

**AN ORDINANCE OF THE TOWN OF BLUFFTON
ORDINANCE NO. 2025-
FISCAL YEAR 2026 BUDGET**

TO PROVIDE FOR THE LEVY OF TAX FOR THE TOWN OF BLUFFTON FOR THE FISCAL YEAR BEGINNING JULY 1, 2025 AND ENDING JUNE 30, 2026; TO PROVIDE FOR EXECUTION OF AND TO PUT INTO EFFECT THE CONSOLIDATED BUDGET; AND TO PROVIDE BUDGETARY CONTROL OF THE TOWN'S FISCAL AFFAIRS.

BE IT ORDERED AND ORDAINED BY THE MAYOR AND COUNCIL OF THE TOWN OF BLUFFTON, SOUTH CAROLINA:

SECTION 1. APPROPRIATION.

Funds are hereby appropriated as shown in the Consolidated Budget, the documents attached hereto and incorporated for reference as Attachments A, B, C, D, E, F and G establishing a Consolidated Budget of \$95,203,643 consisting of the General Fund of \$37,959,835; the Hospitality Tax Fund of \$8,095,222; the Local Accommodations Tax Fund of \$2,213,719; the Stormwater Fund of \$5,190,332; the Capital Improvements Program Fund of \$30,901,490; and the Debt Service Fund of \$10,843,045.

SECTION 2. ESTABLISHMENT OF PROPERTY TAX LEVY.

A tax to cover the period from July 1, 2025, through June 30, 2026, inclusive, for the sums and in the manner hereinafter mentioned, is and shall be levied, collected, and paid into the Treasury of the Town of Bluffton for its uses at a rate of mills on assessed value of real estate and personal property of every description in the Town of Bluffton, except such property as is exempt from taxation under the United States Constitution and laws of the State of South Carolina. Said tax levy shall be collected by Beaufort County Treasurer and paid into the County Treasury for the credit of the Town of Bluffton for its corporate purposes a general fund levy of 34.3 mills and a debt service fund levy of 1.7 mills for at a total levy of 36.0 mills. However, Council reserves the right to modify these millage rates at its August 12, 2025 Council meeting.

SECTION 3. ESTABLISHMENT OF A MASTER FEE SCHEDULE.

A Master Fee Schedule listing all fees charged by the Town for Fiscal Year 2026 is included and incorporated for reference as Attachment H.

SECTION 4. OUTSTANDING BALANCE APPROPRIATION AND ENCUMBRANCES.

The unobligated balance remaining from the prior fiscal year hereby remains in the fund and will be available for Fiscal Year 2026 appropriations.

Fiscal Year 2025 encumbrances of the Fund Balance will be provided for through a subsequent amendment of this budget ordinance to increase the funds from previous years and increase the appropriated budget expenditures.

SECTION 5. TRANSFER OF FUNDS AND AMENDMENTS.

The Town Manager or his designee is authorized to transfer any sum from one budget line item to another or from one department or division to another provided that no such transfer be made from one fund to another fund, conflict with any existing Bond Ordinance, or conflict with any previously adopted policy of Council. Changes or amendments that alter the total expenditures of any fund must be approved by Council.

SECTION 6. CONTRACTS.

The Town Manager or his designee is authorized to execute contracts on behalf of the Town within budgeted amounts. Contract amounts greater than that budgeted shall be subject to Council approval. All contracts greater than \$200,000 shall be subject to Council approval.

SECTION 7. RATE OF EXPENDITURES.

The Town Manager shall control the rate of expenditures within the Consolidated Budget so as not to exceed the amount of funds on hand. Any proposed tax and/or revenue anticipation notes shall be subject to specific Council approval prior to issuance.

SECTION 8. RESERVE FUNDS.

The following Designated Reserve Funds are established and fully funded:

Emergency Recovery Fund – This reserve shall be funded at an amount equal to or greater than fifteen (15) percent of the current fiscal year consolidated expenditure budget. For Fiscal Year 2026, this amount is established at \$10,469,449.

Capital Asset Reserve Fund – This reserve shall be funded annually by 50% of the total annual depreciation expense up to a maximum total reserve of the most recent five years of depreciation. For Fiscal Year 2026, the estimated contribution is \$824,727.

SECTION 9. COMPENSATION OF COUNCILMEMBERS

The mayor and councilmembers shall receive an annual compensation increase. The mayor compensation will increase from \$16,500 to \$25,000 and councilmember compensation will increase from \$11,000 to \$17,000. The last increase in compensation was approved in Fiscal Year 2025.

Pursuant to S.C. Code 1976, 5-7-170, this compensation change shall not go into effect until the commencement date of the terms of two or more members of town council elected at the next general election following the adoption of this section.

Participation in the retirement and health insurance plans remain the same.

SECTION 10. SEVERABILITY.

Should any section, phrase, sentence, or portion of this Ordinance be found invalid by a court or competent jurisdiction, such finding shall not invalidate the remaining portions of this Ordinance.

SECTION 11. EFFECTIVE DATE.

This Ordinance shall be effective on July 1, 2025.

PASSED, APPROVED, AND ADOPTED BY THE COUNCIL FOR THE TOWN OF BLUFFTON ON THIS _____ DAY OF _____, 2025.

Larry Toomer, Mayor

ATTEST:

Marcia Hunter, Town Clerk

Attachments:

- A. General Fund Budget
- B. Hospitality Tax Fund Budget
- C. Local Accommodations Tax Fund Budget
- D. Stormwater Fund Budget
- E. Capital Improvement Program Fund Budget
- F. Debt Service Fund Budget
- G. Consolidated Budget
- H. Master Fee Schedule

First Reading: May 13, 2025

Public Hearing and Second and Final Reading: June 10, 2025