

**REGULAR MEETING OF FLORENCE CITY COUNCIL
MONDAY, AUGUST 12, 2024 – 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, Councilwoman LaShonda NeSmith-Jackson and Councilman J. Lawrence Smith, II

MEMBERS ABSENT

Councilman Bryan A. Braddock

ALSO PRESENT

Mr. Scotty Davis, 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 Planning; Mrs. Victoria Nash, Director of Parks, Recreation, and Sports Tourism; Mrs. Amanda Pope, Director of Marketing/Communications and Municipal Services; Mrs. Jennifer Krawiec, Director of Human Resources; Mr. Adam Swindler, Director of Public Works; Mr. Joshua Whittington, Director of Utilities; Mr. Glenn Bodenheimer, Interim Finance Director and Ms. Patrice Rankin, Administrative Coordinator

MEDIA PRESENT

Mr. Seth Taylor with the Post and Courier and Ms. Audra Grant 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

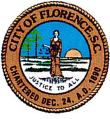
Mayor Ervin called the August 12, 2024 regular meeting of Florence City Council to order at 1:01 pm.

INVOCATION

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

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

Councilwoman NeSmith-Jackson made a motion to adopt the minutes of the July 8, 2024 Regular Meeting and Councilwoman Barnes seconded the motion. The minutes were unanimously (6-0) adopted.



ADDENDUM TO THE AGENDA:

EXECUTIVE SESSION

Action from Executive Session from the special called meeting held at 11:00am on August 12, 2024 to receive legal advice regarding the PFAS lawsuit [30-4-70(a)(2)].

Councilman McCall made a motion to add this item to August 12, 2024 meeting agenda and Councilwoman NeSmith-Jackson seconded the motion. This item was added to the agenda by unanimous vote (6-0).

SERVICE RECOGNITIONS

Mr. Shannon Tanner, Fire Chief, presented Kevin Coleman with a certificate of recognition for 25 years of service with the Florence Fire Department.

Mr. Allen Heidler, Police Chief, presented Christopher Walters with a certificate of recognition for 25 years of service with the Florence Police Department.

Mr. Scotty Davis, City Manager, presented James Moore with a certificate of recognition for 10 years of service with the City of Florence.

APPEARANCES BEFORE COUNCIL

Charlie Barrineau, Field Services Manager – Municipal Association of S.C.

Mr. Charlie Barrineau presented the Municipal Achievement Award in the Economic Development category for Sports Tourism to the City of Florence. Forty municipalities applied for this award and the City of Florence was selected as the winner. Mr. Barrineau said the City of Florence has received this award five times.

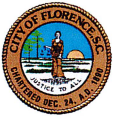
Don Strickland, Executive Director – PDRTA

Mr. Don Strickland appeared before Council to provide an update on the Pee Dee Regional Transportation Authority (PDRTA). PDRTA is celebrating its 50th anniversary and services six counties in the Pee Dee region. He spoke on the need for expansion of service hours, growth and connectivity and said they are working with the FLATS Committee to complete a transit study. PDRTA has partnered with local healthcare providers, educational institutions and workforce to provide transportation routes.

Mayor Ervin acknowledged the partnership between PDRTA and the City of Florence to provide transportation from the local schools to the Barnes Street Activity Center.

Connie Waters

Ms. Connie Waters appeared before Council to speak on dog parks in the City. She introduced several officers with the Florence County Sheriff's Office along with a law enforcement canine. One of the officers announced that the Florence County Violent Crimes Task Force would be traveling to California to receive a certification for Street Crimes Unit of the Year. Ms. Waters said that she was pleased to know that the city has 3 dog parks, but each existing city park is large enough to construct more dog parks. She



**FLORENCE CITY COUNCIL
REGULAR MEETING – AUGUST 12, 2024**

shared her vision of the city having a dog park that would honor fallen military and law enforcement dogs.

Janie Behr

Ms. Janie Behr appeared before Council to speak on the recent dog attack and the control of dangerous dogs, specifically pit-bull dogs. She shared an encounter that she had with a pit bull but was able to get away unharmed. Ms. Behr acknowledged the dog attack that claimed the life of Ms. Karen Nelson, as well as a pit bull attack with a minor in Florence County. Ms. Behr shared statistics regarding pit bull bans in the United Kingdom and asked Council to consider banning dangerous pit bull dogs in the City of Florence.

Jayne Boswell

Ms. Jayne Boswell appeared before Council to speak on spay and neuter ordinances and a spay and neuter clinic. The Humane Society was established to care for homeless animals in the community. There is currently a crisis with animals and there are not enough adoptions to decrease the number of animals in shelters. Ms. Boswell shared the idea of a regional low cost spay and neuter clinic to assist with lowering the pet population in the community. Best Friends Animal Society is currently offering free spay and neuter of bully breeds and would like to bring the service to the City of Florence. Ms. Boswell said the Florence Humane Society is working on a financial plan to assist with the spay and neuter and clinic.

INTRODUCTION OF ORDINANCES

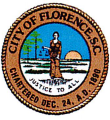
Bill No. 2024-13- First Reading

An Ordinance providing for the issuance and sale of combined waterworks and sewerage system revenue bonds of the City of Florence, South Carolina, and other matters relating thereto.

Councilwoman Barnes made a motion to pass Bill No. 2024-13 on first reading and Councilwoman NeSmith-Jackson seconded the motion.

Mr. Davis said this bill is in reference to water and sewer revenue bonds of up to \$270 million. These funds will allow the City to secure the funding necessary for the expansion of the city's Surface Water Treatment Plant and to rehabilitate and upgrade the Jeffries Creek Sewer Interceptor. Mr. Davis introduced Ms. Amy Vitner, Managing Director with First Tryon Advisors, to present the financing plan to Council. He said this information was previously presented to the Finance, Audit and Budget Committee.

Ms. Vitner presented background information regarding the upcoming bond sale. In 2023, the city issued \$33.5 million to fund a portion of the \$537 million, 10-year water and sewer Capital Improvement Plan. The ten-year rate structure for utilities was also amended and adopted to accommodate the level of borrowing for the costs of the projects. Since 2023, the city's project costs have increased to \$676,231,000 due to increased cost estimates as well as additional projects. Ms. Vitner said the adopted rate increases should be adequate to support the additional costs in the short term. The city may need to consider additional rate increases once timing is determined for longer term projects. Projects included in Phase II are the Surface Water Treatment Plant Expansion, the Jeffries Creek Sewer Interceptor and the PFAS project. The project costs for Phase II have increased by \$77 million for a total cost of \$305 million. Other sources of funding have been identified to include \$15 million in anticipated grant funding and a \$24 million SRF Loan. The balance of \$266 million is expected to be financed with the revenue bond. In addition to the Phase II costs increases, the Wastewater Management Facility Expansion project



**FLORENCE CITY COUNCIL
REGULAR MEETING – AUGUST 12, 2024**

has grown from \$180 million to \$250 million, but debt for this project is not anticipated to be issued until fiscal year 2029. Debt service remains in line with last year until 2030; however, starting in 2030, when the debt payments for the Wastewater Management Expansion commence, the city will likely need to identify additional revenues.

Councilwoman NeSmith-Jackson asked for the start date of the Phase II projects. Ms. Vitner said the engineering and design phases are almost complete, so construction could start later this year. Mr. Michael Hemingway, Director of Utility Planning and Economic Development, confirmed the construction for the surface water expansion project will start in November and will take five years to complete. The Jeffries Creek Sewer Interceptor design phase will be complete in March 2025 and construction will begin sometime after spring 2025.

Councilwoman NeSmith-Jackson asked if the city anticipates any additional rate increases. Mr. Hemingway said additional increases could occur if escalated costs are received from contractors during the bid process. Councilwoman NeSmith-Jackson asked what the next steps are if escalated costs do occur. Mr. Hemingway said the city is still seeking other revenue opportunities such as grants to assist in funding these projects.

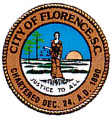
Councilman McCall asked Mr. Davis to clarify if this bond will be used to fund additions to the city's water and sewage system. Mr. Davis responded yes. Councilman McCall asked if this would cover any deferred maintenance issues and Mr. Davis responded no. These projects will be to upgrade the city's system so that the city can continue to address the demand on the system. Mr. Davis also spoke on maintenance of the utility system. AECOM presented an assessment at last month's Council meeting that indicated \$37.2 million in repairs and improvements to the city's utility system. City staff is working diligently on securing grant funding and existing dollars to cover the cost of repairs and improvements. The \$37.2 million in repairs and improvements will not come out of this bond.

Pro tem Jebaily said that the city is under DHEC order to address the sewer line that runs through Jeffries Creek. The Jeffries Creek Interceptor will address sewage issues that has been ongoing for years and will. Mr. Davis said this project will help to address the sewage issues that the community has been dealing with for a number of years.

Councilwoman Barnes asked Mr. Davis to explain the process of flushing the water lines to resolve the discolored water issue. Mr. Davis said the discolored water is due to the high iron content in the water. The city has a dual water system consisting of groundwater wells and surface water. The water from the wells contains a high amount of iron and sometimes the iron will coat the inside of the pipes. The city uses filtration systems and flushing mechanisms to resolve the discolored water. Many of the issues with discolored water will be addressed with the \$37.2 million in repairs and improvements to the system.

Mayor Ervin spoke on the importance of looping the water lines in the system. Much of the system consists of dead-end lines causing water to sit and collect iron sediment. Looped lines help prevent discolored water with the continuous circulation of water through the pipes.

Council voted unanimously (6-0) in favor of the motion. Bill No. 2024-13 was passed on first reading.



**FLORENCE CITY COUNCIL
REGULAR MEETING – AUGUST 12, 2024**

Bill No. 2024-14 – First Reading

An Ordinance to annex and zone RG-3 Phase 2 of Smith’s Field subdivision, identified as Florence County Tax Map Parcels 00100-01-337 through 00100-01-380.

Councilman Smith a motion to pass Bill No. 2024-14 on first reading and Councilwoman Barnes seconded the motion.

Mr. Jerry Dudley, Planning Director, said this request is consistent with the development agreement that requires the developer to annex into the city as they finish the phases of development. The applicant is requesting to zone Residential General-3 (RG-3) and the development has been subdivided into forty-five lots. Planning Commission voted unanimously to recommend the zoning request.

Council voted unanimously (6-0) in favor of the motion. Bill No. 2024-14 was passed on first reading.

Bill No. 2024-15- First Reading

An Ordinance to annex and zone CG the lot at 525 South Ebenezer Road, identified as Florence County Tax Map Number 00074-01-334.

Councilwoman Barnes made a motion to pass Bill No. 2024-15 on first reading and Pro tem Jebaily seconded the motion.

Mr. Jerry Dudley, Planning Director, said this request is for the KJ’s Market located at the corner of Ebenezer Road and Pine Needles Road. The applicant is requesting Commercial General zoning, which is consistent with the land use and the lots in the vicinity. Planning Commission voted unanimously to recommend the zoning request.

Pro tem Jebaily asked if the same developer owns the adjacent parcels. Mr. Dudley said he wasn’t sure of the owner of the adjacent parcels but could find out who the owner is.

Councilwoman NeSmith-Jackson inquired on the continuity for annexation of this property. Mr. Dudley said continuity is provided across Pine Needles Road from The Grove development. Councilwoman NeSmith-Jackson asked if city staff knew the applicant’s reason for requesting annexation. Mr. Dudley said the applicant is requesting city services, primarily police protection. Councilwoman NeSmith-Jackson asked how long has the KJ’s Market been opened for business. Mr. Dudley said it has been in business for some years.

Mayor Ervin said this KJ’s Market was recently remodeled, as well as the KJ’s Market located on Pamplico Highway.

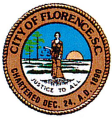
Council voted unanimously (6-0) in favor of the motion. Bill No. 2024-15 was passed.

INTRODUCTION OF RESOLUTIONS

Resolution No. 2024-31

A Resolution to proclaim August 4-10, 2024 as National Health Center Week in the City of Florence.

Councilwoman NeSmith-Jackson made a motion to pass Resolution No. 2024-31 and Councilman Smith seconded the motion.



**FLORENCE CITY COUNCIL
REGULAR MEETING – AUGUST 12, 2024**

Councilwoman NeSmith-Jackson and Mayor Ervin presented the Resolution to Nicole Echols, Director of External Affairs for Hope Health.

Council voted unanimously (6-0) in favor of the motion. Resolution No. 2024-31 was passed.

Resolution No. 2024-32

A Resolution to recognize August as Black Business Month in the City of Florence.

Councilwoman NeSmith-Jackson made a motion to pass Resolution No. 2024-32 and Councilman McCall seconded the motion.

Councilwoman NeSmith-Jackson presented the Resolution to Les Echols, Director of Community and Minority Enterprise for the Greater Florence Chamber of Commerce.

Council voted unanimously (6-0) in favor of the motion. Resolution No. 2024-32 was passed.

Resolution No. 2024-33

A Resolution of Recognition for Ashley Briggs.

Councilwoman NeSmith-Jackson made a motion to pass Resolution No. 2024-33 and Councilman Smith seconded the motion.

Councilman Smith presented the Resolution to Ashley Briggs.

Council voted unanimously (6-0) in favor of the motion. Resolution No. 2024-33 was passed.

Resolution No. 2024-34

A Resolution certifying buildings as an abandoned building site pursuant to the South Carolina Abandoned Buildings Revitalization Act, Title 12, Chapter 67 Section 12-67-100 of the South Carolina Code of Laws, as amended regarding the property located at 161 N. Coit Street, Florence, South Carolina, Florence County Tax Map Parcel 90073-15-029.

Pro tem Jebaily made a motion to pass Resolution No. 2024-34 and Councilman McCall seconded the motion.

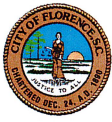
Mr. Clint Moore, Assistant City Manager of Development, said this resolution will certify the abandoned buildings located on North Coit Street that are in association with the Urban Square project. The contractors previously submitted their letter of intent to the state and Council passing this Resolution will complete the documentation process.

Council voted unanimously (6-0) in favor of the motion. Resolution No. 2024-34 was passed.

Resolution No. 2024-35

A Resolution of City Council approving Downtown Redevelopment Grants for First Quarter, FY25.

Mayor Ervin said this item will be discussed in Executive Session. Having no objection, this item will be discussed in Executive Session.



REPORTS TO COUNCIL

Department of Environmental Services

Mr. Scotty Davis, City Manager, said the city wanted to give clarity and transparency regarding the water system. He introduced Mr. David Thompson, drinking water team lead with the Department of Environmental Services (DES), to provide an update regarding the water system.

Mr. David Thompson said the city operates the water system for Florence, as well as the Town of Timmonsville. The city's last inspection was satisfactory and these inspections are completed out of the Columbia Department of Environmental Services. The Department of Environmental Services is not required to give prior notification for inspections, but a courtesy call may be offered the day before to make sure the proper operators are present during the inspection. A Department of Environment Services inspection will consist of a review of paperwork, equipment operations, maintenance of equipment, cleanliness and security of the facilities and ensure operator requirements are met. They will also complete a review of the annual audit for water loss percentage and review the Consumer Confidence report. Mr. Thompson also said DES works closely with the city regarding complaints received of discolored water and concluded by saying the city is doing a great job providing water to the customers of Florence.

Councilwoman Barnes asked for the tiers of the Department of Environment Services grading system. Mr. Thompson said the facilities can receive a satisfactory, needs improvement or unsatisfactory rating.

MAYORAL REPORT

Mayor Ervin thanked city staff for ensuring that the citizens of Florence have potable water. She also thanked city staff for their emergency preparedness efforts during Tropical Storm Debby, as well as the citizens who helped to clean storm drains. The City of Florence received a Municipal Achievement Award from the Municipal Association of South Carolina at the annual meeting in Greenville, SC. The 2nd Annual Pee Dee Youth Day Initiative event was well attended and was a success.

COMMITTEE REPORTS

Business Development Committee, Chaired by Pro tem Jebaily

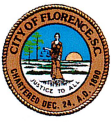
Pro tem Jebaily said the committee discussed feedback received from the public meeting regarding the Lucas Street Corridor. The committee also received updates regarding infrastructure and trail projects.

Community Development Committee, Chaired by Councilwoman Barnes

Councilwoman Barnes said the committee discussed efforts to unify the community. The committee is continuing to work on the five points of a crime plan and received information on railroad quiet zones.

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

Councilwoman NeSmith-Jackson encouraged residents to sign up to receive notifications from "Cy." The fall session of City University will be held on September 16th through October 28th. The deadline to apply for the fall session is September 8th. Councilwoman NeSmith-Jackson acknowledged that August is also National Dog Month and Women's Equality Day is August 26th. The committee will continue to work on awareness campaigns.



**FLORENCE CITY COUNCIL
REGULAR MEETING – AUGUST 12, 2024**

Mayor Ervin said that she has met with Florence 1 Schools to discuss hosting a Youth City University session.

Finance, Audit and Budget Committee, Chaired by Councilman McCall

Councilman McCall said the committee received a presentation from First Tryon Advisors on the water and sewer bonds. The committee also reviewed the monthly financial reports for June 2024.

EXECUTIVE SESSION

Mayor Ervin said Council will be entering into Executive Session for a discussion of matters related to an economic development project, to receive legal advice regarding a potential lawsuit, for a personnel matter, and action from Executive Session from the special called meeting held at 11:00am on August 12, 2024 to receive legal advice regarding the PFAS lawsuit.

Councilwoman NeSmith-Jackson 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 2:58pm.

Council resumed open session at 3:22pm and took action on the following items:

Resolution No. 2024-35

A Resolution of City Council approving Downtown Redevelopment Grants for First Quarter, FY25.

Pro tem Jebaily made a motion to pass Resolution No. 2024-35 and Councilman McCall seconded the motion.

Council voted unanimously (6-0) in favor of the motion. Resolution No. 2024-35 was passed.

Action from Executive Session from the special called meeting held at 11:00am on August 12, 2024 to receive legal advice regarding the PFAS lawsuit.

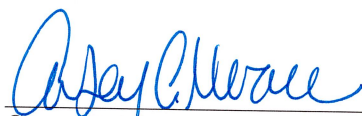
Pro tem Jebaily made a motion to authorize the City Manager to work with city attorneys to opt out of additional PFAS/PFOA Class Action matters and to approve and authorize the filing of an action by the City relating to PFAS and PFOA damages to the City of Florence. Councilman McCall seconded the motion.

Council voted unanimously (6-0) in favor of the motion.


ADJOURN

Without objection, the August 12, 2024 Regular meeting of City Council was adjourned at 3:23pm.

Dated this 9th day of September 2024.



Casey C. Moore, Municipal Clerk



Teresa Myers Ervin, Mayor