



SPECIAL CITY COUNCIL MEETING -- WORKSHOP

5:00pm, Tuesday, July 8, 2025

City Hall Council Chambers

1207 Palm Boulevard, Isle of Palms, SC

MINUTES

1. Call to Order

Present: Council members Streetman, Anderson, Pierce Ward, Hahn, Carroll, and Mayor Pounds

Absent: Council members Bogosian and Miars

Staff Present: Administrator Kerr, various department heads

2. Citizens' Comments

Mr. Josh Hooser, 6 Sand Wedge Lane, encouraged City Council to address some issues in the proposed hate crime legislation prior to voting on it. He mentioned that South Carolina is only one of 2 states that does not have hate crime legislation. He noted that there are crimes without sentences should be addressed. He expressed concern about the proposal that fines for these crimes be given to a non-profit organization as such a measure could be viewed as funneling money. He suggested Council look at how this ordinance would work with the current ordinances on the books. He also encouraged them to be clear about the message they wish to send with this legislation.

3. Special Presentations -- none

4. Dashboard of City Operations and Short-Term Rental Report

Administrator Kerr said there are 3 vacancies in City Hall, 3 in Public Safety, 1 in the Fire Department, and one in the Recreation Department.

He reported that he is looking to outsource some of the work in the Building Department due to the vacancies, specifically inspections. This would be for the short term and is not uncommon in smaller municipalities. He pointed out that some violations caught by the current building inspector could go unnoticed by an outside firm who is unfamiliar with the city.

There are currently 1,640 active short-term rental licenses. He expects the number to go up. There were 1,610 at this time last year.

5. Departmental Reports

6. Financial Review

Financial Statements and project worksheets

Director Hamilton said there is \$15.3 million in the General Fund, which is 103% of the budget, and there are still outstanding tourism funds. \$15.3 million (95% of budget) has been spent. Invoices are still coming in and a partial payroll will be accrued into FY25. The audit will begin in October.

She noted that the interest rate continues to decline. However, the City earned \$2.2 million in interest in FY25.

She has reached out to the County for clarification about the \$54,000 received in Municipal ATAX funds as it seems extremely low. State ATAX, the County pass-through, and LOST have not been received for the last quarter. Hospitality taxes are tracking 2% higher than FY24.

7. Procurement

- i. **Purchase of ATVs and trailer \$20,364.75- Aiken Motorcycle/ state contract- FY26 Capital Budget, \$22,000**
- ii. **Purchase of police truck- \$48,577 Santee Automotive/ state contract- FY26 Capital Budget, \$67,000**
- iii. **Purchase of two police SUVs- \$46,440 each- Santee Automotive/ state contract- FY26 Capital Budget, \$64,000 each**
- iv. **Replacement of wrecked patrol vehicle \$46,440- Santee Automotive/ state contract (unbudgeted- \$15,000 anticipated from insurance)**

Administrator Kerr noted that three of the four procurement requests are budgeted expenses. Chief Cornett explained the circumstances of the accident that lead to the wrecked patrol vehicle and why the City anticipates only receiving \$15,000 for it. Administrator Kerr said the difference between the insurance and the replacement cost will be accounted for by the time City Council votes on these items at the end of the month.

8. Capital Projects Update

Administrator Kerr reported that only three hold-harmless agreements remain outstanding for the Waterway Boulevard project, but that all property owners indicated a willingness to sign the agreements. He is working with Wild Dunes owners and contractors to get updated pricing for the drainage project as there have been modifications due to the timing of the work. He anticipates having those numbers by the City Council meeting. Council Member Pierce asked for updated costs for the entire project.

He has spoken with SCDOT regarding the maintenance of the drainage work at 41st Avenue, and he said they have agreed to maintain the infrastructure the City will install beginning this fall.

He added, "You will recall that this project was being done, kind of dovetailing in with a Water & Sewer [Commission] project. That Water & Sewer project came in, I think, twice, two times

over budget. I think the budget was \$5 million and it came back at \$10 million. So the Water & Sewer Commission is kind of scrambling on either scaling that project back or trying to get additional grant money to complete it. So we are a little bit uncertain if the Water & Sewer project will happen.”

The City has the State permit for the marina dredging project and is awaiting the USACE permit.

The Emergency Vehicle Beach Access Path at the County park is functional but is waiting for the electrical connection to the gate and for the gate to be programmed.

The shoal management project is now complete. There was some damage to the area following this weekend’s storm. Mr. Traynum will continue to provide updates on the area.

The work on the 21st Avenue sidewalk began yesterday and is anticipated to take 3-4 weeks to complete.

9. Strategic Plan Policy Initiatives and Priorities

A. Livability

i. Discussion of engaging a traffic engineer to conduct a traffic study

Administrator Kerr said this initiative came from the Public Safety Committee. Stantec has provided a proposal of \$29,500 to send up drones on a busy weekend to capture areas where traffic leads to gridlock and to offer potential solutions for its prevention and or easier traffic flow. One consideration would be to ask SCDOT for permission to treat known busy weekends like a college football game and allow the City to set up the Connector with two lanes going out. Significant manpower along with the cooperation of Mt. Pleasant and Charleston County would need to be available to effectuate such a plan.

Council Member Anderson agrees the proposal is expensive. She would like to know if Stantec’s plan includes turning movement counts and a signal timing analysis.

Chief Cornett agreed significant amounts of manpower would be needed to make such a plan work well. He also stated that changing the light function will cause more issues.

Council members discussed the need for Mt. Pleasant and Charleston County to be part of the conversation and to share in the cost of the study and or the manpower to make any plans work to everyone’s benefit. Council Member Hahn said a traffic study will bring those agencies to the table for a discussion.

Administrator Kerr will ask Stantec if turning movement counts and a signal timing analysis are included in their proposal and bring that information to the July Council meeting.

ii. Discussion of shark fishing ordinance

Administrator Kerr said the proposed ordinance prohibits chumming for shark, trot lines, intentional shark fishing, and the use of drones to bait for sharks as well as restricts the hours for shark fishing to 5pm to 10am between Memorial Day and Labor Day.

Council Member Hahn expressed his concern about the ordinance. He does not like the definition used for chumming because it “excludes chicken and only talks about chopped or ground bait being poured into the water.” Regarding Section E, he said, “placement of natural bait upon a hook and line is not prohibited. That’s what I just described. That is what these people are doing. They are taking a big hunk of meat, they are putting it on a hook and line, and they are taking it way offshore and dropping it.”

He does not believe the restrictions are helpful since there are many people who swim between 5pm and 10am and outside of the Memorial Day to Labor Day timeframe. He believes people should not be fishing for shark in areas where people swim. He also would like to see a provision that dictates the line should be cut if there is a shark on the line.

Council Member Ward believes the ordinance needs more work. Chief Cornett said the Public Safety Committee’s intent with the ordinance is to allow shark fishing within some parameters.

The ordinance will return to the Public Safety Committee for more work.

iii. Discussion of hate crime legislation

Mayor Pounds said he does not see an issue with passing this ordinance. Administrator Kerr said it was modeled after the one proposed by MASC and the one used by the Town of Summerville.

Chief Cornett would like for the City Attorney to review the parts about fines and community service.

Administrator Kerr will have the City Attorney look at the Chief’s concerns and bring a final draft to the July Council meeting.

iv. Discussion of changing parking requirements at 41st Avenue & City Marina

Administrator Kerr said, “This is a housekeeping provision. The City’s parking standards, codes allow for trailer parking of residents in the area that used to be ditched between Waterway Boulevard and the Marina. That area specifically, trailers could pull alongside of it, and the provision made sense at the time. Since that time, we have changed the orientation of those parking spaces to be perpendicular to the road so that a car with a trailer or truck with a trailer cannot pull in perpendicular and keep the trailer out of the road. And if they park parallel, they are using up 4 or 5 different spaces. We did have an incident where this happened. I don’t think it was residents that did it, but it elevated itself to show us that we do have this issue in the ordinance where it specifically allows trailers in those spaces that don’t fit trailers. So this would clean that up.”

B. Environmental – Update on offshore drilling

Mayor Pounds said another 60-day comment period should open regarding offshore drilling in light of opposition letters being sent by Congresswoman Mace, the SC Beach Advocates, and Senator Campsen.

He explained, “If South Carolina stays in the mix of being considered for offshore drilling, there will be another 60-day comment period in the future where we can take more Council action.”

C. Public Services

D. Personnel – discussion of employee vacation buyout policy

Administrator Kerr said this policy is already “baked into” the FY26 budget. It will increase the amount of leave that an employee could cash out from \$1,000 to \$2,000. This change will need to be made in the employee handbook and approved by Council.

Council Member Hahn expressed concern about employees not taking vacation. HR Officer Ladd said the policy requires that the employee have 10 vacation days available to them before taking a buyout.

E. Other items for discussion – discussion of revised Ordinance 2025-05 amending the trigger for business license revocation

Administrator Kerr noted that the revised ordinance removes the garbage can violation altogether and provides a clean slate from violations for all short-term rentals. Council Member Pierce noted a change needing to be made in the title of the ordinance.

Second Reading for Ordinance 2025-05 will be heard at the July Council meeting.

10. Legislative Report – update on kickoff meeting with Thorn Run Partners

Mayor Pounds said funding needs were discussed at a recent meeting with representatives from the City, the IOP Water & Sewer Commission, and Thorn Run Partners.

He said his takeaways from the meeting included the need for significantly more pre- and post-request documentation and follow-up reporting which could be a strain on staff. He added, “The other was kind of the timing of funding, timing of projects. The current administration wants a kind of local cost share arrangement, which makes total sense from a buy-in standpoint. But at the same time, you want shovel-ready projects. Well, that’s a chicken and the egg conversation. To go through all the permitting, when you think about what we have to do, our design and engineering to permitting to being ready to put a shovel in the ground, you better already have funding lined up. Well, at a federal level, it sounds like they want proof of concert, a completely designed project ready.” He believes the federal lobbyist will help “plug the funding hole.”

Administrator Kerr said the Federal government also wants the money spent within the year it is allocated, which is difficult.

11. Adjournment

The next City Council Workshop will be held on Tuesday, August 12, 2025 at 5pm.

Council Member Ward made a motion to adjourn the meeting, and Council Member Hahn seconded the motion. The meeting was adjourned at 6:43pm.

Respectfully submitted,

Nicole DeNeane
City Clerk