



City Council Worksession and Regular Meeting Meeting Minutes – City Hall Council Chambers, 2nd Floor

July 7, 2026

I. CALL TO ORDER

5:00 PM

Philip Cromer, Mayor

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

II. INVOCATION AND PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

Michael McFee, Mayor Pro Tem

III. MEETING AGENDA APPROVAL

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

All were in favor, motion carried.

IV. PRESENTATIONS

A. Applicant interviews for Boards, Commissions and Committees.

Edward Simmer and Jessie White interviewed for the Beaufort-Jasper Sewer and Water Authority Board of Directors Seat.

Michael Holle interviewed for the Planning Commission and Matthew Hanks interviewed for the Planning Commission and Zoning Board of Appeals.

Nate Farrow, Public Works Director, was recognized for his dedicated service to the City and residents over the past 9 years, as he is leaving and moving out of state.

V. PROCLAMATIONS/COMMENDATIONS/RECOGNITIONS

A. Proclamation proclaiming July 25 - August 1, 2026, as Gullah/Geechee Nation Week.

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

All were in favor, motion carried.

B. Recognition of Bill Suter for his service on the Design Review Board and Planning Commission.

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

All were in favor, motion carried.

C. Recognition of Matt McAlhaney for his service on the Tourism Development Advisory Board.

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

All were in favor, motion carried.

D. Recognition of Kevin Blank for his service on the Zoning Board of Appeals.

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

All were in favor, motion carried.

VI. PUBLIC COMMENT

Tom Keaveny spoke against the rezoning of 1556 Salem Road.

Paul Trask spoke about Executive Session descriptions and spoke against the rezoning of 1556 Salem Road.

Amanda Patel spoke about a FOIA release from 2025.

Cyndi Phillips spoke about tree canopies and electrical infrastructure.

Felice LaMarca spoke about Executive Session topics and frequency.

Robin Koppernaes spoke about the tree trimming being performed by Dominion Energy.

Graham Trask spoke about Executive Session topics and the tree trimming being performed by Dominion Energy.

Mare Deckard spoke about Executive Session topics.

Randy Martin spoke about the rezoning at 1556 Salem Road as he is the applicant and gave a description of the business use he is proposing as the potential buyer of the property.

VII. WORKSHOP ITEMS

A. Dominion Energy Vegetation Management Program Update.

Scott Marshall, City Manager, provided an update regarding Dominion Energy's ongoing vegetation management activities within the City limits. Dominion Energy was not present. He went over slides provided to him about the purpose of the program, current status and tree trimming cycles.

Members of Council provided their concerns.

The following addressed Council:

Graham Trask
Felice LaMarca
Joe Macdermant

VIII. CONSENT AGENDA

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

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 from CAPA and The Exchange Club of Beaufort to host the 32nd Annual Ghost Tours, October 16-18, 23-25, and 29-30, 2026, and request for two (2) complimentary parking spaces from October 16-30, 2026.

L. Request from the YMCA to co-sponsor the Annual Beaufort River Swim on Saturday, May 22, 2027, use of the Marina/Waterfront Park from 5:00 am to 12:00 pm.

IX. MINUTES

A. Regular Meeting - June 9, 2026.

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

Minutes approved as presented.

B. Special Meeting - June 22, 2026.

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

Minutes approved as presented.

C. Worksession - June 23, 2026.

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

Minutes approved as presented.

X. OLD BUSINESS

- A. An ordinance to amend the City of Beaufort Zoning Map to rezone real property located at 1556 Salem Road, Beaufort County Tax Map R120 029 000 103E 0000 from T4-Neighborhood (T4-N) to Regional Mixed-Use (RMX) -Second Reading.

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

Curt Freese, Community Development Director, provided an overview of this request.

Members of Council expressed their concerns.

The applicant, Randy Martin, addressed Council and answered questions regarding what he is proposing to do with the building.

There was a discussion about a text amendment for issuing a special exception for this parcel instead of rezoning. Staff will reach out to the City Attorney to see if this is feasible.

Councilman Lipsitz made a motion to postpone the vote on second reading until the next meeting on August 18, 2026. The motion was seconded by Mayor Pro Tem, McFee.

All were in favor, motion carried.

- B. An ordinance to amend the City of Beaufort Zoning District Map to rezone real property identified as 909 Church Street, Beaufort County Tax Map Number R120 004 000 0275 from T4-Neighborhood (T4-N) to T4-Historic Neighborhood District (T4-HN) - Second Reading.

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

Curt Freese, Community Development Director, provided an overview.

All were in favor, motion carried.

XI. NEW BUSINESS

- A. Request from Just Listen Organization for co-sponsorship of Southside Park to host their 2nd annual Back-to-School Bash on Sunday, August 2, 2026, from 3:00 pm - 6:00 pm.

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

All were in favor, motion carried.

- B. Authorization to allow the City Manager to enter into a Contractual Agreement for Waste Management Services.

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

Alan Eisenman, Finance Director, provided an overview. Capital Waste Services LLC were selected by the Committee. Three bids were received. He stated the current collection method billing for residential service is \$270/year, \$22.50/month charged on the Beaufort County residential property tax bills. Under the new contract CWS will bill on a quarterly basis beginning January 1, 2027, directly to the resident. Effective January 1, 2027, the City will exercise the direct billing method at \$21.99/unit from residential collection from January 1, 2027, to June 30, 2027. The next four fiscal years will follow the direct billing method with adjustments according to the US Consumer Price Index: Urban Consumer - Garbage and Trash Collection. The contractor will bill the residents directly on a quarterly basis beginning January 1, 2027.

All were in favor, motion carried.

XII. REPORTS

City Manager's Report

Mr. Marshall began his comments by addressing concerns and comments made by Ms. Amanda Patel during her public comment. He said he admired her energy and passion for the truth, but she does not have a license to propagate her own version of the truth. He reiterated he was not provided with a copy of the FOIA release in question. He was party to an email that contained the link, which he never accessed. He said Council has been aware of this fact for some time and he has also previously communicated that to Ms. Patel. He requested that if she had proof to the contrary, she should bring it forward, but he does have proof that he did not access the link to the file. He also noted that her comments indicated she was familiar with the contents of the file. Even though he is not part of the ongoing investigation, he said if he was, he would be interested to know how she has those details since she was not an intended recipient of the files.

Recognized our employees and community partners for what has been an outstanding series of Independence Day events. From the "Putting Down the Roots of Liberty" ceremony commemorating America's 250th birthday, to First Friday's "Red, White & Beaufort," and especially the inaugural Community Freedom Fest at Waterfront Park, our staff demonstrated once again what can be accomplished through teamwork and community partnerships. The Downtown Operations Team, Public Works, Police, Fire, and many volunteers helped create memorable experiences for hundreds of families. Based on the response from the public, he believes we have established a new annual tradition.

Recognized Public Works Director, Nate Farrow, who will soon be leaving the City for an outstanding professional opportunity. Nate has transformed our Public Works Department and established a standard of service that has benefited every resident of Beaufort. While we are certainly disappointed to lose him, we are grateful for his leadership and wish him and his family nothing but success in this next chapter. We are a better staff and better service provider because of him.

On the capital projects front, we are continuing to make steady progress with the King Street Charles-Craven drainage projects. We anticipate Duke Street to be under construction this summer. The 1st SC Volunteers of African Descent Park is in the design phase, and the Waterfront Park Day Dock gangways are expected to restore pedestrian access before Water Festival. We realize some of these projects can be disruptive, but they represent long-term investments that will serve our community for decades.

Appreciates the continued work of the Waterfront Advisory Committee. The committee is now helping shape the next phase of the relieving platform project, having reviewed the Phases and Tasks included in the RFQ that will begin the engineering and design process. We anticipate the RFQ will be published no later than the first of next week. This should put us on a path to bring a recommendation for contract award to you in September.

Acknowledged the Beaufort Police Department and Beaufort Fire Departments for another successful year of the Future Guardians and Sparking Embers youth programs. These initiatives are about much more than introducing young people to careers in public safety—they're about building trust, leadership, and lasting relationships with the next generation of our community.

Reminded everyone Council will be on a Summer Recess until Tuesday, August 18, 2026.

Mayor's Report

Reported on meetings and events he had attended which included the Liberty Tree Planting in the Waterfront Park.

Councilman Mitchell

Reported on meetings and events he had attended which included the Liberty Tree Planting.

Thanked all who helped with the 3rd annual Unity in the Community Event at the Charles Lind Brown Center and thanked all who attended.

Mayor Pro Tem, McFee

Reported the Long Range Planning Survey for local transportation through the Lowcountry Area Transportation Study will be ending on July 8, 2026.

Councilman Scallate

Spoke about an email thread regarding the FOIA Release mentioned by Ms. Patel. He knew that Mr. Marshall and Mr. Sauve were included. What was a surprise to him was the revelation of a letter sent by the City Attorney to the Department of Crime Victim Services in September stating that he was the only other recipient of that file. He does not feel that was an honest representation.

Reported on meetings and events he had attended, which included welcoming the participants of the Future Guardians Program which is held by the Police Department.

Thanked all who attended the meeting this evening.

Councilman Lipsitz

Reported on meetings and events he had attended which included An Evening with Ben Franklin.

Stated he has been elected Treasurer on the Lowcountry Council of Governments (LCOG) Executive Board.

Members of Council will be attending the MASC Annual Meeting in Greenville, SC.

XIII. EXECUTIVE SESSION

- A. Pursuant to Title 30, Chapter 4, Section 70 (a) (2) of the South Carolina Code of Laws.
“Discussion of negotiations incident to proposed contractual arrangements and proposed sale or purchase of property, the receipt of legal advice where the legal advice relates to a pending, threatened, or potential claim or other matters covered by the attorney-client privilege, settlement of legal claims, or the position of the public agency in other adversary situations involving the assertion against the agency of a claim.
 - 1. FOIA Investigation.
 - 2. Parcel K in the Beaufort Commerce Park.

- B. Pursuant to Title 30, Chapter 4, Section 70 (a) (1) of the SC Code of Laws -Discussion of employment, appointment, compensation, promotion, demotion, discipline, or release of an employee, a student, or a person regulated by a public body or the appointment of a person to a public body.
 - 1. Beaufort Jasper Water and Sewer Authority Board of Directors.
 - 2. Planning Commission.
 - 3. Municipal Judges.

Councilman Lipsitz made a motion to go into Executive Session and seconded by Councilman Mitchell.

All were in favor, motion carried.

Councilman Lipsitz made a motion to come out of Executive Session and seconded by Mayor Pro Tem, McFee.

All were in favor, motion carried.

Note: Mayor Cromer recused himself and left the room for the discussion regarding the Beaufort Commerce Park. A copy of the recusal form is attached.

Actions taken:

Councilman Scallate made a motion to appoint Michael Holle to the Planning Commission for a 3 year term to expire on June 30, 2029. The motion was seconded by Councilman Lipsitz.

All were in favor, motion carried.

Mayor Pro Tem, McFee made a motion to recommend Jessie White as the City Representative on the Beaufort-Jasper Sewer and Water Authority. The motion was seconded by Councilman Scallate.

All were in favor, motion carried.

XIV. ADJOURN

10:51 PM

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

All were in favor, motion carried.

Disclaimer: This document captures all actions taken by Council and may summarize discussions. 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: August 18, 2026
Traci Guldner





RECUSAL STATEMENT

Member Name: Philip E. Croner

Meeting Date: July 7, 2026

Agenda Item: Section XIIT Number: A. 2.

Topic: Parcel K in the Beaufort Commerce Park

*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: Member of the Board

Date: 7/7/26

Philip E. Croner
Member Signature

April 2, 2026

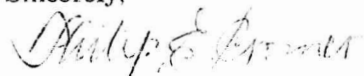
Hon. Michael A. McFee
Mayor Pro Tempore
City of Beaufort City Council
1911 Boundary Street
Beaufort, SC 29902

Re: Conflict of Interest

Dear Mayor Pro Tempore McFee:

I currently serve on the Board of Directors of the Beaufort County Economic Development Corporation ("BCEDC"). I believe that service creates a conflict of interest which disqualifies me from taking action or making decisions in my capacity as a member of Council which would affect the economic interests of BCEDC. As such, I am providing this statement to comply with the requirements of S.C. Code § 8-13-700(B). Please add this statement to Council meeting minutes; for any action from which this conflict disqualifies me, please note the disqualification and the reason for it in the minutes; and excuse me from any votes, deliberations, and other actions on the matter.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script, appearing to read "Philip E. Cromer".

Mayor Philip E. Cromer