



## **SPECIAL CITY COUNCIL MEETING**

**10:00am, Tuesday, January 13, 2026**

**1207 Palm Boulevard, Isle of Palms, SC and**

**broadcasted live on YouTube: <https://www.youtube.com/user/cityofisleofpalms>**

## **MINUTES**

### **1. Call to order**

Present: Council members Ward, Carroll, Bogosian, Miars, Miller, Carroll, Pierce, and Cohen, and Mayor Pounds

Staff Present: Administrator Kerr, Deputy Administrator Kuester

### **2. Strategic Plan Review**

Council members affirmed the continued applicability of the strategic plan. Administrator Kerr noted that the intent is to review and update the Strategic Plan in 2027 through a formal process.

Council Member Miars would like Council to find a way to roll the other plans (Comprehensive Plan, Community Enrichment Plan, etc.) into the Strategic Plan. Council Member Pierce would like new initiatives to tie back to the Strategic Plan.

Discussion ensued as to how to prioritize and implement the initiatives that have come out of the various plans. Administrator Kerr shared that tourism-related staff position has been transformed to that of a Public Information Officer who will post updates on City initiatives as a higher cadence. He will instruct the new PIO to update the Community Enrichment Plan on IOP.net. Staff will continue to review all plans to determine which suggestions can be rolled into others and into the Comprehensive Plan. Council Member Miars added that any initiative that might be dismissed should be discussed by City Council.

### **3. Current Projects Review/Update**

Administrator Kerr provided updates on current City projects. The Waterway Boulevard project is continuing as planned. The latest price tag for the project is \$6.3 million, which includes \$500,000 in soft costs. Going forward, soft costs will be included in the total cost of all projects.

Phase 4 drainage project is delayed until next winter. Project estimates will be updated.

The Public Services & Facilities Committee continues to work through an agreed-upon parking lot arrangement with the restaurant tenants. Upon City Council's approval of the scope of the project, staff will work with the tenants and legal counsel to amend the lease agreement.

The City received \$1.5 million from the State for the marina dredging project, and the City's permits are in place. The City has made efforts to work with the surrounding neighbors to share

in the mobility costs. The other stakeholders may be a year away from being ready. City Council will also need to identify a disposal site. Administrator Kerr will ask ATM to update the cost estimates for this project.

All Council-authorized emergency beach work is in place. Mr. Traynum reported that the shoal in Wild Dunes is not spreading north as much as anticipated. Ocean Club owners have been notified of that development.

Ahtna has been given authorization to begin round-the-clock operations. They are trying to be out of the way by February when the second contractor, Cottrell, is expected to begin their operations.

Administrator Kerr reported on a phone call with Mr. Traynum from January 12 when Mr. Traynum stated that new US Fish & Wildlife wildlife protection guidelines may create conflicts with beach renourishment timelines for the upcoming large project. It may be necessary to work on the inlets, then pause work and renourish the non-inlet spaces later. Mr. Traynum will continue to work with US Fish & Wildlife. Mobilization costs could increase due to these new guidelines.

Further work regarding underground power lines will be processed through the Public Services & Facilities Committee. Up for consideration and discussion is the development of a master plan for undergrounding utilities across the island.

The City has told Charleston County that they would like the bike and pedestrian improvements for Palm Boulevard to be considered for a TST-funded project. Administrator Kerr noted that the County is handling TST funding differently this year. City Council will hear a presentation about it at their February workshop.

#### **4. Discussion of new initiatives**

City Council asked for a one-page communication strategy to include outflow networks and frequency of communications. Council Member Streetman suggested the use of response templates for events such as storms and other common events so that the City reaction is more proactive than reactive.

Council Member Miars asked that meeting agendas be linked on the calendar.

Council members proposed quarterly town hall meetings at the Recreation Center.

Discussion ensued about the rebranding efforts through the CVB. It was suggested that the City use a portion of the 30% funds to hire an agency to handle the rebranding prioritizing IOP as a family-friendly destination. This rebranding effort should also be part of the new PIO's job. Additionally, Council Member Cohen suggested a Council liaison be appointed to the ATAX Committee.

Council members discussed adding reports from Committee chairs back to the City Council agenda. This matter will be discussed at the February workshop.

Council Member Bogosian suggested staff research how AI can be used to help expand staff capabilities without expanding staff. This matter will be on a future Administration Committee meeting agenda.

Council members briefly discussed the redesign of the IOP Connector. Administrator Kerr reminded the Council that without buy-in from the Town of Mt. Pleasant, SCDOT will not be making changes to the Connector. The matter will be addressed in a future Public Safety Committee meeting.

Administrator Kerr shared an annual calendar of meetings prepared by staff. He said it is better for staff workflow and planning purposes as well as for public knowledge to abide by this calendar as closely as possible.

Allowable purposes for the Recreation Center will be a topic on a future Public Services & Facilities Committee agenda.

Council Member Pierce said the City's organization will be discussed by the Administration Committee to see if it still fits the City's current needs.

Discussion ensued about the formation of a new standing Finance subcommittee made up of three Council members. The matter will be discussed at a future Council meeting. Administrator Kerr added that there will need to be an ordinance change in order for this to happen.

Council Member Miller said the Administration Committee has already begun a review of the ethics and code of conduct for the City. She would like someone from MASC to review these topics with City Council.

Council Member Cohen suggested a review of City Code. Administrator Kerr said outside firms typically perform this kind of work and report back on duplications, references, etc.

Council would like the recommendations of the Beach Ad Hoc Preservation Committee distributed at the next workshop. Administrator Kerr pointed out that five of the recommendations need City Council direction.

##### **5. Discussion of potential threats to revenue, expenses, projects, operations**

Council discussed their concerns about City revenues declining. Council Member Pierce noted escalating expenses, the cost of the upcoming large renourishment project, and decreasing interest rates affecting interest income as areas of concern.

Mayor Pounds said municipalities are "legislatively locked down." He hopes the Beach Advocates group can work with the State to find additional financial levers the City can use to pay for beach-related efforts.

Administrator Kerr suggested that the State's budget surplus could be a source of income.

##### **6. Discussion of state legislative opportunities/concerns**

Council Member Ward suggested inviting the City's County Council representative to a future meeting to discuss ways to engage County Council in beach restoration.

Administrator Kerr said staff is working with Thorn Run Partners to vet the idea of the City's water and sewer needs becoming a federal project. It is a long-range idea but one worth looking into.

Council Member Pierce suggested that the new Finance Committee look at the sources of City revenue and review downward pressures and increasing expenses.

#### **7. Discussion of beach funding options**

Administrator Kerr reviewed cost breakdowns of the upcoming beach renourishment project, including soft costs. There is a \$10 million funding gap. Bar charts projected the effects of securing that financial gap through various City funds. Administrator Kerr said drawing down these funds will also affect the amount of interest income generated by the City.

The installation of groins could extend the life of a renourishment project. Administrator Kerr said there is money in the budget assigned to a groin project, but he is waiting for the alternatives analysis from CS&E and Foth/Olsen to continue that discussion.

Council Member Bogosian suggested the City research taking on debt to close the funding gap. Mayor Pounds would like to see an analysis of debt vs. no debt for the project, adding that the City will have some debt rolling off in the next few years.

Administrator Kerr shared historical cost-sharing factors and options from the previous two renourishments. Council discussed the options for cost-sharing with the WDCA for the upcoming renourishment project. Staff will move forward with finalizing the details of the MOU with WDCA once City Council has identified which cost-sharing option they would like to effectuate.

#### **8. Miscellaneous**

Council Member Miller asked how sunshine laws apply to members of the same subcommittee. She also asked for Council members to vote yes or no on all votes and to not remain silent during voting. Council members discussed how voting should happen at Council meetings.

Administrator Kerr will send out the beach nourishment funding slides and a summary of action items from today's meeting with their corresponding committee and proposed agenda date.

Council Member Ward would like Council members to follow Robert's Rule of Order at all meetings. He suggested asking staff about agenda items prior to the meetings.

#### **9. Adjournment**

Council Member Ward made a motion to adjourn. Council Member Miller seconded the motion. The meeting was adjourned at :159pm.

Respectfully submitted,

Nicole DeNeane  
City Clerk