department.

Mayor Barnes recognized the Southside Middle School Student Government Association that was present for today's meeting.

**APPEARANCES BEFORE COUNCIL**

**Don Strickland– Executive Director, Pee Dee Regional Transportation Authority (PDRTA)**

Mr. Don Strickland, Executive Director of the Pee Dee Regional Transportation Authority (PDRTA), appeared before Council to provide a transit update and FY 2026–27 funding summary. He reported significant growth within PDRTA, highlighting positives from the Transit Development Plan along with areas needing improvement. He noted PDRTA serves six counties across more than 3,500 square miles, making it the largest geographically in the state and third largest in the nation among regional transportation authorities, and provided an overview of the plan.

Councilman Braddock asked about federal funding, noting it accounts for a significant portion. Mr. Strickland clarified that federal and state funding together total closer to 70% and that increased local funding would expand the overall budget rather than reduce federal percentages. He stated that for every \$1 of local funding, PDRTA can provide approximately \$4 in service, increasing operational capacity and capital improvements.

Councilman McCall asked about the impact of fare-free service. Mr. Strickland explained that Florence County currently offsets lost farebox revenue based on prior trends and that continued funding is included in the County's budget request. He noted Florence County has more than doubled its funding over the past three years. He added that eliminating fares avoids significant capital costs, such as replacing fareboxes, and increases ridership, which in turn improves eligibility for federal and state funding.

Councilman McCall inquired about the Florence Transit Center. Mr. Strickland confirmed it remains open, noted past loitering issues that were addressed with security measures, and stated that PDRTA has outgrown the facility. He indicated expansion is not feasible due to limited space and that efforts are underway to secure a larger location.



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Councilman Braddock asked about the Ride for Transportation Tax in Horry County. Mr. Strickland explained it is a penny sales tax referendum funding multiple transportation-related projects, including public transit. Discussion also included the feasibility of matching funds for farebox replacement and the long-term sustainability of fare-free service, with Mr. Strickland noting fare revenue cannot be used to match federal or state funds and that fare-free service supports ridership growth.

Councilman Braddock also asked about potential public-private partnerships for a future intermodal hub. Mr. Strickland expressed support for this approach.

Councilman McKay confirmed that \$1 million in local funding could leverage approximately \$4 million or more in total funding, depending on the use, and discussed the economic impact of PDRTA services.

Mr. Strickland reported approximately 525,000 passenger trips this year, with 78% of riders lacking access to a vehicle and 62% commuting to work.

Councilwoman NeSmith-Jackson asked about fare-free routes. Mr. Strickland noted there are 275 stops within Florence, with regional connections to surrounding areas. Service hours are currently 6:00 a.m. to 6:00 p.m., with hopes for future expansion.

**ORDINANCES IN POSITION**

**Bill No. 2026-07 – Second Reading**

**An Ordinance to annex and zone NC-15 the property located at 2511 Ascot Drive, identified as Florence County Tax Map Number 01221-01-191.**

Councilman Braddock made a motion to adopt Bill No. 2026-07 on second reading and Councilwoman NeSmith-Jackson seconded the motion.

Council voted unanimously (7-0) in favor of the motion. Bill No. 2026-07 was adopted.

**Bill No. 2026-08 – Second Reading**

**An Ordinance to annex and zone NC-15 the property located at 2710 Trotter Road, identified as Florence County Tax Map Number 00984-01-007.**

Councilwoman NeSmith-Jackson made a motion to adopt Bill No. 2026-08 on second reading and Pro tem Jebaily seconded the motion.

Council voted unanimously (7-0) in favor of the motion. Bill No. 2026-08 was adopted.

**Bill No. 2026-10 – Second Reading**

**An Ordinance to create the Florence City-County Convention and Visitors Commission, to provide for the operation of the Florence Convention and Visitors Bureau to include provisions for the Commission's organization and funding, and other matters related thereto.**

Pro tem Jebaily made a motion to adopt Bill No. 2026-10 on second reading and Councilman McCall seconded the motion.

Councilman Braddock asked about the composition of the Commission. Mr. Scotty Davis, City Manager, explained that Council requested four members be appointed by City Council and three by Florence



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County Council. Councilman Braddock recommended involving Ashley Blade of Pee Dee Tourism with the Commission to help maintain an established relationship with the organization.

Council voted unanimously (7-0) in favor of the motion. Bill No. 2026-10 was adopted.

**INTRODUCTION OF ORDINANCES**

**Bill No. 2026-09 – First Reading**

**An Ordinance to amend the City of Florence *Unified Development Ordinance* regarding window signage.**

Pro tem Jebaily made a motion to pass Bill No. 2026-09 on first reading and Councilman McKay seconded the motion.

Mr. Jerry Dudley, Director of Planning, explained that the ordinance, deferred from last month, proposes changing window signage from an allowed use to a permitted use and limiting it to 25% of window area for commercial properties. He noted that staff included visual examples and, in response to Council's prior concerns, suggested alternatives, such as allowing up to 50% in more intense zoning districts due to greater setbacks, while ensuring total building and window signage does not exceed 25% of the building façade.

Councilman Smith raised concerns from small businesses, asking about the permit cost and approval process. Mr. Dudley said the permit fee is \$25 and that approvals would be handled administratively by staff, unless a hardship requires review by the Board of Zoning Appeals, which would take longer.

Councilwoman NeSmith-Jackson opposed the amendment, expressing concern that reducing allowable window signage from 100% to 25% could make businesses harder to identify and unnecessarily restrict their ability to advertise.

Councilman Braddock also expressed concerns, suggesting the ordinance should establish a fair minimum allowance for signage regardless of window size to ensure equity among businesses.

Mayor Barnes said window signage was discussed during the Riley Mayors Design Fellowship, emphasizing that Council has a responsibility to guide smart growth through reasonable regulations. She noted that while overly small signage limits could present challenges, businesses might consider placing signage on the building instead of covering windows. She added that law enforcement has raised concerns about fully covered windows, as they limit visibility into buildings and create potential safety risks. She stressed the need for balanced regulations that align with the city's vision.

Councilman Smith asked whether law enforcement is adequately trained to handle situations involving obstructed windows and business signage. Councilwoman NeSmith-Jackson responded that this had been confirmed at the previous meeting.

Ms. Angela Greene, Police Chief, explained that, from a public safety perspective, fully covered or heavily tinted windows make it more difficult for officers to assess situations before entering a building. She noted that visible windows provide a clearer understanding of potential risks, allowing for safer and more informed responses, and stated a preference for visibility over obstruction.

Councilman Braddock reiterated his concern with the ordinance's approach, suggesting it should focus on requiring a minimum amount of clear window space for visibility rather than strictly limiting how much



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signage can be used. He recommended defining an appropriate visibility standard and allowing businesses flexibility with the remaining space.

Councilman McKay clarified that the ordinance applies to window signage, not window tinting, which Mr. Dudley confirmed. He agreed with Councilwoman NeSmith-Jackson, expressing concern that the proposal represents unnecessary government regulation. While acknowledging the issue of visual clutter, he emphasized the importance of remaining pro-business and avoiding measures that could deter new businesses. Mr. Dudley noted the only cost involved would be the \$25 permit fee.

Pro tem Jebaily spoke in support of the ordinance, saying that clear regulations and guidelines can enhance quality of life, strengthen community identity, and do not discourage businesses from locating downtown.

Councilman McCall said that while regulations have their place, the current economic climate, particularly affordability challenges, makes this an inopportune time to introduce additional fees or requirements. He indicated he would not support the ordinance.

Mayor Barnes sought clarification on the purpose of the fee. Mr. Dudley explained it is tied to the permit process, noting that window signage is currently an allowed use. He added that Council could choose to keep it as an allowed use without a permit, while still enforcing guidelines through Code Enforcement if violations occur.

Councilman Smith asked whether 25% is a typical standard across municipalities. Mr. Dudley explained that regulations vary, some use a percentage of window area, others a maximum size per façade, but noted that 25% is a commonly used benchmark, though it can be adjusted. He added that the permit fee could be incorporated into a business's initial signage or use package as a one-time cost, unless additional signage is added later.

Councilwoman NeSmith-Jackson referenced examples from the agenda packet, saying the reduced signage appeared too small in practice. Mr. Dudley responded that businesses often compensate for smaller signage by enhancing font size, design, or imagery.

Councilman Braddock cautioned that without clear and specific language, business owners may find ways to work around the ordinance. He stressed the importance of clearly defining what is permitted to avoid loopholes and unintended alternatives.

Councilwoman NeSmith-Jackson added that some businesses intentionally use extensive window signage as a deterrent to theft, limiting visibility into the store as a protective measure.

Councilman McCall asked whether the ordinance would apply citywide or only downtown. Mr. Dudley confirmed it would apply to all commercial zoning districts. He noted that downtown does not currently have a specific requirement beyond existing code, though proposals are often reviewed by the Design Review Board.

Mayor Barnes reiterated the need to address what she described as a growing issue, again voicing support for the ordinance. She emphasized that without clear standards in place, there is a risk of unchecked and inconsistent practices.

Pro tem Jebaily asked Mr. Scotty Davis, City Manager, whether the item could be deferred and referred to the Business Development Committee for further review. Mr. Davis responded that it could, or



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alternatively be sent to the Planning Commission to explore revisions, such as defining a specific allowable signage area instead of using a percentage.

Councilman McKay sought confirmation that Bill No. 2026-09 had been deferred at the previous meeting, which was confirmed.

Pro tem Jebaily made a motion to defer Bill No. 2026-09 to allow for further review by either the Planning Commission or the Business Development Committee, with the goal of revising the ordinance to establish a specific allowable signage area rather than a percentage and Councilman Braddock seconded the motion.

Council voted (4-3) to defer Bill No. 2026-09 with Mayor Barnes, Pro tem Jebaily, Councilman Braddock and Councilman Smith voting in favor of the motion and Councilwoman NeSmith-Jackson, Councilman McCall and Councilman McKay voting against the motion. Bill No. 2026-09 was deferred.

**Bill No. 2026-11 – First Reading**

**An Ordinance to annex and zone RG-3 the property located at 115 East Red Bud Lane, identified as Florence County Tax Map Number 00152-01-112.**

Councilman Braddock made a motion to pass Bill No. 2026-11 on first reading and Councilwoman NeSmith-Jackson seconded the motion.

Mr. Jerry Dudley, Director of Planning, explained that the property is currently city-owned and serves as the site of one of the city's water production plants. Due to recent annexations, it now borders the city limits, and staff is proposing to formally annex and zone it as General Residential to align with the surrounding properties.

Council voted unanimously (7-0) in favor of the motion. Bill No. 2026-11 was passed on first reading.

**Bill No. 2026-12 – First Reading**

**An Ordinance to annex and zone RG-2 the property located at 875 Stratton Drive, identified as Florence County Tax Map Number 00751-01-113.**

Councilwoman NeSmith-Jackson made a motion to pass Bill No. 2026-12 on first reading and Councilman McCall seconded the motion.

Mr. Jerry Dudley, Director of Planning, explained that this item is similar to Bill No. 2026-11 but pertains to a different location. He noted that recent annexations have created continuity for the property, which is the site of a city water treatment plant, and that the proposed zoning aligns with the surrounding residential properties. Planning Commission voted unanimously (6-0) to recommend the annexation and zoning request.

Council voted unanimously (7-0) in favor of the motion. Bill No. 2026-12 was passed on first reading.

**Bill No. 2026-13 – First Reading**

**An Ordinance to establish an Opioid Response Commission for the review and recommendation of opioid settlement funding distributions.**

Councilman Smith made a motion to pass Bill No. 2026-13 on first reading and Councilman Braddock seconded the motion.



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Mr. Glenn Bodenheimer, Finance Director, explained that the ordinance would establish a five-member advisory commission appointed through the Finance, Audit and Budget Committee and approved by Council. He said the commission would include members with expertise in areas such as public health, substance abuse treatment, law enforcement, emergency management services (EMS), behavioral health, and community advocacy. Its role would be to review funding applications for opioid settlement funds, ensure alignment with the Community Action Plan presented to Council in December 2025, and recommend annual funding allocations to the Committee for Council's final approval, promoting transparency, accountability, and alignment with established priorities.

Councilman Braddock made a motion to move Bill No. 2026-13 to Executive Session and Councilman Smith seconded the motion.

Without objection, this item will be discussed in Executive Session.

**Bill No. 2026-14 – First Reading**

**An Ordinance to amend the declining rate schedule for business licenses effective January 1, 2027.**

Councilman McCall made a motion to pass Bill No. 2026-14 on first reading and Councilman Braddock seconded the motion.

Mr. Glenn Bodenheimer, Finance Director, said the proposed ordinance was previously discussed at the January Budget Work Session and would take effect on January 1, 2027. He explained that the update is intended to modernize the City's declining rate structure, improve fairness across income tiers, better align with peer cities in South Carolina, and support small businesses while maintaining a competitive environment. Mr. Bodenheimer reviewed the current structure, noting it includes large brackets and steep discounts, with reductions beginning early and accelerating quickly. Florence's model is among the most aggressive in the state, more comparable to larger economies like Myrtle Beach and North Charleston, despite having a different economic base. He added that the current system disproportionately benefits larger businesses, shifting more of the burden to small and mid-sized local businesses, especially since over 2,000 of the city's approximately 2,700 licensed businesses never reach the discounted tiers. Mr. Bodenheimer said the proposed structure would introduce smaller, more gradual brackets, progressing in \$2 million increments up to \$7 million, and cap the maximum discount at 60% beyond that point. This approach would create a more balanced, small business-friendly system while still encouraging growth and remaining competitive with peer cities. He noted the proposal also aligns with the Municipal Association of South Carolina's model ordinance and has been recommended for approval by the Finance, Audit and Budget Committee.

Councilman Smith thanked Mr. Bodenheimer for his work in making the structure more equitable, particularly for small businesses. Mr. Bodenheimer added that the proposal reflects a collaborative effort with Business Licensing staff and builds on discussions that have taken place over several years.

Council voted unanimously (7-0) in favor of the motion. Bill No. 2026-14 was passed on first reading.

**Bill No. 2026-15 – First Reading**

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

Pro tem Jebaily made a motion to pass Bill No. 2026-15 on first reading and Councilwoman NeSmith-Jackson seconded the motion.



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Mr. Glenn Bodenheimer, Finance Director, explained that the proposed ordinance would amend the FY 2025–2026 budget to appropriate \$300,000 from the Fund Balance for the installation of above-ground fuel tanks at the City’s Marion Street location. He noted that while tanks already exist on site, the funding would support rehabilitation and the addition of diesel capacity. Mr. Bodenheimer said the goal is to improve operational efficiency and resiliency. Currently, the City’s only diesel tank is located at Public Works on McCurdy Road, requiring vehicles and equipment working downtown to travel there for refueling. Adding a diesel tank at the Marion Street site would reduce downtime and provide redundancy in the event of emergencies such as severe weather.

Council voted unanimously (7-0) in favor of the motion. Bill No. 2026-15 was passed on first reading.

**Bill No. 2026-16 – First Reading**

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

Councilwoman NeSmith-Jackson made a motion to move Bill No. 2026-16 to Executive Session and Councilman Braddock seconded the motion.

Without objection, this item will be discussed in Executive Session.

**Bill No. 2026-17 – First Reading**

**An Ordinance authorizing the execution of an amendment to extend the Lease Agreement between the City of Florence and Pee Dee Healthy Start, Inc.**

Mayor Barnes said this item may be discussed in Executive Session.

Without objection, this item will be discussed in Executive Session.

**INTRODUCTION OF RESOLUTIONS**

**Resolution No. 2026-15**

**A Resolution to proclaim April as Fair Housing Month in the City of Florence.**

Pro tem Jebaily made a motion to pass Resolution No. 2026-15 and Councilman McCall seconded the motion.

Mayor Barnes and presented the Resolution to Pamela Jacobs, Chief Executive Officer of the Pee Dee Realtors Association. Ms. Jacobs thanked Council for the recognition.

Council voted unanimously (6-0) in favor of the motion, with Councilman Smith having not yet arrived. Resolution No. 2026-15 was passed.

**Resolution No. 2026-16**

**A Resolution of Recognition honoring Donnie Carter for his years of service on the Florence Veterans Park Committee.**

Councilwoman NeSmith-Jackson made a motion to pass Resolution No. 2026-16 and Councilman Braddock seconded the motion.



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Mayor Barnes and Councilman Braddock presented the Resolution to Donnie Carter. Mr. Carter thanked Council for the recognition.

Council voted unanimously (6-0) in favor of the motion, with Councilman Smith having not yet arrived. Resolution No. 2026-16 was passed.

**Resolution No. 2026-17**

**A Resolution of Recognition for The Kings Academy for winning the 2025 SCISA 2A Golf Championship.**

Councilwoman NeSmith-Jackson made a motion to pass Resolution No. 2026-17 and Councilman Braddock seconded the motion.

Mayor Barnes, Councilman McKay and Councilman Braddock presented the Resolution to The Kings Academy Golf Team. The Kings Academy Golf Team thanked Council for the recognition.

Council voted unanimously (6-0) in favor of the motion, with Councilman Smith having not yet arrived. Resolution No. 2026-17 was passed.

**Resolution No. 2026-18**

**A Resolution of Recognition for The Kings Academy for winning the 2025 SCISA 2A Volleyball Championship.**

Councilwoman NeSmith-Jackson made a motion to pass Resolution No. 2026-18 and Councilman McCall seconded the motion.

Mayor Barnes, Councilman McKay and Councilman Braddock presented The Kings Academy Volleyball Team. The Kings Academy Volleyball Team thanked Council for the recognition.

Council voted unanimously (7-0) in favor of the motion. Resolution No. 2026-18 was passed.

**Resolution No. 2026-19**

**A Resolution of Recognition for the City of Florence Gymnastics State Champions.**

Councilwoman NeSmith-Jackson made a motion to pass Resolution No. 2026-19 and Pro tem Jebaily seconded the motion.

Mayor Barnes presented the Resolution to the City of Florence Gymnastics Team. Liame Frewin, Gymnastics Coordinator, thanked Council for the recognition.

Council voted unanimously (7-0) in favor of the motion. Resolution No. 2026-19 was passed.

**Resolution No. 2026-20**

**A Resolution of Recognition for FLO-TOWN United Classy Queens for their contributions to the community.**

Councilman Braddock made a motion to pass Resolution No. 2026-20 and Councilman McCall seconded the motion.



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Mayor Barnes and Councilwoman NeSmith-Jackson presented the Resolution to FLO-TOWN United Classy Queens. FLO-TOWN United Classy Queens thanked Council for the recognition.

Council voted unanimously (7-0) in favor of the motion. Resolution No. 2026-20 was passed.

**Resolution No. 2026-21**

**A Resolution to proclaim May as Small Business Month in the City of Florence.**

Without objection, Resolution No. 2026-21 was deferred.

**Resolution No. 2026-22**

**A Resolution authorizing and approving the acceptance of loan assistance monies from the State Revolving Fund Drinking Water Project to fund a PFAS study, and other matters related thereto.**

Councilman McCall made a motion to pass Resolution No. 2026-22 and Councilwoman NeSmith-Jackson seconded the motion.

Council voted unanimously (7-0) in favor of the motion. Resolution No. 2026-22 was passed.

**Resolution No. 2026-23**

**A Resolution authorizing and approving the acceptance of loan assistance monies from the State Revolving Fund Clean Water Project to fund the Jeffries Creek Sewer Phase I project, and other matters related thereto.**

Pro tem Jebaily made a motion to pass Resolution No. 2026-23 and Councilwoman NeSmith-Jackson seconded the motion.

Mr. Michael Hemingway, Director of Utility Planning and Economic Development, provided an update on the city's sewer expansion project, explaining that Phase I includes installation of an 8-inch sewer main extending from South Cashua Drive along Fairway to the city's wastewater treatment facility, ultimately transitioning to a 54-inch line. He noted that in gravity sewer construction, work begins at the lowest elevation and progresses upstream, and that the project includes approximately 11,000 linear feet of new pipe installation.

Pro tem Jebaily asked for clarification on costs, confirming that Phase I totals \$24.7 million, which Mr. Hemingway confirmed. Pro tem Jebaily further confirmed the overall project cost is approximately \$25 million and expressed appreciation that the state is providing \$24.7 million in funding for the project.

Councilman Braddock inquired about incentives for local contractors during the bidding process. Mr. Scotty Davis, City Manager, explained that contractors within the City of Florence and Florence County are given preference and may match the lowest bid if they are within a 3%–5% range, allowing them to be awarded the project.

Councilman McKay asked whether the incentive applies only to City and Florence County contractors or includes those statewide. Mr. Davis confirmed it is limited to contractors within the city and county. Councilman McKay asked whether the program could be expanded to include state contractors while still prioritizing local firms and sought clarification on whether awarded contractors for this project were out of state. Mr. Hemingway responded that the project has not yet gone out for bid and is currently awaiting final approval from the South Carolina Department of Environmental Services (DES), with bidding anticipated in July.



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Mayor Barnes thanked city staff for securing the funding and asked Mr. Hemingway to outline the overall project development process. Mr. Hemingway explained that initial engineering work began in 2021 with field assessments conducted by the city’s engineering team. Following those assessments, the state permitting process was initiated. After permit approval, the design phase began and took approximately 2.5 years to complete. Additional approvals were required from CSX and the South Carolina Department of Transportation (SCDOT). He noted that once all approvals are finalized, DES will authorize the project to move forward to construction.

Council voted unanimously (7-0) in favor of the motion. Resolution No. 2026-23 was passed.

**Resolution No. 2026-24**

**A Resolution authorizing the execution of an intergovernmental agreement between the City of Florence, South Carolina and School District No. 1 of Florence County, South Carolina for the governance of the Aquatics Center.**

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.

**Utilities Update**

Mr. Michael Hemingway, Director of Utility Planning and Economic Development, provided an update on the city’s utility projects. He reported that, in coordination with city staff and consulting engineers AECOM and CDM Smith, there are currently 16 water-related projects underway across three phases: seven in planning, four in design, and five under construction. For sewer projects, three are in the planning phase, two are in design, and one is under construction. Additionally, there are six stormwater projects, with two in planning, two in design, and two under construction. He noted that CDM Smith is working with contractor Wharton Smith on the expansion of the surface water treatment plant, with initial work such as plans and submittals already in progress. Other ongoing efforts include infrastructure development for the Florence Global Technology Park, located between Williamson Road and Highway 327, and the Jeffries Creek Sanitary Sewer Interceptor. In total, there are 31 utility-related projects currently being managed by city staff and consulting engineers.

Councilman Braddock asked whether this information is available to the public. Mr. Hemingway said that many of the water-related projects are accessible through the city’s water portal and added that staff is developing a sewer portal to provide similar access for sewer projects.

Councilman McKay referenced a recent incident involving a sewer backup into a resident’s home and asked whether current projects would address such issues. Mr. Hemingway responded that the specific issue, caused by a collapsed manhole, has been repaired. Mr. Ron Scott, City Attorney, advised that matters involving specific individuals and the city are more appropriately addressed in Executive Session rather than in open session.



## **CITY MANAGER'S REPORT**

Mr. Scotty Davis, City Manager, recognized Mr. Adam Swindler, Director of Public Works, for participating in this year's Dancing For Our Future Stars, sponsored by The School Foundation, noting that he received both the Most Entertaining Award and the People's Choice Award. He also reported that on April 11<sup>th</sup>, the City unveiled a new community mural at the City Center Market, funded by the South Carolina Arts Commission, and acknowledged Mrs. Amanda Pope, Director of Marketing/Communications and Municipal Services, along with city staff for their efforts in securing the grant. Mr. Davis announced that the City of Florence, in partnership with Duke Energy, Keep Florence Beautiful, Naturally Outdoors, and the South Carolina Forestry Commission, will host an Earth Day Native Tree Giveaway on April 29 from 4:00 p.m. to 7:00 p.m. at Naturally Outdoors. He further reported that approximately \$18 million has been secured for the Levy Park expansion project, with construction drawings about 90% complete. The project is expected to go out for bid in early fall, with completion anticipated by the end of September 2027. Lastly, Mr. Davis acknowledged Chief Angela Greene of the Florence Police Department, noting this was her first Council meeting, and announced that Mr. Glenn Bodenheimer has been officially promoted to Finance Director, thanking him for his hard work.

## **MAYORAL REPORT**

Mayor Barnes expressed excitement for the Levy Park expansion project and recognized Pro tem Jebaily and Councilman Smith for their leadership with this project, as well as city staff for their contributions. She also shared that she was selected to participate in the Riley Mayors Design Fellowship, noting that Florence was highlighted and recognized, and she thanked Council and staff for their continued efforts on behalf of the city. Lastly, Mayor Barnes shared that she, along with Mr. Davis and others, recently took a canoe trip down Jeffries Creek, describing it as a valuable community asset and expressing her support for its continued preservation and maintenance.

## **COMMITTEE REPORTS**

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

Pro tem Jebaily reported that the committee did not meet in March. He spoke on the updates occurring with the city's groundwater treatment plants.

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

Mayor Barnes reported the committee did not meet in March.

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

Councilman McCall reported that the committee discussed the business license declining rate schedule. The committee also reviewed the budget amendments that will be discussed in Executive Session and the Opioid Response Commission ordinance.

## **EXECUTIVE SESSION**

Mayor Barnes said Council will be entering into Executive Session for a discussion and receipt of legal advice regarding Bill No. 2026-13, the receipt of legal advice regarding Bill No. 2026-16, for a discussion and receipt of legal advice regarding proposed contractual arrangement for the lease of property as referenced in Bill No. 2026-17, for a discussion and receipt of legal advice regarding proposed



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contractual arrangements between the City of Florence and Florence School District One, as referenced in Resolution No. 2026-24, for a discussion regarding appointments to city Boards and Commissions, for a discussion and receipt of legal advice regarding proposed contractual arrangements for the acquisition of property and for a personnel matter regarding the reappointment of judges.

Councilwoman NeSmith-Jackson 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 3:18pm.

Councilwoman McCall made a motion to resume open session and Councilwoman NeSmith-Jackson seconded the motion. The motion carried. Council resumed open session at 4:34pm and took action on the following items:

**Bill No. 2026-13 – First Reading**

**An Ordinance to establish an Opioid Response Commission for the review and recommendation of opioid settlement funding distributions.**

The motion by Councilman Smith to pass Bill No. 2026-13 on first reading and seconded by Councilman Braddock is on the table.

Councilwoman NeSmith-Jackson made a motion to amend Bill No. 2026-13 to add the following language under Exhibit B, Section 3 entitled “Membership”: “Members shall be required to publicly disclose affiliations with organizations applying for funding” and Councilman Smith seconded the motion.

The motion to amend was passed unanimously (7-0).

Councilman McCall made a motion to pass Bill No. 2026-13, as amended, on first reading and Councilman Braddock seconded the motion.

Council voted unanimously (7-0) in favor of the motion, as amended. Bill No. 2026-13 was passed, as amended.

**Bill No. 2026-16 – First Reading**

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

Councilman McCall made a motion to defer Bill No. 2026-16 and Councilman Smith seconded the motion.

Council voted unanimously (7-0) in favor of the motion. Bill No. 2026-16 was deferred.

**Bill No. 2026-17 – First Reading**

**An Ordinance authorizing the execution of an amendment to extend the Lease Agreement between the City of Florence and Pee Dee Healthy Start, Inc.**

Councilman Braddock made a motion to defer Bill No. 2026-17 and Councilman Smith seconded the motion.

Council voted unanimously (7-0) in favor of the motion. Bill No. 2026-17 was deferred.



**Resolution No. 2026-24**

**A Resolution authorizing the execution of an intergovernmental agreement between the City of Florence, South Carolina and School District No. 1 of Florence County, South Carolina for the governance of the Aquatics Center.**

Pro tem Jebaily made a motion to defer Resolution No. 2026-24 and Councilman Smith seconded the motion.

Council voted unanimously (7-0) in favor of the motion. Resolution No. 2026-24 was deferred.

**Appointments to Boards and Commissions**

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

**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.

**Florence City-County Convention and Visitors Commission**

Councilman McCall made a motion to appoint Chad Patterson for a term of 3 years, Grey Raines for a term of 1 year, Arnette James for a term of 2 years and Hunter Morgan for a term of 3 years to the Florence City-County Convention and Visitors Commission and Pro tem Jebaily seconded the motion.

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

**Opioid Response Commission**

Councilman McCall made a motion to appoint Dr. Brian Hanna from Freedom Family Medicine, Cassie Love from The Hope Center, Officer Brian Hartwell from Florence County Sheriff's Office, Corbert Stone from Reformers Anonymous and Cedric Evans from Pee Dee Mental Health to the Opioid Response Commission and Councilman Smith seconded the motion.

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

**Reappointment of Judges**

Councilwoman NeSmith-Jackson made a motion to reappoint Judge Alesha Lewis, Judge Nick Lewis, Judge Edgar Wilcox, and Judge Marsh Julian and Councilman McCall seconded the motion.

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



**FLORENCE CITY COUNCIL  
REGULAR MEETING – APRIL 13, 2026**

**ADJOURN**

Without objection, the April 13, 2026 Regular meeting of City Council was adjourned at 4:41pm.

Dated this 11<sup>th</sup> day of May 2026.

Respectfully Submitted:

Casey C. Moore  
Municipal Clerk