



Clarendon County Regular Council Meeting

Monday, May 11, 2026

6:00 PM

Council Chambers, 411 Sunset Drive, Manning, SC 29102

Those in attendance:

Chairman John E. Johnson III
Councilman Billy G. Richardson
Administrator Walt Ackerman

Vice Chairman John P. Coker
Councilman Kurtis W. Rodine
Clerk to Council, Dorothy M. Levy

Absent: None

Press in attendance: Manning Times, Melissa McCoy

Others in attendance included:

Legear McCabe	Jacob Edwards	Natalie Scott	Chuck Dukes	Marie Hardy Dukes
Terrey Streath	Mike Streath	Donald Ruth	Skippy Osborne	Clarita D. Jones
Ruth Ragin	Julius Adger	Vida McFadden	Donald L. Davis	George Frierson
Franklin Colclough	Amanda Ridgeway	Karen H. Sanders	David Woods, Jr.	Linda Pringle
Carole Summers	Patricia Pringle	Sylvia Witherspoon	Fawn Pedalino	Joe Pedalino
Barbara Ferrell	Johnny Wilson	Monica Wood	Debra Billie	Willie Briggs
Bobby Elmore	Hallie Conyers	Delaney K. 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 May 11, 2026.

2. Approval of Minutes

On motion by Councilman Richardson and seconded by Councilman Rodine, the Council voted unanimously approving the minutes for the Regular Council Meeting, which was held on April 13, 2026, and the Special Called Council Meeting and Budget Workshop, which was held on April 28, 2026.

3. Public Comments:

George Frierson - stated that he was born in South Carolina on December 9, 1952, the same day that Briggs vs Elliott was heard before the United States Supreme Court. He stated that there are a lot of things going on, and we are still a divided society. He concluded by stating that the Bible says in Roman 12:9 Let love be without dissimulation. Abhor that which is evil; cleave to that which is good.

David Woods, Jr. – stated that he is requesting that Clarendon County honor a native of Manning, SC, who has excelled in his career in the Military and in Education. He is a 1983 graduate of Manning High School and a 1988 graduate of South Carolina State University. He has an outstanding and stellar military career and has gone on to become the 13th president of South Carolina State University. Under his leadership, the University has experienced a 32% increase in enrollment and secured the largest state appropriation in its history. He continued by stating that he is talking about Retired Lieutenant Colonel Alexander Conyers of Manning, SC.

4. 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 stated that the former Councilman W.J. Frierson was a big supporter and advocate of the Summer Arts Institute. He continued by stating that this year, the Institute is asking for Hospitality Tax Funds of \$10,000. 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.

Chairman Johnson asked the Council if there would be a motion to provide the Jeffrey and Harriet Lampkin Foundation with \$10,000 for their Art Institute.

The Council did not make a motion to provide \$10,000 to the Jeffrey and Harriet Lampkin Foundation.

- **Linda Jackson** – She stated that she is representing Inspire Me “Let's Read Clarendon” and she is requesting \$10,000 in Hospitality Funds to support our upcoming event, Arts in the Park Festival, which will be held at Walker Gamble. She stated that this is more than just an event; it's an investment in our community. She stated that this day is a day of fun for our kids, where we will bring in local artists. We will also be having someone come in to teach them about making flowers and face painting. This will also bring people from other counties, and families will have a safe and comfortable place to interact.

On motion by Councilman Richardson and seconded by Vice Chairman Coker, the Council voted unanimously to give Linda Jackson \$6,000 to aid in Inspire Me “Let's Read Clarendon” Arts in the Park Festival scheduled for June 6, 2026.

5. Board Appointment

On motion by Councilman Richardson and seconded by Councilman Rodine, the Council voted unanimously to appoint Mary King Taylor to the Clarendon County Behavioral Health Services Board.

6. Resolution

On motion by Councilman Richardson and seconded by Councilman Rodine, the Council voted unanimously to the Resolution proclaiming the month of April as Fair Housing Month in Clarendon County.

7. Opioid RV Presentation

Ms. Vickie Williams stated that as a result of the South Carolian Opioid Litigation proceedings in October of 2022, Clarendon County received a guaranteed political subdivision fund in the amount of \$100,315. The County formed an Opioid recovery fund team for the utilization of those as the pathway to freedom. The strategies that would be used included supporting the treatment of Opioid use disorder and any co-occurring substance use disorder or mental health condition. Ms. Williams continued by stating that in March 2025, a competitive grant was submitted and awarded in the amount of \$297,000. She concluded by stating that we were able to get the RV and will be getting it wrapped.

8. Presentation -Youlanda Gibbs, Executive Director, The Palmetto Palace.

Administrator Ackerman stated that Ms. Youlanda Gibbs had an emergency and was unable to attend the meeting tonight. He stated that he would probably have her at another meeting. He stated that she is over an organization that provided free dental care for residents of the County.

9. Budget Presentation

Mr. Gibbons, Finance Director, began his presentation by stating that as of the First Reading, we had a deficit of \$405,890. As of today, we have a balanced budget. He stated that currently, we are funding the General Fund with \$414,000 of Fund Balance. He continued by stating that the Library has a balanced budget, but we have to supply the Turbeville Library with books. Mr. Gibbons continued by stating that the Fire Rescue budget is balanced. He stated that there will be no mill increase for the General Fund or the Library Fund.

Mr. Gibbons concluded by stating that the General Fund right now is \$31,888,850, and we only have a few minor changes since the budget workshop. He stated that over the next couple of weeks, we will review and update the revenues for the Budget for the year, and the budget binders that you have will be updated.

10. Public Hearing – Ordinance 2026-04

Chairman Johnson stated that the Public Hearing for Ordinance 2026-04 – An Ordinance to provide for a Levy of Taxes for the County purposes of Clarendon County, SC., 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. The Public Hearing opened at 6:34 pm.

- **Linda Jackson** – Has Clarendon County ever considered an Exemption for road fees like Sumter County does for their Senior Citizens over 65, and what do road fees cover?
- **Councilman Richardson** – they responded by stating that the road fees help cover the maintenance on dirt roads.
- **Chairman Johnson** stated that an Exemption for road fees was never brought up.
- **Linda Jackson** – stated that she is bringing it up now.
- **Chairman Johnson** stated that we will discuss it, and this is something that we cannot do tonight.
- **Patricia Pringle** – stated that in the past, elected officials and others were allowed to bring their budget before Council to be approved. This is the first year that we have not been able to do that.
- **Administrator Ackerman** – stated that none of the elected officials told him that they wanted to present their budget.
- **Chairman Johnson** stated that it is the responsibility of the County Administrator to prepare all operating capital budgets and to present them to the County Council.
- **Patricia Pringle** stated that this is something that has been done every year since she has been the Auditor.
- **Administrator Ackerman** stated that this is his first budget process because he has only been an employee with Clarendon County since November.
- **Patricia Pringle** stated that she has not seen the Emergency Services District Budget, and she just wants to find out what amount was in the budget. Are there any increases or decreases for that?
- **Administrator Ackerman** stated that we have not separated that out; it is a part of, and it's a transfer from EMS to Emergency Services District that is incorporated in that budget. It's a Direct Transfer.
- **Patricia Pringle** stated that the increase of \$858,780 in Ad valorem Taxes. What percentage are you expecting in Real Estate and Vehicles?
- **Administrator Ackerman** stated that this is probably a more technical discussion that we can have offline.
- **Jacqueline Blackwell** - she stated that when she asked if the elected officials would be allowed to present their budget, the answer that she received was I haven't made up my mind yet. She continued by stating that the Coroner's Office budget had been cut by \$142,000, and she needs to know what was cut so she can prepare for the next year. Ms. Blackwell asked if she would be allowed to go line by line publicly.
- **Administrator Ackerman** stated that it is his and Nelson's (Finance Director) job to prepare the budget.

- **Chairman Johnson** stated that in the past, everyone had the opportunity to come here and speak about it, but if you have issues with your budget, you technically need to schedule a meeting with Walt and Nelson and talk about it. He continued by stating that when it's all said and done, people come here, stand up, and talk; it's just taking up a lot of time because it all has to go back to Walt and Nelson. He continued by stating that the Council approves the budget but does not prepare the budget.
- **Jacqueline Blackwell** stated that if we turn in a proposed budget with decreases in certain areas and it still is not satisfactory for a \$142,000 budget cut, don't you think that we deserve to know in what areas those cuts are coming from?
- **Chairman Johnson** responded by stating yes ma'am. But once again, that's their department.
- **Administrator Ackerman** stated that we have ample time over the next two weeks before the budget workshop. He stated that he would be able to go line by line and show exactly what has been done.
- **Chairman Johnson** stated that the Council has the final say to approve or not approve the budget. What we are trying to do is not have those long conversations in here. The Administrator and Finance Director can have those conversations with you and iron out everything.
- **Chairman Johnson** told Ms. Blackwell that if Mr. Ackerman and Mr. Nelson can't get with her and if they can't come up with a resolution, then bring it to us, and we will see what the issue is that can't be resolved.

The Public Hearing closed at 6:46 pm.

11. Ordinance 2026-04

Administrator Ackerman stated that the First Reading of this Ordinance was by title only, and we want to incorporate the text for the Budget Ordinance in the Second Reading.

On motion by Vice Chairman Coker and seconded by Councilman Richardson, the Council voted unanimously in approval to incorporate the text for the Budget Ordinance in the Second Reading.

On motion by Councilman Richardson and seconded by Vice Chairman Coker, the Council voted unanimously approving the Second Reading of Ordinance 2026-04 – an Ordinance To Provide For A Levy of taxes for County Purposes of Clarendon County, C., 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.

12. Public Hearing – Ordinance 2026-05

Chairman Johnson stated that the Public Hearing for Ordinance 2026-05, an Ordinance Amending the Clarendon County Unified Development Code regarding Administrative Approval of Manufactured Homes within the Performance Zone and Other Matters Related Thereto. The public hearing opened at 6:48 pm.

Chairman Johnson asked if there were any comments on this Ordinance. Hearing none, he stated that the public hearing would close. The public hearing closed at 6:49 pm.

13. Ordinance 2026-05

On motion by Councilman Richardson and seconded by Vice Chairman Coker, the Council voted unanimously approving the Third and Final Reading of Ordinance 2026-05 - an Ordinance Amending the Clarendon County Unified Development Code regarding Administrative Approval of Manufactured Homes within the Performance Zone and Other Matters Related Thereto.

14. Induction Resolution 2026-04 – PROJECT GOLDEN BEAR

Mr. George Kosinski, Development Board Director, presented the Council with an Induction Resolution for Project Golden Bear. He stated that Project Golden Bear is considering a major investment in Clarendon County through the acquisition of an existing industrial facility. He stated that the company is requesting that the Council consider a Fee In Lieu of Property Tax and a Special Source Revenue Credit to help offset a portion of its property tax liability associated with their investment over a five-year period.

Mr. Kosinski continued by stating that this project would represent an investment of approximately \$338 million and would create 289 jobs with an average wage of \$35 per hour, which is roughly 40% higher than the County's current average manufacturing wage of \$25 per hour. Golden Bear would become one of the county's largest taxpayers while supporting the growth of high-wage manufacturing employment opportunities for our residents.

Mr. Kosinski concluded by stating that, in addition to the direct economic impact, the project would help drive secondary investment throughout Clarendon County, including increased housing demand, retail growth, and the expansion of a supplier and support network.

On motion by Vice Chairman Coker and seconded by Councilman Richardson, the Council voted unanimously approving an Induction Resolution for certain incentives to Induce Project Golden Bear, acting for itself, One or more current or future affiliates and other Project Sponsors (Collectively, "Company"), to establish or Expand certain facilities in Clarendon County, South Carolina ("County"), including (1) a Negotiated Fee In Lieu of Ad Valorem Tax arrangement; (2) Certain Special Source Credits to be applied against Fees In Lieu of Ad Valorem Taxes; (3) Designation of the Project site as subject to a Multi-County Industrial or Business Park Arrangement; and Providing for Other Related Matters.

15. Ordinance 2026-06

On motion by Councilman Richardson and seconded by Vice Chairman Coker, the Council voted unanimously approving the First 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.

16. Ordinance 2026-07 – School District Budget

Mrs. Amanda Ridgeway, Director of Finance, presented the Council with Ordinance 2026-07- an Ordinance Approving the Fiscal Year 2026-2027 Budget of the Clarendon County School District and Other Matters Relating Thereto. She stated that the School District is not requesting a Millage increase.

On motion by Councilman Richardson and seconded by Vice Chairman Coker, the Council voted unanimously approving the First 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.

17. Ordinance 2026-08

Administrator Ackerman presented the Council with Ordinance 2026-08 – an Ordinance Amending the Rental Fees and Charges for Weldon Auditorium and Other Matters Related Thereto.

- Vice Chairman Coker asked if the Ordinance could be amended to give a break to all schools to include Private Schools. He said at least half price two times per year.
- Administrator Ackerman stated that the County has an agreement with the public schools where they can use the Weldon 12 times per year at no cost and any additional use at half price. He stated that we utilize a lot of their facilities and resources, football fields, and gymnasiums. I think that's why the agreement was made

with the public schools, and we do not have an agreement with the private schools; that's why there isn't a reduction in the rate. But, we can incorporate that if it is the will of the Council.

- Vice Chairman Coker stated that he would like to give back and cut it in half for the private schools at least two times per year.
- Administrator Ackerman stated that we will not be able to do that tonight because it is not on the agenda, and we can come back with that at Third Reading if it's the will of the Council. The Council can reduce fees or waive fees.

On motion by Councilman Richardson and seconded by Vice Chairman Coker, the Council voted unanimously approving the Second Reading of Ordinance 2026-08 as written – an Ordinance Amending the Rental Fees and Charges for Weldon Auditorium and Other Matters Related Thereto.

18. Finance Report

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

- **The General Fund** expenses were 83% of the Budget. We had Expenditures of \$3,021,804 and Revenue of \$1,12,074 as of April 30, 2026.
- **Weldon Auditorium** – there was no report for the Weldon because the Weldon is being renovated.
- **The Water and Sewer Department** had total Revenue of \$1,358,006 for the month ending April 30, 2026, and total Expenses were \$722,855. After Depreciation, Bond Interest Expense, and Interest Income, the Water and Sewer Department ended April 2026 with a Net Utility Income of \$18,653.
- **The C-Fund Program** - for the month ending April 30, 2026, The C-Fund program had a Cash Balance of \$8,863,360, of which \$4,029,513 has been committed to remaining local paving projects and State Proviso Funds. She stated that the C-Fund Program had an Uncommitted Balance of \$3,718,050 as of the end of April 2026.
- **Fire Rescue** – expenses were 79% of the Budget. We had Expenditures of \$763,453 and revenue of \$367,552 as of April 30, 2026.

19. Administrator's Report

Administrator Ackerman began his report by stating that our team was able to make huge strides in the preparation of the budget. At second reading tonight, we are nearly complete. There may be a few minor changes prior to the third reading, but these will likely result from additional information received during May.

He continued by stating that he wants to give a huge thank you to our Treasurer's office for all of their help with our analysis efforts. The Treasurer and his team have gone the extra mile, providing tremendous amounts of information. We could not have been as successful in the process without them.

The Capital Projects Committee met today, including Hunter Denny, Walt Ackerman, Billy Timmons, Tabitha Hanna, Thom Barrineau, Donad Ricks, Brittany Jones, and Nelson Gibbons.

✓ **Facilities:**

- **EOC/Dispatch Communication Center:** Design and Engineering by Caplea Coe Architects, Inc. Construction by Pyramid Contracting with a base bid of \$9,044,848. Pyramid's site subcontractor continues working on the site, filling in the ditches and building the ponds. Pyramid poured the building slab today and will continue with the block work and steel construction on May 4th. Estimated 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 the pump next week. They need to credit us for the steel casing. B&B Construction will start to flush the main lines and pull final samples. Once approved by SCDES we can begin operations of the water mains. Barwick Construction has a base bid of \$996,249. Barwick Plumbing has begun ordering materials and has sent the 1st pay request. Substantial completion 6/1/2026, and completion 10/1/2026.

- **Public Works, Fleet Maintenance, Animal Control:** 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. The animal control building has masonry work going on for the kennels. We have started installing the security systems in these buildings. We will need to get pricing for fencing, concrete pad and containment area for fuel tanks. The Contractor is projecting to have the project finished by July/August. Contract Completion date 11/24/2026.
- **Turbeville Library:** Project funded by the S.C. Legislature and the Doctors Bruce and Lee Foundation. Chamber & Associates has a base bid of \$2,750,000. The building foundation and CMU blocks have been placed. Slab rough ins for plumbing and electrical will start next week, and we plan to pour the building pad 5/15. Completion date TBD.
- **Summerton North Shore Project:** The Development Board is handling engineering through Alliance Consulting Engineering for the project. Santee Electric is waiting for the electrician to install the conduit to install power. The generator arrives mid-March. Completion date 05/30/2026.
- **Clarendon Community Complex Renovations** – Exterior Building Services are finishing up the project and are planning to have a punch list next Tuesday. The roofing manufacture will be here on Tuesday as well to approve the roof installation for its warranty. EBS plans to have everything cleaned and re-open on 5/20. Completion date 5/31/2026.
- **Newman Branch Restoration Projects:** We received \$950,000 for this project. The project has been awarded to Ecological Associates, Inc. They have removed 82 beavers and have a total of 33 dams. They are still trapping and working on removing some damns with equipment. They are continuing to maintain the stream. Completion date extending to 01/07/2027.
- **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's 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, a moving target system, and a new building. An estimated balance of \$178,233 for the building. We are working on the plans to submit for permitting. The Sheriff has a PO on the concrete pad and the building. Completion date TBD.
- **Drainage Projects** – Hudson Road and Deal Street need to obtain easements. Padgett Highway and David Chalmers Road are complete.

20. Chairman's Report

Chairman Johnson stated that if you have a chance to go to the Puddin Swamp Festival, you should go. There was a record crowd at both the Puddin Swamp Festival and the Striped Bass Festival. He concluded by stating that he encourages everyone to get out and enjoy Clarendon County and see all the fun stuff we have going on. He stated that we have the Palmetto Pickle Music Festival on Saturday night.

- Karen Hilton-Sanders stated that she wanted to get clarification on the request from Jeffrey Lampkin.
- Chairman Johnson responded by stating that he asked for a motion, and he did not get one, so there was no response.
- Karen Hilton-Sanders asked does that mean he should reapply again?
- Chairman Johnson stated that some of the Council did not have a chance to view the document, and we need more time to make a decision.
- Administrator Ackerman responded by asking Jeffrey Lampkin to send him a note reapplying.

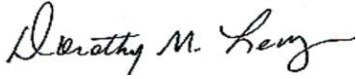
21. Adjourn

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 7:08 pm.

Respectfully Submitted,

A handwritten signature in cursive script, reading "Dorothy M. Levy".

Dorothy M. Levy
Clerk to Clarendon County Council, CCC