



GREENVILLE COUNTY COUNCIL

Minutes
Regular Meeting
May 6, 2025
6:01 p.m.

Council Chambers
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 27*
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

None

Council Members Remote Participation

None

Staff Present

Joe Kernell, *County Administrator*
Chris Antley, *County Attorney*
Regina McCaskill, *Clerk to Council*
Jessica Stone, *Deputy Clerk to Council*
Pam Gilliam, *Administrative Assistant*
Terrence Galloway, *Information Systems*

Ted Lambrecht, *Assistant County Administrator*
Nicole Wood, *Assistant County Administrator*
Tee Coker, *Assistant County Administrator*
Hesha Gamble, *Assistant County Administrator*
Ronald Hollister, *Assistant County Administrator*
Bob Mihalic, *Governmental Affairs Officer*

Others Present

None

Call to Order

Chairman Blount

Invocation — *Introduced by Councilor Shaw*

Jay Gresham
Greenville County Clerk of Court

Pledge of Allegiance

Item (4) **Approval of Minutes**

a. April 15, 2025 – Regular County Council Meeting

Action: Chairwoman Pro Tem Seman moved to approve the minutes of the April 15, 2025 – Regular Council meeting.

Motion carried.

Special Announcement

Chairman Blount stated the following items had been pulled from the agenda:

- Item 9.a.** *Resolution Supporting the Greater Greenville Sanitation District*
- Item 16.b.** *Motion to Suspend Council Rules in Order to Reconsider the December 3, 2024, Action Adopting an Ordinance Authorizing the Transfer of Ownership of Poinsett Park, Gateway Park, and Trailblazer Park to the City of Travelers Rest*
- Item 16.c.** *Motion to Suspend Council Rules in Order to Reconsider the December 3, 2024, Action Authorizing the Greater Greenville Sanitation Commission to Issue \$20,000,000 General Obligation Bonds*

Chairman Blount stated several people had signed up to speak about one or more of the above listed items; if they still wanted to address Council, he would allow them to do so.

Item (5) **Proclamations and Special Recognitions**

a. Recognizing NextGEN

Chairman Blount recognized the staff from NextGen who were in attendance.

b. Proclaiming EMS Week

Chairwoman Pro Tem Seman presented a proclamation to Greenville County Emergency Medical Services, proclaiming May 19 – 23 as Emergency Medical Services Week.

Item (6) **Appearances – Current Agenda Items**

- **Logan LaMance** - appeared regarding Item 5.a. Recognizing NextGen
- **Ed Paxton** - appeared regarding Item 16.c. Motion to Suspend Council Rules in Order to Reconsider the December 3, 2024, Action authorizing the Greater Greenville Sanitation Commission to Issue \$20,000,000 General Obligation Bond
- **David Davis** - appeared regarding Item 16.c. Motion to Suspend Council Rules in Order to Reconsider the December 3, 2024, Action authorizing the Greater Greenville Sanitation Commission to Issue \$20,000,000 General Obligation Bond

Item (7)

Public Hearings

a. Animal Control Ordinance Amendments

A public hearing was held for the purpose of receiving comments from the public regarding an ordinance to amend Chapter 4 of the Greenville County Code of Ordinances regulating animal care in Greenville County.

- **Barbara Wally** - appeared in favor of the proposed
- **Anne Goettee** - appeared in favor of the proposed
- **Robert Chapman** - appeared in favor of the proposed
- **Angela Gschwind** - appeared in favor of the proposed
- **Chantal Hambides** - appeared in favor of the proposed
- **Daniel DeSousa** - appeared in favor of the proposed
- **Jane Swan** - appeared in favor of the proposed
- **Tyler Cole** - appeared in favor of the proposed

- **Robert Vandiver** - appeared in opposition to the proposed
- **Sharon Smith** - appeared in opposition to the proposed
- **Nancy Koenigsmann** - appeared in opposition to the proposed
- **Bob Koenigsmann** - appeared in opposition to the proposed
- **Keith Butler** - appeared in opposition to the proposed
- **Michael Kilgore** - appeared in opposition to the proposed
- **Debbi Kaplan** - appeared in opposition to the proposed

There being no other speakers, Councilor McGahhey declared the public hearing closed.

b. Greenville County Library Budget / Millage Request

A public hearing was held for the purpose of receiving comments from the public regarding an ordinance to approve the appropriation of funds for the Greenville County Library System for the Fiscal Year beginning July 1, 2025 and ending June 30 2026; and to authorize the annual Ad Valorem property tax millage for library purposes.

- **Emily Cinquemani** - appeared in opposition to the proposed
- **Corinne Shuford** - appeared in opposition to the proposed
- **Lauren Kohnle** - appeared in opposition to the proposed
- **Heather Shockey** - appeared in opposition to the proposed
- **Shanna Raines** - appeared in opposition to the proposed

There being no other speakers, Councilor Collins declared the public hearing closed.

c. Greenville County Land Development Regulations Amendment / Design Standards

A public hearing was held for the purpose of receiving comments from the public regarding an ordinance amending Section 10.3 (design standards) of the Greenville County Land Development Regulations to require new business, office, mercantile, assembly (gathering), educational, or storage uses, structures, or developments be designed and constructed compatible with the surrounding area and conform with the unique character and architectural highpoints of surrounding buildings.

There being no speakers, Vice-Chairman Bradley declared the public hearing closed.

d. Greenville County Land Development Regulations Amendments / Sec. 15-102

A public hearing was held for the purpose of receiving comments from the public regarding an ordinance to amend Section 15-102 of the Greenville County Land Development Regulations concerning additional citizen input and eliminating staff recommendations on approvals.

There being no speakers, Vice-Chairman Bradley declared the public hearing closed.

Item (8)

Consent Agenda

- a. **2025/2026 Road Paving List**
- b. **Duke Energy 2025 Helping Emergency Response Organizations Grant**
- c. **Community Project Application / River Falls Fire District – Equipment**
- d. **Community Project Application / Parks and Recreation – Soccer Fields**
- e. **Community Project Application / Parks and Recreation – Blue Star Monument Garden**
- f. **Community Project Application / Parks and Recreation – Butler Springs Park**

Action: Chairman Pro Tem Seman moved approval of the Consent Agenda items.

Motion carried.

Item (9)

Resolutions

- a. **~~Resolution Supporting the Greater Greenville Sanitation District~~**

Action: ~~Vice Chairman Bradley moved for adoption a resolution of Greenville County, South Carolina expressing support for the Greater Greenville Sanitation District and concern over legislation proposed in the South Carolina General Assembly which would, if enacted, modify its powers in a manner that would have a negative impact on the district's finances and ability to operate efficiently, and which would have a disproportionate negative impact on the most financially distressed areas of the district and the residents and businesses therein, and which would result in the termination of existing waste collection services to residents and businesses in areas outside the district, and which may result in termination of existing waste collection services to thousands of residents and businesses inside the district; and other matters related thereto.~~

Item was removed from the agenda.

Item (10) **Ordinances – Third Reading**

a. Zoning Ordinances

- i. **CZ-2025-016,** Property of Rocky Creek, LLC, located at 847 Fairview Road and Wilson Bridge Road, requesting rezoning from R-S to R-10.

Action: Vice-Chairman Bradley moved adoption of the ordinance at third reading.

Motion carried.

- ii. **CZ-2025-017,** Property of VanRock Holdings, LLC, located at 4607 and 4615 Old Spartanburg Road, requesting rezoning from POD to R-MA.

Action: Vice-Chairman Bradley moved adoption of the ordinance at third reading.

Motion carried.

- iii. **CZ-2025-019,** Property of Brian Dillard, located at 101 Stallings Road, requesting rezoning from R-S to R-12.

Action: Vice-Chairman Bradley moved adoption of the ordinance at third reading.

Motion carried.

- iv. **CZ-2025-020,** Property of Keith Delesline, located at 358 S. Harrison Bridge Road and New Harrison Bridge Road, requesting rezoning from R-S to AG. The Planning Commission and Committee recommended approval.

Action: Vice-Chairman Bradley moved adoption of the ordinance at third reading.

Motion carried.

b. Animal Control Ordinance Amendment

Action: Councilor McGahhey moved for adoption at third reading an ordinance to amend Chapter 4 of the Greenville County Code of Ordinances regulating animal care in Greenville County.

Motion carried by a Roll Call vote of twelve (Russo, Long, Blount, Shaw, McGahhey, Farmer, Mitchell, Seman, Fant, Bradley, Collins and Tripp) in favor and none in opposition.

Item (11)

Ordinances – Second Reading

a. Zoning Ordinances

- i. **CZ-2025-014** Property of Las Cruces Investments, LLC, located on Agnew Road and Richards Avenue, requesting rezoning from R-MHP to R-M8. The Planning Commission recommended approval and the Committee recommended denial.

Action: On behalf of the Committee, Vice-Chairman Bradley moved to deny the ordinance at second reading.

Action: Councilor Bradley moved to hold the item.

Motion to hold carried.

b. Greenville County Library Budget / Millage Request

Action: Councilor Collins moved for approval at second reading an ordinance to approve the appropriation of funds for the Greenville County Library System for the Fiscal Year beginning July 1, 2025 and ending June 30, 2026; and to authorize the annual Ad Valorem property tax millage for library purposes.

Action: Councilor Fant moved to amend the ordinance to approve the appropriation of funds for the Greenville County Library System for the fiscal year beginning July 1, 2025, and ending June 30, 2026, and to authorize the annual ad valorem property tax millage for library purposes to be consistent with the proposed amended ordinance and budget draft appended to the motion.

Councilor Fant stated the amendment was being offered as the library employees were on the front line of learning, literacy and public service in the community. He stated there were still some of those employees who made just \$10.83 an hour. That was not conservative budgeting and not just morally wrong; it was morally indefensible. Mr. Fant stated library workers were skilled, dedicated individuals who helped children read, assisted job seekers and supported seniors with technology while providing a safe, welcoming space for everyone. The original proposed budget included greatly deserved raises that reflected the real value of the employees' work and the rapidly rising cost of living in Greenville County. It did not require an increase in property taxes. He stated in order to maintain a high quality public library system, Council must start by respecting and retaining the people who worked there. He urged his colleagues to support the original proposed budget for fairness, for service and for the future of Greenville County.

Councilor Tripp stated the issue of the library was near and dear to his heart. Council had discussed investing in roads during the Committee of the Whole meeting held earlier in the evening; it was his opinion that the item in question was 1000 times more important than roads because it affected the children.

Mr. Tripp stated his three young children (7, 6 and 2) “voraciously devoured” books from the library; his two-year old even had his own library card. He accompanied his children to the library recently and they checked out 100 books. Mr. Tripp thanked the staff at the Mauldin Library; they were always so helpful and he had nothing but praise for them. He planned to support Mr. Fant’s proposed amendment; it was important to make an investment in children.

Councilor Collins stated he voted against the item in question when it was originally presented to the Finance Committee. Since that time, Council had heard from multiple people in the community, including library employees, who were opposed the budget. He stated some individuals had suggested the board had overstepped its authority when they instructed the Executive Director to make changes to the budget. Mr. Collins stated the members of the Library Board were selected by Council and did have the authority to issue that directive; he commended them for doing so. He stated his vote during the Finance Committee was not due to proposed reductions in the budget or any other reason expressed by those in opposition; it was to press for more cuts to expenses and millage. Mr. Collins stated the library had excess reserves on hand and could use those funds. It was his belief the millage should be further reduced in order to provide a greater tax relief for the taxpayers; monies in the reserve fund should be used instead. Since the Finance Committee meeting, he had studied and researched the library budget. He still believed greater cost savings could be found. He appreciated the fact that the Library Board Members rejected the ridiculous 13.1% increase in operating expense proposed by the Director in her budget. Mr. Collins stated he also appreciated the caution they were exercising in their analysis for future projections. He was prepared to support the budget approved by the Library Board with one caveat, they continue to find ways to reduce taxes and save money.

Mr. Collins stated the Library’s Human Resources department conducted a wage study comparing the wages of its positions to similar positions in the Greenville County. The board was told that the Director’s proposed budget included a 17.2% increase in wages in order to get Library positions more in line with County positions. The lowest full-time salary for the Library was \$31,429, which was higher than the lowest Greenville County full-time salary of \$31,373. Mr. Collins cited additional wage information he found on *Talent.com* and *Zip Recruiter* for comparison. He stated he was unable to support his colleagues’ amendment and suggested the Library Board search for a new Director.

Vice-Chairman Bradley stated the Director of the Library had recommended a 4.5% raise for employees and the Board recommended a 3% raise. He stated for an individual making \$15 per hour, the difference was 22 cents.

Chairwoman Pro Tem Seman stated she appreciated all the speakers and the work they did. She hoped Council realized there were good employees at the libraries and at all of the positions at the County. Customer service was the responsibility of all County employees, including Council. Ms. Seman stated she was in favor of Councilor Fant’s amendment and requested a roll call vote.

Councilor Farmer stated in looking at pay for library employees, there were only two (2) making less than \$12 per hour. Both of those individuals were part-time.

Councilor Mitchell stated his sister was a librarian and had worked in numerous places such as Hughes Aircraft and the Los Angeles County Library System. He stated she had changed positions a number of times due to pay. He stated librarians were not viewed as full-time, established employees; they were viewed as “helpers.” Mr. Mitchell stated the 1.5% difference in proposed pay increases was not enough to quibble over. Council was talking about lives; if the difference was going to help somebody improve their life, it was worth it. There were other ways to make up that difference; he was sure the library system could find some.

Councilor McGahhey stated he had struggled with the issue. He lived near the Five Forks Library and it was beautiful; his family loved it. He stated he could not “speak out of two sides” of his mouth. A number of Council Members “ran on cutting taxes.” He understood the employees wanted better wages; however, as someone responsible for the taxpayers’ money, it would be irresponsible to give large raises to those employees. Mr. McGahhey stated there were “a few red herrings out there.” Employees with Parks and Recreation made \$9 per hour; most were high schoolers and not making a living wage. He stated he took offense to that, as it was a misnomer and misleading. He stated, as Mr. Farmer had pointed out, \$11 was not what most employees working at the libraries were making. Mr. McGahhey stated he was elected to cut taxes, have transparency and give his constituents a voice. He stated there was no employee at the library with a college degree making \$11 an hour, as proposed by some of his colleagues. Mr. McGahhey stated he would be voting against the proposed amendment.

Councilor Shaw stated he had a fantastic time when he visited one of the libraries in the County. The staff was great. Mr. Shaw thanked the members of the Library Board for all their hard work on the budget and indicated he planned to rely on their recommendation.

Councilor Collins stated being certified or credentialed in the library system was determined by the State Legislature; and, the certification was granted by the American Libraries Association. That association did not say there were six (6) position in a library. He suggested the library employees contact their state representative.

Chairman Blount stated he felt for the library employees; however, he believed in the process. The County had boards for a reason. He stated Council had to trust the boards and if the citizens were not happy with the decision the boards made, they should lobby to get new people to fill those positions. Mr. Blount stated it was an easy decision for anybody; if Council was going to start bypassing board decisions, they were basically taking government and turning it up on its head. He stated that while he wished there had been another way to handle the situation, there was a purpose for those structures.

Motion to amend was denied by a vote of four (Seman, Mitchell, Fant and Tripp) in favor and eight (Russo, Long, Blount, Shaw, McGahhey, Farmer, Bradley and Collins) in opposition.

Action: Councilor Seman moved to hold the item in order for the Library Board to consider its amendments to the budget.

Councilor McGahhey inquired about the Library Board’s vote. If the vote was 5-0 to approve the amendments, it would be a waste of time for the board to reconsider.

Chairman Blount stated it was his understanding the vote was not unanimous; however, he did not have the exact count. He stated there did not appear to be a timeline issue with possibly holding the item.

Motion to hold was denied by a vote of six (Blount, Mitchell, Seman, Fant, Bradley and Tripp) in favor and six (Russo, Long, Shaw, McGahhey, Farmer and Collins) in opposition.

Motion to approve the appropriation of funds for the Greenville County Library System for the Fiscal Year beginning July 1, 2025 and ending June 30, 2026; and to authorize the annual Ad Valorem property tax millage for library purposes carried by a roll call vote of eight (Russo, Long, Blount, Shaw, McGahhey, Farmer, Bradley and Collins) in favor and four (Mitchell, Seman, Fant and Tripp) in opposition.

Item (12) **Ordinances – First Reading**

a. Brookfield Special Tax District / Millage Request

Councilor Collins presented for first reading an ordinance to approve the Brookfield Special Tax District Commissioners' request for an increase to its current Ad Valorem property tax millage levy.

Chairman Blount stated the item would remain on the floor.

Item (13.) **Committee Reports**

a. Committee of the Whole

i. 2025 TAP Grant – West Greenville Share Use Path

Action: On behalf of the Committee, Vice-Chairman Bradley moved to approve the 2025 TAP Grant for the West Greenville Shared Use Path.

Motion carried.

Item (14) **Public Comments**

- **Amelia Sanders** – appeared regarding Affordable Housing
- **Keri Driggers** – appeared regarding Greenlink

Item (15) **Administrator's Report**

Mr. Kernell stated the next session of the Citizens Academy was scheduled for Tuesday, May 13. They would be touring Animal Care and Pleasant Ridge Park. He extended an invitation to Council to attend.

Item (16) **Requests and Motions by Council Members**

8:06 p.m. - Chairman Blount passed the gavel to Vice-Chairman Bradley.

a. **Resolution to Initiate the Development of an Impact fee Ordinance and Capital Improvement Plan**

Councilor Blount introduced a resolution to initiate the development of an impact fee ordinance and capital improvement plan pursuant to the South Carolina Development Impact Fee Act.

Vice-Chairman Bradley referred the item to the Finance Committee.

8:07 p.m. - Vice-Chairman Bradley passed the gavel back to Chairman Bradley.

b. **~~Motion to Suspend Council Rules in order to Reconsider the December 3, 2024, Action Adopting an Ordinance Authorizing the Transfer of Ownership of Poinsett Park, Gateway Park, and Trailblazer Park to the City of Travelers Rest~~**

Item was removed from the agenda.

c. **~~Motion to Suspend Council Rules in order to Reconsider the December 3, 2025, Action Authorizing the Greater Greenville Sanitation Commission to Issue \$20,000,000 General Obligation Bonds.~~**

Item was removed from the agenda.

Item (17) **Adjournment**

Action: There being no further business, Councilor McGahhey moved to adjourn.

The motion carried and the meeting was adjourned at 8:08 p.m.

Respectfully submitted:

Regina McCaskill
Clerk to Council