



**REGULAR MEETING OF FLORENCE CITY COUNCIL
MONDAY, MARCH 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 and Councilman J. Lawrence Smith, II

ALSO PRESENT

Mr. Scotty Davis, City Manager; Mr. Ronald Scott, City Attorney; Mr. Benjamin Zeigler, City Attorney; Mr. Luke Carter, City Attorney; Mrs. Casey Moore, Municipal Clerk; Mr. Clint Moore, Assistant City Manager of Development; Chief Shannon Tanner, Florence Fire 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; Mr. Joshua Whittington, Director of Utilities; Mrs. Victoria Nash, Director of Parks, Recreation, and Sports Tourism; Mr. Glenn Bodenheimer, Interim Finance Director and Ms. Patrice Rankin, Administrative Coordinator

MEDIA PRESENT

Abby Ann Ramsey with the Post and Courier, Tonya Brown with WPDE News Channel 15 and Taylor Ford with the Florence Morning News 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 Barnes called the March 10, 2025 Regular meeting of Florence City Council to order at 1:02pm.

INVOCATION

Councilman Braddock gave the invocation for the meeting. The pledge of allegiance to the American Flag followed the invocation and was led by Chief Shannon Tanner, Florence Fire Department.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

Pro tem Jebaily made a motion to adopt the minutes of the January 9-10, 2025 Work Session and Councilman Smith seconded the motion. The minutes were unanimously (6-0) adopted.

Councilwoman NeSmith-Jackson made a motion to adopt the minutes of the February 10, 2025 Regular Meeting and Pro tem Jebaily seconded the motion. The minutes were unanimously (6-0) adopted.



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SERVICE RECOGNITIONS

Mr. Adam Swindler, Public Works Director, recognized Jose Guzman for 20 years of service with the City of Florence.

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

APPEARANCES BEFORE COUNCIL

John Cox

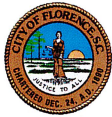
Mr. John Cox addressed the Council to voice concerns about homelessness and litter in the community. He mentioned that his primary concern with homelessness is the issue of panhandling on public property, stating that he believes action should be taken to address this. He also expressed frustration with the widespread litter throughout the city, noting that it presents a poor image for the community. Mr. Cox inquired about any plans to address the litter issue.

Pro Tem Jebaily asked City Manager Mr. Scotty Davis to provide details on the city's efforts to tackle both homelessness and litter. Mr. Davis outlined several initiatives, including the No One Unsheltered program, which allocates \$75,000 to support homelessness services. The city also offers financial assistance for home repairs to address deteriorating properties. To combat litter, the city provides \$10,000 annually to Keep Florence Beautiful and collaborates with Florence County to manage litter. Two city employees are also tasked with handling litter in the community in which the sanitation department is unable to address. Mr. Davis highlighted efforts to monitor dump sites with surveillance cameras and emphasized the importance of partnerships in tackling litter.

Pro Tem Jebaily sought clarification on whether the city partners with neighborhood associations for cleanup efforts. Mr. Davis confirmed that there are more than 30 neighborhood associations in the city and the city typically organizes at least one cleanup per year in collaboration with these associations. The city supplies materials, and the neighborhoods take responsibility for adopting specific streets. Councilwoman NeSmith-Jackson inquired if residents can request specific streets or neighborhoods to be cleaned. Mr. Davis responded that residents can sign up on the Keep Florence Beautiful website and the city works together with the organization to address the requests. Mr. Cox mentioned that much of the litter he notices is along Irby Street.

Councilman Braddock added that the Council had increased fines for littering a few years ago. Mr. Cox asked if these fines are being enforced and whether the police could monitor certain areas. Councilman Braddock explained that while Irby Street spans both city and county areas, any reported litter will be addressed. Mr. Cox also noted seeing litter on public property, particularly in front of businesses. Councilman Braddock explained the challenge of addressing litter in such areas, as businesses may be located both within and outside of city limits. He clarified that annexation must be voluntary, and the city cannot compel property owners to annex into the city.

Mayor Barnes thanked Mr. Cox for raising these concerns.



ORDINANCES IN POSITION

Bill No. 2024-22 – Second Reading

An Ordinance to amend Article I Chapter 3 of the City of Florence Code of Ordinances to add provisions related to prohibiting ownership or keeping of livestock and wild animals and other matters related thereto.

Pro tem Jebaily made a motion to adopt Bill No. 2024-22 on second reading and Councilwoman NeSmith-Jackson seconded the motion.

Mr. Clint Moore, Assistant City Manager, provided an update on the ordinance since its introduction in November 2024. City staff, in collaboration with the city attorney and faculty and staff from Francis Marion University, have worked to address concerns and refine the ordinance. Key updates include revisions to the language and the inclusion of genus and species recommendations from Francis Marion University biology professors. The proposed ordinance also incorporates language from a state bill regarding venomous reptiles. Depending on whether the state bill is passed, this section may require further revision. Additionally, clarifying language was added regarding the transport of prohibited animals, specifying that individuals transporting these animals for veterinary care or rehabilitation will not be in violation of the ordinance. The ordinance now includes a weight threshold of 15 pounds to ensure animals like baboons and chimpanzees are not permitted.

Councilman Braddock asked if anyone signed up to speak on this agenda item. Mayor Barnes responded that no one had. Councilman Braddock expressed concern that the State House of Representatives is currently in session, and a similar bill is under debate. He suggested that the city may be better positioned if the state takes the lead on legislation regarding wild animals and proposed deferring Bill No. 2024-22 until the state decides.

Pro Tem Jebaily asked Mr. Moore what the process would be if Council passed the ordinance on second reading and the state also passed a similar law. Mr. Moore responded that the ordinance would be amended to align with any changes made at the state level.

Councilman Braddock inquired about the current status of the state bill. Mr. Moore explained that the bill was introduced a few weeks ago and is currently in the Agriculture, Natural Resources, and Environmental Affairs Committee.

Mayor Barnes reiterated that the purpose of this ordinance is to ensure community safety. She also emphasized that the Council understands state law will always take precedence over local ordinances.

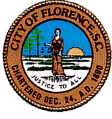
Council voted unanimously (6-0) in favor of the motion. Bill No. 2024-22 was adopted.

Bill No. 2025-03 – Second Reading

An Ordinance to amend Chapter 4 of the Code of Ordinances of the City of Florence entitled “Buildings, Construction and Related Activities”, to establish Article XV “Vacant and Abandoned Residential, Commercial and Industrial Building Registration.

Pro tem Jebaily made a motion to adopt Bill No. 2025-03 on second reading and Councilwoman NeSmith-Jackson seconded the motion.

Mr. Clint Moore, Assistant City Manager, provided an update on the ordinance, which was introduced in January 2025. After consulting with local stakeholders and considering both their feedback and the



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Council's recommendations, this is the final version of the ordinance. The primary change involves the designation of Category II buildings, which will be exempt from registration with the city. Another key change is the introduction of different fee structures for commercial and industrial buildings. Lastly, the ordinance's effective date will be January 1, 2026, allowing city staff time to reach out to property owners and proactively address issues before the ordinance goes into effect.

Pro Tem Jebaily asked Mr. Moore to elaborate on the addition of "and abandoned" to the ordinance. Mr. Moore explained that the clarification was made in response to concerns about vacant spaces in strip malls. The ordinance applies only to vacant and abandoned buildings, not those that are simply empty. Councilman Braddock inquired whether a lien could be placed on properties where the owner is experiencing financial hardship. Mr. Moore responded that the city has a program that addresses this. If a property owner is unable to afford necessary repairs, they may donate the property to the city.

Councilwoman NeSmith-Jackson asked for the name of the program assisting property owners in financial hardship. Mr. Moore replied that it is the Demolition Program, managed by the Community Services Department. Mr. Davis added that the program provides funding for properties within the Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) areas to assist with repairs. However, this funding does not cover repairs for businesses. If the city acquires a property for demolition, a five-year lien can be placed on the property if the owner exceeds the income level; if the owner is below the income threshold, no lien will be applied.

Councilman Braddock then asked whether CDBG funding could be used to assist businesses facing financial difficulties. Mr. Davis explained that when using CDBG funding for businesses, owners typically must demonstrate that they are either maintaining the business or adding jobs, making it eligible under economic development guidelines. He noted that it is handled on a case-by-case basis. Mr. Ronald Scott, City Attorney, clarified that CDBG funding follows a five-year plan approved by the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD), and activities must align with the priorities set forth in that plan. There are specific limitations on using CDBG funds for commercial building rehabilitation, and currently, the city's plan does not include funding for business repairs.

Council voted unanimously (6-0) in favor of the motion. Bill No. 2025-03 was adopted.

Bill No. 2025-06 - Second Reading

An ordinance to annex and zone CG the property located at Gilbert Drive and Freedom Boulevard, identified as Florence County Tax Map Number 00178-01-244.

Pro Tem Jebaily made a motion to adopt Bill No. 2025-06 on second reading and Councilman Smith seconded the motion.

Council voted unanimously (6-0) in favor of the motion. Bill No. 2025-06 was adopted.

Bill No. 2025-07 - Second Reading

An ordinance to annex and zone RG-3 the properties located at 1001 Tunbridge Place and 3740 West Lake Drive, identified as Florence County Tax Map Numbers 00751-01-279 & 00751-01-282.

Pro Tem Jebaily made a motion to adopt Bill No. 2025-07 on second reading and Councilman Braddock seconded the motion.

Council voted unanimously (6-0) in favor of the motion. Bill No. 2025-07 was adopted.



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Bill No. 2025-09 - Second Reading

An Ordinance to amend the City of Florence Unified Development Ordinance relating to the flood hazard district to maintain compliance with the current Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) regulations and adopt the revised Flood Insurance Rate Map (FIRM).

Councilman McCall made a motion to adopt Bill No. 2025-09 on second reading and Councilman Smith seconded the motion.

Council voted unanimously (6-0) in favor of the motion. Bill No. 2025-09 was adopted.

Bill No. 2025-10 - Second Reading

An Ordinance of the City Council of the City of Florence, South Carolina, imposing a temporary moratorium on final approval of development plans and other approvals relating to properties that contain cemeteries for the purpose of enabling consideration by city council of recommendations relating to amendments to development regulations of the City regarding cemeteries, and further invoking the pending ordinance doctrine with respect to such temporary moratorium in anticipation of such amendments.

Councilman Smith made a motion to adopt Bill No. 2025-10 on second reading and Councilwoman NeSmith-Jackson seconded the motion.

Councilman Braddock requested clarification on the status of a situation involving a developer. Mr. Moore confirmed that the issue has been resolved, stating that the developer has completed the delineation process and will be transferring the property to the City. He added that once the GPR scanning is completed, the City will proceed with addressing the matter.

Council voted unanimously (6-0) in favor of the motion. Bill No. 2025-10 was adopted.

Bill No. 2025-11 - Second Reading

An Ordinance authorizing the conveyance of surplus city property of approximately .319 acres on a portion of Florence County Tax Map Number 00147-01-023 located at Jennie O'Bryan Avenue back to Floyd Family Properties, LLC, such city property having been initially conveyed to the City of Florence for the purpose of constructing a Sports Complex and a road accessing such complex.

Pro tem Jebaily made a motion to adopt Bill No. 2025-11 on second reading and Councilwoman NeSmith-Jackson seconded the motion.

Council voted unanimously (6-0) in favor of the motion. Bill No. 2025-11 was adopted.

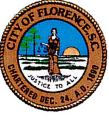
INTRODUCTION OF ORDINANCES

Bill No. 2025-08 – First Reading

An Ordinance to adopt the updated Downtown Design Standards for the City of Florence.

Pro tem Jebaily made a motion to pass Bill No. 2025-08 on first reading and Councilman Smith seconded the motion.

Mr. Jerry Dudley, Planning Director, provided a summary of the updated Downtown Design Standards, recently presented to city staff by the consulting firm Bolton and Menk, Inc. He noted that the project



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received funding from a combination of federal sources, the State Historic Preservation Office, and the city's general fund.

The updated standards are structured into three main sections:

1. **Florence by Design** – This section explains the rationale behind the guidelines and highlights their alignment with existing policies such as the Unified Development Ordinance, the Comprehensive Plan, and the Downtown Master Plan. It also introduces general design principles that apply across all seven downtown districts. While existing overlay districts will remain unchanged, a new tier system will be introduced to make the guidelines more user-friendly.
2. **The Process** – This section outlines the administrative and submittal procedures, featuring a flow chart to guide users through the approval process. It also distinguishes between minor and major projects, with minor projects eligible for staff-level approval and major projects requiring approval from the Design Review Board.
3. **The Standards** – This section addresses three primary areas:
 - o **Site Design** – Including frontage types, building placement, height, on-site open space, outdoor dining, screening, landscaping and stormwater management, and parking.
 - o **Building Design** – Covering district character, design standards for residential and non-residential buildings, and signage.
 - o **Public Realm** – Focusing on blocks, streets, public realm zones, streetscape elements, pedestrian and bicycle infrastructure, public spaces, and placemaking efforts.

Both the Planning Commission and the Design Review Board voted unanimously to approve the updated Downtown Design Standards. As a result, the Unified Development Ordinance will also need to be amended to reflect and reference the new standards.

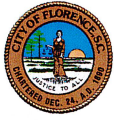
Councilman McCall asked how the Downtown Design Standards align with the Comprehensive Plan and whether these standards are legally required or simply implemented by the City to ensure consistency in design. Mr. Dudley responded that while the standards are not mandated by law, the Comprehensive Plan does recommend their adoption, and the Downtown Master Plan also calls for their regular review and update. He emphasized that by updating the standards, the City is fully aligned with the goals of the Comprehensive Plan.

Councilman McCall then asked whether the updated guidelines address issues related to abandoned buildings. Mr. Dudley explained that the document primarily focuses on rehabilitation and new construction projects. However, he noted that the City's existing code, along with downtown appearance and maintenance regulations, provides tools to address abandoned properties.

Regarding project review, Councilman McCall inquired who is responsible for reviewing minor projects. Mr. Dudley stated that the Planning Department handles these reviews, occasionally consulting with members of the Design Review Board or community experts as needed.

When asked for clarification on the residential district, Mr. Dudley explained that the residential reference pertains specifically to the Timrod Park Overlay District. He added that the remaining areas within the Central Business District and Downtown are designated as mixed-use zones, supporting a blend of residential and commercial development.

Lastly, Councilman McCall raised a question about the \$1 million insurance requirement for businesses located downtown. He said that there are concerns with businesses who cannot afford the \$1 million coverage. Councilman McCall said the State House of Representatives passed a liquor liability law and for the city to make another requirement for \$ 1 million insurance coverage may cause businesses not to



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be able to afford the necessary coverage. He said mandating businesses to have \$1 million insurance coverage may be tough on the local businesses and asked for city staff to review this requirement. Mr. Dudley said staff will review this requirement.

Councilman Braddock inquired on whether housing such as Accessory Dwelling Unit (ADU) could be added to the guidelines. These housing units were taken out of the Unified Development Ordinance and with the high demand of housing and lack of affordable housing, the city's housing inventory is limited. Mr. Dudley said the appropriate area to address this would be the Unified Development Ordinance within the zoning code. City staff is currently working on an ADU amendment that will hopefully be brought before Planning Commission and Council in the coming months. When the Unified Development Ordinance was initially adopted, there was a section pertaining to ADU. Through reviews, the majority of the section was removed, but staff would like to bring the ADU portion back. Councilman Braddock spoke in favor of ADUs and said it is needed.

Councilman Smith inquired if there was a public hearing for the Downtown Design Standards. Mr. Dudley said there were several public input sessions throughout the process. Once the draft was complete, there was a public hearing held at both Planning Commission and the Design Review Board meetings. Councilman Smith asked aside from Council's concerns if there were any other major concerns from the community. Mr. Dudley said during the public input sessions, there was a lot of interaction with the public, city staff and the consultants and any concerns were taken into account.

Councilwoman NeSmith-Jackson expressed concerns on the 10:00pm noise ordinance for downtown and also inquired on the purpose of the \$1 million insurance requirement for downtown businesses. Mr. Dudley said the \$1 million insurance requirement is to cover events in public spaces that serve alcohol. Councilwoman NeSmith-Jackson asked if it only pertains restaurant and bar related businesses. Mr. Dudley said yes, as well as for businesses that are hosting a public facing event such as in a plaza. Mr. Moore also added that anytime someone utilizes city-owned properties or public spaces, they are required to have the \$1 million insurance policy.

Mr. Davis also added that anyone doing work on city property or hosting an event is required to have the \$1 million insurance policy. Councilman McCall reiterated that he doesn't think the businesses should be required to obtain the \$1 million insurance policy. Pro tem Jebaily clarified that the guidelines only focus on the use of the public spaces.

Councilman McCall asked for clarification if the noise ordinance is addressed in the guidelines. Mr. Dudley said these are strictly design standards and not meant to regulate noise. The concerns with the noise ordinance would be addressed through the city's Unified Development Ordinance.

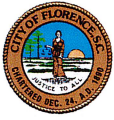
Council voted unanimously (6-0) in favor of the motion. Bill No. 2025-08 was passed on first reading.

Bill No. 2025-12- First Reading

An Ordinance to rezone from NC-15 to NC-6.3 the property located at Dexter Drive and Attwood Avenue, identified as Florence County Tax Map Number 00150-01-140.

Councilman Braddock made a motion to pass Bill No. 2025-12 on first reading and Councilman Smith seconded the motion.

Mr. Jerry Dudley, Planning Director, reported this property is on the corner of Attwood Avenue and Dexter Drive and is currently vacant. The current zoning is Neighborhood Conservation-15, which is a single family detached only zoning district. This zoning requires lots that are 100 feet wide and 15,000



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square feet. With the current zoning, approximately four lots would be available on this parcel. This property was brought before Planning Commission and City Council in 2023 and ultimately the requested zoning of Neighborhood Conservation 6.3 was denied by Council due to lack of a second. The applicant was required to wait six months before making a like submittal and their request is to rezone the property Neighborhood Conservation 6.3 to allow single family detached homes on 50-foot-wide lots that are a minimum of 6,000 square feet. With this zoning designation, the applicant would be able to develop nine lots on this parcel. However, this zoning designation allows duplexes, townhomes and multi-family detached homes. City staff has recommended a zoning designation of Neighborhood Conservation 6.1, which only allows single family detached homes due to the proximity to single family detached homes. This zoning designation would allow approximately seven lots that are 60 feet wide with a minimum area of 6,000 square feet. City staff is aware there are some stormwater concerns associated with this property, and, due to the possibility of infrastructure being installed, none of the maximum potentials are likely to be achieved. The applicant also inquired about a zoning designation of Neighborhood Conservation 4 which allows smaller lots that are 40 feet wide and a minimum of 4,400 square feet. Planning Commission voted unanimously to recommend the Neighborhood Conservation 6.1 zoning designation.

Pro tem Jebaily asked if Neighborhood Conservation 6.1 is the current zoning designation before Council. Mr. Dudley said the applicant is requesting the Neighborhood Conservation 6.3 zoning designation. Planning Commission and city staff are recommending a zoning designation of Neighborhood Conservation 6.1. Pro tem Jebaily asked if Council would need to amend the ordinance to vote in favor of the Neighborhood Conservation 6.1 zoning designation. Mr. Dudley responded yes. Pro tem Jebaily asked Mr. Dudley to review the impact development has on stormwater issues. Mr. Dudley said as part of the submittal for a development plan, a developer must demonstrate that their post construction runoff is the same or less as their pre-construction runoff. This can be shown through a retention or stormwater pond or an underground structure, or low impact development like rain gardens or pervious pavements.

Pro tem Jebaily made a motion to amend Bill No. 2025-12 to rezone from NC-15 to NC-6.1 and Councilman Braddock seconded the motion. The motion carried unanimously (6-0).

Council voted unanimously (6-0) in favor of the motion, as amended. Bill No. 2025-12 was passed on first reading, as amended.

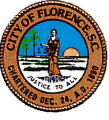
Bill No. 2025-13 – First Reading

An Ordinance to amend the budget for Fiscal Year beginning July 1, 2024 and ending June 30, 2025.

Councilman McCall made a motion to pass Bill No. 2025-13 on first reading and Councilman Smith seconded the motion.

Mr. Glenn Bodenheimer, Interim Finance Director, said the objective of this ordinance is to align budgeted amounts more closely with actual revenues and expenditures. The city has received several grants and state appropriations since the budget was initially adopted in 2024 to include \$1.25 million from the State Appropriations Act for the purchase of a fire engine and associated equipment. The city also received various smaller grants such as a Hazard Mitigation Grant through the Federal Emergency Management Agency for the purchase of a generator for the Pine Street Water Plant and \$50,000 from Long Leaf to fund the Timrod Park Recreation Facilities Rehabilitation project. There are also budget carryforward requests for two sanitation trucks that were appropriated in FY 2023-2024.

Council voted unanimously (6-0) in favor of the motion. Bill No. 2025-13 was passed on first reading.



INTRODUCTION OF RESOLUTIONS

Resolution No. 2025-08

A Resolution authorizing the City Manager to enter into a Facility Encroachment Agreement with CSX Transportation, Inc.

Councilman McCall made a motion to pass Resolution No. 2025-08 and Councilwoman NeSmith-Jackson seconded the motion.

Mr. Michael Hemingway, Director of Utility Planning and Economic Development, said this Resolution will enable the City to construct a new 30-inch sanitary sewer force main beneath the railroad tracks along North Williamson Road to serve the new Technology Park. CSX requires the Resolution before finalizing the encroachment agreement, allowing the contractor to commence work.

Council voted unanimously (6-0) in favor of the motion. Resolution No. 2025-08 was passed.

Resolution No. 2025-09

A Resolution and Conditional Grant and Development Agreement to provide an incentive for the development of new housing within East Florence as part of the ongoing Neighborhood Redevelopment Project.

(Note: This item may be discussed in Executive Session.)

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

REPORT TO COUNCIL

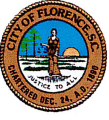
Appointments to Boards and Commissions

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

Mauldin and Jenkins, CPAs and Advisors

Mr. Grant Davis of Mauldin & Jenkins CPAs and Advisors presented the city's annual comprehensive financial report to the Council. He explained that two documents were issued: the city's financial statements and the auditor's discussion and analysis. The financial statements consist of three key reports. The first is the independent auditor's report, which confirmed that the city received an unmodified opinion – meaning the financial statements were free of material misstatements, which is the highest and only acceptable result.

The second report, often referred to as the "yellow report," focuses on internal controls, compliance with laws, and adherence to grant agreements. This report does not provide an opinion, but it offers negative assurance. The auditing firm conducts the audit according to government auditing standards, and if any instances of non-compliance or internal control issues arise, they are required to report those findings. Two internal control deficiencies were noted, but the city still received a clean report in this area. The third and final report is the federal single audit report, triggered when a city spends over \$750,000 in federal funds in a given fiscal year. In fiscal year 2023-2024, the city expended approximately \$3.7 million, and the firm audited around 85% of these expenditures, or \$3.3 million, covering the Community



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Development Block Grant (CDBG) Program and the American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) Program. The result was another clean opinion on compliance with federal expenditure guidelines.

Overall, Mr. Davis described the financial report as positive. The two internal control deficiencies were related to past inventory recording practices, which have now been corrected, and the segregation of duties due to staffing levels in the Finance Department. He noted that it's challenging to maintain proper segregation of duties with limited staff, especially considering turnover. At certain times during the fiscal year, the segregation of duties was not adequate.

Mr. Davis also highlighted the general fund's financial position, noting that the fund balance increased by about \$1.7 million in fiscal year 2024, bringing the total to \$26.2 million. The city expended \$59 million in the general fund during the year, leaving a healthy balance equivalent to about 160 days or roughly five and a half months of operating expenses.

Councilwoman NeSmith-Jackson inquired if the segregation of duties issue was addressed in the report, to which Mr. Davis confirmed it was, noting it can be found on page 158. He explained that as part of the audit process, interviews and control assessments are conducted to ensure there are no incompatible functions that could lead to fraud or misappropriations. He also pointed out that segregation of duties is a common finding in audits and that the Finance Department is aware of it and actively working to address it.

Mr. Scotty Davis, City Manager, addressed the two internal control deficiencies, commending Interim Finance Director Glenn Bodenheimer for his efforts in ensuring a clean audit. He also noted that the city is actively seeking to hire a permanent Finance Director to improve internal controls within the department. Additionally, the second issue regarding a property sold in 2021 was discovered when staff noticed the property was still listed on the books. This error has been corrected, and the auditing firm was informed of the correction.

Mayor Barnes expressed her gratitude to city staff for their hard work and dedication.

CITY MANAGER'S REPORT

Mr. Scotty Davis, City Manager, acknowledged the wildfires in Horry County and informed Council that the Florence Fire Department deployed an engine company to assist. The team worked 24-hour shifts for six days to help contain the fires. City University will begin on Monday, March 17th. The deadline to apply for City University is March 10th. The City of Florence Minority Business Seminar is scheduled for Thursday, March 20th at 6pm. Coastal Carolina University is conducting a Parks and Recreation survey for the City of Florence. The survey is open until Monday, March 17th and is available on the city's website.

MAYORAL REPORT

Mayor Barnes recognized March as Women's History Month and shared that she, along with Scotty Davis and Michael Hemingway, traveled to Washington, D.C. to meet with federal legislators about funding opportunities for the City of Florence. She reported that Congressman Fry has secured \$40 million for the city through the House Water Resources and Development Act, along with an additional \$2.25 million from an Interior Appropriations Bill to support the Water Treatment Plant Expansion Project. Mayor Barnes also acknowledged that Senator Lindsey Graham has secured \$5 million in Fiscal Year 2024 for the city's Surface Water Treatment Plant Expansion Project. She added that the Fireside Chat with the Mayor events have been going well.



COMMITTEE REPORTS

Business Development Committee, Chaired by Pro tem Jebaily

Pro tem Jebaily stated that the committee received a presentation from AECOM regarding the Water Distribution System Master Plan. The Master Plan was initiated in 2022 to identify and assist with improvements to the distribution system and accommodate future growth. The plan estimated that approximately \$125 million will be necessary to make improvements to the system over the next ten years to.

Community Development Committee, Chaired by Mayor Barnes

Mayor Barnes said the committee did not meet so there is no report at this time.

Finance, Audit and Budget Committee, Chaired by Councilman McCall

Councilman McCall said the committee received an update on the budget amendment ordinance. The committee also received a presentation from Mauldin and Jenkins, CPAs and Advisors regarding the city's financial audit.

EXECUTIVE SESSION

Mayor Barnes said Council will be entering into Executive Session for a discussion regarding an Economic Development Project as referenced in Resolution No. 2025-09, a discussion regarding appointments to Boards and Commissions, and to receive an update regarding Project Urban Square.

Councilman McCall made a motion to enter into Executive Session and Councilman Smith seconded the motion. Council voted unanimously (6-0) to enter into Executive Session at 2:36pm.

Councilman McCall made a motion to resume open session and Councilman Smith seconded the motion. The motion carried. Council resumed open session at 3:12pm and took action on the following items:

Resolution No. 2025-09

A Resolution and Conditional Grant and Development Agreement to provide an incentive for the development of new housing within East Florence as part of the ongoing Neighborhood Redevelopment Project.

Councilman Smith made a motion to pass Resolution No. 2025-09 and Councilwoman NeSmith-Jackson seconded the motion.

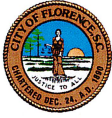
Council voted unanimously (6-0) in favor of the motion. Resolution No. 2025-09 was passed.

Appointments to Boards and Commissions

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

Civic Center Commission

Councilwoman NeSmith-Jackson deferred her nomination to the Board.



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Design Review Board

Councilman McCall deferred his nomination to the Board.

Construction & Maintenance Board of Adjustments and Appeals

Mayor Barnes deferred all nominations to the Board.

Parks and Beautification Commission

Pro tem Jebaily deferred his nomination to the Board.

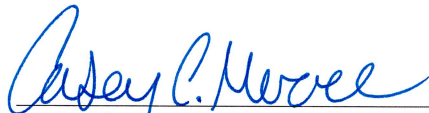
Veterans Park Committee

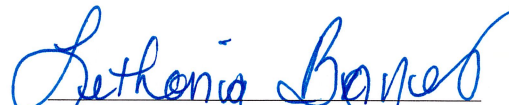
Mayor Barnes made a motion to reappoint Bruce Mallick to the Veterans Park Committee and the motion carried unanimously. Mr. Mallick was reappointed to the Veterans Park Committee for a term to begin immediately and expire on June 30, 2029.

ADJOURN

Without objection, the March 10, 2025 Regular meeting of City Council was adjourned at 3:15pm.

Dated this 14th day of April 2025.


Casey C. Moore, Municipal Clerk


Lethonia Barnes, Mayor