

**CITY OF BARNWELL, SOUTH CAROLINA**

**MINUTES of the MEETING of BARNWELL CITY COUNCIL**

**August 4, 2025 – 5:30PM**

**MEETING LOCATION:**  
130 Main Street, Barnwell, SC 29812

Barnwell City Council met in Regular Session with Mayor Still presiding.

**Councilmembers Present:** Mayor Ron Still, Mayor Pro Tem Peggy Kinlaw, and Councilmembers Louis Claytor, Alicia Davis, Ricky Dixon, Wanda Highsmith, and Jana Myers

**Councilmembers Absent:** None

**Others Present:** Interim City Administrator Tony Dicks, City Attorney Thomas Boulware, Clerk & Treasurer Kim Vargo, Police Chief Michael Butts, PRT Director Tommy Elkins, and Public Works Director Philip Stanley

Stephanie Shaver with the People Sentinel was present.

**CALL TO ORDER**

Mayor Still called the meeting to order. Mayor Pro Tem Peggy Kinlaw led in prayer.

**PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE & CIVILITY PLEDGE**

Council led the pledge of allegiance and the civility pledge.

**PUBLIC COMMENTS**

Barbara Christian talked about the Patriots Day- 9/11 Memorial which will be held at 2:00 pm on September 11, 2025 at Calhoun Park. She is requesting that the grass is cut and sprayed for the event.

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**BETH OVERTON DEPUTY DIRECTOR SOUTHEASTERN HOUSING &  
COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT**

Ms. Beth Overton gave an update on the blight removal program with the City. The City contributed \$100,000 and her organization was able to leverage that with \$54,300 in additional funds. They were able to eliminate the blight from 22 properties. Mayor Still said he and Administrator Dicks put together a new list of houses if the City wants to continue their partnership with the program. He asked Council to review the list for additional properties. Ms. Overton said additional grant funding should be available in September or October. She would have to have something from the City before then to try to obtain these additional funds.

**APPROVAL OF THE MINUTES OF THE JULY 7, 2025, REGULAR SCHEDULED  
CITY COUNCIL MEETING**

Councilmember Claytor made a motion to approve the minutes of July 7, 2025, regular scheduled City Council meeting. The motion was seconded by Councilmember Myers and unanimously approved.

**APPROVAL OF THE MINUTES OF THE JULY 29, 2025, SPECIAL CALLED CITY  
COUNCIL MEETING**

Councilmember Dixon made a motion to approve the minutes of July 29, 2025, Special Called City Council meeting. The motion was seconded by Councilmember Davis and unanimously approved.

**RECOGNITION OF THE MASC ACHIEVEMENT AWARD FOR THE CITY OF  
BARNWELL**

Mayor Stil said that at the MASC annual conference held in Hilton Head, the City of Barnwell was presented with the Municipal Association's 2025 Achievement Award for the new fire station. He thanked everyone for their hard work on the project. The City received a plaque that will be put up in the fire station. They also received a trophy that the City will keep for one year until the 2026 projects are awarded.

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**FIRST READING OF ORDINANCE 2025-03 "TO RAISE REVENUE AND ADOPT A BUDGET FOR THE CITY OF BARNWELL, SOUTH CAROLINA FOR THE FISCAL YEAR ENDING SEPTEMBER 30, 2026"**

Councilmember Highsmith made a motion to read the ordinance by title only. The motion was seconded by Mayor Pro Tem Kinlaw and unanimously approved. Administrator Dicks read the ordinance by title only. Councilmember Dixon made a motion to approve the first reading of Ordinance 2025-03. The motion was seconded by Councilmember Davis and unanimously approved. The budget includes a 13.0 mill decrease for the debt service for the fire station general obligation bond and no increase in the operating millage. There are no increases in water, sewer, or garbage rates.

**RECOMMENDATION TO TRANSFER FUNDS IN THE CURRENT BUDGET FOR IT AND EQUIPMENT NEEDS**

Chapter 2, Article 8, Section 2-225 of the Barnwell City Code of Ordinances gives the administrator the authority to transfer funds within and between departments as necessary to achieve the goals of the approved budget. Administrator Dicks said there are unexpended funds available in this year's budget that he would like to use for additional IT and equipment needs, some of which are included in next year's budget. Councilmember Claytor made a motion to approve the Administrator's recommendation to transfer funds for IT and equipment needs. The motion was seconded by Mayor Pro Tem Peggy Kinlaw and unanimously approved.

**COMMITTEE/DEPARTMENT REPORTS**

Water and Sewer (Councilmembers (Davis & Myers) – Public Works Director Philip Stanley gave an update on projects:

- The prefab metal parts for the elevated tank grant are complete and construction will begin next week
- All of the field work for the sewer rehabilitation grant is complete and bid documents are ready to go out
- Clearing of easements and right ways for the SCAT Park grant should be completed this week and they should start laying pipe on Monday
- Our engineers have completed the permit for Barnwell Tissue Solutions. We are waiting for Barnwell Tissue Solutions to schedule a walk through inspection and then they can start operations.
- We have contracted with GHD and the State to service the new high school with water and wastewater. GHD is modeling our water system to provide the best service.
- There were some RIA staff changes for the RIA Planning Grant, so we had to resubmit some of our forms

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-We received a \$2 million grant for emergency bypass pumps and generators for our wells and lift stations. This grant will pay for all fees including engineering fees.  
-We are applying for a \$1.75 million water improvement and upgrade grant to tie in Well 6 and Well 10 on Clinton St.

Sanitation and Streets (Councilmembers Davis & Myers) – The department was thanked for doing a good job on keeping the streets clean and the grass cut. The City is still spraying for mosquitos.

Parks, Recreation and Tourism (Councilmembers Dixon & Highsmith) – PRT Director Tommy Elkins thanked everyone for the school supply distribution. Registration for fall sports will end this Friday August 8<sup>th</sup>. Coaches are needed. He is hosting a coed softball tournament on November 15<sup>th</sup> at the LPSC. The cost will be \$200 per team. Everyone enjoyed the reptile event at Fuller Park. Mayor Still reminded the public that vehicles cannot be driven inside the parks without permission. Councilmembers Dixon talked about the activities for special needs individuals.

Police (Mayor Pro Tem Kinlaw & Councilmember Dixon) – Police Chief Butts gave a report on monthly activity and gave an update on the status of the new vehicles purchased for his department. He attended the Law Enforcement Expo at the Airport on Saturday. Commended Officer Love for his hard work with his new code enforcement and animal control position.

Fire (Mayor Pro Tem Kinlaw and Councilmember Claytor) – Received a written report of monthly activities.

Finance and Salary (Mayor Pro Tem Kinlaw & Councilmember Claytor) – There will be a Special Call Meeting on August 25<sup>th</sup> at 5:30 for the public hearing and final reading of the budget ordinance.

Building and Planning (Councilmembers Claytor & Highsmith) – No discussion

Downtown Revitalization (Councilmembers Dixon & Myers) – Councilmember Myers reminded Council to put in their suggestions for the wayfinding signs.

### **ADMINISTRATOR'S REPORT**

-Contracted with JLA, the architectural firm that did the preliminary Fuller Park design, to help with the RFQ's & the biddings process for Phase 1 of the Fuller Park project which will be the food truck court. They are looking at December for the contract awards to begin and a 60 day construction period once they are awarded. The project included a play structure to be located by

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the food court. We are asking for an amendment to the grant to change this to a special needs playground structure that will be located by the existing play structures.

-Filing for Council District seats 1, 3, & 5 opened August 1<sup>st</sup> and will run through noon on August 15<sup>th</sup>.

### **EXECUTIVE SESSION**

Councilmember Davis made a motion to enter executive session for pre-contractual negotiations for potential purchase of real property and personnel discussion on administration for the Clerk and Treasurer. The motion was seconded by Councilmember Highsmith and unanimously approved.

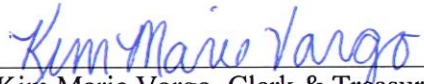
Mayor Still declared the Council was out of executive session.

Councilmember Claytor made a motion to accept the finance & salary committee's recommendation to offer Candidate A the position of Assistant Clerk & Treasurer under the terms agreed upon by both the Council and the Candidate. The motion was seconded by Mayor Pro Tem Kinlaw and unanimously approved.

### **ADJOURN**

Councilmember Dixon made a motion to adjourn. The motion was seconded by Councilmember Highsmith and unanimously approved.

Submitted by:

  
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Kim Marie Vargo, Clerk & Treasurer