



City Council Regular Meeting  
Meeting Minutes – City Hall Council Chambers, 2<sup>nd</sup> Floor

January 13, 2026

**I. CALL TO ORDER**

**6:00 PM**

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Philip Cromer, Mayor

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

**II. INVOCATION AND PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE**

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Michael McFee, Mayor Pro Tem

**III. PRESENTATIONS**

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City Manager, Scott Marshall presented Sarah Farrow, from Municipal Court, with a plaque upon her retirement with 18 years of service to the City of Beaufort.

**IV. PUBLIC COMMENT**

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Paul Trask, 610 Bladen Street, spoke regarding New Business, Item H. A written copy of his remarks is attached.

**V. MEETING AGENDA APPROVAL**

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Motion to approve the Meeting Agenda was made by Councilman Lipsitz and seconded by Councilman Scallate.

Councilman Lipsitz made a motion to amend by moving New Business Item F, to New Business Item A. The motion was seconded by Councilman Mitchell.

All were in favor of the amended motion.

All were in favor of the main motion.

**VI. PROCLAMATIONS/COMMENDATIONS/RECOGNITIONS**

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A. Character Education Proclamation, Kaia Carlson, Broad River Elementary School.

Motion to approve was made by Mayor Pro Tem, McFee and seconded by Councilman Lipsitz.

All were in favor, motion carried.

## VII. CONSENT AGENDA

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Motion to approve the Consent Agenda was made by Councilman Mitchell and seconded by Mayor Pro Tem, McFee.

Councilman Scallate asked a few questions about the Capital Projects Monthly Report which were answered by Interim Capital Improvements Program Director, Brian Ranger.

All were in favor, motion carried.

Items approved are listed below:

- A. Capital Projects Monthly Report.
- B. Community Development Monthly Report.
- C. Downtown Operations Monthly Report.
- D. Finance Department Monthly Report.
- E. Fire Department Monthly Report.
- F. Human Resources Monthly Report.
- G. IT Monthly Report.
- H. Municipal Court Monthly Report.
- I. Police Department Monthly Report.
- J. Public Works Monthly Report.
- K. Request to hold the 2026 Beaufort Shrimp Festival and Arts and Crafts Market in the Henry C. Chambers Waterfront Park, October 2 - 3, 2026, and request waivers for the sale of alcohol, open containers, public drinking, noise ordinances, street closures, 5k race, and permission for issuance of parking passes.
- L. Request to host the 2026 Halloween Celebration in the Henry C. Chambers Waterfront Park on Saturday, October 17, 2026, from 10:00 am - 2:00 pm and twenty (20) complimentary parking passes.
- M. Request to host 2026 Holiday Weekend events to include street closures and other permissions, December 4 - 6, 2026.
- N. Request from Open Land Trust to revise the date to host Brunch on the Bluff from April 25, 2026, to May 9, 2026, for street closure, waiver of drinking in public, and waiver of noise ordinance from 11:00 am - 2:00 pm.

## VIII. MINUTES

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- A. Worksession and Regular Meeting - December 9, 2025.

Motion to approve was made by Councilman Lipsitz and seconded by Mayor Pro Tem, McFee.

Minutes approved as presented.

## IX. NEW BUSINESS

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- A. A Resolution of the City Council of the City of Beaufort, South Carolina, authorizing the gift of an Original Sculpture by Arthur Rose, Sr. from the City's Historical Collection to Claflin University.

Motion to approve was made by Mayor Pro Tem, McFee and seconded by Councilman Lipsitz.

Councilman Mitchell spoke about the sculpture by Arthur Rose, Sr., and the reasons as to why it is being gifted to Claflin University.

All were in favor, motion carried.

- B. Request to host A Taste of Beaufort on May 1 - 2, 2026, in the Henry C. Chambers Waterfront Park, Washington Street Park, and a street closure of Washington Street between Carteret Street and New Street from 12:00 pm to 7:00 pm on May 1, 2026, and 10:00 am to 5:00 pm on May 2, 2026.

Motion to approve was made by Mayor Pro Tem, McFee and seconded by Councilman Lipsitz.

All were in favor, motion carried.

- C. Request from the Beaufort History Museum to host its annual auction of historical items on March 19, 2026, from 5:30 pm to 8:30 pm at the Beaufort History Museum. The Beaufort History Museum is requesting from the city a waiver of loud and unseemly noise, additional lighting, reserved parking, trash disposal, and police services during the event.

Motion to approve was made by Councilman Mitchell and seconded by Councilman Lipsitz.

All were in favor, motion carried.

- D. Request from The Beaufort History Museum to host its Living History Day on April 11, 2026, from 10:00 am to 4:00 pm at The Arsenal. The event is requesting a waiver of discharging of blank ammunition firearm (canon fire) for ceremonial/educational purposes, reserved parking, and trash services.

Motion to approve was made by Councilman Lipsitz and seconded by Councilman Mitchell.

All were in favor, motion carried.

- E. Request for Main Street Beaufort co-sponsorship, waiver of police service fees, and drinking in public - "Sip and Stroll for the Stars" Thursday, February 12, 2026, from 4:00 pm - 8:00 pm.

Motion to approve was made by Mayor Pro Tem, McFee and seconded by Councilman Lipsitz.

Councilman Scallate recused himself from the vote. A copy of the Recusal Form and his statement are attached.

All were in favor, motion carried.

- F. Request from Main Street Beaufort for street closures for Bay Street from Charles Street to Carteret Street, and West and Scott Streets from Bay Street to Port Republic Street and drinking in public for First Friday events on April 3, 2026, and July 3, 2026, from 3:30 pm - 9:00 pm.

Motion to approve was made by Councilman Lipsitz and seconded by Mayor Pro Tem, McFee.

All were in favor, motion carried.

- G. Appointment of Dr. Natassia Allen to the Beaufort Housing Authority Board of Directors to fill the unexpired term of John Warley.

Motion to approve was made by Mayor Pro Tem, McFee and seconded by Councilman Lipsitz.

Dr. Allen's term will expire on October 24, 2027. Ethan James, Chair of the Beaufort Housing Authority Board of Directors provided some information on Dr. Allen.

All were in favor, motion carried.

- H. Appointment to the Beaufort County Transportation Referendum Advisory Committee (TAC) as the City Representative.

Motion to approve was made by Councilman Lipsitz and seconded by Councilman Mitchell.

Councilman Scallate made a motion to elect Grady Woods as the City's Representative. The motion was seconded by Councilman Lipsitz.

All were in favor, motion carried.

## **X. PUBLIC COMMENT – NON-AGENDA ITEMS**

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Edie Rodgers, 7A Rising Tide Drive - spoke about her disapproval of a Social District downtown.

Jennifer Boeckner, 103 Bella Way - spoke about removing Fluoride from our drinking water and the banning of pesticides being used in all parks and public spaces with the City.

## **XI. REPORTS**

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### **City Manager's Report**

He made a correction to his weekly Bridge report that was published yesterday. His report stated that the Historic District Review Board's agenda for their meeting tomorrow included consideration of a new residence on Duke Street. That was incorrect, the proposal being considered by the board is actually on Congress Street.

Staff continues to meet weekly with the Charles-Craven drainage project team and updates will continue to be channeled through his Bridge Report. If there are urgent messages that need to be communicated, then we will publish them through all available public communication means.

In a special meeting about the project last week, City staff met with the full project team—including SCOR, SCDOT, Gulfstream Construction, and stormwater engineers—to discuss a contractor-initiated proposal to close the entire remaining project area to accelerate completion. Both the City and SCOR raised concerns about sustaining active engagement across such an expanded work zone. He communicated that our position was that the City does not support closing large areas unless active construction is occurring.

Phase 2 of the Waterfront Park project has begun, following issuance of a notice to proceed. This phase includes design refinement, preparation for public charrettes, design and permitting for a solution enabling reopening of the Day Dock, and continued evaluation of alternatives for the relieving platform and park enhancements. A public charrette is anticipated in the first quarter of 2026. As a reminder, the Waterfront Park Public Survey will remain open for input until this Friday, January 16, 2026.

City staff have met several times with representatives from the Chamber, CVB, and BAHA to explore the feasibility of establishing a Social District in the Downtown Core Business District. The Chamber is facilitating a meeting with downtown business owners scheduled for tomorrow to gather their input. Their feedback will be incorporated into a presentation to City Council at the January 27, 2026, Work Session. The goal is a potential pilot implementation in April 2026. Since first mentioning this topic in a previous Bridge Report, he has heard understandable concerns that a social district could transform downtown into something resembling Bourbon Street. He wanted to be clear: that is not what is being contemplated. Any potential district would be limited to a small commercial area, would allow only beer and wine to be consumed outside, and would retain full enforcement of public-drunkenness and disorderly-conduct laws. Maintaining the dignity and character of downtown Beaufort will always be the guiding priority.

We are in full swing with the Beaufort Area Hospitality Association's Tides to Tables Restaurant Week which runs all week and into the weekend's Oyster Festival at the Henry C. Chambers Waterfront Park. We already know Beaufort is the Best Part of the Lowcountry.

As a reminder to all about City Council's new meeting schedule, our January work session will be held on Tuesday, January 27, 2026, at 5:00 p.m.

#### **Mayor's Report**

Reported on the events and meetings he had attended which included the USCB Fall Commencement.

#### **Councilman Scallate**

Spoke about all the events and meetings he had attended which included the Partnership Breakfast with BJWSA.

He cited the story behind the gift he gave members of Council.

#### **Councilman Mitchell**

Stated he had attended the MLK Unity Breakfast along with Councilman Lipsitz. He also attended the ground breaking ceremonies of two new Beaufort County Community Centers on St. Helena and in Sheldon.

#### **Mayor Pro Tem, McFee**

He spoke about the Hazardous Mitigation Survey being conducted through the Lowcountry Area Transportation Study that will end on January 31, 2026.

On a personal note, he honored the memory of Elizabeth Harvey Butt on her passing and wished Edna Horne a very Happy 93rd Birthday.

#### **Councilman Lipsitz**

Spoke about the events and meetings he had attended which included the Parris Island Command Holiday Reception.

Members of Council wished all a Happy New Year.

## **XII. EXECUTIVE SESSION**

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- A. Pursuant to Title 30, Chapter 4, Section (70) (a) (2) of the South Carolina Code of Law: Receipt of legal advice on current and pending litigation.

Councilman Lipsitz made a motion to go into Executive Session and seconded by Mayor Pro Tem, McFee.

All were in favor, motion carried.

Councilman Lipsitz made a motion to come out of Executive Session and seconded by Councilman Scallate.

All were in favor, motion carried.

No actions from Executive Session.

**XIII. ADJOURN**

**8:23 PM**

Motion to adjourn was made by Councilman Lipsitz and seconded by Councilman Mitchell.

All were in favor, motion carried.

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Disclaimer: This document captures all actions taken by Council and summarizes discussions. All City Council Worksessions and Regular Meetings are recorded. Live stream can be found on the City's website at [www.cityofbeaufort.org](http://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](mailto: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](http://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: February 10, 2026  
Traci Guldner



# Public Comment - Agenda Item.

The newspapers say the 2024 1% sales tax referendum failed because:

1. Distrust in county government and leadership
2. Perception of incomplete or slow progress on past projects
3. Concerns about transparency, clarity, and specificity of projects.
4. Active opposition campaigns citing fiscal responsibility.

This should not happen again.

The City and County require transportation improvements to meet growth.

Large scale funding is required.

Professional construction management and results are required.

Vision and coordination between the county and municipalities is required.

For the City of Beaufort's part, what is the vision? Two initial suggestions:

1. 3<sup>rd</sup> Crossing... Woods bridge is set in stone. Carteret/Boundary are at or near capacity. City streets are already congested with Island thru traffic.
2. North St. Extension... The parallel road North of Boundary is never going to happen. A better alternative exists. Create a Bladen like streetscape from Ribaut down North St and cross Battery Creek. Incorporate an improved pedestrian trail. Tie Neil Road, Salem Road and Robert Smalls into a functional signalized intersection. Use some TIF2 to perform a study and initial engineering.

Action Required:

1. Generate a city-specific priority list that voters can get behind.
2. Proactively and immediately engage with the County.
3. Transparency & Public Engagement.

Paul Trask Remarks

City of Beaufort Council Meeting January 13, 2026

New Business - Item E.



# RECUSAL STATEMENT

Member Name: Councilman Josh Scallato

Meeting Date: January 13, 2026

Agenda Item: Section New Business Number: E

Topic: Sip and Stroll for the Stars, Thursday, February 12, 2026 from 4:00 - 8:00 pm.

*The Ethics Act, SC Code §8-13-700, provides that no public official/board member may knowingly use his office to obtain an economic interest for himself, a family member of his immediate family, an individual with whom he is associated, or a business with which he is associated. No public official/board member may make, participate in making, or influence a governmental decision in which he or any such person or business has an economic interest. Failure to recuse oneself from an issue in which there is or may be conflict of interest is the sole responsibility of the council member/board member. (1991 Op. Atty. Gen. No. 91-37.) A written statement describing the matter requiring action and the nature of the potential conflict of interest is required.*

**Justification to Recuse:**

           **Professionally employed by or under contract with principal**

           **Owns or has vested interest in principal or property**

\* **Other:** Spouse organized the event in question.

Date: Jan 13, 2026

[Signature]  
**Member Signature**

On January 13, 2026, I, Councilman Josh Scallate, recused myself from the discussion and vote regarding an event titled **“Sip and Stroll for the Stars,”** scheduled to take place downtown on February 12, 2026. I recused myself because my wife assisted in organizing the event and owns a boutique located in the downtown area.

In accordance with state statute, I am providing this written explanation as an attachment to accompany the recusal form and to be included with the official meeting minutes. This document will become part of the memorialized record.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Josh Scallate". The signature is stylized with a large, sweeping initial "J" and "S". Below the signature, the number "57" is written in a smaller, simpler font.