



GREENVILLE COUNTY COUNCIL

Minutes
Regular Meeting
May 20, 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*
Dean Campbell, *Deputy 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*
Ronald Hollister, *Assistant County Administrator*
Hesha Gamble, *Assistant County Administrator*
Bob Mihalic, *Governmental Affairs Officer*
Marcia Papin, *Manager, Greenville County Solid Waste*

Others Present

Beverly James, *Executive Director, Greenville County Library System*
Jim Burns, *Greenville Area Development Corporation*

Call to Order

Chairman Blount

Invocation

Councilor McGahhey

Pledge of Allegiance

Item (4) **Approval of Minutes**

a. May 6, 2025 – Regular County Council Meeting

Action: Councilor Farmer moved to approve the minutes of the May 6, 2025 – Regular Council meeting.

Motion carried.

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

a. National Public Works Week

Councilor McGahhey presented a proclamation to Greenville County Public Works, recognizing May 18 -24 as National Public Works Week and thanking staff for protecting the safety, well-being, comfort and quality of life for the County's citizens.

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

Chairman Blount stated there were a large number of people had signed up to address Council regarding current agenda items; that portion of the meeting was limited to 30 minutes. He stated the speakers would be called to the lectern, five at a time. He suggested the speakers be cognizant of their time; doing so would allow more people to speak.

Mr. Blount stated he wanted to address the proposed Greenville County budgets. He stated that he, along with staff, had been working with the school board and Dr. Royster in attempt to resolve the issues surrounding the district's proposed funding for the next two years. The County had been able to make changes to the proposed budget and none of the school board's anticipated funding for the upcoming fiscal year would be affected. The school board had worked really hard to prepare a budget with no tax increase.

Chairman Blount stated he would like to open the floor to his colleagues if they would like to address the audience about the budget and the school district. It had been a long week of discussions. He stated Council McGahhey would like to address the audience first.

Councilor McGahhey stated it had been a "pretty hot week" and there were a "lot of lies out there." Since he had the pulpit, he wanted to address the citizens he represented. He wanted to "put some truths out there"; the lies had been rampant and bad. Mr. McGahhey stated the most pressing issue before Council was public school funding. The school district had said teachers would not get raises, Special Education would be cut, charter schools would get 80% of school funding for the next year and Council was prioritizing roads over kids. He stated the school district had encouraged people to protest. Mr. McGahhey stated he had the truth and facts to all those statements based on the district's fiscal reporting; every number he was prepared to quote was obtained from the district's website. The district had sufficient funding to give teachers larger raises than proposed in its budget.

Point of Order Councilor Tripp inquired as to why Mr. McGahhey was discussing the school board, as it was time for people to address Council regarding current agenda item.

Councilor McGahhey stated he was allowed to speak because he was a Council Member.

Chairman Blount stated he had informed Mr. McGahhey he could speak, after consulting with the Administrator and other pertinent staff members and advised it was his decision.

Councilor Tripp asked under what Council Rule did the Chairman have the authority to make that decision.

Action: Councilor McGahhey moved to suspend Council Rules.

Councilor Tripp requested Mr. Campbell to cite the rule.

Councilor McGahhey stated Mr. Tripp may be concerned if he had people sitting in front of his house like he did.

Councilor Tripp stated he did not call anyone a “fat cow.”

Chairman Blount stated he refused to be part of the discussion and asked Mr. Campbell to weigh in on the issue.

Mr. Campbell stated he did not think Council Rules directly addressed the situation. He felt it had been done in the past.

Councilor Tripp stated if an issue was not addressed under Council Rules, Mason’s was the controlling authority. He inquired as to what Mason’s indicated about allowing a point of personal privilege. Mr. Tripp stated there were a lot of people in the attendance wanting to address Council. The evening’s agenda was long and Council needed to stick to the rules.

Councilor McGahhey stated Mason’s did address the issue. The Chairman did have authority to allow him to speak as Council made up its own rules and could “change them on the fly.” Mr. McGahhey stated the Chairman had ultimate authority.

Councilor Tripp asked Mr. McGahhey if he could cite that information in Mason’s.

Councilor McGahhey stated he did not have his Mason’s Manuel with him, but he knew for a fact that was the case.

Mr. Campbell stated Section 2-22 of Mason’s referred to questions of personal privilege and indicated that they must relate to persons as members of the body or relate to charges against their character. He stated he had not had an opportunity to delve into the issue extensively. Mr. Campbell stated the Chairman’s ruling to allow Mr. McGahhey to address the audience could be appealed.

Councilor Tripp stated he was not trying to be obstructionist. He stated Mr. McGahhey should stick to the point of personal privilege; if his character had been attacked, he should talk about that, not “all the lies” of presumably somebody in the audience.

Councilor McGahhey stated he had been smeared and called names by the school board.

Chairman Blount stated he did indicate that any Council Member could make a statement, if they wanted; the privilege was not just for Mr. McGahhey.

Councilor Tripp stated if that was the case, it was not one member's personal privilege. It was the same as the Requests and Motions portion of the agenda.

Chairman Blount stated he was trying to be fair to all Council Members. He told Mr. McGahhey he could continue.

Councilor McGahhey stated on the school district's own fiscal reporting, there was sufficient funding to give teachers larger raises than proposed. He stated the district had \$78 million in excess funds for FY 2025 and had amassed a General Fund balance of over \$240 million. The district had collected significantly more money than it had spent in eight of the past 10 years, while raising taxes in seven of the past 11 years.

Point of Order Councilor Tripp stated Mr. McGahhey's speech was not a personal privilege speech.

Councilor Tripp stated the Point of Order took precedence over Mr. McGahhey's "bloviating."

Chairman Blount stated Mr. McGahhey felt he had been attacked by the media and it was fair for him to be able to address the accusations.

Councilor Tripp stated Mr. McGahhey should speak about what the school board had said about him, not about teacher pay raises and other issues. Those issues did not speak to Mr. McGahhey's character.

Chairman Blount addressed the audience, stating Council should not be operating that way and it was not typical of the current Council. He stated he felt they could all handle listening to what one of their colleagues had to say.

Action: Councilor McGahhey moved to suspend Council Rules.

Councilor Fant stated there were no rules to suspend in regard to the situation at hand.

Chairman Blount asked Mr. McGahhey if he was willing to speak later in the meeting during the appropriate part of the agenda.

Councilor McGahhey stated he was willing to wait if Mr. Tripp promised not to interrupt him.

Councilor Tripp stated he was raising a legitimate point of order, which took precedence over anything Mr. McGahhey was saying. He stated the Requests and Motions portion of the agenda was the appropriate place for Mr. McGahhey to deliver his speech.

- **William Johnson** – appeared regarding Item 12.a.i. Request Planning Commission to Reconsider PP-2025-015 (Bellewyn)
- **Doris Turner** - appeared regarding Item 9.a. Greenville County Library Budget / Millage Request

- **Michael Fox** - appeared regarding 12.a.i. Request Planning Commission to Reconsider PP-2025-015 (Bellewyn)
- **Joanna Reese** - appeared regarding 11.c. FY 2026 Greenville County Budget
- **Roosevelt Lilliston** - appeared regarding 11.c. FY 2026 Greenville County Budget – Affordable Housing
- **Jeffrey Darling** - appeared regarding 11.c. FY 2026 Greenville County Budget
- **Corinne Shuford** - appeared regarding Item 9.a. Greenville County Library Budget / Millage Request
- **Storm Bruner** - appeared regarding 8.c. FY25-26 Accommodations Tax Funding Recommendations
- **Dorothy Waldrop** - appeared regarding 11.c. FY 2026 Greenville County Budget – Greenlink
- **Cindy Jordan** - appeared regarding 11.c. FY 2026 Greenville County Budget
- **Bennett Meares** - appeared regarding 11.c. FY 2026 Greenville County Budget – Greenlink
- **Susan Smith** - appeared regarding 11.c. FY 2026 Greenville County Budget
- **William Bradshaw** - appeared regarding 12.a.i. Request Planning Commission to Reconsider PP-2025-015 (Bellewyn)
- **Jim Burns** - appeared regarding 12.a.i. Request Planning Commission to Reconsider PP-2025-015 (Bellewyn)
- **Matthew Miller** - appeared regarding Item 9.a. Greenville County Library Budget / Millage Request
- **Leah Narro** - appeared regarding 11.c. FY 2026 Greenville County Budget
- **Sherry Barrett** - appeared regarding Item 10.c. Land Development Regulations Amendment / Cluster Housing
- **Lily Wood** - appeared regarding Item 11.c. FY 2026 Greenville County Budget
- **Sherry Sutton** - appeared regarding Item 10.b. Zoning Text Amendment / Section 8:5 Environmentally Sensitive District – Paris Mountain (CZ-2025-028)
- **Tracey Byrd** - appeared regarding Item 11.c. FY 2026 Greenville County Budget

Item (7)

Public Hearings

a. Brookfield Special Tax District / Millage Request

A public hearing was held for the purpose of receiving comments from the public regarding an ordinance to approve the Brookfield Special Tax District Commissioners' request for an increase to its current ad valorem property tax millage levy.

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

Item (8)

Consent Agenda

- a.** Petco Love Grant
- b.** Duke Energy Grant – Emergency Management
- c.** FY2025-2026 Accommodations Tax Funding Recommendations
- d.** Community Project Application / Greenville County Parks and Recreation – Summer Day Camp Scholarships \$3,906.00
- e.** Community Project Application / City of Greenville – Artisphere \$2,500.00

- f. Community Project Application / Greenville County Sheriff's Office – LEAD Upstate Appreciation Event \$5,000.00
- g. Community Project Application / Duncan Chapel Fire District – Portable Radios \$4,500.00

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

Motion carried.

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

a. Greenville County Library Budget / Millage Request

Action: Councilor Collins moved for adoption at third 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 the library purposes.

Action: Chairwoman Pro Tem Seman moved to suspend Council Rules to allow for amendments at third reading.

Motion to suspend Council Rules was denied by a roll call vote of five (Seman, Mitchell, Fant, Bradley and Tripp) in favor and seven (Russo, Long, Blount, Shaw, McGahhey, Farmer and Collins) in opposition.

Councilor Fant suggested Ms. Seman should have been given the opportunity to say what she had to say about the item in question, before Council aggressively voted in opposition to her request to allow for amendments at third reading. It appeared she may have wanted to offer amendments to the item; Council Members would have the chance to vote against any proposed amendments, if they chose to do so.

Chairman Blount agreed and gave Chairwoman Pro Tem Seman the floor.

Councilor Seman stated she was going to suggest Council vote on the original budget, not the one in question. She thanked all the speakers and apologized for not being able to make amendments to the budget. Ms. Seman welcomed her colleagues to make a motion to suspend the rules in order to make amendments at third reading.

Action: Councilor Fant moved to suspend Council Rules to allow for amendments at third reading.

Motion to suspend Council Rules was denied by a roll call vote of four (Seman, Mitchell, Fant and Tripp) in favor and seven (Russo, Long, Blount, Shaw, McGahhey, Farmer, Bradley and Collins) in opposition.

Councilor McGahhey stated he had met with some members of the library staff the preceding evening and they expressed concerns about the budget. Earlier in the day, he spoke with the Director, the Finance Director and a board member. In the proposed budget, all staff members were slated to receive a 3% raise, at a cost of approximately \$500,000. There was also \$500,000 allocated for a Wage Assessment Correction for FY 2027, which would give some employees a salary increase of 8% - 10%. He stated that was "a pretty good deal"; it was the best package any Greenville County employee would be getting.

Councilor Fant stated Greenville County had a great library system. He could not understand how any of his colleagues could feel comfortable in knowing some library employees worked 2 and 3 jobs to make ends meet; had not one but two roommates; were trying to live off of \$1,500 a month; and had \$100 a month for food. Mr. Fant stated no one should make \$10.83 an hour. He did not care how many library employees were making that amount. If an individual loved their job, they should make a living wage. Councilor Seman asked where the millage the library board had proposed to give back would go.

Mr. Kernell stated if the millage was reduced by half a mill, the taxpayers would just not pay as much.

Councilor Seman stated someone had made a comment about library employees making the choice to work there. She stated the individuals who worked at the library were qualified to do so. In fact, many people working at the library were required to have more qualifications that it took to be a Council Member, and Council Members made more than most of the people working at the library.

Councilor Mitchell stated the library staff did a great job and deserved a raise. It was unfortunate that not enough of his colleagues felt the same way. He assured them they would eventually get the pay they deserved. Mr. Mitchell told them not to feel completely defeated, hold their head up high, keep walking and keep working.

Councilor Seman inquired about the value of the half mill decrease and how much that would be saving the taxpayers.

Mr. Kernell stated one mill amounted to about \$4 per \$100,000 of home value; most taxpayers would see a decrease of less than that amount.

Councilor McGahhey stated the employees would be getting the full Wage Assessment raise over two years; he could not understand what else Council could do.

Motion to approve the Greenville County Library Budget as presented 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 (10) **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.

Motion to deny carried.

- ii. **CZ-2025-022,** Property of Cole Emma II, LLC, located at 12 Old Chick Springs Road (Council District 18), requesting rezoning from R-20 to R-MA. The Planning Commission recommended denial and the Committee recommended approval as amended to R-10.

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

Action: Vice-Chairman Bradley moved to amend the request to R-10.

Motion to amend carried.

Action: Vice-Chairman Bradley moved to approve the ordinance as amended.

Motion carried.

- iii. **CZ-2025-023,** Property of Joshua Rafe Laws, located at 13025 Old White Horse Road (Council District 17), requesting rezoning from R-S to C-1. The Planning Commission and the Committee recommended denial.

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

Motion to deny carried.

- iv. **CZ-2025-024,** Property of Lakesha Michele Evans & Dorothy J Kitchen, located at 601 & 609 Jacobs Road, Maxwell Avenue, & Rearden Drive, (Council District 25), requesting rezoning from R-20 to R-10. The Planning Commission and the Committee recommended denial.

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

Motion to deny carried.

- v. **CZ-2025-025,** Property of James A. Boling, Jr., located at 3835 E. North Street (Council District 22), requesting rezoning from O-D to C-1. The Planning Commission and the Committee recommended approval.

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

Motion carried.

- vi. **CZ-2025-026,** Property of Palmetto Business Partners, LLC, located on New Easley Hwy. & Bent Bridge Rd., (Council District 23), requesting rezoning from S-1 to R-M8. The Planning Commission and the Committee recommended denial.

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

Motion to deny carried.

- vii. **CZ-2025-027,** Property of Sagar S. Gandhi, located at 1421 Old Gunter Rd., (Council District 25), requesting rezoning from R-S to AG. The Planning Commission and Committee recommended approval.

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

Motion carried.

b. Zoning Text Amendment / Section 8:5 Environmentally Sensitive District – Paris Mountain (CZ-2025-028)

Action: On behalf of the Committee, Vice-Chairman Bradley for approval at second reading an ordinance to amend Section 8:5 (ESD-PM, Environmentally Sensitive District-Paris Mountain) of the Greenville County Zoning Ordinance.

Councilor Seman asked for clarification as to whether approval of the item would only be for future use and would not affect any current property.

Mr. Campbell stated there had been no prior reversion and would only be for future use.

Councilor Tripp asked what approval of the item would mean in practical terms.

Councilor Shaw stated there was a “loophole” in the ESD Paris Mountain classification. Currently it stated if a developer could find access from another source and not utilize Altamont Road, the property would be removed from the ESD PM classification and revert back to the original zoning. Mr. Shaw stated the planning staff was aware of the loophole.

Motion as presented carried.

c. Land Development Regulations Amendment / Cluster Housing

Action: On behalf of the Committee, Vice-Chairman Bradley moved for approval at second reading an ordinance to delete Article 11 of the Greenville County Land Development Regulations and to prohibit new cluster developments in Greenville County.

Action: Vice-Chairman Bradley moved to hold the item until June 17, at which time the public hearing was scheduled.

Councilor Fant stated he had wanted to suggest a workshop regarding the item in question in order to find some common ground between cluster developments and other needed amendments. As the item was being held, the workshop could wait.

Motion to hold carried.

d. Storm Water Ordinance Revisions

Action: Councilor McGahhey moved for approval at second 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.

Action: Councilor McGahhey moved to send the item back to the Roads, Infrastructure and Public Works Committee for further review.

Motion to send the item back to the Roads, Infrastructure and Public Works Committee carried.

d. Brookfield Special Tax District / Millage Request

Action: Councilor Collins moved for approval at second reading an ordinance to approve the Brookfield Special Tax District Commissioners' request for an increase to its current ad valorem property tax millage levy.

Motion carried.

Item (11) Ordinances – First Reading

a. Zoning Ordinances

Vice-Chairman Bradley presented for first reading Zoning Dockets **CZ-2025-029** through **CZ-2025-033**.

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

b. Glassy Mountain Fire Service Area / General Obligation Bond Request

Councilor Collins presented for first reading an ordinance to provide for the issuance and sale of not exceeding \$1,100,000 Greenville County, South Carolina, General Obligation Bonds (Glassy Mountain Fire Service Area Project), Series 2025b; to prescribe the purposes for which the proceeds shall be expended; to provide for the payment thereof; and other matters related thereto.

Chairman Blount stated the item would remain on the floor.

c. FY 2026 Greenville County Budget

Vice-Chairman Bradley presented for first reading an ordinance adopting the County of Greenville FY 2026 Budget.

Chairman Blount referred the item to the Committee of the Whole.

Item (12) Committee Reports

a. Planning and Development Committee

i. Request Planning Commission to Reconsider PP-2025-015 (Bellewyn)

Action: On behalf of the Committee, Vice-Chairman Bradley moved to approval a motion to request the Planning Commission to reconsider PP-2025-015.

Councilor Tripp stated it appeared as if Council had some legal issues before them and they should be wise to think about them. On March 13, County Attorney Chris Antley sent an email to all Council Members regarding their relationship with the Planning Commission. Mr. Tripp stated, in addition to that email, former County Attorney Mark Tollison had written a very specific memorandum outlining what the State Ethics Commission had said about Council's relationship with the bodies it appointed. He summarized some of Mr. Tollison's memorandum as follows:

- *Council Members appearing before the Planning Commission or Board of Zoning Appeals to advocate a position on a pending subdivision or zoning matter would be a violation under the Ethics Commission guidance.*
- *Mr. Tollison's advice would be to avoid all presentations to County Council appointed boards; he recommended Council Members find advocates within their district, other than themselves, if some position needed to be taken with matters before those boards.*

Mr. Tripp stated it was his opinion that it was problematic for Council to direct the Planning Commission to reconsider its vote on PP-2025-015. He asked Deputy County Attorney, Dean Campbell, to weigh in regarding the rule the Planning Commission had that allowed the reconsideration of its vote, especially the rule that allowed County Council to request a reconsideration.

Mr. Campbell stated the County Attorney's Office had contacted the State Ethics Commission regarding Council Members appearing before the Planning Commission to advocate for a docket within their district. He stated they were told "in no uncertain terms" Council Members should not do that as they were the appointing body for the Planning Commission. Mr. Campbell stated the Ethics Commission sent a decision they had rendered involving another County; he offered to provide that decision to Council. He stated that while that decision was a bit different, the County Attorney's Office had identified some issues regarding the item in question. Mr. Campbell stated an open forum was probably not the best place to discuss those issues and suggested it would be more appropriate in Executive Session.

Councilor Tripp asked his colleagues if any of them were familiar with *Niemitalo vs. Greenville County Planning Commission*. He stated the County was going to end up paying the developer involved in PP-2025-015. In the above-referenced lawsuit, the courts found on behalf of the developer, Niemitalo, and the facts of that case were very similar. He stated when the Planning Commission gave approval for a project, the developer has what is called "vested rights." The County had some liability for damages if the Planning Commission, acting alone or at the direction of County Council, reconsidered a decision without the presence of material misrepresentation by the developer. Mr. Tripp stated he would recommend holding the item or sending it to the Committee of the Whole.

Councilor Farmer stated he agreed with Mr. Tripp's suggestion.

Councilor Mitchell stated he agreed with Mr. Tripp. He stated the County should not get into lawsuits where there was a potential to lose. It made no sense to him to get involved in a lawsuit, have the courts rule against the County and have to pay the developer, who would end up doing what they originally wanted to do. Mr. Mitchell stated approving the item in question would set a precedent where anything could be reconsidered at any time; that was not good practice.

Councilor Fant stated he had a similar situation in his district. The County's Legal Department had asked him to wait. He stated sometimes the Planning Commission may make the wrong decision. Mr. Fant stated members of the Planning Commission were not elected; they were appointed by Council. When the commission made a bad decision, it was Council Members who received all the complaints from the public and took the blame for something they did not have anything to do with. Mr. Fant stated when the Planning Commission a "complete mess" of a subdivision approval, there had to be some mechanism in place to fix it.

Councilor Tripp stated he had experienced similar situations in his district. He felt it would be prudent for Council to read the *Niemitalo vs. Greenville County Planning Commission* case documentation; approval of the item would be doing the exact same thing. Mr. Tripp stated he would love to be the attorney representing the developer; it would be like a "slam dunk." He stated it would necessitate a legislative answer to systemically solve the problem. Council's hands were tied. They could not be activist before board that Council appointed. Mr. Tripp stated Council could approach the Delegation and find a way to change State law or create some type of system to have the process changed.

Councilor McGahhey asked Mr. Campbell if it was fair and correct to say no Council Member had appeared in front of the Planning Commission.

Mr. Campbell stated he was unable to answer that question; he was addressing Mr. Tripp's comments.

Councilor McGahhey asked if any current Council Member had appeared in front of the Planning and Development Committee.

Councilor Tripp stated he was not accusing any of his colleagues. He had situations in his district where someone wanted him to do something about the Planning Commission; he was not aware that Council had the ability to ask for a reconsideration. If a constituent had a problem with a decision the Planning Commission made, it was a very rational reflex for Council Members to want to talk to the Planning Commission. He stated they just could not. It was his opinion if Council chose to vote in favor of the item, they would open "up a can of worms." It was important to have some legal guidance before they stepped "into a cow pie."

Action:

Councilor Farmer moved to send the item to the Committee of the Whole.

Councilor Seman stated Vice-Chairman Bradley could withdraw his motion and take the item up in the Committee of the Whole. She sensed the body wanted some legal on the issue.

Councilor McGahhey stated the Committee was pushing it forward. If the action was withdrawn, the Committee could just take another action on it next time.

Councilor Tripp stated if it was sent to the Committee of the Whole, Council could go into Executive Session for additional discussions.

Chairwoman Pro Tem Seman stated if the request was removed, it could be included on the next Committee of the Whole agenda as an executive session item to specifically to address the issue.

Mr. Campbell's stated it was not really Mr. Bradley's request; it came out of the Committee and needed to be dealt with.

Motion to send the item to the Committee of the Whole carried.

ii. Initiate Zoning Text Amendment / Altamont Road Access

Action:

On behalf of the Committee, Vice-Chairman Bradley moved to initiate the Zoning Text Amendment regarding access to Altamont Road. Mr. Bradley requested the item be referred to the Planning and Development Committee.

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

b. Committee of the Whole

i. Construction Board of Adjustments and Appeals Appointments

Action: On behalf of the Committee, Vice-Chairman Bradley moved to appoint Catherine Knight and Pete Nomikos to fill two vacancies on the Construction Board of Adjustments and Appeals.

Motion carried.

ii. Alcohol and Drug Abuse Commission / Board Member Removal

Action: On behalf of the Committee, Vice-Chairman Bradley moved to remove Scott Robinson from the Alcohol and Drug Abuse Commission due to excessive absenteeism.

Motion carried.

Item (13) **Public Comments**

- **Ruby Bonner** – appeared regarding Eviction Court

Item (14) **Administrator's Report**

Mr. Kernell stated he had no report.

Item (15) **Requests and Motions by Council Members**

- Councilor Shaw asked Mr. Kernell if the Indigent Defense Fund covered evictions, given Ms. Bonner's concerns.

Mr. Kernell stated it was his belief that it covered evictions.

Councilor Fant stated the Housing Court item was sent to the Public Safety Committee during the previous year. He stated "the year ran out."

Councilor Farmer asked if the Clerk of Court had to sign off on the issue. He stated he had inquired about what was needed in order to set a Housing Court.

Councilor Fant stated there was some outside funding that was to be secured to help with the cost. The County had planned to provide approximately \$100,000, in addition to that outside funding. He stated some of the Magistrates did not want to pursue the Housing Court. Some Council Members had voiced concern about that and felt Council should leave it alone. Mr. Fant stated the County should not scrap the idea just because the Magistrates did not want to take on the responsibility. He stated the issue would certainly be worth revisiting.

- Councilor McGahhey requested to “blow off steam for about three minutes.” He stated his daughter was a teacher in North Carolina and earned about \$40,000 per year. Given that information, the issue of the school district’s budget hit close to home. Mr. McGahhey stated the Greenville County School District had a “propaganda arm that is Soviet style.” Based on the district’s own fiscal reporting, they had \$70 million in excess last year and had amassed a General Fund budget of over \$240 million. He stated the district had collected significantly more money than they had spent in eight of the last 10 years. He stated the school district had raised taxes in seven of the last 11 years, claiming the additional funding was for teacher salaries. Mr. McGahhey asked when was anyone going to “question the blank check and give teachers what they deserve.” He stated the money was there for the teachers and the students; the school district did not want anyone to see it.

Mr. McGahhey stated the public should question the \$24 million recently spent on turf fields. Special Education was never on the table for discussion; the district brought that up. Mr. McGahhey stated the public wanted bureaucracy to be reduced in favor of increasing student programming. First, the district said they needed the funding for teacher raises; then they said the students would suffer and Special Education would be cut. He stated every few days, a new issue was introduced, a “specially designed and purposely delayed rollout of issues” to keep the public angry and deceived. Mr. McGahhey stated new funding went to charter schools, not all funding. He stated he had received numerous phone calls about that issue. Traditional schools would still receive their normal funding. The school district wanted everyone to get excited about all the new funding going to the charter schools, but it was not a fact. He stated charter schools well out-performed regular schools, but only received 1/3 of the funding. The school district loved to account for charter school success while complaining about how they unfairly took funding from traditional public schools. Mr. McGahhey stated he had two children in charter schools. Charter schools produced superior results without the top heavy bureaucracy found in traditional school systems.

Mr. McGahhey stated Council was not proposing to prioritize roads over education. They were proposing a holistic approach to the community; where one piece, which was the roads, did not suffer from a lack of funding, while the other piece, schools, were plush with excess funding. He stated the district’s buses travel approximately 37,000 road miles per day, transporting more than 27,000 children. There were 985 school bus crashes statewide last year, with the largest percentage in the Upstate. Greenville County averaged 48 crashes per year or about one every three days. Road conditions were the major contributing factor of school bus accidents statewide. In the last eight years, there had been 16 fatalities on school buses. He could not understand how anyone from the school district could say roads were not a priority for the safety and well-being of the children and the bus driver, as well as all the parents who drove their children to school every day.

Councilor McGahhey stated the “Soviet style propaganda wing” had been “brought to bear over the issue.” He stated it was not cheap to fund such a mechanism. The propaganda had been so misleading and had unjustly infuriated so many people. He stated he had people sitting in vehicles outside his house, for no apparent reason, and then suddenly drive off. The Sheriff’s Office now patrolled his house because he feared for the safety of my family. That was intimidation, pure and simple, and now it was personal.

Mr. McGahhey stated the lies and misleading rhetoric from the school district must stop. He stated he cared about the schools, the students, the teachers and staff, as much as anyone. To demonize him otherwise was repulsive, at best. He stated it was time to scrutinize the budgets of all government entities, including the County. Mr. McGahhey stated the public had to be involved and informed; not one person he spoke with on the phone knew school district’s budget was \$922 million for the next year. Councilor McGahhey stated the public must not blindly follow the bureaucrats. After all the dust settled, calmer heads would prevail, and Greenville, South Carolina, would remain a great place to live, work and raise a family.

Item (17)

Adjournment

Action: There being no further business, Chairwoman Pro Tem Seman moved to adjourn.

The motion carried and the meeting was adjourned at 8:09 p.m.

Respectfully submitted:

Regina McCaskill
Clerk to Council