



**REGULAR MEETING OF FLORENCE CITY COUNCIL  
MONDAY, SEPTEMBER 11, 2023 – 1:00 P.M.  
CITY CENTER – COUNCIL CHAMBERS  
324 WEST EVANS STREET  
FLORENCE, SOUTH CAROLINA**

**MEMBERS PRESENT**

Mayor Teresa Myers Ervin, Mayor Pro Tempore George Jebaily, Councilwoman Lethonia Barnes, Councilman Chaquez T. McCall, Councilman Bryan A. Braddock, Councilwoman LaShonda NeSmith-Jackson and Councilman J. Lawrence Smith, II

**ALSO PRESENT**

Mr. Randall S. Osterman, City Manager; Mr. Scotty Davis, Deputy City Manager; Mr. Benjamin T. Zeigler, City Attorney; Mrs. Casey Moore, Municipal Clerk; Mr. Clint Moore, Assistant City Manager of Development; Chief Allen Heidler, Florence Police Department; Chief Shannon Tanner, Florence Fire Department; Mr. Michael Hemingway, Director of Utility Planning and Economic Development; Mr. Jerry Dudley, Director of Utilities; Mrs. Amanda Pope, Director of Marketing/Communications and Municipal Services; Mr. Adam Swindler, Director of Public Works and Mr. Kevin Rawlinson, Chief Financial Officer

**MEDIA PRESENT**

Mr. Christian Smith with the Florence Morning News and Mr. Seth Taylor with the Post and Courier were 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**

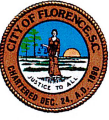
Mayor Ervin called the September 11, 2023 regular meeting of Florence City Council to order at 1:00 p.m.

**INVOCATION**

Mayor Ervin gave the invocation for the meeting. The pledge of allegiance to the American Flag followed the invocation.

**APPROVAL OF MINUTES**

Councilwoman Barnes made a motion to adopt the minutes of the August 14, 2023 Regular Meeting and Councilwoman NeSmith-Jackson seconded the motion. The minutes were unanimously adopted.



**ADDENDUM TO THE AGENDA**

**Resolution No. 2023-42**

**A Resolution of Recognition for Pastor Ralph Canty, Sr.**

Councilwoman Barnes made a motion to add Resolution No. 2023-42 to the agenda and Pro tem Jebaily seconded the motion. Council voted unanimously (7-0) to add Resolution No. 2023-42 to the September 11, 2023 City Council meeting agenda.

**MOMENT OF SILENCE**

Mayor Ervin called for a moment of silence in remembrance of 9/11.

**APPEARANCES BEFORE COUNCIL**

**Bryan and Jody Ransom**

Bryan and Jody Ransom appeared before Council to make a presentation regarding One Table Florence. Mr. Ransom said One Table started in Aiken, SC and has made its way to Florence. One Table Florence is a Thanksgiving community event that will bring the community together at one table for a holiday meal. This year, One Table Florence will be located in Timrod Park on Thanksgiving Day from 11:00am to 1:00pm and is free to all attendees. Mrs. Ransom spoke of other various partnerships and collaborations and asked the City for their support. Support from the City will provide the necessary infrastructure, resources and coordination to ensure the event is a success.

Mayor Ervin asked what their fundraising goal is and Mrs. Ransom replied they would like to raise \$30,000. Pro tem Jebaily said it would be helpful if they could provide a budget of their expected expenditures and contributions. Pro tem Jebaily also advised the Ransoms to speak with Chris Handley with Helping Florence Flourish.

Councilman McCall asked where this event originated. Mr. Ransom said Aiken has been doing this event for over two decades and Mrs. Ransom volunteered at their event to learn the process of creating One Table with the intent to hold the event somewhere else and Florence was chosen.

**Lekesha Jones**

Lekesha Jones appeared before Council to speak on a Parks and Recreation concern. Ms. Jones said she has concerns as a parent. Her children attend Northwest Park and she said there is only one staff member there and this is a safety concern. She also said her children need homework assistance and this is an issue at all the community centers. There is also a problem with bullying in the community centers and recreation. She then spoke of softball and baseball concerns with parents being commissioners over their own children. She said she has brought her concerns to the athletic director and the city manager and there has been no resolve.

**ORDINANCES IN POSITION**

**Bill No. 2023-16 – Second Reading**

**An Ordinance adopting a redistricting plan for three single member districts of the City of Florence, South Carolina in accordance with the Federal Decennial Census of 2020.**



FLORENCE CITY COUNCIL  
REGULAR MEETING – SEPTEMBER 11, 2023

Councilwoman NeSmith-Jackson made a motion to adopt Bill No. 2023-16 on second reading and Councilman Smith seconded the motion.

Council voted unanimously (7-0) in favor of the motion. Bill No. 2023-16 was adopted.

**Bill No. 2023-30 – Second Reading**

**An Ordinance to annex and zone NC-15 2488 Abbey Way, identified as Florence County Tax Map Number 01221-01-247.**

Pro tem Jebaily made a motion to adopt Bill No. 2023-30 on second reading and Councilwoman NeSmith-Jackson seconded the motion.

Council voted unanimously (7-0) in favor of the motion. Bill No. 2023-30 adopted.

**INTRODUCTION OF ORDINANCES**

**Bill No. 2023-32 – First Reading**

**An Ordinance to rename West Kansas Road and name an unnamed road, identified as Florence County Tax Map Number 90093-01-001.**

Pro tem Jebaily made a motion to pass Bill No. 2023-32 on first reading and Councilman Smith seconded the motion.

Mr. Clint Moore, Assistant City Manager of Development, said this renaming is at the request of the Freedom Square property owner. Both are private roads located within the development and will continue to be maintained by the property owner. The proposed new street name for West Kansas Drive is Ticonderoga Way and the proposed new street name for the unnamed street is Allegiance Avenue. There is currently one business addressed on West Kansas Drive and they will be notified upon approval of this request.

Council voted unanimously (7-0) in favor of the motion. Bill No. 2023-32 was passed on first reading.

**Bill No. 2023-33 – First Reading**

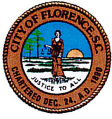
**An Ordinance to rezone 619 South Church Street, identified as Florence County Tax Map Number 90104-02-019, from AC to NC-6.3.**

Councilman Smith made a motion to pass Bill No. 2023-33 on first reading and Councilwoman NeSmith-Jackson seconded the motion.

Mr. Moore reported the lot is currently vacant and this request will allow the property owner to construct a single-family residential home on the property. Due to the size of the lot, development of the property would be limited to single-family residential under the NC-6.3 zoning designation. A survey of the property revealed the adjacent home encroaches up to 2.1' on the property, but this does not affect the zoning designation.

Pro tem Jebaily expressed his excitement to see single-family homes being built along Church Street, as this area has been depressed for many years.

Council voted unanimously (7-0) in favor of the motion. Bill No. 2023-33 was passed on first reading.



**INTRODUCTION OF RESOLUTIONS**

**Resolution No. 2023-37**

**A Resolution to authorize the transfer of \$1,000,000 from American Rescue Plan Act funds to the General Fund.**

Councilwoman NeSmith-Jackson made a motion to adopt Resolution No. 2023-37 and Pro tem Jebaily seconded the motion.

Mr. Randy Osterman, City Manager, said \$1,000,000 in American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) funding was set aside for the City to participate as needed with Florence County to expand broadband access. Following an analysis, it was determined that 98% of the City had broadband coverage and this funding was no longer needed for broadband expansion. During the budget process, a number of police cars and a sanitation truck were removed in order to balance the budget; therefore, Mr. Osterman said his recommendation is to transfer the \$1,000,000 in ARPA funding to the General Fund as lost revenue to purchase twelve police vehicles at the cost of \$600,000, one sanitation truck at the cost of \$300,000 and to increase contingency in the amount of \$100,000.

Councilwoman Barnes made a motion to amend the Resolution to authorize the City Manager to transfer \$500,000 to the General Fund from the ARPA Fund to allot \$200,000 to the purchase of four police vehicles and \$300,000 to purchase one sanitation truck with the remaining \$500,000 balance to remain in the ARPA fund account to be expended at the direction of City Council at the October Council meeting following a meeting with City staff and a recommendation from the Finance, Audit and Budget Committee. Pro tem Jebaily seconded the motion.

Councilman Braddock said the Finance, Audit and Budget Committee planned to meet to discuss this matter, but the meeting was rescheduled due to the weather associated with the hurricane. Therefore, they were unable to fully discuss this item before this Council meeting. This amendment will allow the City to move forward with the purchase of the sanitation truck and some of the requested police vehicles and allow the Committee more time to review.

Council voted 6-1 in favor of the motion to amend, with Mayor Ervin voting in opposition. The amendment passed.

Council voted 6-1 to adopt Resolution No. 2023-37, as amended, with Mayor Ervin voting in opposition. Resolution No. 2023-37 was adopted, as amended.

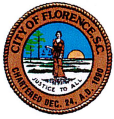
**Resolution No. 2023-40**

**A Resolution to recognize October 12, 2023 as Pee Dee Hearing Center Day.**

Councilwoman Barnes made a motion to adopt Resolution No. 2023-40 and Councilwoman NeSmith-Jackson seconded the motion.

Mayor Ervin presented the Resolution to Ms. Celly Kahn, Executive Director of Pee Dee Hearing Center. Ms. Kahn said Pee Dee Hearing Center, formally Pee Dee Speech and Hearing, has narrowed their mission to better serve the community. They have discovered that there is not as much of a need for speech pathology and they will increase their audiology services. A Grand Re-opening will be held on October 12<sup>th</sup> at Pee Dee Hearing Center.

Council voted unanimously (7-0) in favor of the motion. Resolution No. 2023-40 was adopted.



**Resolution No. 2023-41**

**A Resolution authorizing staff to negotiate a grant agreement with the organizations in the amounts as shown in “Exhibit A” in compliance with the South Carolina Opioid Recovery Act.**

Mayor Ervin said this item may be discussed in Executive Session. There being no objection, this item will be discussed in Executive Session.

**Resolution No. 2023-42**

**A Resolution of Recognition for Pastor Ralph Canty, Sr.**

Councilwoman Barnes made a motion to adopt Resolution No. 2023-42 and Councilman McCall seconded the motion.

Council voted unanimously (7-0) in favor of the motion. Resolution No. 2023-42 was adopted.

**REPORTS TO COUNCIL**

**Appointments to Boards and Commissions**

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

**Planning Commission**

Councilwoman NeSmith-Jackson made a motion to appoint Shelanda Deas to the Planning Commission. Council voted unanimously (7-0) in favor of the motion. Shelanda Deas was appointed to the Planning Commission for a term to begin immediately and expire on June 30, 2026.

**Board of Zoning Appeals**

Councilman Braddock made a motion to reappoint Miriam James-Singley to the Board of Zoning Appeals. Council voted unanimously in favor of the motion. Miriam James-Singley was reappointed to the Board of Zoning Appeals for a term to begin immediately and expire on June 30, 2026.

**Design Review Board**

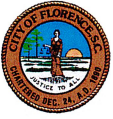
Councilwoman NeSmith-Jackson deferred her nomination to the Board.

**Parks and Beautification Commission**

Councilman McCall made a motion to reappoint Simon Lee to the Parks and Beautification Commission. Council voted unanimously in favor of the motion. Simon Lee was reappointed to the Parks and Beautification Commission for a term to begin immediately and expire on June 30, 2028.

**Public Safety Citizen’s Review Board**

Mayor Ervin deferred her nomination to the Board.



## **MAYORAL REPORT**

Mayor Ervin acknowledged the 50 years of service of Ms. Jolley, Delmae School Principal. She also announced that the Florence Center will host the 2024 South Carolina High School League (SCHSL) basketball state semifinals and finals. This weeklong event is projected to bring in approximately \$5,000,000. Mayor Ervin spoke of Community Development and acknowledged the builders working on the historical Pine Street catalytic area.

## **COMMITTEE REPORTS**

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

Pro tem Jebaily said the Committee received an update on the projects related to the third penny sales tax and stormwater projects. Also discussed were the corridors and a report will be forthcoming. Pro tem Jebaily also said he and Councilman Smith gave a presentation to the Parks and Recreation Department to provide an update on the Levy Park grant application and the East Palmetto Corridor. Pro tem Jebaily spoke of water quality concerns and asked Mr. Osterman to provide an update. Mr. Osterman said a water quality task team made up of water production and distribution staff, as well as outside engineers has been formed to help determine issues and solutions. A comprehensive study of all the groundwater plants is currently being reviewed. The engineering group has established a directional flow system to help clear the pipes for the areas that experience consistent issues. Changes have also been made to the treatment processes at some of the groundwater plants. This will be a long-term process and Mr. Osterman encouraged residents to continue notifying the Utilities Department of any discolored water concerns.

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

Councilwoman Barnes said she did not have much to report but she wanted to address Ms. Jones and her concerns with the Recreation Department. Councilwoman Barnes said Council hears her and will work to try to remedy some of her concerns.

### **Marketing and Public Relations Committee, Chaired by Councilwoman NeSmith-Jackson**

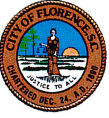
Councilwoman NeSmith-Jackson said one of her goals is to bridge the gap of communication, trust and transparency between the City of Florence and its residents. The communications survey has ended and feedback was received. 579 people took the survey and the top categories they'd like to hear from are community events, water, sewer and utility information, public safety advisories, economic development and city council and administrative meetings. Councilwoman NeSmith-Jackson announced CitiBot as the City's new communications tool. CitiBot will offer web chat, text and push notification to residents and utility customers. The City will also continue with the educational awareness campaigns.

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

Councilman McCall said the Committee had a brief meeting and discussed the round-up program and finishing the details on that proposal. There will be a marketing campaign prior to the rollout of the program. They also discussed the ARPA funds and reviewed the monthly financial reports.

## **EXECUTIVE SESSION**

Mayor Ervin said Council will be entering into Executive Session for a discussion of matters related to a contractual matter and for a personnel matter.



FLORENCE CITY COUNCIL  
REGULAR MEETING – SEPTEMBER 11, 2023

Councilwoman Barnes made a motion to enter into Executive Session and Councilwoman NeSmith-Jackson seconded the motion. Council voted unanimously (7-0) to enter into Executive Session at 2:10 p.m.

Council resumed open session at 3:15 p.m. and took action on the following items:

**Resolution No. 2023-41**

**A Resolution authorizing staff to negotiate a grant agreement with the organizations in the amounts as shown in “Exhibit A” in compliance with the South Carolina Opioid Recovery Act.**

Pro tem Jebaily made a motion to defer action on this item and Councilman Smith seconded the motion. Council voted unanimously (7-0) in favor of the motion. Resolution No. 2023-41 was deferred.

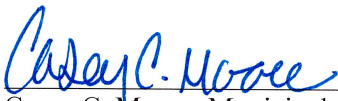
**PERSONNEL MATTER**


Mayor Ervin announced the retirement of City Manager, Randy Osterman in February 2024. Pro tem Jebaily made a motion to initiate a search internally for an Interim City Manager and to direct the City Attorney to develop a process between now and the October meeting to inform Council of the process for internal applications as well as a timeline and job description. The motion was seconded by Councilman McCall and carried unanimously.

**ADJOURN**

Without objection, the September 11, 2023 Regular meeting of City Council was adjourned at 3:25 p.m.

Dated this 9<sup>th</sup> day of October 2023.

  
\_\_\_\_\_  
Casey C. Moore, Municipal Clerk

  
\_\_\_\_\_  
Teresa Myers Ervin, Mayor