



GREENVILLE COUNTY COUNCIL

Minutes
Regular Meeting
February 3, 2026
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

Alan Mitchell, *Council District 23*

Staff Present

Joe Kernell, *County Administrator*
Ted Lambrecht, *Deputy County Administrator*
Chris Antley, *County Attorney*
Regina McCaskill, *Clerk to Council*
Jessica Stone, *Deputy Clerk to Council*

Council Members Remote Participation

Liz Seman, *Council District 24*

Julie Wallace, *Administrative Assistant*
Bob Mihalic, *Governmental Affairs Officer*
Terrence Galloway, *Information Systems*
Hesha Gamble, *Assistant County Administrator*
Ronald Hollister, *Assistant County Administrator*

Others Present

None

Call to Order

Chairman Blount

Invocation

Councilor Long

Pledge of Allegiance

Item (4) **Approval of Minutes**

a. January 20, 2026 – Regular County Council Meeting

Action: Vice-Chairman Bradley moved to approve the minutes of the January 20, 2026, Regular County Council Meeting.

Motion carried.

Item (5) **Proclamation**

a. Recognizing J.H. Chapman and Chapman Grove Community Club

Vice-Chairman Bradley presented a proclamation recognizing J.H. Chapman and the Chapman Grove Community Club.

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

There were no speakers

Item (7) **Ordinances – Third Reading**

a. Gilstar Metts Street LLC (formerly Project Cherry) / Special Source Credit Agreement

Action: Councilor Collins moved for adoption at third reading an ordinance authorizing the execution and delivery of a special source credit agreement between Greenville County, South Carolina and Gilstar Metts Street LLC, whereby certain special source credits against payments in lieu of taxes would be granted to the company to offset certain investment in qualifying infrastructure; and other matters related to the foregoing.

Councilor McGahhey stated he spoke with Max Stewart, CEO of GADC, about the item in question. After asking some very tough questions, he was satisfied it made “good sense” to approve the amendment. The item was an amendment to a special source credit agreement, not a FILOT. He stated its approval was fiscally responsible for the County's growth.

Motion carried.

b. Anderson – Greenville Multi-County Industrial Business Park Agreement Amendment / Gilstar Metts Street LLC (formerly Project Cherry)

Action: Councilor Collins moved for adoption at third reading an ordinance to amend an agreement for the development of a joint county industrial and business park (2010 Park) of Greenville and Anderson Counties so as to enlarge the park to add a certain parcel in Anderson County.

Motion carried.

Item (8)

Ordinances – Second Reading

a. Greenville Arena District / General Obligation Bonds

Action: Vice-Chairman Bradley moved for approval at second reading an ordinance finding that Greenville Arena District, South Carolina, may issue not exceeding \$40,000,000 of General Obligation Bonds in one or more series; to authorize the Board of Trustees of the Greenville Arena District, South Carolina, to issue such bonds and to provide for the publication of notice of the said finding and authorization.

Motion carried.

Councilor Long requested a roll call vote.

Councilor McGahhey stated he wanted to be very clear to the public. He had received some emails and phone calls about the item. The arena was not a private entity. It was established by the State of South Carolina in the 1940s and was owned by the taxpayers. Mr. McGahhey stated the assertion it was a private entity making money for private people was wrong. The people of Greenville County needed to protect, promote, and invest in the Arena to ensure its success. It was one of the few revenue sources that actually provided money to the County, rather than taking money from it. Councilor McGahhey stated Council would be remiss to vote against the bond. The Arena made good money; investing in it was an investment not only in the Arena but also in the County. He stated no one wanted a blighted piece of property the County would be responsible for maintaining or disposing of in ten years because they failed to invest in it. Mr. McGahhey stated he would vote in favor of the item.

Vice-Chairman Bradley echoed Councilor McGahhey's sentiments. The Arena was a county-owned entity. It made money for the County; the return on the dollar was \$56 to \$1, and that figure could be shown in the hospitality tax, the accommodation tax, and wages and salaries, which were put into the City and the County. The Arena was a business that needed to be maintained. Mr. Bradley stated he planned to vote in favor of the item, even though he had been told if he did, some of his constituents would not vote for his reelection.

Chairwoman Pro Tem Seman thanked Beth Paul and her team, along with the Arena District Board members, for providing strong economic impact and job data, and for taking the time to answer Council's questions. Ms. Seman stated she planned to vote in favor of the item.

Councilor Collins stated he had attended three (3) different meetings regarding the Arena. He would not vote in favor of the item as it was not what his constituents wanted.

Chairman Blount stated Council would be far less responsible with taxpayer dollars if it voted to let the Arena "go by the wayside." It could turn into a "money pit" if they did not stay proactive, focused, and ahead of the curve. He stated it appeared some people in the community did not understand the Arena's contribution to the County's economy, and it was up to Council to explain it to their constituents.

Councilor Farmer stated the Arena contributed \$50 million per year to the local economy and was an investment in the area's small businesses. Those businesses needed help; he understood some of them earned 30-40% of their revenue from Arena events. Mr. Farmer stated it would be irresponsible not to invest in something that would help small businesses. He stated most of Council considered themselves "Republicans" and were supposed to be "pro small business."

Motion as presented carried by a roll call vote of nine (Russo, Blount, Shaw, McGahhey, Farmer, Seman, Fant, Bradley and Tripp) in favor, two (Long and Collins) in opposition, and one (Mitchell) absent. Ms.

b. Greenville Arena District - Intergovernmental Agreement Amendment / Accommodations Fee Revenues

Action: Vice-Chairman Bradley moved for approval at second reading an ordinance approving an amendment to an Intergovernmental Agreement related to the County's Accommodations Fee Revenues among Greenville County, Greenville Arena District, the City of Greenville, and an escrow agent; approving an amendment to an escrow agreement among Greenville County, the City of Greenville and an escrow agent; and other matters related thereto.

Councilor Long requested a roll call vote.

Motion as presented carried by a roll call vote of nine (Russo, Blount, Shaw, McGahhey, Farmer, Seman, Fant, Bradley, and Tripp) in favor, two (Long and Collins) in opposition, and one (Mitchell) absent.

c. Hospitality Tax Revenue Bonds / Second Supplemental Ordinance

Action: Vice-Chairman Bradley moved for approval at second reading a second supplemental ordinance providing for the issuance and sale by Greenville County, South Carolina, of not exceeding \$100,000,000 Hospitality Tax Revenue Bonds in one or more series and the issuance and sale of Hospitality Tax Revenue Bond Anticipation Notes in one or more series, and other matters relating thereto.

Councilor McGahhey asked Mr. Kernell to provide the public with background on how the Arena District would cover the proposed bond, including its ability to cover those bonds now and in the future.

Mr. Kernell stated the County was not at risk for any of the debt. If approved, the H-Tax funding would pay for the Hospitality Tax Revenue Bonds, the local A-Tax funding would pay for the Accommodations Tax Revenue Bonds, and the GO (General Obligations) Bonds would be paid by the Arena District, using revenue from its operations. He stated the Arena District had done an excellent job over the past few years and there was no reason to believe that would change, based on upcoming events and projections for the proposed amphitheater. Mr. Kernell stated H-Tax funding was derived from food and beverage sales throughout the unincorporated portion of the County; A-Tax funding was established specifically for the Arena and was derived from the hotel tax that unincorporated hotels paid into the Arena District for the upkeep and construction of the facility. He stated both H-Tax and A-Tax funding could only be used for tourism-related activities.

Councilor Long requested a roll call vote.

Motion as presented carried by a roll call vote of nine (Russo, Blount, Shaw, McGahhey, Farmer, Seman, Fant, Bradley, and Tripp) in favor, two (Long and Collins) in opposition, and one (Mitchell) absent.

Item (9) **Committee Reports**

Councilor McGahhey acknowledged the "County's heroes" during the back-to-back winter storms the area recently experienced. In particular, the employees of Public Works, Emergency Management, Roads and Bridges, Property Management, Animal Care, Solid Waste, EMS, Sheriff's Office, Vehicle Service Center, Governmental Affairs, and Information Systems. Those staff members worked tirelessly during both events to keep essential services up and running and get the County fully operational as soon as possible. Mr. McGahhey thanked them all for their hard work.

Item (10) **Public Comments**

- **Bob Carson** – appeared regarding the need for a Housing Court
- **Jamila Onweazu** – appeared regarding the Greenville Theatre
- **Scott Smith** – appeared regarding buried barrels of poison

Item (11) **Administrator's Report**

Mr. Kernell acknowledged and thanked the County's first responders and Public Works employees for their hard work and keeping everyone safe during the two winter storms.

Item (12) **Requests and Motions by Council Members**

a. Introduction of a Land Development Concurrency Requirement Study Resolution

Councilor Collins introduced a resolution directing Greenville County staff and the Planning Commission to investigate and study the implementation of a land development concurrency requirement.

Chairman Blount referred the item to the Planning and Development Committee.

- Councilor Fant stated Greenville County was growing so fast. It appeared some citizens did not always understand the issues Council faced, and they were often blatantly wrong in their assumptions. For instance, there were many misconceptions about the Arena District. With 50,000 constituents each, there was no way Council Members could communicate with all of them. Mr. Fant stated he received one phone call about the Arena. It was from a woman who lived in District 26, and she did not even live in the Arena District. Mr. Fant stated they needed to find a better way to educate their constituents on reality versus myth, as the amount of misinformation or lack of knowledge was palpable. He stated they had to put better systems in place to better inform the public.
- Councilor McGahhey inquired about the public hearing for the Arena District.

Ms. McCaskill stated third reading and the public hearing were scheduled for February 17.

Item (13) **Adjournment**

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

The motion carried and the meeting was adjourned at 6:48 p.m.

Respectfully submitted:

Regina McCaskill
Clerk to Council