



GREENVILLE COUNTY COUNCIL

Minutes
Committee of the Whole Meeting
May 6, 2025
4:34 p.m.

Committee Meeting Room
301 University Ridge
Greenville, South Carolina

Council Members

Benton Blount, *Chairman, District 19*
Rick Bradley, *Vice-Chairman, District 26*
Liz Seman, *Chairwoman Pro Tem, District 24*
Joey Russo, *District 17*
Kelly Long, *District 18*
Stephen Shaw, *District 20*
Curt McGahhey, *District 21*
Frank Farmer, *District 22*
Alan Mitchell, *District 23*
Ennis Fant, Sr., *District 25*
Garey Collins, *District 26*
Dan Tripp, *District 28*

Pursuant to the Freedom of Information Act, notice of the meeting date, time, place and agenda was posted online, at 301 University Ridge, Greenville, and made available to the newspapers, radio stations, television stations and concerned citizens.

Council Members Absent

Curt McGahhey, *District 21*

Council Members Remote Participation

Staff Present

Joe Kernell, *County Administrator*
Chris Antley, *County Attorney*
Ted Lambrecht, *Deputy County Administrator*
Andrew Price, *Assistant County Attorney*
Regina McCaskill, *Clerk to Council*
Jessica Stone, *Deputy Clerk to Council*
Pam Gilliam, *Administrative Assistant*
Terrence Galloway, *Information Systems*
Hesha Gamble, *Assistant County Administrator*
Nicole Wood, *Assistant County Administrator*

Tee Coker, *Assistant County Administrator*
Ronald Hollister, *Assistant County Administrator*
Bob Mihalic, *Governmental Affairs Officer*
Lyndsey Sloane, *Director of Grants and Special Projects*
Walt Atkins, *Property Management*
Ruth Parris, *Budget Director*
Deneise Branyon, *Management and Budget*
Lisa Shealey, *Management and Budget*
Maria Tooley, *Management and Budget*

Others Present

None

Call to Order

Chairman Benton Blount

Invocation

Councilor Shaw

Item (3)

Approval of Minutes

- a. **April 14, 2025 – Special Called Committee Meeting**
- b. **April 15, 2025 – Regular Committee Meeting**

Action: Councilor Farmer moved to approve the minutes of the April 14, 2025, Special Called Committee Meeting and the April 15, 2025, Regular Committee Meeting.

Motion carried.

Item (4)

2025 TAP Grant – West Greenville Shared Use Path

Action: Chairwoman Pro Tem Seman moved for approval the 2025 Tap Grant – West Greenville Shared Use Path as presented in the packet.

Motion carried.

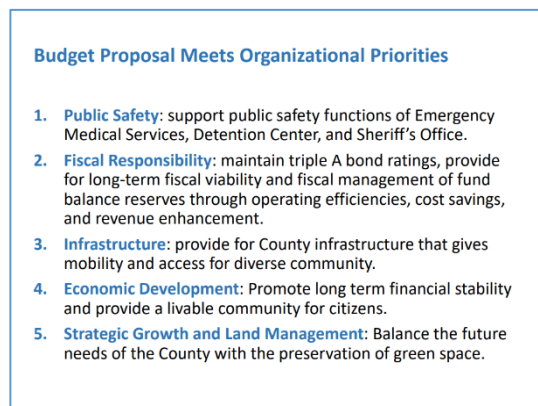
Item (5)

Budget Presentation

Presented by: Joe Kernell
County Administrator



Mr. Kernell stated the proposed Greenville County budgets for FY 2026 and FY 2027 provided a financial structure for the County's programs and services. The budgets encompassed a fiscally responsible allocation plan for resources and services necessary to maintain the County's acclaimed quality of life. They allowed for a continuation of the sound management and financial practices Greenville County Government has established and maintained over the years. Those practices have resulted in the County's retention of its AAA bond ratings for the past 22 years.



The proposed budget proposal met the following organizational priorities:

Public safety - Supported public safety functions of Emergency Medical Services, Detention Center and Sheriff's Office.

Fiscal Responsibility - Maintained AAA A bond ratings, provided for long term fiscal viability and fiscal management of fund balances for reserves through operating efficiencies, cost savings and revenue enhancement.

Infrastructure - Provided for county infrastructure that would give mobility and access for the County's diverse community.

Economic Development - Promoted long term financial stability and a livable community for citizens.

Strategic Growth and Land Management - Balanced the future needs of the County with the preservation of green space.

Major Emphasis

- Maintains average Fund Balance of \$68.7 million
- Reduces total County millage by 1.5 mills
- Reflects organizational priorities of public safety, fiscal responsibility, infrastructure, economic development, and strategic growth
- Provides Cost of Living for employees

Mr. Kernell stated the proposed budget maintained an average fund balance of \$68.7 million in the General Fund, reduced total County millage by 1.5 mills, reflected organizational priorities of public safety, fiscal responsibility, infrastructure, economic development and strategic growth, and provided a cost of living increase for employees.

Action Taken Preparing FY2026 Budget and FY2027 Budget

- Services inventoried and all department budgets reviewed in an effort to:
 - Reduce unnecessary expenses
 - Realign resources where needed
- Reviewed all funds
- Minimized increase in General Fund operating accounts

All County services and department budgets were inventoried and reviewed in order to reduce unnecessary expenses and realign resources, where needed. He stated all funds were reviewed and they minimized an increase in General Fund Operating Accounts. Mr. Kernell stated most of the funds flowed through the General Fund, which was always the major focus in preparing the budget.

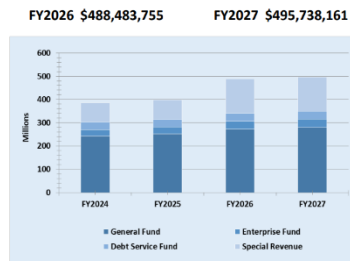
Proposed Budget Fiscal Year 2026 & Fiscal Year 2027

Fiscal Year 2026	\$488,483,755
Fiscal Year 2027	\$495,738,161

Includes General Fund, Special Revenue Funds, Debt Service Fund, and Enterprise Fund

The proposed budget for FY2026 was \$488,483,755 and \$495,738,161 for FY 2027. Those amounts included the General Fund, Special Revenue Funds, Debt Service Funds and Enterprise Funds. Mr. Kernell stated those amounts did not include the Internal Service Funds, which were \$56.9 for FY 2026 and \$58.8 million for FY 2027. The Internal Service Funds included items such as Health Insurance. The departments were charged for those items and funds dispersed to the Internal Service Funds.

Proposed Budgets Summarized by Fund



Highlights of Proposed Budgets

- Significant focus on Public Safety and Law Enforcement
- Major investment in infrastructure
- Intentional focus on maintaining sound fiscal condition
- \$2 million each year to address radio replacement

Mr. Kernell stated there was a significant focus on Public Safety and Law Enforcement, a reduction in taxes, major investments in infrastructure, an intentional focus on maintaining a sound fiscal condition, and \$2 million each year to address radio replacement.

Highlights for Public Safety

	FY2026	FY2027
Sheriff's Office	12 Deputies	12 Deputies
Coroner's Office	2 Deputy Coroner	2 Deputy Coroner
EMS	5 Paramedics	5 Paramedics
Forensics	1 Criminalist (Drug Analyst)	
Records	1 Records Specialist	
Probate Court	1 Law Clerk	
Emergency Management	1 Preparedness Manager	

- Funding for Sheriff's Office Body-Worn and In-Car Cameras
- Increased funding for Sheriff's Office for operating equipment and auto expenses
- Increased operational funding for Coroner's Office for auto expenses and telephone services
- Increased funding for Emergency Management for Emergency Response Team and increased contract costs
- Increased funding for Forensics equipment contract costs
- Increased funding for Probate Court digitization of estate records
- Funding for Courthouse judicial office expansion and security upgrades
- Personnel service funding for Public Defender's Office

Mr. Kernell stated all proposed added positions were located Public Safety.

- 12 deputies in each fiscal year
- 2 deputy coroners in each fiscal year
- 5 paramedics in each fiscal year
- 1 criminologist – FY 2026
- 1 record specialist in Records
- 1 law clerk in Probate Court
- 1 Preparedness Manager

Increased Funding:

- Funding for Sheriff's Office Body-Worn and In-Car Cameras
- Increased funding for Sheriff's Office for operating equipment and auto expenses
- Increased operational funding for Coroner's Office for auto expenses and telephone services
- Increased funding for Emergency Management for Emergency Response Team and increased contract costs
- Increased funding for Forensics equipment contract costs
- Increased funding for Probate Court digitization of estate records
- Funding for Courthouse judicial office expansion and security upgrades
- Personnel service funding for Public Defender's Office

Highlights Fiscal Responsibility

- Maintains adequate reserves and meets standards to maintain Triple A bond ratings
- 3.0% salary adjustment for both FY2026 and FY2027
- \$7 million for vehicle/equipment replacements and additions for both FY2026 and FY2027
- Grant matching funds of \$200,000 per year

Mr. Kernell stated the highlights of fiscal responsibility included the following:

- Maintaining adequate reserves and meets standards to maintain the County's AAA bond ratings
- 3.0% salary adjustment for FY 2026 and FY 2027
- \$7 million for vehicle/equipment replacements and additions for both years
- Grant matching funds of \$200,000 per year

Highlights Planning and Infrastructure Improvements

Infrastructure Improvement Projects	Annual Investment
Neighborhood Drainage Improvements	\$600,000
Water Quality Retrofit Projects	\$2.5 to \$4.0 million
Storm Water Flood Projects	\$2.35 million
Road Program	\$40 million
Radio Replacement	\$2 million

Highlights in Planning and Infrastructure Improvements:

- \$600,000 for neighborhood drainage improvements
- \$2.5 to \$4.0 million for water quality retrofit projects
- \$2.35 million for storm water flood projects
- \$40 million for the road program
- \$2 million for radio replacement

Highlights Capital Projects & Economic Development

- \$25.45 million in FY2026 and \$18.2 million in FY2027 for capital projects to support technological enhancements, equipment replacement, facility improvements, and Parks and Recreation projects
- \$3.1 million for FY2026 and FY2027 for Economic Development funding

Mr. Kernell stated for Capital Projects and Economic Development, \$25.45 million was allocated for FY 2026 and \$18.2 million for FY 2027. Those monies were needed for capital projects to support technological enhancements, equipment replacement, facility improvements, as well as Parks and Recreation projects. A total of \$3.1 million for FY 2026 and FY 2027 was allocated for economic development.

Capital Projects Included in FY2026 Budget & FY2027 Budget

- **Technological Improvements**
 - Enhancements to operating systems and GIS Orthophotography
 - Historical Document Preservation for Register of Deeds
 - Replacement of Body-Worn and In-Car Cameras for Sheriff's Office
- **Facility/Construction Projects**
 - Flooring Replacements for the Courthouse, Law Enforcement Center, and Detention Center
 - Rebuild of Cooling Tower at Courthouse and Law Enforcement Center
 - Replacement of the roof at Animal Care Services Facility, Central Records Facility, and Travelers Rest Maintenance Facility
 - Expansion of Courthouse judicial offices and security upgrades

Capital Projects Included in FY2026 Budget & FY2027 Budget

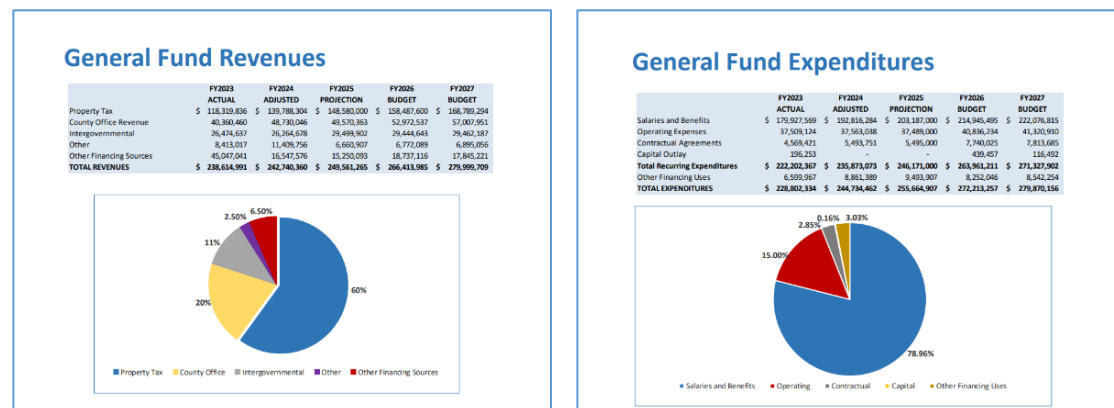
- **Equipment Projects**
 - Funding for vehicle replacements and additions
 - Replacement of EMS Stretchers
 - Replacement of Legacy Radios for Public Safety Offices
- **Parks, Recreation, and Tourism Projects**
 - Repaving of roads, parking lots, and sidewalks at Southside and Northside Parks
 - Replacement of tennis/pickleball court lighting at Southside, Northside, and Lakeside Parks
 - Replacement of playground equipment at Pittman Park
 - Master plan and construction documents for Oakland Plantation development and Lakeside Park renovations
 - Trail Extensions and Improvements
 - Turf for Soccer Field at Herd Klotz Park
- **Infrastructure Projects**
 - Road improvements

Mr. Kernell stated a study group was planned with the Circuit Solicitor, Public Defender, Clerk of Court, and some of the judges, to sit down and identify what was needed in terms of space. Council would be advised of those needs and the cost; it would be a long range type of plan.

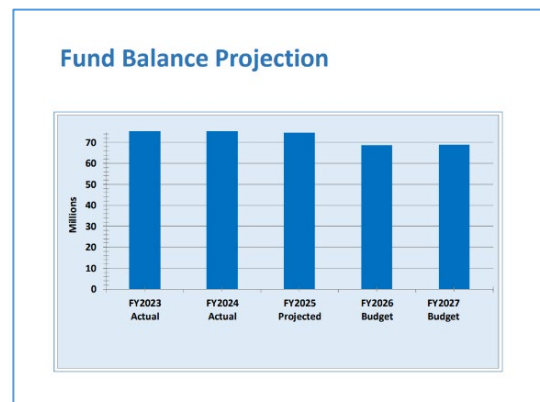
There appeared to be some positions that could be eliminated, mainly with Parks and Recreation. The County was now using robots to stripe the soccer and football fields; it was highly successful as it saved in manpower hours and supplies.

Mr. Kernell stated he was happy to report that the road paving or road repair budget had been increased to \$40 million, with approximately \$2 million in additional funding for the Woodruff Road Bypass that was funded years ago. It would be up to Council to determine how that funding would be spent.

Mr. Kernell stated a tax reassessment was coming up in the near future. He emphasized that reassessment did not generate additional revenue for the County. Mr. Kernell stated when property values increased, the millage decreased. Some properties would increase in value; however, the increase was capped at 15%. He stated the millage rate would decrease after the reassessment.



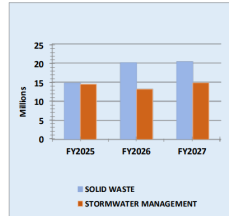
Mr. Kernell reviewed the anticipated revenue the County hoped to receive in the upcoming years. There would be increases in salaries and benefits, operating expenses, and contractual agreements. Approximately 80% of the County's budget was "people and benefits"; there was a 20% increase in health insurance accounted for in the proposed budgets. Mr. Kernell stated the County was "self-insured" and not quite as susceptible to some of the "whims" of big insurance companies. The main issues with the health insurance was the cost of claims, both medical and prescription costs.



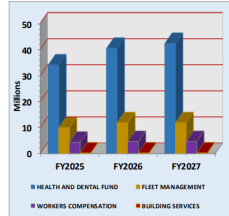
Mr. Kernell stated the Fund Balance would remain at the \$70 million mark, which fell within the 25%-35% of the amount indicated by the County's financial policy requirement. Expenditures were expected to increase. It may be necessary to raise the Fund Balance a bit; however, staff was comfortable with the proposed amount and had been very successful over the years keeping that amount where it needed to be.

Proprietary Funds

ENTERPRISE FUND
FY2026 \$33,222,597
FY2027 \$33,861,234



INTERNAL SERVICE FUND
FY2026 \$56,969,595
FY2027 \$58,857,600



The Enterprise Fund included Solid Waste and Storm Water Management. There was approximately \$33 million set aside for FY 2026 and \$34 million for FY 2027. Mr. Kernell stated \$56.9 million had been set aside for the Internal Service Fund for FY 2026 and \$58.9 for FY 2027.

Budget Adoption Process

May 20	1 st Reading – FY2026 and FY2027 Ordinances
May	Budget Workshops as needed
June 3	2 nd Reading and Public Hearings – FY2026 and FY2027 Ordinances
June	Budget Workshops as needed
June 17	3 rd Reading – FY2026 Ordinance
July 15	3 rd Reading – FY2027 Ordinance

Mr. Kernell reviewed the Budget Adoption Policy:

- May 20 – 1st Reading
- June 3 – 2nd Reading and Public Hearings for FY 2026 and FY 2027
- June 17 – 3rd Reading for FY 2026
- July 15 – 3rd Reading for FY 2027

Mr. Kernell stated Council may schedule workshops during that time.

Budget Summary

- Meets Requirements to Maintain Triple A Ratings
- Addresses Organizational Priorities and Goals
- Reduces millage by 1.5 mills
- Increases Personnel in Public Safety area
- Addresses capital needs
- Provides for economic development programs

Mr. Kernell summarized the proposed budgets as follows:

- Met requirements to maintain Triple A ratings
- Addressed organizational priorities and goals
- Reduced millage by 1.5 mills
- Increased personnel in Public Safety area
- Address capital needs
- Provided for economic development programs

Chairman Blount thanked Mr. Kernell for the presentation. He stated the next step would be to schedule a workshop for the upcoming week. He stated Council Members would have the opportunity to review the budget and have their questions prepared.

Vice-Chairwoman Seman stated she appreciated the additional staffing in the area of public safety; she asked if there were any additional staffing requests from other departments. She asked if there were any departments that were understaffed. Ms. Seman also inquired about the purchase of the radios in terms of if they would all be upgraded or would the County have to start all over in FY 2028.

Mr. Kernell stated in approximately 2018, the County purchased a whole new system. They joined the state system and put up towers. Recently, Motorola advised they were upgrading to a new system. Some of the County's existing radios could be upgraded; however, a number of them could not. Mr. Kernell stated it was "planned obsolescence." He stated staff was exploring providers other besides Motorola. More than likely, the County would have to continue to purchase new radios on a rolling basis. He stated it was very much like cell phones; the companies kept changing them. The key with public safety was interoperability. It was crucial all entities could talk with each other. Mr. Kernell stated it was obvious during the County's most recent disasters in that everybody was communicating, talking with each other. Purchase of the radios would probably be a 10-year process; they would be purchased now and paid for over 10 years.

In terms of employees, Greenville was the largest county in the state. It would be expected that the County would have the highest number of employees per capita; however, it was actually the second lowest. Mr. Kernell stated there was always a need for additional staff. The County tried to find ways to provide needed services without adding people. One example was the robots being used with Parks and Recreation. There was no way to use that type of technology in the public safety sector. The Detention Center did not ask for additional staff, even though the population at the jail was the highest it had ever been. Mr. Kernell stated there would be no need to staff the Juvenile Detention Center as it was now leased to the State. There was a budget increase of about \$750,000 for food for the inmates due to increased food costs; the lease at the Juvenile Detention almost covered that amount. While Greenville County could always use more people, it was succeeding by working smarter and more efficiently with fewer employees.

Mr. Tripp stated he appreciated the prioritization of public safety. The proposed budget indicated \$40 million over two years for roads and a decrease of 1.5 mills. Mr. Tripp inquired about cuts in the budget.

Mr. Kernell stated the \$40 million was a re-allocation of the FILOT funds the County received. Currently, the County kept 30% of those funds; the budget proposed keeping 60%. Those additional funds would provide the increase needed for the roads. He stated the bond payment for the Woodruff Road bypass would be paid using the road maintenance fees. The amount allocated for Affordable Housing was reduced from \$3 million to \$1 million. Mr. Kernell stated \$1 million was the amount that started the program, along with monies from Prisma which were part of a settlement when the hospital expanded. Monies from the settlement were scheduled for 32 years, with 24 years remaining. Monies set aside for land preservation was reduced from \$2 million to \$1 million. Those were the two major changes.

Chairwoman Pro Tem Seman asked where the 30% the County was proposing to keep had been going.

Mr. Kernell stated those funds were going to the other taxing jurisdictions.

Chairwoman Pro Tem Seman asked if those taxing jurisdictions were aware of the proposed change.

Mr. Kernell stated they were not aware as he wanted to discuss it with Council first.

Councilor Shaw asked what percentage of the budget was used for health care costs.

Mr. Kernell stated health care costs were approximately 10% of the total budget.

Councilor Shaw stated the last budget was approximately \$380 million and the proposed budget was approximately \$488 million.

Mr. Kernell stated fund accounting dealt with separate entities, so to speak. For instance, when something was done in the Infrastructure Bank where the FILOT money occurs, it was increased. Mr. Kernell stated monies received and expended must be accounted for. Land sales were starting to take place. The County had 1.6 acres under contract for \$8.8 million. That amount was shown in the budget and inflated it. The amount was inflated due to fund accounting. The total budget was projected to increase 22% the first year and 1.49% the second year.

Councilor Shaw asked if there were any adjustments to Greenlink funding.

Mr. Kernell stated Greenlink did ask for additional funding but there was no increase in the proposed budget. He stated no additional funds were provided for those types of agencies. The funding amount recommended was the same as the previous budget.

Councilor Shaw asked if there was a difference between the Emergency Management Director and a Preparedness Manager.

Mr. Kernell stated the Preparedness Manager was a new position and would be responsible for some of the long range planning for disasters. It was a very small staff and they "just need bodies." During a disaster, staff worked 24/7 and it was very hard on them. Mr. Kernell stated it was important to have some bodies that could help put things in place while there was no disaster going on and be prepared when a disaster occurred.

Councilor Shaw stated in regards to the Historic Trust, it was his understanding there was money to be spent in the trust. He inquired what would happen to the money that was in the trust.

Mr. Kernell stated there was "just shy of \$2 million" remaining in the fund. Those monies would stay in the trust and could be spent if they acquired property.

Vice-Chairwoman Seman stated she attended a presentation given by the Auditor, Scott Case, the previous day. She stated Mr. Case did a really good job of explaining how the County did not make money on a reassessment. She recommended her colleagues watch the presentation as it would be very beneficial.

Councilor Shaw asked if there were fee increases in any department.

Mr. Kernell stated fees were increased a few years ago in order to get them where they needed to be. He stated the County continued to make adjustments in building permit fees and landfill fees in an attempt to keep them current. The increased fees helped with the 1.5 mill decrease. He stated the Natural Resources fund pro forma showed \$2.6 million at the end of the current fiscal year; they would be in pretty good shape going into the new year. Mr. Kernell stated they would still have between \$1.8 and \$2 million over the next two years.

Chairman Blount thanked Mr. Kernell for the presentation and the information provided.

Item (6)

Adjournment

Action: There being no further business, Councilor Farmer moved to adjourn the meeting.

Motion carried and the meeting was adjourned at 5:18 p.m.

Respectfully submitted:

Regina McCaskill
Clerk to Council