



GREENVILLE COUNTY COUNCIL

Minutes
Regular Meeting
April 1, 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

Steve Shaw, *District 20*

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

Sheriff Hobart Lewis, *Greenville County Sheriff's Office*
Steve Cole, *Executive Director, Greater Greenville Sanitation*

Call to Order

Chairman Blount

Invocation – introduced by Councilor McGahhey

Josh Martin, Pastor
Palmetto Hills Presbyterian Church

Pledge of Allegiance

Item (4) **Approval of Minutes**

Action: Vice-Chairwoman Seman moved to approve the minutes of the March 18, 2025 – Regular Council meeting.

Motion carried.

Item (5) **Appearances – Current Agenda Items**

- **Daniel Rumfelt** – appeared regarding item 6.a. Resolution Supporting the Greater Greenville Sanitation District
- **Bruce Wilson** – appeared regarding item 6.a. Resolution Supporting the Greater Greenville Sanitation District
- **David Davis** – appeared regarding item 6.a. Resolution Supporting the Greater Greenville Sanitation District
- **Ed Paxton** – appeared regarding item 6.a. Resolution Supporting the Greater Greenville Sanitation District
- **Jimmy Torrey** – appeared regarding item 6.a. Resolution Supporting the Greater Greenville Sanitation District

Item (6) **Resolutions**

a. Resolution Supporting the Greater Greenville Sanitation District

Action: On behalf of the Committee, 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, purport to dissolve the district or otherwise 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.

Action: Vice-Chairman Bradley moved to amend the resolution to remove all references to House Bill 4002, following its failure in the State Senate.

Without objection, the motion to amend carried.

Action: Vice-Chairman Bradley moved approval of the resolution as amended.

Councilor Fant stated there appeared to be some cooperation and conversation between the Legislative Delegation and Council in regard to the item in question. He stated there also appeared to be a commitment in trying to find some common ground to preserve Greater Greenville Sanitation.

Action: Councilor Fant moved to hold the item until the April 15, 2025, Regular Council meeting.

Motion carried with Councilors Long and Shaw voting in opposition.

b. Resolution Supporting the Designation of a Portion of Interstate 85 as Sgt. W.C. Jumper Highway

Action: On behalf of the Committee, Councilor Bradley moved for adoption a resolution to support the designation of a portion of Interstate 85 In Greenville County as “Sgt. W.C. Jumper Highway” in honor of Sergeant Conley Jumper’s dedicated service and sacrifice to Greenville County.

Motion carried.

Item (7) Ordinances – Third Reading

a. Zoning Ordinances

- i. **CZ-2025-009,** Property of South Greenville Fire District, located at 40 Old Augusta Road. Ext., requesting rezoning from R-M20 to S-1.

Action: Councilor Bradley moved adoption of the ordinance at third reading.

Motion carried.

- ii. **CZ-2025-010,** Property of 9 Springside, LLC, located at 9 Springside Avenue, requesting rezoning from R-7.5 to R-6.

Action: Councilor Bradley moved adoption of the ordinance at third reading.

Motion carried.

b. Augusta Grove 10 Investors, LLC (formerly Project Firehouse) / Fee in Lieu of Tax Agreement

Action: Councilor Collins moved for adoption at third reading an ordinance authorizing the execution and delivery of a fee in lieu of tax agreement by and between Greenville County, South Carolina and Augusta Grove 10 Investors, LLC, with respect to certain economic development property in the County, whereby such property would be subject to certain payments in lieu of taxes and other matters related thereto.

Councilor Long stated the required investment the for FILOT was \$10 million; however, the information in the summary was very vague. She asked if there was any additional information that could be shared regarding the item.

Chairman Blount stated all information regarding the item was initially presented in the Finance Committee and then included in the Council packet.

Councilor McGahhey stated in talking to several staff members and other elected officials, it was his understanding that many FILOTs were not simply a “giveaway.” In terms of the item in question, the County would receive revenue, if approved. Mr. McGahhey stated he planned to vote in favor of the item. In the future, if a FILOT was presented that was not a good deal for the County, he would vote in opposition.

Councilor Long inquired about the number of jobs the item would generate, if approved.

Chairman Blount stated it was his understanding that no new jobs would be created by the FILOT; it was for a speculative building.

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

c. Greenville – Anderson Multi County Industrial Business Park Agreement Amendment / Cone Mills Acquisition Group LLC *(formerly Project Ott)*

Action: Councilor Collins moved for adoption at third reading an ordinance authorizing the execution and delivery of the first amendment to that certain agreement for development of a joint county industrial and business park by and between Greenville County, South Carolina and Anderson County, South Carolina (Cone Mills Acquisition Group, LLC); and other matters related thereto.

Councilor Shaw asked if Greenville County would receive money from the other county.

Chairman Blount stated the County would not receive any revenue. The item had been “around for a while” and needed “some restructuring.”

Motion as presented carried.

Item (8) Ordinances – Second Reading

a. Establishment of a Firearms Sign Policy for Greenville County Properties or Facilities

Action: Councilor Collins moved for approval at second reading an ordinance establishing a Greenville County policy directing all Greenville County administrators and staff regarding signs, posters, bulletin boards, memorandum, and/or administrative policies or directives regarding firearms on Greenville County properties or facilities.

Action: Councilor Collins moved to hold the item for a public hearing scheduled for April 15.

Councilor Seman inquired about the language used in *Section 1. Policy* of the proposed ordinance which read as follows:

Section 1. Policy.

(A) It is the policy and directive of Greenville County Council that, with the exception of the statutory sign (S.C. Code of Laws Section 21-31-235(B)), placed at the entry door of government buildings, no sign, poster, bulletin board, memorandum, shall be placed or allowed to remain upon any Greenville County property or premises.

Chairwoman Pro Tem Seman asked if the ordinance would ban all signs on County property.

Mr. Antley stated, as currently written, the ordinance would prohibit any signage, with the exception of the state statutory sign that prohibited firearms at governmental buildings.

Councilor Seman inquired about the language used in *Section 3. Violation* of the proposed ordinance which read as follows:

Section 3. Violation.

Violation of this Greenville County Policy shall be deemed cause for termination of employment, contract, or agency.

Chairwoman Pro Tem Seman asked if Council had the authority to make such a determination.

Mr. Antley stated the language was problematic and contradicted State law with regard to County Council's ability to enact an ordinance and create penalties, which would normally have to be within the statutory limits of the Magistrate Court.

Councilor McGahhey stated the ordinance appeared to only be applicable to directives regarding firearms.

Mr. Antley stated he believed the intent was to reference firearms; however, it was not written that way.

Councilor Fant requested Mr. Shaw provide a brief summary of his intent in drafting the proposed ordinance.

Councilor Shaw stated it was presumed that people with firearms in Greenville County were law abiding citizens and allowed to carry firearms in accordance with the law for their own self-protection. He stated there were signs at the convenience centers that were not statutory signs and were erected by the Director of Solid Waste. Mr. Shaw stated he had questioned that individual about the signs and was told that staff was not comfortable with citizens carrying firearms to the centers. State law was very clear that no local government or government official had the authority to determine firearm laws in the State; convenience centers were legal places to carry firearms. Mr. Shaw stated the proposed ordinance did not "talk about" termination of employment. The intent was to establish a policy that would find a cause for termination if violated. Whether or not an individual was terminated or not was under the Administrator's purview.

Councilor Tripp stated the proposed ordinance mentioned the County Administrator. He asked if the proposed would create a cause of dismissal that was not allowed for under his contract.

Councilor Shaw stated if it did, Council could “cross that bridge” when they got there. He stated the ordinance was needed to keep the signage clean, protect the Second Amendment Rights of the citizens and ensure the County was not sued. Mr. Shaw stated if the County Administrator was not willing to follow the ordinance, he was comfortable with the consequences.

Motion to hold carried.

Item (9) **Ordinances – First Reading**

a. Stormwater Ordinance Revisions

Councilor McGahhey presented for first reading an ordinance to amend the Greenville County Storm Water Management Ordinance to implement requirements and procedures in compliance with Federal and State Regulations pursuant to the County’s NPDES Permit.

Chairman Blount stated the item would remain on the floor.

Item (10) **Committee Reports**

a. Committee of the Whole

i. Greenville County Citizens’ Academy Appointments

Action: On behalf of the Committee, Vice-Chairman Bradley moved to appoint Charlene Means and Hugh Means to the 2025 Greenville County Citizens’ Academy.

Without objection, the motion carried.

ii. Greenville County Sheriff’s Office Citizen Advisory Committee Appointments

Action: On behalf of the Committee, Vice-Chairman Bradley moved to appoint Tony Gilliard, William Crank, Marcus Griffis and Randy Eskridge Jr. to the Greenville County Sheriff’s Office Citizen Advisory Committee.

Without objection, the motion carried.

Item (11) **Public Comments**

- **Ed Paxton** – appeared regarding Greater Greenville Sanitation
- **Margaret McGinty** – appeared regarding Greenlink
- **Audrey Pasin** – appeared regarding Land Development

Item (12) **Administrator’s Report**

- Mr. Kernell provided a brief update on the area's wildfires. The Persimmon Ridge Fire, consisting of 2078 acres, was 74% contained; Table Rock Fire, totaling 13,287 acres, was 30% contained. The recent rain that came through helped tremendously. He stated the South Carolina Firefighter Mobilization had coordinated approximately 1000 firefighters and more than 400 pieces of apparatus since March 22, 2025. No structures had been lost. Mr. Kernell stated, at the height of fire, 856 homes were under mandatory evacuation in Greenville County. There have been 707 air-drop missions, with 845,000 gallons of water dropped and a total of 170 flight hours. He stated the Table Rock Complex Fire documented the first time a very large air tanker was used in South Carolina history. The tanker dropped fire retardant on homes located south of Cliff Ridge and north of Sky Ranch. The 2016 Pinnacle Mountain Fire, with 10,623 acres, was the previous record holder of the largest wildfire in South Carolina; the Table Rock Complex Fire was now the largest. Mr. Kernell stated the Table Rock Complex incident had been listed as the number one priority fire in the nation for four days straight.

Mr. Kernell thanked all the first responders to include firefighters, EMS, Sheriff's Office, State Fire Marshal, Forestry Service (state and federal) and South Carolina Emergency Management. He also thanked staff with Greenville County Emergency Management, stating they had worked tirelessly from the beginning, with some staff spending the night there for days, providing necessary coordination and support. It had been a tremendous operation. The fires had impacted a small population of the County, but, a very important area of the County. Mr. Kernell stated they were all proud that no homes were lost.

- Mr. Kernell stated the County had received payment for the electric chargers in the garage; he had shared a copy of the check with Councilor McGahhey.

Chairman Blount asked if drop off points for supplies were still available. It was his understanding that Emergency Management had indicated no additional supplies were needed.

Mr. Kernell stated he would check on that and put the information on the County's webpage.

Item (13)

Requests and Motions by Council Members

- Councilor Fant stated last week he attended the unveiling of the first F-16 Block 70 built by Lockheed Martin for Taiwan. It was a great ceremony, with a number of dignitaries from Taiwan in attendance. Mr. Fant stated Lockheed Martin had started with 400 employees and was now at 800, looking to hire 300 more to build an additional 59 F-16's for Taiwan.
- Councilor Long thanked Mr. Blount, Mr. Kernell and Nicole Wood for hosting Leadership Greer earlier in the day. The group was taken on a tour of the buildings and staff explained each department's responsibility. Ms. Long stated it meant a lot to her as she was a graduate of Leadership Greer.

- Councilor McGahhey stated Council was responsible for appointing members to the Greater Greenville Sanitation Commission; however, they had no authority to dissolve it as it was a taxing entity. The Legislative Delegation had been tasked with that responsibility.

Mr. McGahhey stated during the most recent Planning and Development Committee meeting, the committee denied the development of 402 new houses and approved 60. He stated there were seven items on the agenda. One item was a request for an Agricultural Preservation District. Of the remaining six, three were approved and three were denied.

- Chairman Blount stated the person(s) leasing the property at Riverbend Equestrian Park had performed an amazing service during the wildfire. Councilor Long had contacted him and stated there was a woman who needed to evacuate 25 horses due to the wildfires. The lady at Riverbend assisted in evacuating the horses and provided shelter. Mr. Blount stated he did not know her name but he wanted to personally thank her for saving those animals.

Item (14)

Adjournment

Action: There being no further business, Vice-Chairman Bradley moved to adjourn.

The motion carried and the meeting was adjourned at 6:55 p.m.

Respectfully submitted:

Regina McCaskill
Clerk to Council