



BUDGET WORKSHOP

Town Council Chambers, Moncks Corner Municipal
Complex, 118 Carolina Avenue
WEDNESDAY, AUGUST 13, 2025 at 1:00 PM

MINUTES

CALL TO ORDER

The Budget Workshop was called to order by Mayor Thomas J. Hamilton, Jr. at 1:00 p.m.

Present:

Mayor Thomas J. Hamilton, Jr.
Mayor Pro-Tem David A. Dennis, Jr.
Council Member DeWayne G. Kitts
Council Member James N. Law, Jr.
Council Member Latorie S. Lloyd
Council Member Chadwick D. Sweatman
Council Member James B. Ware, III

Staff Present:

Jeffrey V. Lord, Town Administrator
Marilyn M. Baker, Administrative Services Director/Clerk to Council
Justine H. Lovell, Finance Director

AGENDA ITEMS

1. **Discussion:** FY 2026 Budget
Administrator Lord presented a proposed budget for Council's consideration.

Revenue increase proposals:

- **Sanitation Fees:**
Staff recommended an increase of \$8.08 per year to the sanitation fees, raising the total from \$166.92 per year to \$175.00 per year on the property tax bills. The Justification for the increase is to begin preparing for the future replacement of the Town's three garbage trucks, which are currently five years old. The estimated \$55,000 in additional revenue generated by the fee adjustment would be sufficient to cover the debt service for the purchase of a new garbage truck. After discussion, the majority of Council supported the fee increase as presented. Council Member Law opposed the increase.
- **Stormwater:**
Staff recommended an increase of \$30 per year for storm water fees on the property tax bills. Fees would increase annually to \$66 from the current fees of \$36 per single family residential and all non-residential property fees at \$36 ERU. This increase would provide the local matching funds needed for a STAG (State

and Tribal Assistance Grant) and NRCS Grant (Natural Resources Conservation Service), which would help pay for critical Stormwater improvement projects and the purchase of a Minzi-Muck, a machine used to clean and maintain drainage systems. After some discussion, the consensus of Council was to move forward with the fee increase.

Land Development Applications:

- **Site Plan:**

The Town currently doesn't charge for site plan applications. This process can take several revisions with each review, taking approximately 2 hours for staff to complete and an additional hour coordinating between different agencies and departments. Staff researched fees from other surrounding jurisdictions. Staff recommended the following, using a sliding scale:

- Less than an acre - \$100
- 1-5 acres - \$200
- 5 acres or more - \$300

This will generate approximately \$3,200 per year. After some discussion, the consensus of Council was to impose the new fees for site plan applications as recommended by staff.

- **Preliminary Plat:**

The Town currently does not charge for preliminary plat applications. This process can take several revisions with each review, taking approximately 2 hours for staff to complete and an additional hour coordinating between different agencies and departments. Staff researched fees from surrounding jurisdictions. All jurisdictions use a sliding scale based on acreage of the disturbance area of a preliminary plat. Staff recommended the following sliding scale.

- less than 4 lots - \$100
- 4 lots or more - \$200 for the first 4 lots plus \$10 per lot over 4

This will help cover expenses and will increase revenue by approximately \$3200 based on an estimated 16 preliminary plats per year. The consensus of Council was to impose the new fees for preliminary plats as recommended by staff.

- **Final Plat:**

The Town currently does not charge for final plat applications. This process can take approximately an hour for staff to complete and an additional hour ensuring all required improvements such as sidewalks, street signs, etc. and financial guarantees are in place. Staff recommended the following fees:

- \$50 – Final Plat Fee

Imposing the fee will generate approximately \$500 based on an estimated 10 final plats per year. The consensus of Council was to impose the new fee as recommended by staff.

- **Exempt Plat:**

The Town currently does not charge a fee for exempt plat applications. This process can take approximately half an hour for staff to complete. Staff researched fees from surrounding jurisdictions. Staff recommend the following:

- \$25 – Exempt Plat

Implementing this fee will help cover expenses and will increase revenue by approximately \$250 based on 10 per year. The consensus of Council was to impose the new fees for Exempt plats.

Board Action Applications:

- **Zoning Map Amendments/Re-zoning:**

The Town currently does not charge for re-zoning applications. Staff researched fees from other nearby jurisdictions. Staff recommended adding fees for straight zoning requests in the amount of \$150, conditional zoning requests in the amount of \$300 and planned zoning requests in the amount of \$700. After some discussion the consensus of Council was to impose fees only for the following:

- Conditional Zoning - \$300
- Planned Development Zoning - \$700

- **Development Agreement:**

Currently the Town does not charge a fee for review of development agreements. Development agreements are required for any project over 25 acres. These agreements typically involve multiple rounds of negotiation, often in consultation with legal counsel, and can extend over several months. The process requires a significant investment of staff time to ensure the terms are favorable and aligned with the Town's interests. As such, the Town will begin assessing the following fees to offset the administrative and legal resources required to facilitate these agreements:

- Development Agreement - \$500

Recreation:

- **Christmas Parade Entry Fees:**

The current fee for Christmas Parade Entry is \$10 per spot. Due to rising costs associated with organizing and hosting the event, staff recommended an adjustment to the fee structure to better support parade operations and ensure their continued success. Council reached consensus to increase the fee to \$50 per spot.

- **Summer Camps:**

Currently the fee for summer camps is \$100 for a 5-day camp from 8 a.m. – 4 p.m., with a maximum of 30 campers. The program includes 5–6 instructors daily, snacks, crafts, and special activities. On Fridays, campers enjoy pizza, Kona Ice, and a water slide as part of Water Day. Due to rising operational costs, staff recommended increasing the fee to \$150. Council reached consensus to approve the increase as recommended.

- **Basketball Camp:**

Currently basketball camp is offered at no cost to the participant, Monday – Thursday from 8 a.m. – 12 p.m. with an in-house registration free of charge. To help offset staffing expenses, staff recommend implementing a minimum fee of \$50 per week.

Council Member Kitts expressed concern that many of the children who attend may not be able to afford a fee, potentially reducing the number of children who would benefit from the program. He emphasized that the camp provides a valuable outlet during the summer months, offering structure, engagement, and safe environment for young people who might otherwise lack access to organized activities. He urged Council to consider maintaining the no-cost structure to ensure continued access for all children.

Following discussion, Council reached consensus to continue offering the camp free of charge as a community service.

- **Recreation Fees:**

The current participation fee is \$35 for in-town residents and \$85 for out-of-town residents. The average cost per child is approximately \$56, which includes \$14 for a shirt, \$12 for a hat, and \$30 for officiating. This figure does not account for additional program expenses such as field supervisors, trophies, lighting, practice equipment, coach jerseys, and other materials.

Team sponsorships are currently set at \$250, which helps offset costs not covered by individual participation fees.

It is estimated that 40% of participants are in-town residents, while 60% reside outside town limits.

Following discussion, a majority of Council members agreed to maintain the \$35 fee for in-town residents and increase the out-of-town fee to \$100. Council Member Kitts opposed the fee adjustment.

- **Football and Cheer Fees:**

The current participation fee is \$35 for in-town residents and \$85 for out-of-town residents. Due to the rising cost of uniforms and pom poms, staff recommended increasing the registration fees by \$25 for football players and \$15 for cheer. After some discussion, the consensus of Council was to charge \$35 for in-town residents and \$100 for out-of-town residents.

- **Sponsorship for Teams and Signage:**

Following discussion, Council agreed by consensus to retain the existing fees for team sponsorships and signage.

- **Facility Rentals:**

Council discussed staff's concerns about managing the current rate structure, which charges residents significantly less than non-residents. The system is difficult to enforce, especially with online reservations requiring residency verification. Staff noted frequent issues with non-residents using in-town addresses or having residents' rent on their behalf, making the policy both time-consuming and easily circumvented.

To streamline the process and reduce administrative burden, it was recommended that the fee differential be eliminated. After some discussion the consensus was to set the rental rates for the Train Depot at \$400 for full-day use Monday through Thursday, and \$800 per day for Friday through Sunday and eliminate half-day rentals. Rental rates for the Market Pavilion will be \$300 per day.

- **Alcohol Policy for Rentals:**

Currently renters are allowed to have alcohol served at their events if they hire an officer to be present during the event. The system to schedule an officer is a cumbersome process. Also, there is a very small percentage of rentals with that choose this option. Eliminating alcohol use lowers the Town's liability and will simplify the rental process, along with the newly adopted standardized flat-rate system. The consensus of Council was to eliminate alcohol use for all Town facilities.

- **Depot Deposit:**

The rental deposit will increase from \$100 to \$200 per rental.

- **New Park Facilities:**

Due to the excessive use of our new park facilities, staff recommended implementing rental fees for Harmony and Lacey Parks for private parties. After some discussion, the consensus was to monitor usage trends and rental activity over the coming months before making any decisions regarding fee implementation.

Police Off Duty:

- **Off Duty Employment Rates for Police Officers:**

Currently the rate for off-duty employment is \$45 per hour. Staff recommended the following fee structure to keep in line with rising personnel costs and what the Berkeley County Sheriff's Department is charging.

- \$55 per hour for officers
- \$65 per hour for holidays and short notice events for officers. (Short notice is any off-duty request with less than 48 hours' notice).
- \$60 per hour for Supervisors when more than 3 officers are needed to the event.
- \$70 per hour for Supervisors on premium days (New Years Eve, New Years Day, Memorial Day Weekend, 4th of July, Labor Day Weekend, Thanksgiving Day, Christmas Eve, Christmas Day) and short notice events (Short notice is any off-duty request with less than 48 hours' notice).
- \$75 per hour for Command Staff when eight or more officers are present.
- All requests will include a minimum of 2 hours of pay for all events that are shorter than 2 hours. A supervisor will be required for every three officers making the 4th position a supervisor position. When events have more than 2 supervisors, the 9th position will require a Command Staff member to oversee the event operations.
- Rates do not reflect fees (15%) assessed by Off Duty Solutions.

Tax Millage:

- **Millage Rate Discussion:**

The Town currently levies a millage rate of 70.8 mills for general operations and an additional 3 mills dedicated to outstanding bonds and debt service. In accordance with South Carolina Code of Laws §6-1-320, the South Carolina Revenue and Fiscal Affairs Office annually determine the allowable increase in the municipal millage rate for general operating purposes. This calculation is based on a formula that incorporates the Consumer Price Index (CPI) and population growth.

State law also grants Council the authority to implement millage rate increases within a three-year retrospective window. Council reached a consensus not to pursue an increase in the millage rate.

Initiatives/Capital Purchases:

- **Cost of Living Increase:**

Staff recommended a 3% cost of living increase in addition to a 2% merit increase. Administrator Lord explained that the 3% COLA would be implemented at the beginning of the fiscal year if funding is available. 2% of salaries is set aside for merit increases. The employees could receive 0 to 5% merit increase based on performance. Several members of Council expressed concerns of salaries being high. Administrator Lord explained that we do not need to get too far behind our surrounding municipalities and county governments. Our salaries need to be attractive for potential applicants to draw new people in when a vacancy occurs.

Executive Session:

Council Member Kitts requested that Council go into executive session to further discuss salaries.

Motion was made by Council Member Kitts to go into executive session to further discuss salaries. Motion was seconded by Council Member Sweatman and approved unanimously as follows:

Voting Yea: Mayor Hamilton, Mayor Pro-Tem Dennis, Council Member Kitts, Council Member Law, Council Member Lloyd, Council Member Sweatman, Council Member Ware.

Out of Executive Session and Reconvene to the Regular Meeting:

Motion was made by Council Member Law to come out of executive session and reconvene to the Budget Workshop. Motion was seconded by Council Member Sweatman and approved unanimously as follows.

Voting Yea: Mayor Hamilton, Mayor Pro-Tem Dennis, Council Member Kitts, Council Member Law, Council Member Lloyd, Council Member Sweatman, Council Member Ware.

Mayor Hamilton announced that no action was taken during executive session. The consensus was to incorporate the 3% Cola and merit in the budget.

Council reviewed the following Capital requests:

- **Administration:**

- Replacement vehicle \$40,000 – Existing vehicle will be surplus.

- **Community Development:**

- 2 replacement vehicles/Upfit \$70,000 – 1 existing vehicle will be surplus, and the other will be transferred to Public Service.
- SS4A Grant – traffic study - \$240,000 with a \$60,000 match
- UDO (Unified Development Ordinance) \$80,000

- **Fire Department:**

- Replacement vehicle/Upfit for Chief \$107,000. The existing Chief vehicle will be used by Battalion Chief and/or the CRR Officer
- UTV upfit acquired through federal surplus - \$15,000
- Retrofit 1995/2004 Spartan Engine into a reserve service truck (Backup ladder) -- \$12,000
- Bunker Gear Replacement (6 sets) - \$40,000
- Fire Extinguisher Training Prop - \$22,750

- **IT Department:**

- New computer servers - \$55,000

- **Police Department:**

- 5 new positions – SRO Sgt, Training Sgt, CID Sgt, Traffic Officer, Evidence Clerk.
- Modular Vehicle Barriers (Grant Dependent) \$280,967
- Traffic Speed Sign - \$30,000
- 5 New marked Police Vehicles/Upfit \$577,753 - 1 new vehicle and 4 replacements.
- 1 Motorcycle/Upfit - \$66,014
- Outside storage - \$45,500
- 2 SRO Vehicles/Upfit \$231,101 - 1 new and 1 replacement

- **Public Service:**

- (a) Grounds**

- Facility Maintenance – 1 Custodian
 - Concession stands appliances - \$20,000
 - New lights for Youth Fields football field and field 2 - \$44,500
 - Fence replacement at Youth Fields - \$9,400
 - Vericutter - \$12,100
 - Stand on Blower - \$13,500
 - Portable Light Tower - \$14,000
 - Front End Loader - \$103,000

- (b) Storm Water**

- Minzi Muck - \$470,000 (Storm Water Fund)

- (c) Sanitation**

- 1 new position – Refuse Collector

- **Recreation:**

- Temp workers raise hourly to \$15.00 hr.
- Recondition all 4 fields - \$70,000

- **Wellness Center:**

- Professional Services - \$290,000

- **Abatement Fund:**

- Traffic Calming Program - \$30,000

- **Unbudgeted Items – all were not funded**

- 3 new Battalion Chiefs - \$362,757
- Train Notification System - \$75,000
- Recreation Complex Sign - \$130,000
- Security Services for Recreation Complex - \$75,000

ADJOURNMENT

Motion was made by Council Member Sweatman, seconded by Council Member Kitts to adjourn the Budget Workshop of Council. Motion was approved unanimously as follows.

Voting Yea: Mayor Hamilton, Mayor Pro-Tem Dennis, Council Member Kitts, Council Member Law, Council Member Lloyd, Council Member Sweatman, Council Member Ware

The meeting was adjourned at 6:10 p.m.

A copy of this meeting's agenda was e-mailed to the Post and Courier, The Berkeley Independent, Live 5 News, Channel 4, Channel 2, and The News Journal Scene. As required, the agenda was posted on the Municipal Complex bulletin board and the Town Website at least 24 hours prior to the meeting.

Minutes Approved and Adopted:

Marilyn M. Baker/Clerk to Council

September 16, 2025

DATE