

CITY OF BARNWELL, SOUTH CAROLINA

**MINUTES of the MEETING of BARNWELL CITY COUNCIL
September 8, 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, Asst. Clerk & Treasurer Allison S. Wade, 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. Councilmember Davis made a motion to amend Agenda Item # 12- Letter of Support Request for Generations Unlimited to include discussion of a one-time donation. The motion was seconded by Councilmember Claytor and unanimously approved. Prayer was led by Councilmember Davis.

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE & CIVILITY PLEDGE

Council led the pledge of allegiance and the civility pledge.

PUBLIC COMMENTS

Ms. Barbara Christian thanked Mayor Still, Mayor Pro Tem Kinlaw, and Councilmember Claytor for assisting with putting out 3,000 flags on Saturday in memory of the victims of 911. Mayor Still thanked Ms. Christian for her work in the community.

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Ms. Alyssa Dluzak requested information on the type and installation of the handicap playground equipment at Fuller Park. Several mothers with disabled children have provided input and she wanted to make sure this was included in the design. She also wanted to know the status of replacing the crosswalk brick pavers around the Circle. Administrator Dicks said that both items are being addressed, and everyone's input is being considered.

Ms. Phyllis Rhodie thanked Councilmember Dixon for attending a community affair in her neighborhood. Ms. Rhodie voiced concerns regarding the roads located off Webb and Calhoun Street. She was reminded that the City did not own any roads, and she would have to notify the County or SCDOT. She also had some concerns about the date of the July 4th celebration, litter in her neighborhood, and a safety issue with a tree on Pine St obstructing the view of drivers.

APPROVAL OF THE MINUTES OF AUGUST 4, 2025, REGULAR SCHEDULED CITY COUNCIL MEETING

Councilmember Dixon made a motion to approve the minutes of August 4, 2025, Regular Scheduled City Council meeting. The motion was seconded by Councilmember Highsmith and unanimously approved.

APPROVAL OF THE MINUTES OF AUGUST 25, 2025, SPECIAL CALLED CITY COUNCIL MEETING & PUBLIC HEARING

Councilmember Davis made a motion to approve the minutes of August 25, 2025, Special Called City Council Meeting and Public Hearing. The motion was seconded by Mayor Pro Tem Peggy Kinlaw and unanimously approved.

APPROVAL 2025 HOSPITALITY TAX GRANT RECOMMENDATIONS

The City received five applications for 2025 Hospitality Grants. The applications were reviewed by the PRT Director, PRT committee, and the City Administrator. Council decided to discuss and approve each application individually with the following results:

Barnwell Farmers Market: Cultural Heritage Event Series sponsored by Axis 1 Center of Barnwell dba Barnwell Farmers Market. Amount requested \$2,400. Councilmember Claytor made a motion to approve the Hospitality Tax Grant. The motion was seconded by Councilmember Davis and unanimously approved.

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Echoes of Barnwell's Past sponsored by Barnwell County Museum. Amount requested \$2,500. Mayor Pro Tem Peggy Kinlaw serves on the Museum Board and recused herself from discussion and voting. Councilmember Dixon made a motion to approve the Hospitality Tax Grant. The motion was seconded by Councilmember Claytor and unanimously approved.

A Day in Barnwell sponsored by Southern Palmetto Foundation. Amount requested \$2,500. Councilmember Claytor made a motion to approve the Hospitality Tax Grant. The motion was seconded by Councilmember Davis. Councilmember Dixon made a motion to postpone the approval of the Hospitality Tax Grant until further information is received and reviewed. The motion was seconded by Councilmember Myers and unanimously approved.

4th Annual BBQ, Blues, & Boo's sponsored by Southern Palmetto Regional Chamber of Commerce. Amount requested \$2,500. Councilmember Davis made a motion to approve the Hospitality Tax Grant. The motion was seconded by Councilmember Myers and unanimously approved.

Barnwell Sundial Festival sponsored by Barnwell Sundial Festival Inc. Amount requested \$2,500. Councilmember Dixon made a motion to approve the Hospitality Tax Grant. The motion was seconded by Mayor Pro Tem Peggy Kinlaw and unanimously approved.

APPROVAL OF SOUTHEASTERN HOUSING AND COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT BLIGHT PROGRAM AGREEMENT

Councilmember Highsmith made a motion to award a contract to the Southeastern Housing and Community Development in the amount of \$110,000.00 for a Blight Elimination Program. The project will be funded with Capital Project Sales Tax. The motion was seconded by Councilman Dixon and unanimously approved.

APPROVAL OF ENTERING A CONTRACT WITH EDMUNDS GOV TECH TO UPDATE FINANCE, BUSINESS LICENSING, AND ONLINE SERVICES SOFTWARE

Clerk & Treasurer Kim Vargo explained the City needs updated financial software. The current software company will no longer update the software being used. After evaluating several software packages, the programs with Edmunds Gov Tech best fit the City's needs. Councilmember Myers made a motion to approve the contract with Edmunds Gov Tech to update Finance, Business Licensing, and Online Services Software. The motion was seconded by Councilman Dixon and unanimously approved.

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APPROVAL OF SURPLUS PROPERTY SALE/ AUCTION ITEMS

Mayor Pro Tem Peggy Kinlaw made a motion to approve the list of sale items. The motion was seconded by Councilmember Myers and unanimously approved. The sale of items will start September 5th and end September 26th. Any items not sold will go into a silent auction on September 29th thru 1:00 pm on October 3rd.

APPROVAL OF SPECIAL EVENT FOR FULLER PARK. BBQ COOK OFF SUPPORTING WOMEN'S EMPOWERMENT

The special events application for this event was brought before Council because it involved retail vendors at the park which must be approved by Council. Discussion followed with several questions about the event and application. Councilmember Claytor made a motion to approve the event contingent on the sponsor, Kenneth Odom, completing the proper paperwork, meeting with the City Administrator and providing event insurance. The motion was seconded by Councilmember Myers and unanimously approved.

FIRST READING OF ORDINANCE 2025-04 "AMENDING THE BUSINESS LICENSE ORDINANCE OF THE CITY OF BARNWELL TO UPDATE THE CLASS SCHEDULE AS REQUIRED BY ACT 176 OF 2020"

Councilmember Myers made a motion to read the ordinance by title only. The motion was seconded by Highsmith and unanimously approved. Administrator Dicks read the ordinance by title only. Mayor Pro Tem Peggy Kinlaw made a motion to approve the first reading of Ordinance 2025-04. The motion was seconded by Councilmember Davis and unanimously approved.

LETTER OF SUPPORT REQUEST FOR GENERATIONS UNLIMITED

Councilmember Myers and Mayor Pro Tem Peggy Kinlaw recused themselves from discussion and vote because of their affiliation with Generations Unlimited. Councilmembers Davis and Highsmith explained the importance of the transportation services provided by Generations Unlimited to the citizens in their districts and Barnwell County. They recommended that a one-time contribution be considered in lieu of the letter of support. Discussion followed. Administrator Dicks will seek further information and will bring it back to Council.

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COMMITTEE/DEPARTMENT REPORTS

Water and Sewer (Councilmembers Davis & Myers) – Public Works Director Philip Stanley

- Steel for the elevated water tank should arrive this weekend. It will take two months to erect and then it will need sand blasting and painting.
- Bids for the Sewer Rehabilitation Project will be opened on September 30th at 2:00 pm.
- 100% of the clearing has been completed for the SCAT Park Force Main Project and 3,000 feet of pipe has been laid.
- All surveys down Ellenton Street have been completed for the new Barnwell County High School site. GHD Engineers are doing the water and sewer models to make sure that everything is correct. We are looking at different sites for booster pump stations.
- The RIA Planning Grant utilizes large trucks downtown to clean sewer lines. They're cleaning "Old Barnwell" All lines will be smoke tested. The area will range from Allen Street to Hagood then Jackson to Marlboro. They will clean, use a camera, and smoke test all lines.

Sanitation and Streets (Councilmembers Davis & Myers) – The department is still spraying for mosquitos. Call City Hall for problem areas.

Parks, Recreation and Tourism (Councilmembers Dixon & Highsmith) – PRT Director Tommy Elkins

- Fall sport programs have begun. Volleyball begins tonight then flag and tackle football. There are still issues with the football schedules with other towns, so he is asking everyone to be patient and contact him with questions or concerns.
- A softball tournament is scheduled for November 15th and the registration deadline is October 31st.
- There are 67 spots available for Trick or Treat around the Circle on October 31st. Any churches, families, local businesses are welcome to register to participate.
- A poll was completed on Facebook regarding the ADA disabilities. He would like to go with the Parks and Recreation and the public to see what their opinions are.
- The big pavilion at Fuller Park is getting an electrical update September 22- 26 and will be closed during this time.

Police (Mayor Pro Tem Kinlaw & Councilmember Dixon) – Police Chief Michael Butts

- Presented Lt. Green with a Life Savers Award for helping someone who was choking.
- Gave a monthly report on police and animal control enforcement activity
- Officer Norman Padgett has graduated from the police academy.
- He is requesting a committee meeting next week if possible.
- Conducted a MAD Campaign along with SC Highway Patrol in August which included road checks and vehicle stops.
- The camera systems for the new patrol cars have been installed. Radios will be reprogrammed on Wednesday.

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

Finance and Salary (Mayor Pro Tem Kinlaw & Councilmember Claytor) – Clerk Treasurer Kim Vargo reminded everyone that September 30th is the fiscal year end, and the new budget starts October 1st.

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

Downtown Revitalization (Councilmembers Dixon & Myers) –

- Councilmember Dixon said he received some information from Daryll Queen on the bench dedicated to James Brown and a 3D mockup should be available soon.

- Councilmember Myers requested input from Council for the wayfinding signs

- Councilmember Myers asked about the status of the Smart Start Business Kit for the website. This is still being addressed.

- Councilmember Myers requested a meeting on the \$350,000.00 CPST fund allocation for Downtown Revitalization and Parks.

ADMINISTRATOR'S REPORT

- He is continuing to work with JLA on developing the plans for bids on the Fuller Park Phase I Project. A rough draft of the ground's layout, entrance way, and a list of different playground equipment for special needs situations was provided.

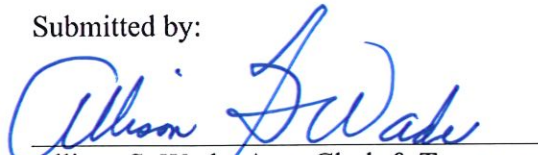
- Tree trimming was completed in the downtown circle area, and a dead pecan tree was removed from Darnell Park.

- We had a great turnout and engagement with the Department of Commerce Rural Development and Strategic Planning Initiative that was conducted with the City. We are waiting for the consultant that is working with Commerce to get back with us on the next step. A small committee may be formed to work with group.

ADJOURN

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

Submitted by:


Allison S. Wade, Asst. Clerk & Treasurer

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