



City Council Worksession

Meeting Minutes – Planning Conference Room – 1st Floor

September 9, 2025

I. CALL TO ORDER

5:00 PM

Philip Cromer, Mayor

Members of Council in attendance - Philip Cromer, Neil Lipsitz, Michael McFee, Mitch Mitchell, Josh Scallate.

II. EMPLOYEE NEW HIRE RECOGNITION

A. Police Department.

Stephenie Price, Police Chief introduced Deborrah Smith, Andrew Williams.

III. DISCUSSIONS

A. Employee Compensation Study Discussion.

Alan Eisenman, Finance Director, stated the following summarizes the core features of each implementation scenario presented by Management Advisory Group and refined by the staff/committee. During the August 26, 2025, Worksession, City Council narrowed in on Scenario 2 and Scenario 3 by including Public Works employees. City Council requested additional information on revenue projections to sustain funding for the compensation recommendations.

2. Scenario 2 – MAG Final Report with Department Input Adjustments (Committee recommendation). Combines MAG's pay-grade framework with department-submitted corrections (for example, recently promoted employees and overstated compressions). Includes a 3.5% Additional Cost-of- Living Adjustment (COLA) and adjustments to align employee pay with the revised grade minimums; raises the lowest minimum to \$40,988.00 to meet the committee's living-wage benchmark. Recommended for implementation because it preserves MAG's market alignment while correcting administratively identifiable errors. (FY26 modeled impact: \$640,025.00).

3. Scenario 3 – Department Input plus \$1,000 Public Safety Supplement. Starts from department-corrected pay grades and adds a targeted, recurring supplement of \$1,000.00 to Police, Fire and Public Works positions to improve public-safety competitiveness. Creates a higher recurring cost than Scenario 2 and affects multi-year fund projections accordingly. (FY26 modeled impact: \$830,642.00).

Both scenarios were shown side by side for comparison. **Mr. Eisenman** also went over the General Fund Revenue Projections. City staff worked with financial advisors First Tryon to update the City's long term financial model.

It was stated Compensation Study's will be performed every 3 to 5 years.

Scott Marshall, City Manager, mentioned the City's personnel costs are 43 percent of the budget. This percentage is on the lower end as compared to some other small to mid-sized municipalities where those are 55 to 70 percent of their operating budget.

Councilman Mitchell asked **Mr. Eisenman** which scenario he is more confident in. **Mr. Eisenman** stated in his opinion he is more comfortable with Scenario 2.

Councilman Scallate proposed a hybrid approach. Do a 3 percent COLA and then add an additional \$1,000.00 for Police, Fire and Public Works.

Councilman Lipsitz is more in favor of Scenario 2 to be more fiscally responsible, even though the personnel deserve much more.

Councilman Scallate favors Scenario 3 as Police, Fire and Public Works personnel deserve it, and due to the fact we spent over \$137,000.00 on other things. He feels those funds would have been more appropriately spent on personnel.

Mr. Marshall stated he is on board with Scenario 3 to have more of a competitive edge.

Staff will prepare a Resolution and a Budget Amendment Ordinance based on Scenario 3.

B. Discussion of gifting certain items in the Beaufort History Museum collection.

Peggy Reynolds and David Russell with the Beaufort History Museum went over some items they would like to see the City gift them. These items would be sold at auction to raise funds for the Museum. In order for the proceeds from the auction to go to the museum, the City must gift these items to the museum by resolution. After some discussion, it was concluded one of the pieces "Unicyclist sculpture by Arthur Rose" will be removed from consideration.

Staff will prepare the resolution and bring it back before Council for approval.

C. Historic Program Initiative/Subcommittee.

Curt Freese, Community Development Director, started off by saying at the Strategic Planning Session there was a discussion about the Historic District. An informal subcommittee was created. Members included the Chairs of the Planning Commission and the Historic District Review Board, Historic Beaufort Foundation, and the Freedman Arts District. They held several informal meetings to explore ideas to improve the Development Code but still foster positive changes in the district. He stated a lot of movement could be done with everyone working together. They explored challenges and history of the district. They wanted to formally come to Council with a recommendation to create this subcommittee and add more people such as Citizens, Chamber of Commerce, or Financial Advisors.

This would not encompass just the Northwest Quadrant, but the entire Historic District. Selected members of the neighborhoods should be involved, and a seat can be designated for each one.

Council feels the objectives are good, but the task force needs to include members of the community.

Members of the task force would include dedicated seats for the Historic District Review Board, Planning Commission, Historic Beaufort Foundation and the Freedman Arts District. There will be 5 citizens seats. Two would be designated for the Northwest Quadrant, and the other 3 seats would be filled from citizens within the Historic District. The total membership would be 9.

Staff will bring forward a Resolution to formally charter the Task Force, then advertise for the 5 citizen seats.

D. Discussion of Proposed Traffic Calming Measures at Bellamy Curve and Possible Elevated Boardwalk.

Scott Marshall, City Manager, stated Bellamy Curve, connecting Boundary Street to Carteret Street, is currently bordered by a sidewalk that supports a steady flow of pedestrian traffic, including a significant number of USCB students traveling between campus facilities on both streets. The curve itself is a sharp 90-degree turn, with a posted speed limit of 15 mph, while adjacent segments of Boundary and Carteret Streets are posted at 25 mph. The combination of the curve's sharpness and the sidewalk's proximity to the roadway presents an inherent safety concern for pedestrians.

Mr. Marshall reported that the South Carolina Department of Transportation proposed a striping plan as a traffic-calming measure intended to enhance pedestrian safety. A second potential improvement of removing the existing sidewalk along Bellamy Curve and replacing it with an elevated boardwalk situated farther from the roadway was also proposed by SCDOT. The proposed project would be an undertaking as a joint initiative between SCDOT and the City.

Councilman Lipsitz inquired about installing Speed Strips similar to Speed Humps to slow cars down.

Council is supportive of the striping plan. Staff will also inquire about the use of rumble strips at both ends approaching the striping pattern to further alert drivers.

E. Proposed Update to the City Council SOP Manual.

JJ Sauvé, Deputy City Manager, started off by saying during initial meetings with the Waterfront Advisory Committee, it was noted that a section regarding council appointments to advisory boards was inadvertently left in the original edition. The section under G - Council Members' Role and Relationship with City Advisory Bodies Item 1 should have been removed. The section reads as follows: In accordance with the provisions of state law, Council Members shall not be appointed to City advisory bodies concurrent with their term of office as Council Members.

Unless specifically authorized by majority vote of a quorum of the Council, no Council Member shall be authorized to state or testify to the policy or position of the Council before any advisory board or commission of the City prior to such policy or position being formally adopted by the Council.

Council is supportive, and staff will move forward with a resolution adopting this change.

The following addressed Council with their comments and concerns on topics discussed:

Stacey Applegate, 1301 King Street
Rob Cahill, 608 Water Street
Ameila Cromer, 162 Spanish Point Drive
Joe Macdermant, 1809 Boundary Street
Graham Trask, 1211 Bay Street
Lise Sundrla, Historic Beaufort Foundation
Peggy Simmer, 915 Port Republic Street
Henrietta Good, 1308 Duke Street

Fred Washington, 804 West Street
Charles Henderson, 1008 Charles Street
Jared Madison, 2618 Holmes Drive

IV. ADJOURN

6:52 PM

Disclaimer: This document is a summary. All City Council Worksessions and Regular Meetings are recorded. Live stream can be found on the City's website at www.cityofbeaufort.org (Agenda section). Any questions, please contact the City Clerk, Traci Guldner at 843-525-7024 or by email at tguldner@cityofbeaufort.org.

In accordance with South Carolina Code of Laws, 1976, Section 30-4-80 (a)(d)(e), as amended, notification of regular meetings was given at the beginning of the calendar year. A copy of the agenda was posted on the City's bulletin board and website www.cityofbeaufort.org twenty-four hours prior to the meeting. A copy of the agenda was given to the local news media and requested public on file.

approved: October 14, 2025
Traci Guldner

