

Regular Town Council Meeting

Theodore D. Washington Municipal Building, Henry “Emmett” McCracken Jr. Council Chambers, 20
Bridge Street, Bluffton, SC

January 14, 2025

I. CALL TO ORDER

Mayor Toomer called the meeting to order at 5:00 PM.

II. PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

The Pledge of Allegiance was led by Mayor Toomer.

III. INVOCATION

The Invocation was given by Councilmember Bridgette Frazier.

IV. ADOPTION OF THE MINUTES

1. Regular Meeting Minutes of 12/10/2024

A motion was made by Councilmember Hamilton; Seconded by Councilmember Burden to approve the Regular Meeting Minutes of 12/10/2024 as submitted.

V. PRESENTATIONS, CELEBRATIONS, AND RECOGNITIONS

1. Beaufort County School District Character Student of the Month - Mayor Larry Toomer

On behalf of Town Council, Mayor Larry Toomer honored the student of the month, Gerrard Garcia Berduo, a 4th grade student from Pritchardville Elementary for Respect/Gratitude.

2. Martin Luther King, Jr. Proclamation - Mayor Larry Toomer

Mayor Larry Toomer presented the MLK Proclamation to Councilmember Bridgette Frazier. Ms. Frazier spoke about the 40th Anniversary of the Bluffton MLK Observance Committee and the events to occur through the weekend and being held on MLK Day.

3. Annual Palmetto Bluff Development Agreement Update - Will Howard, South Street Partners

Will Howard of South Street Partners presented Town Council the current development status of Palmetto Bluff from its housing figures to amenities as well as forthcoming projects. South Street's housing sales in 2024 were \$384 million, close to 2021's \$391 million. The difference is 2024's units are about half of 2021 thus, the construction value per unit in Palmetto Bluff has dramatically increased.

4. Town of Bluffton Annual Development Agreement Update - Kevin Icard, Director of Growth Management

Kevin Icard, Director of Growth Management, presented current updates to Town Council regarding the Town's development agreements. Summary: The fastest growing areas of Bluffton are the New Riverside and Palmetto Bluff. Residential build-out stands at 84% and commercial build-out stands at 32%. These percentages are compared to the development agreement allowances.

5. Annual Update From Bluffton Police Department Mental Health Advocate - Lisa Carlucci, Community Mental Health Advocate

Lisa Carlucci, Bluffton Police Department's Community Mental Health Advocate, presented Town Council with current statistics regarding the BPD's program. The program reached 125 clients throughout 2024, which is on par with 2023.

VI. PUBLIC COMMENT

Sharon Brown 163 Buck Island Rd - Ms. Brown spoke of social injustice, police profiling and goals moving into the new year.

Jessie White 1211 Harrington St, Beaufort - Ms. White spoke on behalf of the Coastal Conservation League, commending the Town staff for proactively seeking to protect important and fragile wetland ecosystems and urged Town Council to approve the scope of work with McCormick Taylor to develop wetland and resilience ordinances.

Joy Coe 5 Cottingham Rd - Ms. Coe spoke of matters relating to general concerns about development agreements and the watershed study.

VII. COMMUNICATIONS FROM MAYOR AND COUNCIL

Councilmember Bridgette Frazier spoke about the approaching MLK Holiday, the events occurring within the community, and invited everyone to participate.

Councilmember Dan Wood commended Councilmember Frazier on her work with the MLK Foundation and the growing participation throughout the community.

Councilmember Fred Hamilton had no communication.

Councilmember Emily Burden had no communication.

Mayor Larry Toomer thanked everyone for the support over the last year that he has served the Town as Mayor.

VIII. COUNCIL WORKSHOP AGENDA ITEMS

IX. PUBLIC HEARING & FINAL READING

X. FORMAL AGENDA ITEMS

1. Consideration of an Ordinance Authorizing an Economic Development Incentive Agreement Between the Town of Bluffton and Encompass Health. Second & Final Reading – David Nelems, CEO of DRCI

A motion made by Councilmember Burden; Seconded by Councilmember Frazier to approve the second and final reading of an Ordinance authorizing the Town Manager to enter into an Economic Development Grant Agreement between the Town of Bluffton and Encompass Health

Town Council unanimously approved the second and final reading of this ordinance.

2. Consideration of an Ordinance Authorizing an Economic Development Incentive Agreement Between the Town of Bluffton and CS Instruments USA Inc. Second & Final Reading – David Nelems, CEO of DRCI

A motion made by Councilmember Burden; Seconded by Councilmember Frazier to approve second and final reading of an Ordinance authorizing the Town Manager to enter into

an Economic Development Grant Agreement between the Town of Bluffton and CS Instruments USA, Inc.

Town Council unanimously approved the second and final reading of this ordinance.

3. Approval to Authorize a Task Authorization to McCormick Taylor, Inc. to Develop Wetland and Resilience Ordinances (Fiscal Impact: \$174,004.55) - Kimberly Washok-Jones, Director of Projects and Watershed Resilience

A motion made by Councilmember Hamilton; Second by Councilmember Frazier to approve authorizing the Town Manager to issue a Task Authorization to McCormick Taylor, Inc. to develop Town Wetland and Resilience Ordinances with a fiscal impact of \$174,004.55.

Town Council unanimously approved the authorization to develop wetland and resilience ordinances.

4. Consideration of an Ordinance Amending the Town of Bluffton FY 2025 Budget to Provide for the Expenditures of Certain Funds and to Allocate Sources of Revenue for the Said Funds – First Reading - Natalie Majorkiewicz, Director of Finance

A motion made by Mayor Pro-Tempore Wood; Seconded by Councilmember Hamilton to approve the First Reading of an Ordinance Amending the Town of Bluffton Fiscal Year 2025 Budget to Provide for the Expenditures of Certain Funds and to Allocate Sources of Revenue for the Said Funds.

Town Council unanimously approved the first reading of this ordinance.

XI. CONSENT AGENDA ITEMS

A motion made by Councilmember Frazier; Seconded by Mayor Pro-Tempore Wood to approve the Consent Agenda as submitted.

1. Monthly Department Reports: Police, Finance and Administration, Human Resources, Municipal Court, Projects & Watershed Resilience, Public Services, Don Ryan Center for Innovation, and Growth Management
2. Town Manager Monthly Report
3. Consideration to Authorize a Contract Renewal with Palmetto Bluff Preservation Trust, Inc. to reimburse for residential trash removal services in the Palmetto Bluff community for the calendar year 2025 (Fiscal Impact: \$193,744). – Chris Forster, Assistant Town Manager
4. Acceptance of the Town of Bluffton FY2024 Audit performed by Mauldin and Jenkins, LLC - Natalie Majorkiewicz, Director of Finance

XII. EXECUTIVE SESSION

1. Discussion Related to the Proposed Conveyance of Development Rights for the Purpose of Affordable Housing in the Buckwalter PUD (Pursuant to SC Freedom of Information Act 30-4-70[a][2])

Mayor Toomer announced Council would enter Executive Session for discussion related to the proposed conveyance of development rights for the purpose of Affordable Housing in the Buckwalter PUD (Pursuant to SC Freedom of Information Act 30-4-70[a][2]).

XII. ACTION FROM EXECUTIVE SESSION

A motion made by Councilmember Burden; Seconded Mayor Pro-Tempore Wood to approve a Resolution for Beaufort Memorial Hospital's (BMH) 120 dwelling unit affordable housing and medical facility project at 335 Buckwalter Parkway and acquisition of necessary residential development rights.

Town Council unanimously approved the resolution of support for Beaufort Memorial Hospital.

XIV. ADJOURNMENT

Town Council adjourned at 7:36PM.