



Clarendon County Regular Council Meeting

Monday, June 8, 2026

6:00 PM

Council Chambers, 411 Sunset Drive, Manning, SC 29102

Those in attendance:

Chairman John E. Johnson III
Councilman Billy G. Richardson
Councilwoman Delaney K. Frierson
Clerk to Council, Dorothy M. Levy

Vice Chairman John P. Coker
Councilman Kurtis W. Rodine
Administrator Walt Ackerman

Absent: None

Press in attendance: Manning Times, Melissa McCoy

Others in attendance included:

Karen Sanders	Linda K. Grant	Paulette King	Mary Ann Bassard	Legear McCabe
Yolanda House	Tyra Johnson	Marilyn Lesesne	Kathleen L. Gibson	Donald Ricks
Skip Osborne	Willie Briggs	Jacob Edwards	Kimberly Herbert	Bobby Ridgeway
Carole Summers	Patricia Pringle	Jeffrey Lampkin	Amanda Ridgeway	Michele Demery
John Mathis	Daniel Demery	Alfred H. Cooper	Clarita D. Jones	Hallie Conyers
Ingra Ball	Embry Ball	Matt Chapman	Melissa McCoy	George Frierson
Jacqueline Blackwell	And other Clarendon County Residents			

Chairman Johnson called the meeting to order at 6:00 pm. The Lord's Prayer and the Pledge of Allegiance were recited in unison.

1. Approval of the Agenda

On motion by Councilman Richardson and seconded by Vice Chairman Coker, the Council voted unanimously approving the Agenda for the Regular Scheduled Council Meeting for June 8, 2026.

2. Approval of Minutes

On motion by Councilman Rodine and seconded by Councilman Richardson, the Council voted unanimously approving the minutes for the Regular Council Meeting, which was held on May 11, 2026, and the Special Called Council Meeting and Budget Workshop, which was held on May 26, 2026.

3. Service Awards Recognition

Prior to the business session of the Regular Council meeting, Leonard Lowery, HR Director, presented service awards to three employees for June.

Tabitha Hanna	5 years	Crystal Hyman	5 years
William M. Jones	5 years		

Chairman Johnson thanked everyone for their years of service to Clarendon County.

4. Public Comments:

Willie Briggs - stated that the grass on County roads should be cut at least once a month. He continued by stating that last year there were 476 cases of Lyme disease, which comes from ticks, and this is a very serious problem. He concluded that there are ticks in the grass, and if the grass has not been cut in a while, it's high and more ticks will be there.

5. Requests – Hospitality Fund

- **Jeffrey Lampkin** – Executive Director of the Jeffrey and Harriet Lampkin Foundation. He stated that the Foundation has been operating for 10 years in Clarendon County with a summer Arts Institute, which has been supported by Clarendon County in the past. He continued by stating that this year, the Institute is asking for Hospitality Tax Funds of \$10,000 (\$7,000 for Marketing and \$3,000 for Accommodation). Mr. Lampkin stated that Hospitality Tax Funds exist to bring people into the County, which his foundation has already been doing. We were able to provide this institute at no cost for the students, which brings a lot of people into Clarendon County, staying in hotels and eating in restaurants. He concluded by stating that this event will be held from July 6, 2026, through July 10, 2026. He concluded by stating that he is also asking for the use of the Weldon Auditorium.
 - Councilman Richardson stated that the foundation does a lot of good things in Clarendon County in the Manning area. Are you interested in coming to the Summerton area?
 - Mr. Lampkin replied by saying absolutely. He continued by stating that he worked with Kathleen Gibson in the Summerton Area in the past.
 - Councilman Rodine asked what do they do at the Art Institute?
 - Mr. Lampkin replied by stating that they step, dance, music, and sing in the choir.

Chairman Johnson asked what does the Council wants to do.

- Vice Chairman Coker made a motion to give them \$3,600 plus the use of the Weldon Auditorium. The motion on the floor died because we did not get a second.
- Councilman Richardson made a motion to give them \$10,000, and it was seconded by Councilwoman Frierson. The vote was two in favor and two against. Chairman Johnson broke the tie and voted against the \$10,000 motion.
- Councilman Rodine made a motion to split the difference, giving them \$8,000 (\$5,600 and the remaining \$2,400 will be for use of the Weldon). It was seconded by Councilman Richardson, and the motion passed.

6. Agreement

Sheriff Baxley presented the Council with an Agreement between the Town of Summerton, Clarendon County, and Timothy Baxley, Sheriff of Clarendon County. He stated that we propose entering into an agreement with the Town of Summerton to mirror what we have with the Town of Turbeville. He stated that for the last two years, we have been trying to cover their shortfall in the Police Department. After meeting with the Town of Summerton, they want us to come up with a contract to take over their policing services.

Sheriff Baxley stated that he gave them a proposal, but before they could sign the agreement, they had to approve an Ordinance to abolish their police department, which would require two readings. This agreement will provide two officers with the Town of Summerton, and they agree to a fee of \$200,000 for the two officers.

On motion by Councilman Richardson and seconded by Vice Chairman Coker, the Council voted unanimously approving the Agreement between the Town of Summerton, Clarendon County, and Sheriff Timothy Baxley.

7. Presentations

- **Vehicle Replacement Plan, Eddie Maracich, Account Executive, Enterprise Fleet Management.**

Mr. Maracich began by showing the Council a presentation on the 186 vehicles that the County owns. He stated that 30% of the current vehicles are over 10 years old. He stated that the resale of the aging fleet is

significantly reduced, and newer vehicles have a lower maintenance expense and increased fuel efficiency with new technology. He stated that the newer vehicles reduce downtime and increase employee safety.

- Administrator Ackerman - stated that we have budgeted a little over \$500,000 to replace eight vehicles, seven in the sheriff's department and one in our Code Enforcement, and up to 50 vehicles for next year. This would be a \$150,000 overall reduction in cost.
- Chairman Johnson – What type of warranty and what partners do you partner with?
- Tony, Regional Manager, manufacturers vary, and we use vendors like Santee Cooper.
- Chairman Johnson – It would be more attractive to us if we used local vendors with the same warranty.
- Vice Chairman Coker – on the contract term, can we get out of it?
- Tony – Yes, you can fire us.
- Councilman Richardson – Will this plan save us funds?
- Administrator Ackerman – Yes, instantly. We need good spears for our medium and light-duty vehicles, F250 and smaller.
- Councilman Richardson – We have 187 vehicles in our fleet?
- Administrator Ackerman – Yes, and some of them were purchased in 1999.
- Councilman Rodine – Will this be a trade-in or swap out?
- Tony – It can go either way based on the resale value.
- Eddie Maracich – If you look backwards at what you've typically done in the first year, you should spend about \$250,000 less than what you've been spending.
- Sheriff Baxley – What is the delivery time on law enforcement vehicles?
- Eddie Maracich – We tend to be able to move things faster than when cities and counties do it on their own.
- Councilman Richardson – When will it go into effect?
- Administrator Ackerman – July 1, 2026.

On motion by Councilman Richardson and seconded by Vice Chairman Coker, the Council voted unanimously to approve the Vehicle Replacement Plan.

➤ **Welcome Sign Entering Manning – Rev. David Woods, Jr.**

Administrator Ackerman stated that the presenter, David Woods, Jr., is in attendance, and we have been working together for the last week, and the idea that he has is to put up welcome signs coming into Manning that say “Welcome to Manning Home of Retired Colonel Alexander Conyers. He stated that Rev. Woods reached out to the City of Manning, and they are working with DOT to see about getting the signs placed. So, tonight we are postponing his presentation until he can overcome the roadblocks.

➤ **Coroner's Office – Jacqueline Blackwell, Coroner**

Coroner Blackwell began by stating that there are some things that she thinks everyone should be aware of before the Third and Final Reading of the Budget is passed. She stated that in 2020, she was elected into office with 13,000 votes, and her reelection was over 11,000 votes; her office is one of the Elected Official Office in Clarendon County. Ms. Blackwell continued by stating that the State of South Carolina had declared all Coroners in Clarendon County to be first responders, and she should receive the same privileges as First Responders. She continued by stating that since February 2023, there have been four meetings with the Administrator. In those meetings, she was told that her salary and her budget are too high. Therefore, her budget will be cut, and as of July 1, 2026, her two full-time employees will no longer be full-time; they will be part-time. When a part-time deputy coroner gets a call, they would have to go to the Coroner's Office, get the van, and then go to the scene, regardless of which part of the county the scene is in, which is problematic.

Coroner Blackwell stated that during the Head of Department Retreat, each department head was permitted to give stats and updates on their departments except for the Coroner's Office. She continued by asking the Council to reconsider cutting her budget by \$142,000, and she is asking for justice. She asked, did you at any time compare the Sheriff's, the Treasurer's, the Auditor's, or the Clerk of Court's budget with any other

County to save taxpayers' money. Did you at any time decide to fire or touch the staff of one of the other elected officers' departments?

- The Coroner from Orangeburg County, Sean Fogle, gave comments. He asked the Council to consider the information that Coroner Blackwell presented in reference to the Coroner's budget. He stated that there is so much that is required of the Coroner's Office. He continued by stating that the community as a whole does not understand everything that the Coroner's office is involved with. He encouraged the Council to stop by the Coroner's office to see what is involved when there is a scene, and it will prepare you better, especially during budget time of everything that the Coroner has requested.
- Chairman Johnson asked Mr. Fogle how many employees are in the Coroner's Office in Orangeburg?
- Mr. Fogle replied seven.
- Chairman Johnson asked what is the population of Orangeburg?
- Mr. Fogle replied 99,000.
- Chairman Johnson asked what is the annual budget for the Orangeburg Coroner's Office?
- Mr. Fogle replied \$310,000.
- Auditor Patricia Pringle – Stated that she has been the Auditor for Clarendon County for 24 years, and they are given power and authority by the State of South Carolina General Assembly, not the County Council. She stated that it's very disturbing to hear that the Coroner's Budget is being cut without consulting her about the needs of her office. She stated that in the past, the elected officials were able to come before the Council and present their budget. She concluded by stating that the elected officials know what is required to run their office, so she asked the Council to reconsider what Coroner's Blackwell is requesting.
- Coroner's Blackwell asked the Council to postpone the Third and Final Reading until June 30, 2026.
- Administrator Ackerman stated that the Coroner's Office does not handle all deaths in the county. He stated that if someone dies in the hospital or in hospice, those deaths are handled by the hospital and or hospice, not the Coroner's office. He continued by stating that in order to restore the Coroner's budget, we will have to raise mills by 1% or decrease the 5% proposed salary by 1% in order to have a balanced budget.
- Coroner Blackwell concluded by asking the Council for the reduced budget that she proposed or just leave it as it.
- Chairman Johnson stated that Administrator Ackerman is doing exactly what the Council asked him to do.
- Coroner Blackwell stated that she is asking for liberty and justice for all.

8. Budget Presentation

Mr. Gibbons, Finance Director, began his presentation by stating that for the Third Reading of the proposed budget, we were tasked with a job. We had to address the challenges that are in front of us, while not increasing Mills and property taxes on our citizens. We have constant inflation, which is rising expenses. We have a reduction of Federal Revenue before us this year. We have to address the capital needs of the County and things that have to be done right now. Finally, we had to address the employees' salaries. We know that currently our salary budget is just over \$12 million countywide. We suspect that 15% is what we're going to need to raise salaries across the county.

Mr. Gibbons stated that we also took a look at our 10-year plan because these calls will be coming up. He continued by stating that tonight he is proud to present the 2027 budget with a net reduction of .2 mills. Mr. Gibbons continued by stating that for the General Fund, the budget sits right now at \$32,023,410, an increase of \$10,570 over last year. He stated that with the expenses, we had to use some Fund Balance to obtain a balanced budget.

- Vice Chairman Coker asked if the Elected Officials would be getting the raise?

- Administrator Ackerman responded by saying yes, they will get the 5% increase but not the 1.6% step. He stated that when it comes down to the Third and Final Reading of the School District Budget tonight, we need to transfer 3.9 Mills from the County's Taxing Authority to the school district.

9. Ordinance 2026-04

On motion by Vice Chairman Coker and seconded by Councilman Rodine, the Council voted unanimously approving the Third and Final Reading of Ordinance 2026-04 – an Ordinance To Provide For A Levy of taxes for County Purposes of Clarendon County, South Carolina, for the Fiscal Year Beginning July 1, 2026 and Ending June 30, 2027, to Direct the Expenditures of said taxes and other funds for Clarendon County, and to Provide for other matters related thereto including the Administrative Accountability Procedures to be followed during Implementation of the Budget (Operating and Capital) for Clarendon County for the Fiscal Year Beginning July 1, 2026 and Ending June 30, 2027.

10. Ordinance 2026-07 – School District Budget

On motion by Councilman Richardson and seconded by Vice Chairman Coker, the Council voted unanimously approving the Third and Final Reading of Ordinance 2026-07 - An Ordinance Approving the Fiscal Year 2026-2027 Budget of the Clarendon County School District and Other Matters Relating Thereto and transferring 3.9 Mills from the County's Taxing Authority to the School District.

11. Ordinance 2026-06

On motion by Councilman Richardson and seconded by Vice Chairman Coker, the Council voted unanimously approving the Second Reading of Ordinance 2026-06 An Ordinance Authorizing, Pursuant to Title 12, Chapter 44 of the Code of Laws of South Carolina 1976, as Amended, the Execution and Delivery of a Fee-In-Lieu of Ad Valorem Taxes and Special Source Revenue Credit Agreement by and Between Clarendon County, South Carolina, and Project Golden Bear, acting for itself, One or more current or future affiliates and other Project Companies (Collectively, "Company"); Providing for a Fee-In-Lieu of Ad Valorem Taxes Incentive; Providing for a Special Source Revenue Credit; Designating the Property of the Project as Subject to a Multi-County Industrial Park Arrangement; and Providing for Other Related Matters.

12. Public Hearing – Ordinance 2026-09

Chairman Johnson stated that the Public Hearing for Ordinance 2026-09 – An Ordinance Authorizing the Issuance and Sale of a Note Exceeding \$2,500,000 General Obligation Bond, in one or more Series, In one or more years with Appropriate Series Designations, Including a Tax-Exempt Series and a Taxable Series, If Appropriate, of Clarendon County, South Carolina; Fixing the Form and Details of the Bonds; Providing for the Payment of the Bond; Authorizing the County Administrator to Determine Certain Matters Relating to the Bond; Providing for the Payment of the Bond; Authorizing the County Administrator to Determine Certain Matters Relating to the Bond; Providing for the Payment of the Bond and the Disposition of the Proceeds Thereof; And Other Matters Relating Thereto is now open. The Public hearing opened at 8:19 pm.

Chairman Johnson asked if there were any comments. Hearing none, he stated that the Public Hearing will close. The Public Hearing closed at 8:20 pm.

13. Ordinance 2026-09

On motion by Councilman Richardson and seconded by Councilman Rodine, the Council voted unanimously approving the Second Reading of Ordinance 2026-09 - An Ordinance Authorizing the Issuance and Sale of a Note Exceeding \$2,500,000 General Obligation Bond, in one or more Series, In one or more years with Appropriate Series Designations, Including a Tax-Exempt Series and a Taxable Series, If Appropriate, of Clarendon County, South Carolina; Fixing the Form and Details of the Bonds; Providing for the Payment of the Bond; Authorizing the County Administrator to Determine Certain Matters Relating to the Bond; Providing for the Payment of the Bond;

Authorizing the County Administrator to Determine Certain Matters Relating to the Bond; Providing for the Payment of the Bond and the Disposition of the Proceeds Thereof.

14. Ordinance 2026-10

Ms. Tabitha Hanna, Planning Director, presented the Council with Ordinance 2026-10 - An Ordinance of the County Council of Clarendon County, South Carolina to Amend the County's Official Zoning Map Designation for Tax Map Parcel #239-00-05-003-00; From Industrial II (IND II) to Agriculture II (AGII) and providing an effective date. She stated that this is a request to amend the Official Zoning Map of the property located at 5494, Greeleyville Highway. It contained approximately 61.99 acres and is owned by Diane Jones and others. The applicant is Mr. Mitchell. The rezoning is to allow the placement of a manufactured home on the property, which is permitted in the agricultural district.

Ms. Hanna continued by stating that the Planning Commission found that the proposed Agriculture Two Zoning District is compatible with the Surrounding Area and consistent with the Clarendon County Comprehensive Plan. The existing and the proposed uses are compatible with the surrounding land uses and sufficient evidence. She concluded that the Planning Commission recommends approval of the request to rezone the tap map number #239-00-05-003-00.

On motion by Councilman Rodine and seconded by Vice Chairman Coker, the Council voted unanimously approving the First Reading of Ordinance 2026-10 - An Ordinance of the County Council of Clarendon County, South Carolina to Amend the County's Official Zoning Map Designation for Tax Map Parcel #239-00-05-003-00; From Industrial II (IND II) to Agriculture II (AGII) and providing an effective date.

15. Finance Report

Nelson Gibbons, Finance Director, began his report by stating the following:

- **The General Fund** expenses were 97% of the Budget. We had Expenditures of \$2,671,097 and Revenue of \$2,357,242 as of May 31, 2026.
- **Weldon Auditorium** – there was no report for the Weldon Auditorium.
- **The Water and Sewer Department** had total Revenue of \$1,494,753 for the month ending May 31, 2026, and total Expenses were \$795,801. After Depreciation, Bond Interest Expense, and Interest Income, the Water and Sewer Department ended May 2026 with a Net Utility Income of \$21,832.
- **The C-Fund Program** - for the month ending May 31, 2026, The C-Fund program had a Cash Balance of \$7,924,501, of which \$3,017,746 has been committed to remaining local paving projects and State Proviso Funds. She stated that the C-Fund Program had an Uncommitted Balance of \$3,904,988 as of the end of May 2026.
- **Fire Rescue** – expenses were 94% of the Budget. We had Expenditures of \$1,394,594 and revenue of \$730,597 as of May 31, 2026.

16. Administrator's Report

Administrator Ackerman began his report by stating that May was a month filled with a flurry of activity. With final budget preparation, the reopening of Weldon, the Bassmaster Elite Tournament, several festivals, and just normal operations all taking place during the month, time seemed to fly by. May marked my 6th month with Clarendon County. I am still getting to know people and learning my way around. I appreciate everyone's patience while I continue to learn and grow within the Community. This will be a continuous process and one which I am excited to continue.

Now that the 26/27 budget process is mostly behind us, the staff and I will renew our focus on long range planning, policy development and improvement opportunities in both operations and service delivery. These are the areas that will have the greatest impact on our Citizens. I look forward to your continued guidance as we work to find solutions to improve our County.

✓ **Facilities:**

- **EOC/Dispatch Communications Center** – Design and Engineering by Caplea Coe Architects, Inc. Construction by Pyramid Contracting with a base bid of \$9,044,848.00. Pyramid's subcontractor Continues working block work and steel construction. Duke power is working on providing service to the front of the building instead of the rear. Completion Date 12/18/2026.
- **SCIIP PHASE V** – Engineering by Alliance with Adam Hogan managing. AC Schultes has installed the pedestal for the pump and will install pump next. Pittsburg Tank Is complete with tank and electrical. B&B Construction has completed the water mains and they are in service.

Barwick Construction had a base bid of \$996,249. Barwick Plumbing has installed the piping from the main to the tank and will begin work on the well house. Substantial completion 8/1/2026, and the final completion 10/1/2026

- **Public Works/Fleet Maintenance (PW/FM)/Animal Control (AC) Facility** –Hawkins and Kolb contract NTE 5.2 MD. They are still working within the public works building installing ceiling grids and painting. The shop area needs windows in the office and electrical items. Animal control Building has masonry work on going for the kennels. We have the pricing for fencing, concrete pad and containment area for fuel tanks and will have contractor to proceed. Contractor is projecting to have the PW project finished by August/Sept. Contract Completion date 11/24/2026
- **Turbeville Library** –Project funded by the S. C. Legislature and the Doctors Bruce & Lee Foundation. Chamber & Associates has a base bid of \$2,750,000. The slab is to be poured during the week of 6-1-26, delayed due to rain. Completion date TBD
- **Summerton North Shore Project** – Development Board is handling engineering through Alliance Consulting Engineers for the project. Everything has been installed. The first draw down test was completed 5-28. Once SCDES approves 2nd draw down test, the project will be complete. Completion date 5/30/2026.
- **Newman Branch Clearing Beaver Dams and Restoring Flow** – We received \$950K for this project. Project has been Awarded to Ecological Associates, Inc. They are still trapping and continuing to maintain the stream. We are waiting for permits from the Army Corps of Engineers. Completion date extending to 01/27/2027.
- **JC Britton Park** – Senator Clyburn's office approved a \$1 million grant. A development team has been organized to work on the design of the project, and they have several ideas as follows. Pickle Ball courts, Tennis Courts and New Track Lighting. New Restrooms will be near the courts. Also adding additional Parking. We are currently waiting for funding. Completion date TBD
- **The Patriot Road Well Infrastructure** - Connecting the water systems through the first water and installing an elevated 250,000-gal tank. Vickie is working with Senator Lindsey Graham office to determine the correct grant to apply for. Completion date TBD
- **Sheriff's Building at Manning Firing Range** – The one-time appropriation of \$373,819 allowed for protective riot gear, moving target system, and new building. An estimated balance of \$178,233 for the building. Plans have been approved and permit received. We will begin to start the foundation and rough ins. Once complete, we can order the building. Completion date TBD.
- **Drainage Projects**-Hudson Road and Deal Street need to obtain easements.

17. Chairman's Report

Chairman Johnson asked what was going on with the Archive? Where are we on getting the Archive moved and set backup?

- Administrator Ackerman stated that he wanted to get a good, qualified Archivist to come in and help guide us through the process of moving that stuff over to the Manning Times, but the person is ill. We reached out to another person in Darlington County for assistant. Administrator Ackerman stated that an idea came to him, and he wanted to get the Council's feedback on it. He stated that the Administrative Building has a lot of visitors, so the items already in cases can be moved over to the Administrative Building for visitors to see when they come into the building to pay their taxes or get a building permit.
- A citizen asked if the Administrative Building would be open on weekends.
- Administrator Ackerman replied by stating that the Archive isn't open on weekends either.

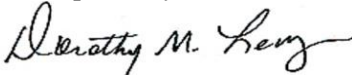
18. Adjourn

Chairman Johnson asked for a motion to adjourn the Council Meeting.

On motion by Councilman Richardson and seconded by Vice Chairman Coker, the Council voted unanimously In approval to adjourn the regularly scheduled Council Meeting.

The Council Meeting adjourned at 8:32 pm.

Respectfully Submitted,



Dorothy M. Levy
Clerk to Clarendon County Council, CCC