

Regular Town Council Meeting

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

December 09, 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 led by Mayor Toomer.

IV. ADOPTION OF THE MINUTES

1. Regular Meeting Minutes of 11/13/2025

A motion made by Mayor Pro-tempore Wood, seconded by Councilmember Hamilton to approve the Regular Meeting Minutes of 11/13/2025.

All were in favor and the motion passed.

V. PRESENTATIONS, CELEBRATIONS, AND RECOGNITIONS

1. Presentation of Awards for Christmas Parade Winners - Mayor Larry Toomer

Mayor Toomer presented the award trophies for the Bluffton Christmas Parade.

The 2025 Bluffton Christmas Parade Winners:

Best Float: Outdoor Empire

Best Performance: May River High School Winter Cheer Team

State of Mind: Palmetto Pediatrics

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

Mayor Larry Toomer honored Sirene Pineda, a senior at Bluffton High School, for the character trait of courage/tolerance. Principal Matthew Hill accepted the award in Ms. Pineda's absence.

3. Don Ryan Center for Innovation Update - Paul Arvantides, CEO

Paul Arvantides, CEO of DRCI, provided an update for Don Ryan Center for Innovation's growing impact, noting that it has supported 105 program companies generating nearly \$28 million in revenue.

VI. PUBLIC COMMENT

John Bartolo 194 Pinecrest Circle - Mr. Bartolo addressed council regarding the possible development in the Pinecrest neighborhood.

Lisa Sulka 37 Stock Farm Road - Mrs. Sulka addressed council with updates regarding public comments she had made at Strategic Planning workshop. She also spoke about contributing resources and saving the history of Bluffton.

Charlie Wetmore 48 Lawrence Street - Mr. Wetmore address council regarding the UDO edits to carports and the vote made by Planning Commission. He also expressed concerns regarding UDO guidelines that may or may not hinder growth.

Tony Presley 68 Pritchard Street - Mr. Presley expressed concerns regarding reoccurring issues with eBikes and the safety of community members.

VII. COMMUNICATIONS FROM MAYOR AND COUNCIL

Councilmember Frazier shared her condolences with Councilmember Hamilton on the recent loss of his sister and commended town staff for the appearance of the town and the work involved.

Mayor Pro Tempore Wood recognized Larry Beckler, Director of Public Services, and Lyndee Simoneaux, Director of Events and Venues, for their outstanding work on town decorations, the Christmas tree lighting, and holiday events. He encouraged residents to support those in need during the holiday season through local nonprofit agencies.

Councilmember Hamilton expressed his appreciation for the support he received during this difficult time following the loss of his sister and wished everyone a Merry Christmas.

Councilmember Burden thanked staff for their contributions to the holiday festivities and wished everyone a Merry Christmas.

Mayor Toomer encouraged residents to visit New Riverside Barn Park in the evening to view the holiday display and shared a message of spreading love, peace, joy, and respect during the holiday season and beyond.

Attorney Terry Finger advised that the Hilton Head Island Deep Well Project has been named the 2025 PGA TOUR Charity of the Year.

VIII. WORKSHOP AGENDA ITEMS

IX. PUBLIC HEARING & FINAL READING

X. FORMAL AGENDA ITEMS

1. Acceptance of the Presentation of the Town of Bluffton FY 2025 Audit by Mauldin and Jenkins, LLC - Natalie Majorkiewicz, Director of Finance

A motion was made by Councilmember Burden, seconded by Councilmember Hamilton to accept the Fiscal Year 2025 Audit for the Town of Bluffton presented by Mauldin & Jenkins, LLC and its inclusion in the Annual Comprehensive Financial Report for the year ending June 30, 2025.

All were in favor and the motion passed.

2. Consideration of Accommodations Tax Advisory Committee Funding Recommendations for Quarter Ending September 30, 2025 - Shannon Milroy, Budget & Procurement Manager

A. Congregation Beth Yam Requesting \$7,770.25

A motion was made by Mayor Pro-tempore Wood, seconded by Councilmember Burden to approve a \$7,770.25 grant to Congregation Beth Yam in support of the 2025 Hanukkah Celebration in Bluffton.

All were in favor and the motion passed.

B. Farmer's Market of Bluffton Requesting \$66,500.00

A motion was made by Councilmember Burden, seconded by Councilmember Hamilton to approve a \$66,500 grant to the Farmer's Market of Bluffton in support of the 2026 Market Season.

All were in favor and the motion passed.

C. Hilton Head Choral Society Requesting \$10,000.00

A motion was made by Councilmember Burden, seconded by Councilmember Frazier to approve a \$10,000 grant to the Hilton Head Choral Society in support of the Vienna Boys Choir Concerts.

All were in favor and the motion passed.

D. The New Bluffton Worship Requesting \$11,500.00

A motion was made by Mayor Pro-tempore Wood, seconded by Councilmember Frazier to approve a \$11,500 grant to the New Bluffton Worship to support the 2025 Christmas Eve Under the Stars event.

All were in favor and the motion passed.

E. May River Theatre Requesting \$49,764.00

A motion was made by Councilmember Hamilton, seconded by Mayor Pro-tempore Wood to approve a \$49,764.00 grant to the May River Theatre for Quarter Ending September 30, 2025.

All were in favor and the motion passed.

3. Approval to Authorize a Construction Contract with Hilton Head Landscapes, LLC for Site Development Construction of Buckwalter Place Park, Phases 3 and 4 (Fiscal Impact: \$1,071,496.54) - Pat Rooney, Manager of Capital Improvements Program

A motion was made by Councilmember Frazier, seconded by Councilmember Hamilton to approve authorizing the Town Manager to enter into a contract with Hilton Head Landscapes for the construction of Buckwalter Place Park, Phases 3 and 4 for a total fiscal impact of \$1,071,496.54, which includes a 10% contingency.

Town Council unanimously agreed and the motion passed.

4. Consideration of Public Art Committee Recommendation to Award a Public Art Commission at New Riverside Barn Park to Michael McLaughlin with a Fiscal Impact of \$58,000 – Chris Forster, Assistant Town Manager

A motion was made by Councilmember Frazier, seconded by Mayor Pro-tempore Wood, to approve the Public Art Committee Recommendation to Award the Public Art Commission at New Riverside Barn Park to Michael McLaughlin.

The recommendation was approved in a 3–2 vote.

Voting Yea: Toomer, Wood, Frazier

Voting Nay: Burden, Hamilton

5. Consideration of an Ordinance to Amend the Town of Bluffton's Municipal Code of Ordinances, Chapter 23 – Unified Development Ordinance, Article 5 – Design Standards, Section 5.15.8 Accessory Buildings (New) and Section(s) 5.15.5.A-E Maximum Lot Coverage (New). First Reading – Kevin Icard, Director of Growth Management

A motion was made by Mayor Pro-tempore Wood, seconded by Councilmember Frazier to approve on first reading of an amendment to the Town of Bluffton's Municipal Code of Ordinances Chapter 23 – Unified Development Ordinance, Article 5 – Design Standards – Accessory Buildings as recommended by Planning Commission in addition of including Section 5.15.5. A through E as it relates to Maximum Lot Coverage.

All were in favor and the motion passed.

XI. CONSENT AGENDA ITEMS

A motion was made by Councilmember Hamilton, seconded by Councilmember Burden to approve item numbers 1-4 as submitted and pull item number 5 for updates to the 2026 Quarterly Workshop Meeting Schedule.

All agreed and the motion passed.

A motion was made by Mayor Pro-tempore Wood, seconded by Councilmember Frazier to adopt the 2026 Town Council Meeting Schedule as submitted and the 2026 Quarterly Workshop Meeting Schedule to reflect meeting dates of January 27, 2026, and October 27, 2026.

All agreed and the motion passed.

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 Pathway Pedestrian Safety Improvements Project - Kimberly Washok-Jones, Director of Projects and Watershed Resilience
4. Presentation of the Hilton Head Island Bluffton Chamber of Commerce FY26 Q1 Quarterly Report - Ariana Pernice, Hilton Head Island Bluffton Chamber of Commerce
5. Consideration of Adoption of the 2026 Town Council Meeting Schedule and 2026 Quarterly Workshop Meeting Schedule - Marcia Hunter, Town Clerk

XII. EXECUTIVE SESSION

A motion was made by Councilmember Hamilton, seconded by Councilmember Burden to enter Executive Session.

Town Council unanimously agreed.

1. Legal Advice Pertaining to an Appeal of a Decision Made by the Historic Preservation Commission (Pursuant to SC Freedom of Information Act 30-4-70 [a][2])
2. Discussions Relating to Proposed Land Acquisition in the Area within the Buckwalter PUD (Pursuant to SC Freedom of Information Act 30-4-70 [a] [2])

3. Discussion Relating to Proposed Contractual Matters Regarding Lease Agreements for Town Owned Property at 97 Progressive Street. (Pursuant to SC Freedom of Information Act 30-4-70 [a][2])
4. Legal Advice Pertaining to the Consideration of Condemnation of Property in Support of Pritchard Street for Light Pole Placement (Pursuant to SC Freedom of Information Act 30-4-70 [a][2])

XIII. ACTION FROM EXECUTIVE SESSION

A motion was made by Mayor Pro-tempore Wood, seconded by Councilmember Hamilton to authorize staff and town attorney to move forward with attempting to obtain an easement in support of the Pritchard Street light pole placement project and if an easement is not agreed, then to proceed with condemnation to pay a fair and reasonable price for the easement.

All were in favor and the motion passed.

XIV. ADJOURNMENT

A motion was made by Councilmember Burden, seconded by Councilmember Frazier to adjourn the meeting at 8:12 PM.

All were in favor and the motion passed.

Marcia Hunter, Town Clerk
Town of Bluffton, South Carolina

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