

Regular Town Council Meeting

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

June 10, 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 Frazier.

IV. ADOPTION OF THE MINUTES

1. Regular Meeting Minutes of 05/13/2025

A motion made by Mayor Pro-Tempore Wood; Seconded by Councilmember Hamilton to approve the Regular Meeting Minutes of 05/13/2025 as submitted.

Town Council unanimously approved the minutes as submitted.

2. Budget Workshop Meeting Minutes 5/22/2025

A motion made by Councilmember Hamilton; Seconded by Councilmember Burden to approve the Budget Workshop Meeting Minutes of 05/22/2025 as submitted.

Town Council unanimously approved the minutes as submitted.

3. Budget Workshop Meeting Minutes 5/27/2025

A motion made by Councilmember Burden; Seconded by Mayor Pro-Tempore Wood to approve the Budget Workshop Meeting Minutes of 05/27/2025 as submitted.

Town Council unanimously approved the minutes as submitted.

V. PRESENTATIONS, CELEBRATIONS, AND RECOGNITIONS

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

Mayor Larry Toomer, on behalf of Town Council, honored Allyson Mendes, 2nd grade student from Red Cedar Elementary for the character trait of forgiveness.

2. Letter of Commendation, American Heritage Girls - Mayor Larry Toomer

Mayor Larry Toomer, on behalf of Town Council, presented a Letter of Commendation to Diana Tisdell as a testament to her remarkable achievements. Ms. Trisdell is a member of the American Heritage Girls.

3. Juneteenth Proclamation - Mayor Larry Toomer

Mayor Larry Toomer, on behalf of Town Council, presented the Juneteenth Proclamation, accepted by Angie Douglas.

4. National Gun Violence Awareness Day Proclamation - Mayor Larry Toomer

Mayor Larry Toomer, on behalf of Town Council, presented the National Gun Violence Awareness Day Proclamation, accepted by Ron Trawinski.

5. Gullah Geechee Heritage Month Celebration - Mayor Larry Toomer

Mayor Larry Toomer, on behalf of Town Council, presented the Gullah/Geechee Heritage Month Proclamation to Queen Quet, Chiefess of the Gullah/Geechee Nation.

Queen Quet was unable to attend the meeting.

VI. PUBLIC COMMENT

Mayor Toomer redirected the Public Comment period portion to agenda item - IX. Public Hearing & Final Reading - Item #2.

All public comments were directly related to the specific item.

VII. COMMUNICATIONS FROM MAYOR AND COUNCIL

VIII. WORKSHOP AGENDA ITEMS

There were no workshop agenda items.

IX. PUBLIC HEARING & FINAL READING

1. Consideration of an Ordinance Approving the Town of Bluffton Fiscal Year 2026 Proposed Consolidated Budget – Public Hearing and Final Reading – Stephen Steese, Town Manager

Motion made by Councilmember Burden; Seconded by Councilmember Hamilton to approve an ordinance for the Town of Bluffton Fiscal Year 2026 Proposed Consolidated Budget.

Town Council unanimously approved the second and final reading of the Fiscal Year 2026 Consolidated Budget (\$97,521,514).

2. Consideration of an Ordinance to Amend the Town of Bluffton Code of Ordinances, Chapter 23 - Unified Development Ordinance, Article 5 - Design Standards, Sec. 5.4 (Wetlands) and Sec. 5.10 (Stormwater); and Article 9 - Definitions and Interpretations, Sec. 9.2 (Defined Terms). Public Hearing and Final Reading - Kevin Icard, Director of Growth Management

A motion made by Mayor Pro-Tempore Wood; Seconded by Councilmember Frazier to approve the amendments to the Town of Bluffton Code of Ordinances Chapter 23 – Unified Development Ordinance, including Article 5 – Design Standards, Sec. 5.3 (Tree Conservation, Planting & Landscaping), Sec. 5.4 (Wetlands) and Sec. 5.10 (Stormwater); and Article 9 – Definitions and Interpretation, Sec. 9.2 (Defined Terms) as amended from first reading.

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

During the First and Second Call for Public Comment the following individuals spoke:

Kenzie Poole 510 Live Oak Drive, Mount Pleasant - Representing the South Carolina Environmental Law Project. Ms. Poole spoke in favor of the amendments to the UDO relating to wetlands and stormwater. She also reiterated several statements regarding the South

Carolina Environmental Law Project's (SCELP) topic previously submitted to Town Council on February 25, 2025.

Grant McClure 1511 Sycamore Street – Representing the Coastal Conservation League addressed council in support of the amendment.

Ronald Williams 24 Hampstead Ave, Joe Almeida 243 Stoney Xing, Frank Byrd Colleton River, Scott Thomas 43 Rose Dhu Creek Plantation Drive, Steve Kiser 67 Myrtle Island, Walter Nester 4 Clark's Summit Drive and Burr & Forman LLP - Representing the Church of the Cross addressed council opposing the amendments to the UDO for the Wetlands ordinance.

Jake Reed 20 Ivory Elm Stroll and John Reed 38 Minuteman Drive - Representing of Reed Entitles, Will Howard 65 Red Cedar Street - Representing Palmetto Bluff, Ben Kennedy 217 Able Street, George Ward 217 Palmetto Bluff Road, and Tom Zinn of Beaufort addressed council opposing the amendments to the UDO for the Wetlands ordinance amendment.

3. Consideration of an Ordinance to Amend the Town of Bluffton Code of Ordinances, Chapter 23 - Unified Development Ordinance, Article 4, Section 4.3 Uses by District to Allow Schools in the Preserve (PR) District. Public Hearing and Final Reading - Kevin Icard, Director of Growth Management

A motion made by Councilmember Burden, Seconded by Councilmember Hamilton to approve the amendments to the Town of Bluffton Code of Ordinances Chapter 23 – Unified Development Ordinance, Article 4 – Zoning Districts, Table 4.3 (Uses by District) to Add Schools as a Permitted Use in the Preserve (PR) Zoning District.

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

4. Consideration of Ordinances for that Certain Real Property Owned by Beaufort County School District, Consisting of a Total of 24.12 Acres, More or Less, Located at 1105 Bluffton Parkway and Bearing Beaufort County Tax Map Nos. R600 029 000 011A 0000, R600 029 000 1736 0000 and R600 029 000 0034 0000 into the Town of Bluffton corporate limits. Public Hearing and Final Reading - Kevin Icard, Director of Growth Management

For the Following Applications:

A. Consideration of 100% Annexation Request to Annex the Subject Properties into the Town of Bluffton Corporate Limits; and,

A motion made by Councilmember Hamilton, Seconded by Mayor Pro-Tempore Wood to approve second and final reading of the ordinance for the annexation of the Beaufort County School District property consisting of a total of 24.12 Acres, more or less, located at 1105 Bluffton Parkway and bearing Beaufort County Tax Map Nos. R600 029 000 011A 0000, R600 029 000 1736 0000 and R600 029 000 0034 0000 into the Town of Bluffton corporate limits.

Town Council unanimously approved the ordinance.

B. Consideration of Zoning Map Amendment to Rezone the Subject Properties Listed Above and R610 029 000 0012 0000 and R610 029 000 0084 0000 to the Preserve (PR) District

A motion made by Councilmember Frazier, Seconded by Councilmember Hamilton to approve the second and final reading of the ordinance for the amendment to the Official Zoning Map

for the Beaufort County School District Property approximately 77.93 Acres, more or less, consisting of the 24.12 Acres, more or less, located at 1105 Bluffton Parkway and bearing Beaufort County Tax Map Nos. R600 029 000 011A 0000, R600 029 000 1736 0000 and R600 029 000 0034 0000 which are under consideration for annexation as well as those adjacent properties consisting of the 53.731 acres, more or less, located at 3050 River Ridge Drive and Bearing Beaufort County Tax Map Nos. R610 029 000 0012 0000, R610 029 000 0084 0000, R610 029 000 1780 0000, and R610 029 000 0612 0000 to the Preserve (PR) District Pursuant to the Unified Development Ordinance ("UDO").

Town Council unanimously approved the ordinance.

X. FORMAL AGENDA ITEMS

1. Consideration of an Ordinance Amending Chapter 2 – Administration, Article IX – Purchasing. Second and Final Reading – Chris Forster, Assistant Town Manager

A motion made by Mayor Pro-Tempore Wood; Seconded by Councilmember Burden to approve the second and final reading of the Ordinance amending the Town of Bluffton Code of Ordinances, Chapter 2 – Administration, Article IX - Purchasing.

Town Council unanimously approved this ordinance.

2. Consideration of the Exercise of Contract Extension for One Five-Year Term with Waste Management. - Chris Forster, Assistant Town Manager

A motion made by Councilmember Frazier, Seconded by Councilmember Hamilton to approve a resolution authorizing the Town Manager to enter into a contract amendment with Waste Management of Georgia, Inc. renewing for a five-year term.

Town Council unanimously approved the resolution with Waste Management of Georgia Inc.

3. Consideration of an Ordinance Authorizing an Economic Development Incentive Agreement Between the Town of Bluffton and Sunshine Bluffton Group, LLC. Second and Final Reading – David Nelems, CEO of DRCI

A motion made by Mayor Pro-Tempore Wood, Seconded by Councilmember Burden to approve second and final reading of an Ordinance authorizing an Economic Development Grant Incentive Agreement between the Town of Bluffton and Sunshine Bluffton Group, LLC of 17,000 square feet of Childcare Space situated within the Washington Square PUD on Buckwalter Parkway.

Town Council unanimously approved this ordinance.

4. Consideration of an Ordinance Authorizing an Economic Development Incentive Agreement Between the Town of Bluffton and Ninety Seven, LLC. Second and Final Reading – David Nelems, CEO of DRCI

A motion made by Councilmember Burden, Seconded by Mayor Pro-Tempore Wood to approve second and final reading of an Ordinance authorizing an Economic Development Grant Incentive Agreement between the Town of Bluffton and Ninety Seven, LLC for renter-occupied workforce/affordable housing located at 97 Goethe Rd.

Town Council unanimously approved this ordinance.

5. Consideration of Ordinance Amending Chapter 6 – Businesses and Business Regulations, Article III – Soliciting and Mobile Vending. Second and Final Reading – Natalie Majorkiewicz, Director of Finance & Administration

A motion made by Councilmember Hamilton, Seconded by Councilmember Frazier to approve an Ordinance amending the Town of Bluffton Code of Ordinances, Chapter 6, Business and Business Regulations, Article III, Soliciting and Mobile Vending as presented.

Town Council unanimously approved this ordinance amendment.

6. Consideration of a Three-Party Intergovernmental Agreement for Indigent Defense Representation at the Town of Bluffton Municipal Court with the Law Office of Carol A. Miller and City of Beaufort. - Lisa Cunningham, Clerk of Court

A motion made by Councilmember Frazier, Seconded by Councilmember Hamilton to approve the Resolution authorizing the Town Manager to sign the Three-Party Intergovernmental Agreement for Indigent Defense Representation at the Town of Bluffton Municipal Court with the Law Office of Carol A. Miller and City of Beaufort.

Town Council unanimously approved the Intergovernmental Agreement for Indigent Defense Representation with the Town of Bluffton Municipal Court with the Law Office of Carol A. Miller and City of Beaufort.

7. Consideration of Accommodations Tax Advisory Committee Funding Recommendations for Quarter Ending March 31, 2025. - Natalie Majorkiewicz, Director of Finance & Administration

Motion 1 - A motion made by Mayor Pro-Tempore Wood, Seconded by Councilmember Frazier to grant the Hilton Head Symphony Orchestra \$48,781 in support of the 2025 Bluffton Concerts as presented in the staff report breakdown for advertising and promotion of tourism and facilities for civic and cultural events expenses.

Town Council unanimously approved the recommended funding.

Motion 2 - A motion made by Councilmember Hamilton, Seconded by Mayor Pro-Tempore Wood to grant Historic Bluffton Foundation \$50,000 for fiscal year 2026 application from July 1, 2025 through June 30, 2025, for operational expenses for the Heyward House Museum.”

Town Council unanimously approved the recommended funding.

Motion 3 - A motion made by Councilmember Hamilton, Seconded by Councilmember Burden to grant the Town of Bluffton \$257,304 for the Sarah Riley Hooks Cottage Restoration project as presented in the Staff Report breakdown.

Town Council unanimously approved the recommended funding.

Motion 4 - A motion made by Mayor Pro-Tempore Wood, Seconded by Councilmember Hamilton to grant BlacQuity SC \$27,000 in support of the 2025 Roots and Rivers Festival event as presented in the Staff Report breakdown.

Councilmember Frazier recused herself from this item. Town Council approved the recommended funding.

Motion 5 - A motion made by Councilmember Hamilton, Seconded by Mayor Pro-Tempore Wood to grant the Bluffton MLK Observance Committee \$23,000 in support of the Bluffton 10th Annual Juneteenth event as presented in the Staff Report breakdown for advertising and promotion of tourism, facilities for civic and cultural events expenses, public facilities, and tourist transportation.

Councilmember Frazier recused herself from this item. Town Council approved the recommended funding.

8. Consideration of a Resolution for Exercise of a Contract Extension for One Two-Year Term and Fiscal Year 2026 Annual Marketing Plan Presented by the Destination Marketing Organization.
- Ariana Pernice, Vice-President Visitor & Convention Bureau, Hilton Head Island-Bluffton Chamber of Commerce and Natalie Majorkiewicz, Director of Finance & Administration

A motion made by Councilmember Frazier, Seconded by Mayor Pro-Tempore Wood to approve a Resolution for the FY2026 Budget and Marketing Plan and renew Contract 2022-35 for the two-year renewal term for the Hilton Head Island-Bluffton Chamber of Commerce to continue to serve as the Town of Bluffton's Designated Marketing Organization.

Town Council unanimously approved the resolution for renewal with the Hilton Head Island-Bluffton Chamber of Commerce as the Town of Bluffton's Designated Marketing Organization.

9. Consideration of an Intergovernmental Agreement with South Carolina Municipal Insurance and Risk Financing Fund for Risk Sharing (SCMIRF) for Property and Casualty Coverage Including Tort Liability and Automobile Coverage for the Town of Bluffton - Steven Pecko, Accounting & Risk Manager

A motion made by Councilmember Frazier, Seconded by Councilmember Hamilton approve a resolution authorizing the Town Manager to approve an Intergovernmental Agreement to participate in the South Carolina Municipal Insurance and Risk Financing Fund.

Town Council unanimously agreed to approve the Intergovernmental Agreement with the South Carolina Municipal Insurance and Risk Financing Fund.

10. Approval to Authorize a Construction Contract with Nix Construction Company, Inc. for Construction of the New River Linear Trail (Fiscal Impact: \$4,108,518.11). - Pat Rooney, Capital Improvements Program Manager

A motion made by Mayor Pro-Tempore Wood, Seconded by Councilmember Frazier to approve authorizing the Town Manager to enter into a Contract with Nix Construction Company, Inc. for the Construction of the New River Linear Trail for a total fiscal impact of \$4,108,518.11, which includes a 20% contingency.

Town Council unanimously agreed to enter into the contract with Nix Construction Company, Inc.

XI. CONSENT AGENDA ITEMS

A motion made by Councilmember Frazer; Seconded by Councilmember Hamilton to approve the Consent Agenda as submitted.

Town Council unanimously approved the motion.

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 Memoranda of Agreement Renewals Between the Town of Bluffton and Intergovernmental Entities and Non-Profits Including the University of SC Beaufort, Beaufort County School District, The Law Office of Darrell Thomas Johnson Jr., LLC, and Bluffton Township Fire District. - Chris Forster, Assistant Town Manager
4. Consideration of a Contract Renewal with Ralph E. Tupper for Judicial Services for the Town of Bluffton Municipal Court. - Lisa Cunningham Clerk of Court
5. Consideration of a Contract Renewal with Mary E. Sharp for Judicial Services for the Town of Bluffton Municipal Court. - Lisa Cunningham, Clerk of Court
6. Consideration of a Resolution Authorizing the Renewal of a Memorandum of Agreement between Beaufort County and the Town of Bluffton Regarding the Sharing of Responsibility of Minimum Control Measures Required in the National Pollutant Discharge Elimination System Permit Requirement for South Carolina Permit #SCR030000. - Kimberly Washok-Jones, Director of Projects & Watershed Resilience
7. Consideration of Approval of a Resolution to Update the Town of Bluffton Employee Handbook - Anni Evans, Director of Human Resources
8. Consideration of a Proposed Lighting Agreement with Dominion Energy for the Affordable Housing Project located at 1095 May River Road (Fiscal Impact: \$94,957.20 over a 10-year term) – Heather Colin, Assistant Town Manager
9. Consideration of a Proposed Lighting Agreement with Dominion Energy for the Pritchard Street Streetscape Project (Fiscal Impact: \$134,003.30 over a 10-year term). - Kimberly Washok-Jones, Director of Projects and Watershed Resilience

XII. EXECUTIVE SESSION

A motion made by Councilmember Frazier; Seconded by Mayor Pro-Tempore Wood to enter Executive Session.

1. Personnel Matters Regarding Town Council Appointments of Boards, Committees, and Commissions (Pursuant to Freedom of Information Act 30-4-70 [a][1])
2. Discussion Relating to Proposed Access Encroachments in Old Town for the Purpose of Street Right-of-Way (Pursuant to SC Freedom of Information Act 30-4-70 [a][2])
3. Discussions Relating to Arrangements for Proposed Land Acquisition in the Area of Old Town (Pursuant to SC Freedom of Information Act 30-4-70 [a] [2])

4. Personnel Matters Relating to Town Manager Annual Review (Pursuant to SC Freedom of Information Act 30-4-70[a][1])

XIII. ACTION FROM EXECUTIVE SESSION

1. Personnel Matters Regarding Town Council Appointments of Boards, Committees, and Commissions (Pursuant to Freedom of Information Act 30-4-70 [a][1])

A motion made by Councilmember Burden, Seconded by Mayor Pro-Tempore Wood to appoint or reappoint the following members of the Boards, Committees, and Commissions:

Appoint Lisa Sulka to the Historic Preservation Commission with a term expiring June 30, 2028.

Reappoint the following citizens to the Town's Boards, Commissions and Committees with all terms expiring June 30, 2028:

Ellen Shumaker to the Accommodations Tax Advisory Committee.

Dan Ciuffreda to the Beautification Committee.

Scott Middleton, David Donnell and Mike Vaccaro to the Construction Board of Adjustments and Appeals.

Charlie Wetmore and Jim Flynn to the Planning Commission.

George Bailey to the Law Enforcement Citizens Advisory Committee.

Brynne Bowler, Pam Davis and Rockelle Henderson to the Public Art Committee.

Annelore Harrell to the Wall of Honor Committee.

2. Personnel Matters Relating to Town Manager Annual Review (Pursuant to SC Freedom of Information Act 30-4-70[a][1])

Motion made by Mayor Tempore Dan Wood; Seconded by Councilmember Emily Burden increase the salary of Stephen Steese, Town Manager, to \$192,000, his new contract be extended for 2 years with a 1-year extension, similar to the current contract, that he receives the same cost of living raise that other employees receive, and the other terms of the contract be repeated.

Town Council unanimously approved the motion.

XIV. ADJOURNMENT

A motion made by Councilmember Hamilton; Seconded by Councilmember Burden to adjourn the meeting at 9:53 PM.