



GREENVILLE COUNTY COUNCIL

Minutes
Committee of the Whole Meeting
April 21, 2026
4:01 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 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

Alan Mitchell, *Council District 23*
Dan Tripp, *Council District 28*

Council Members Remote Participation

Steve Shaw, *Council District 20*

Staff Present

Joe Kernell, *County Administrator*
Chris Antley, *County Attorney*
Ted Lambrecht, *Deputy County Administrator*
Regina McCaskill, *Clerk to Council*
Jessica Stone, *Deputy Clerk to Council*
Julie Wallace, *Administrative Assistant, Clerk to Council Office*

Terrence Galloway, *Information Systems*
Bob Mihalic, *Governmental Affairs Officer*
Hesha Gamble, *Assistant County Administrator*
Ronald Hollister, *Assistant County Administrator*
Ruth Parris, *Budget Director*
Lisa Shealy, *Financial Operations*

Others Present

Sheriff Hobart Lewis

Call to Order

Chairman Blount

Invocation

Councilor Farmer

Item (3) **Approval of Minutes**

a. April 5, 2026 – Regular Committee Meeting

Action: Chairwoman Pro Tem Seman moved to approve the minutes of the April 5, 2026, Regular Committee meeting.

Motion carried.

Item (4) **Board and Commission Interviews and Appointments**

The following individuals appeared before the Committee of the Whole and gave their personal presentations:

a. Alcohol and Drug Abuse Commission (5 vacancies)

Batson, Jimmy (D.17) - incumbent

Action: Chairwoman Pro Tem Seman moved to elect, by acclamation, *Jimmy Batson* and *Laura Noonkesser*, to fill two of five vacancies on the Alcohol and Drug Abuse Commission.

Motion carried.

b. Board of Zoning Appeals (3 vacancies)

Akers, Janes (D.20) – incumbent

Roth, Michael (D.24) - incumbent

Ward, Alexander (D.17) - new

Action: By ballot vote, *James Akers, Michael Roth and Alexander Ward* were elected to fill three vacancies on the Board of Zoning Appeals.

c. Construction Board of Appeals (5 vacancies)

Malone, Bryan (D.20) - incumbent

Action: Chairwoman Pro Tem Seman moved to elect, by acclamation, *Bryan Malone* to fill one of the five vacancies on the Construction Board of Appeals.

Motion carried.

Action: Chairwoman Pro Tem Seman moved to open a special application period of two weeks for the Construction Board of Appeals due to a potential quorum issue.

Motion carried.

d. Greenlink / Greenville Transit Authority (1 vacancy)

Forsythe, William (D.18) - new

By ballot vote, *William Forsythe* was elected to fill one vacancy on the Greenlink / Greenville Transit Authority Board.

e. Greenville Area Development Corporation (GADC) (3 vacancies)

Brock, Peter (D.21) – new

Cunningham, Carlos (D.20) - new

Edwards, Kathleen (D.18) - new

Groves, Eric (D.17) - new

Kuper, Anastasia (Stacy) (D.21) - new

Peek, Vicki (D.20) - new

Action: By ballot vote, *Peter Brock, Eric Groves and Vicki Peek* were elected to fill three vacancies on the Greenville Area Development Corporation Board.

f. Greenville Arena District (3 vacancies)

Andrews, David (D.26) - new

Lightner, Kerry (D.20) - incumbent

Murray, Benjamin (D.23) - new

Parrott, Mark (D.21) - new

Patel, Neetu (D.22) - incumbent

Action: By ballot vote, *Kerry Lightner, Neetu Patel, and B. Curtis Rose* were elected to fill three vacancies on the Greenville Arena District Board.

g. South Carolina Technology and Aviation Center Board (SCTAC) (1 vacancy)

West, Steven (D.27) - incumbent

Action: By ballot vote, *Steven West* was elected to fill one vacancy on the South Carolina Technology and Aviation Center Board.

Item (5) Special Tax District Appointments

a. Boiling Springs Fire District (1 vacancy)

Wells, Richard (D.21) - incumbent

Action: Councilor McGahhey moved to elect by acclamation *Richard Wells* to fill one vacancy on the Boiling Springs Fire District Board.

Motion carried.

b. Chanticleer Community Commission (1 vacancy)

Price, Brian (D.24) - new

Action: Chairwoman Pro Tem Seman moved to elect by acclamation *Brian Price* to fill one vacancy on the Chanticleer Community Commission.

Motion carried.

c. Devenger Point Special Tax District (2 vacancies)

Ballenger, Peggy (D.22) – new

Perunko, Robert (D.22) - new

Action: Councilor Farmer moved to elect by acclamation *Peggy Ballenger and Robert Perunko* to fill two vacancies on the Devenger Point Special Tax District Board.

Motion carried.

d. Devenger Tax District Commission (4 vacancies)

Gordon, Chandler (D.22) – new

Latham, Bruce (D.22) – incumbent

Price, Randy (D.22) - incumbent

Action: Councilor Farmer moved to elect by acclamation *Chandler Gordon, Bruce Latham, and Randy Price* to fill three of four vacancies on the Devenger Tax District Commission; and, open a special application period of two weeks for the Devenger Tax District Commission.

Motion carried.

e. Linkside Special Tax District (4 vacancies)

Barrett, Norman (D.20) – former member

Brown, David (D.20) - new

Isbell, Carol (D.20) - new

Matthews, Richard (D.20) - incumbent

Action: Councilor Long moved to elect by acclamation *Norman Barrett, David Brown, Carol Isbell, and Richard Matthews* to fill four vacancies on the Linkside Special Tax District Board.

Motion carried.

Item (6) FY2024 Greenville County Annual Budget

Mr. Kernell presented the County's proposed FY 2027 budget; a full presentation was not provided. He stated the FY 2027 budget was originally presented in May of 2025, and the current proposal included most of the same information.

Mr. Kernell stated the total proposed budget for FY 2027 was \$473,000,496, and the General Fund portion was \$286,000,588. He stated some funds increased, others decreased. The budget maintained an average General Fund balance of \$71.8 million, which was within the 25%-35% range required by the County's fiscal financial policies.

The budget provided an average 2.5% increase for all employees, with an additional 2.5% increase for Public Safety positions. Mr. Kernell stated it had been challenging over the last few years to keep pace with market salaries, especially in Public Safety, which accounted for roughly 50% of all County employees. The budget proposed adding six Deputy positions, two Deputy Coroner positions, and four Administrative positions for the Clerk of Court. Mr. Kernell stated the two Deputy positions in the Coroner's Office would help with the shift work needed for around-the-clock coverage and would reduce overtime. He stated no Deputy positions were added last year or the current year for the Sheriff's Office; the proposed six additional positions would provide desperately needed manpower. There was definitely a need for additional staff in the Clerk of Court's Office. Mr. Kernell stated one position for a Governmental Communications employee was also included, as requested by Council during the retreat.

Mr. Kernell stated the proposed budget included \$27.5 million for roads, which was less than the previous year's amount. Unfortunately, the plan put in place to utilize FILOT monies did not come to fruition. The businesses had been awarded the FILOTs; however, until they were up and operating, the County would not collect the tax money. Mr. Kernell stated they hoped to see an increase in that area in the coming year. When it became apparent that revenues were not coming in as expected, the County pulled back on expenditures to avoid getting into a bind. He stated the \$27.5 million for roads appeared achievable, unless the economy did not improve.

The budget provided \$21.9 million for capital projects; a host of projects were needed throughout the County. A total of \$1 million had been allocated to Affordable Housing, funded by the Prisma Hospital settlement. Mr. Kernell stated in the current budget, \$2 million had been allocated for Affordable Housing, with \$1 million earmarked for a County employee home ownership program. That program had just gotten off the ground; therefore, it did not seem prudent to allocate additional funding until they saw how it worked.

Mr. Kernell stated the budget provided \$1.5 million in support of the Historic and Natural Resources Trust and \$3.1 million for economic development programs, including GADC, Upstate Alliance, and NEXT.

Mr. Kernell stated \$150,000 had been proposed for a study of the downtown courthouse. There were many issues with the lack of space, and something had to be done. He stated it would be a major construction project. Some pro bono preliminary work was done in the past on the needs, and that information was a good starting point for discussions.

Mr. Kernell stated they wanted to get the information to Council to give them time to review the proposal. He opened the floor for questions.

Chairwoman Pro Tem Seman requested the budget incorporate the new language Council recently approved regarding its budget priorities and modify the narrative to match. Council had done good work on developing those priorities, and while they were similar to those from the past, she would love to see the new language included.

Councilor McGahhey stated he planned to introduce an ordinance to implement a Transportation Sales Tax for Greenville County. If approved, the tax could generate approximately \$1 billion over eight years, and the timeline could be extended. He stated he would also propose eliminating the \$25 road fee, along with a 1.5-mill reduction. Mr. McGahhey stated the additional funding would free up money for Public Safety, land preservation, and a host of other items. The proposed sales tax would not include groceries. He stated the State had introduced House Bill 5071, which would give all roads to the counties without additional funding. As the bill currently stands, counties would have the option to accept the roads or not. He stated for those “familiar with Columbian politics,” items get amended and passed, and no one knows what happened. Mr. McGahhey stated he had been opposed to the Capital Projects Sales Tax for a number of reasons. With his proposal, Council had a say in deciding which roads would be paved and how it would be accomplished. The Transportation Sales Tax would allow the County to be flexible and move funding around as deemed necessary.

Councilor Collins asked if the funding generated by the Transportation Sales Tax prioritized law enforcement.

Councilor McGahhey stated the funding had to be used for roads; however, it would free up other monies for Public Safety.

Councilor Farmer asked whether the FILOT allocations for roads would remain in place or if that funding could be used for Public Safety.

Councilor McGahhey stated the FILOT structure allocated 80% to roads and 20% to other entities; he planned to keep it in place. While all the money generated by the transportation penny had to be used for roads, it would provide the County with flexibility.

Mr. Kernell stated the FILOTs were currently contributing only about \$4.5 million to the roads. The \$25 maintenance fee contributed about \$14 million annually to road maintenance.

Chairwoman Pro Tem Seman stated she wanted to reward the County’s Public Safety employees, but also do what was right for all its employees. She encouraged her colleagues to remember as they went through the budget process, it was important to keep and continue to hire the “best people.” The only way to do that was to pay them what they were worth. Councilor Seman stated she wanted to find a way to reward all County employees; it would probably be one of the hardest things they tackled. She stated everything was symbiotic; Council had to consider the consequences of funding and its effect on the other side of the equation, such as HNRT projects and ensuring Zoning was in order. Councilor Seman stated Council Members had to ensure they could accomplish their priorities, not just from a financial perspective but also from a policy perspective.

Chairman Blount thanked Mr. Kernell for the presentation and asked his colleagues to consult their calendars to determine when they could start the budget discussions.

Councilor Collins asked Mr. Kernell if the term “Public Safety” included Law Enforcement.

Mr. Kernell stated it included Law Enforcement, EMS, Detention Center, Forensics, Records, and the Coroner; basically, any employee that carried a badge.

Item (7)

Adjournment

Action:

There being no further business, Councilor Long moved to adjourn.

Motion carried and the meeting was adjourned at 5:12 p.m.

Respectfully submitted:

Regina McCaskill
Clerk to Council