

Regular Town Council Meeting

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

February 11, 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 delivered by Councilmember Hamilton.

IV. ADOPTION OF THE MINUTES

1. Regular Meeting Minutes of 01/14/2025

A motion was made by Mayor Pro-Tempore Wood; Seconded by Councilmember Frazier to approve the Regular Meeting Minutes of 01/14/2025 as submitted.

2. Quarterly CIP Workshop 01/28/2025

A motion was made by Mayor Pro-Tempore Wood; Seconded by Councilmember Frazier to approve the Quarterly CIP Workshop 01/28/2025 as submitted.

V. PRESENTATIONS, CELEBRATIONS, AND RECOGNITIONS

1. Introduction of New Employees and Recognition of Promotions

Introduction of New Employees and Recognition of Promotions - Anni Evans, Human Resources Manager

New Employees

Sam Barrow – Growth Management – Senior Planner

Brad DeSantis – Building Safety – Building Inspector I

Osmar Sandoval – Public Services – Public Services Worker II – Grounds Maintenance

Vaughn Dyer - Public Services – Public Services Worker IV – Trades Specialist

Abdiel Maldonado – Public Services - Public Services Worker II – Grounds Maintenance

Konnor Harrell – Watershed – Stormwater Inspector

LeeAnn Lennak – Communications and Community Outreach – Welcome Center Coordinator

Melinda Penny – Communications and Community Outreach – Welcome Center Part Time Assistant Coordinator

Thomas McClure – Police Department – School Crossing Guard

Carly Colombero – Police Department – School Crossing Guard

Joe George – Police Department – Quartermaster/Fleet Manager

Eydie Moody – Police Department – Community Relations Manager

Daniel Hopper – Police Department – Police Recruit

William Yostpille – Police Department – School Crossing Guard

Nathan McCallum – Police Department – Class 3 SRO

Christopher Cash – Police Department – Police Recruit

Rodney McFadden – Police Department – Police Sergeant

Brian Kaase – Police Department – Police Lieutenant

Robert Meehan – Police Department – Police Sergeant

Anthony Polo – Police Department – Police Department Intern

Promotions

Jon Story promoted from Building Inspector I to Building Inspector II effective 07/11/2024

Richard Tynon promoted from Public Services Worker II to Public Services Worker III / Asset Manager effective 07/25/2024

William Ayler promoted from Police Recruit to Police Officer effective 02/20/2025

Daniel Hopper promoted from Police Recruit to Police Officer effective 02/20/2025

Lilia Anthony promoted from Police Officer to Police Corporal effective 08/08/2024

Ed King promoted from Police Recruit to Police Office effective 08/22/2024

Christopher Lopez promoted from Police Recruit to Police Officer effective 08/22/2024

Daniel Rickett promoted from Police Corporal to Police Sergeant effective 09/05/2024

Daniel Marciano promoted from Police Sergeant to Police Lieutenant effective 09/19/2024

Craig Karafa promoted from Police Lieutenant to Police Captain effective 10/03/2024

Brandon Cooler promoted from Police Sergeant to Police Lieutenant effective 11/14/2024

Oscar Frazier promoted from Police Corporal to Police Sergeant effective 02/06/2025

2. 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, Jameson Meade, for the character trait of Compassion. Jameson is a 4th grader at Okatie Elementary School.

VI. PUBLIC COMMENT

Sharon Brown 163 Buck Island Road - Ms. Brown spoke of racial injustices of the black community, police response on private property and communications with town staff.

VII. COMMUNICATIONS FROM MAYOR AND COUNCIL

Councilmember Bridgette Frazier - Councilmember Frazier wished everyone a happy Black History Month. She thanked the town's Public Arts Committee for working with the MLK Observance

Committee, selecting an artist for the banners that are displayed throughout Bluffton recognizing Black History Month.

Mayor Pro-Tempore Dan Wood - Mayor Pro-Tempore Wood referenced the CIP projects within the town. He stated he had visited all the town's public parks. The playground and park at New Riverside Park had many people visiting. He is very proud of the work that has already been done and all the good things that are happening.

Councilmember Fred Hamilton - Councilmember Hamilton commended staff for the outstanding job done at the Squire Pope House. The ribbon cutting was a great success with many members of the community attending the event.

Councilmember Emily Burden - Councilmember Burden advised she wanted to clarify her remarks as mentioned by Ms. Sharon Brown at the time of public comment, even though Brown had already left the meeting. She clarified the development agreement percentage is 92%.

She also wanted to commend the Bluffton Police Department for their support and response to the child that was hit by the car in the vicinity of Buck Island Rd. She commended Bluffton Police Department for their quick response to the child.

Mayor Larry Toomer - Mayor Toomer thanked staff for organizing the employee outing to the Savannah Ghost Pirates Game. He stated it was an honor to be able to drop the puck and attend the event.

VIII. WORKSHOP AGENDA ITEMS

1. Consideration and Direction of Amendments to Chapter 7 - Tour Companies of the Town of Bluffton Code of Ordinances - Natalie Majorkiewicz, Director of Finance

Town Council members discussed this issue with the following subjects/questions:

Whether or not to "cap" the number of businesses in this industry.

Concerns about limiting one business (i.e. food trucks in the Historic District) and not limiting others.

Traffic concerns & public safety.

Concerns about limiting one business (i.e. food trucks in the Historic District) and not limiting others.

Potential regulations for certain areas, such as the Historic District.

Potential regulations for motorized and/or tours involving animals such as a horse-drawn tour.

IX. PUBLIC HEARING & FINAL READING

1. Consideration of Town of Bluffton Needs Assessment for Housing, Public Facilities, and Economic Development – Michelle Knight, Community and Economic Development Director, Lowcountry Council of Governments *Must be after 6:00PM

Michelle Knight, Community and Economic Development Director, Lowcountry Council of Governments, presented a public hearing regarding Bluffton Needs Assessment for Housing, Public Facilities and Economic Development for any possible projects which would align with the SC.

X. FORMAL AGENDA ITEMS

1. 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 – Second & Final Reading - Natalie Majorkiewicz, Director of Finance

A motion made by Councilmember Burden, Seconded by Councilmember Hamilton to approve the second and final reading 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.

Town Council unanimously approved the Ordinance Amendment.

2. Consideration of Approval of an Initial Master Plan for New Riverside Parcel 5A South Consisting of 76 Single-Family Lots on Approximately 63 Acres of Land Located on the West Side of New Riverside Road South of Existing Alston Park Phase 2 and Zoned New Riverside Planned Unit Development - Kevin Icard, Director of Growth Management

A motion made by Mayor Pro-Tempore Wood; Seconded by Councilmember Frazier to conditionally approve the initial master plan for Alston Park Phase 3 consisting of approximately 63 acres located on the west side of New Riverside Road south of existing Alston Park Phase 2 and zoned New Riverside Planned Unit Development:

The first phase of development shall be the construction of Holly Hill Lane from New Riverside Road to the development's entrance at Benton Circle, to include connectivity to the Alston Park development to the north. Construction of the road will initially consist of a sub-base and binder course, with the topcoat to be added prior to Final Certificate of Construction Compliance.

Holly Hill Lane shall serve as the only construction road for the development.

The Applicant shall update the master plan to show an asphalt pathway 8 feet in width within the Holly Hill Lane buffer.

The master plan is conceptual in nature, allowing for the Applicant to work with Town Staff to save as many trees as practicable at time of development plan submittal.

Provide an 8-foot wide asphalt path along the south side of Holly Hill Lane from the existing path on New Riverside Drive to Benton Circle.

Consider providing a fenced buffer along the north side of Holly Hill Lane adjacent to the residential homes that back up to Holly Hill Lane from New Riverside Drive to Benton Circle.

Town Council conditionally approved the initial master plan for Alston Park Phase 3 in a 4-1 vote. Toomer, Wood, Hamilton and Frazier voted Yea; Burden voted Nay.

XI. CONSENT AGENDA ITEMS

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 of a Resolution Authorizing Acceptance of Easement Donations from Property Owners Necessary to Complete a portion of the Public Safety Cameras Phase 6 Project - Kimberly Washok-Jones, Director of Projects and Watershed Resilience and Joe Babkiewicz, Chief of Police
4. Finalization of 1095 May River Road, Phase 2, Cost and Schedule - Heather Colin, Assistant Town Manager

Amendment to minutes: The minutes of the February 11, 2025, meeting were amended to accurately reflect the action taken by Town Council regarding the removal of Consent Agenda Item 3, as follows:

Motion 1 – Councilmember Hamilton moved to remove Consent Agenda Item 3 for further discussion. The motion was approved unanimously.

Motion 2 – A motion was made by Councilmember Hamilton and was seconded by Mayor Pro-Tempore Wood to approve Consent Agenda Items 1, 2 and 4. Town Council unanimously approved Consent Agenda Items 1, 2, and 4.

Motion 3 – A motion was made by Mayor Pro-Tempore Wood and was seconded by Councilmember Hamilton to approve Consent Agenda Item 3. Town Council unanimously approved Consent Agenda Item 3.

XII. EXECUTIVE SESSION

1. Legal Matters Relating to the Receipt of Legal Advice Regarding Proposed Municipal Code of Ordinance and Unified Development Ordinance Amendments as they Relate to Development Agreements and Potential Litigation (Pursuant to SC Freedom of Information Act 30-4-70[a][2])

A motion made by Councilmember Hamilton; Seconded by Councilmember Burden to enter Executive Session.

XIII. ACTION FROM EXECUTIVE SESSION

No action taken.

XIV. ADJOURNMENT

A motion made by Councilmember Hamilton; Seconded by Councilmember Burden to adjourn at 8:15 PM.

Marcia Hunter, Town Clerk
Town of Bluffton, South Carolina

Larry C. Toomer, Mayor
Town of Bluffton, South Carolina