CITY OF DARLINGTON
REGULAR CITY COUNCIL MEETING HELD IN THE OLD COUNCIL CHAMBERS LOCATED AT
400 PEARL STREET, DARLINGTON, SC
TUESDAY JUNE 3, 2025 - AT 6:00 PM

PRESENT AT THE MEETING:
Mayor Curtis Boyd, City Manager Lenessa Hawkins, Councilpersons Baccus, Segars, McRavin, Milling, Gardner, and Reed. Also present was Hunter Thomas, Steve Abbott, Gloria Hines, Rose Pruitt, Anna DeWitt, Linwood Epps, Minister Barbara Bull, Katrienne Ham, Ernestine Lyde, Clarence Chapman, Joyce Thomas, James Cooper, Floyd Jackson, City Attorney Kevin Etheridge, and others.

Mr. Stephan Drew from the News and Press was present at the meeting.

Invocation was by Minister Barbara Bull from St. Matthews United Church followed by the Pledge of Allegiance

APPROVAL OF MINUTES
Councilwoman Angela McRavin made a motion to approve the minutes of our regular city council meeting on May 6, 2025. Councilwoman Elaine Reed seconded the motion. Councilpersons Milling, Segars, Gardner, Baccus and Mayor Boyd voted in favor of the motion.

Councilwoman Angela McRavin made a motion to approve the minutes from the City Council Workshop meeting on May 13, 2025. Councilwoman Elaine Reed seconded the motion. Councilpersons Milling, Segars, Gardner, Baccus and Mayor Boyd voted in favor of the motion.

Councilwoman Angela McRavin made a motion to approve the minutes of the City Council Workshop meeting on May 20, 2025. Councilpersons Milling, Segars, Gardner, Baccus and Mayor Boyd voted in favor of the motion.

CITIZENS WISHING TO APPEAR BEFORE COUNCIL
Ms. Katrienne Ham, who lives at 133 Jefferson Street, said as of yesterday she went to the water department to speak to someone about her sink and bathtub backing up. She said this is an ongoing thing. Something is wrong with the lines because everybody on that street is having problems. Mrs. Ham said they are not getting the service they are entitled to. She said she was downtown and from there down Cashua Street it looks beautiful, not even a piece of paper or a cigarette butt is on the ground, but when you get to my side of town, it's a different story. Mrs. Ham said there's paper, and cans everywhere and people's property is growing up. If they were giving out letters and sending them out to these people informing them about their property,

maybe something could get done. Mrs. Ham said, “I have been up here ever since Mr. Garland left and that’s been about seven years before he left and I’m still singing the same song.” She said now you all want us to pay for the pipes because they have lead in them. She said lead has been in those pipes for over two hundred years. She said about two or three months ago. You all had a meeting on N. Main Street, and I stood up and talked about the eyesore concerning the house that burned down around the corner from where I live. The city manager said that she would get in touch with the lady that owns the property, and she would get back with me. I have not heard from her yet.

Ms. Ernestine Lyde who lives at 108 Fleming Street said, “Strong Mayor”, we do not need a ruler or dictator over the City of Darlington. What we need is to put all the citizens of Darlington as one instead of separation. She said money has been spent on unnecessary purchases. For example, $700,000 for the land in Hartsville, which could have been used to change the water pipes in the City of Darlington. Ms. Lyde said, In February of this year, I was mailed a certified letter saying that I had safe drinking water. Now, in June I'm getting a letter saying that it is not. I'm trying to understand why that is, because all this time we’ve been telling you all that the water is dirty, and the pressure is low. She said, “And then for me to get a letter to say that it was good water, but here it is 3 months later, and you send me a letter saying that the pipes need to be changed. Ms. Lyde said, “And I appreciate the guys; they came and changed my meter, but during that process when they changed that meter, the pipe was so bad, they said I was lucky I was getting any water at all. She said, “And I’ve been coming here a long time with this. Ms. Lyde said, “Do you think the senior citizens can afford to change their pipes. She said, No.” Instead of investing in those $5.3 million dollars that you all spent on Blue Street, it should have been spent on changing some of the pipes for the citizens of Darlington. The garbage not being collected just didn’t start because of the new manager; it’s been an ongoing problem. The previous city manager gave out unnecessary raises. If we rely on the mayor to hire or fire, etc. One person over finances, hiring or firing, that’s a dictatorship, not a democracy. She said, “Citizens of Darlington it’s time to become more active in decision making.

Clarence Chapman thanked the mayor and council for their service to the community and to the citizens and hopefully thank you for your service to the future. Mr. Chapman said I want to thank you for appointing me to the Planning Commission. Hopefully one day they will meet so we can carry on with the business of the City of Darlington. Mr. Chapman said, “I want to talk to you about the pipes. He said his neighbor called out to him this morning while he was getting ready for work, yelling for him to come outside and take a look at what was happening. He said next to her house sewage was coming out and you could see toilet paper and everything coming up out of the street. Mr. Chapman said his neighbor told him she had already been here and made a complaint. Mr. Chapman said he works for Darlington County, so he was confused that his neighbor came to him. He said his neighbor came to someone who she knew worked in government expecting something to be done. Mr. Chapman said he told his neighbor he would go to city council and talk to folk, and he will be persistent. He said later on he got a call that the trash / recycling wasn’t picked up today. He said the Citizen expected something to be done, and they are calling somebody in government when there’s a number of people who are in charge of getting that done. Mr. Chapman said people are calling him about things not being

done in our community. He said something has to be done and that's all they are asking. Councilwoman Baccus asked which house had the sewer problem and he said 208 Chestnut Street.

Mr. Floyd Jackson brought a bottle of water to the meeting and said that's what comes out of his faucet at least twice a week. He also had pictures. Mr. Jackson lives at 204 Pine Street. Mr. Jackson said, "As the mayor of the city, I don't think the mayor should have full control. Mr. Jackson said, you said things would work more efficiently, so I'm trying to figure out if the employees and the heads of these departments …… so if the heads of the departments are going to be …. You're going to be over the heads of the department, and these guys are going to be like second citizens, how is that going to make the city run efficiently? If everyone can't agree here, and if they don't agree, what's their alternative? The alternative is for you to say OK it's my decision that we go ahead and do what we have to do. We already have one of those people in Washington and we've seen how that has worked out. Mr. Jackson said when people start talking about certain things about my race, my people or that we are this and we are that you are absolutely wrong because we believe. If you look at history, you will see that we don't make drugs and we don't make guns, yet they always find a way into our neighborhoods.

Mrs. Joyce Thomas said she has served on the Darlington County Council for three terms now and she is very pleased to be of service to the people of Darlington County. Mrs. Thomas said the County of Darlington has applied for a Community Service Block Grant. She said it is especially for South Darlington and the grant has already been approved. She said she is hoping they will have everything in place by November 1st. She said the Grant is for $8.5 million dollars and it might be a little more. She said the Grant is from the office of resiliency.

Boards & Commission Appointments

Councilwoman Reed made a motion to appoint Ms. Heather Tanner to the Historic Landmarks Commission. Councilman Milling seconded the motion. Councilpersons McRavin, Milling, Segars, Baccus and Mayor Boyd voted in favor of the motion.

Community Connections Update - Mark Face (Was not present)

Splash Pad update - Lee Andrews (Was not present) Ms. Hawkins said due to a previous splashpad or pool inspection the South Carolina DES group and local group from the state will be here on Monday at 10 AM to do the final inspection on the splash pad. There was an additional $2,500 on top of the report that Mrs. Bryant gave you formerly for expenses for the splash pad. With that final inspection, we would have completed everything, including the issues that were brought by the engineer. Gandy Pool Update - Councilwoman McRavin said she had an opportunity to attend "Coffee with the COG" and they were speaking about grants and grant opportunities. There is a brand-new Grant out there and it's a Southeast Crescent Grant and it can be coupled and used with a PARD Grant. She said the turnaround time is short. That was on Thursday, and you have to submit a letter of intent by the following Tuesday in order to apply for these funds. Councilwoman McRavin said, our city manager was there as well, and we'd already had that information submitted to us for the Gandy pool. There was a lot of discussion at

our last meeting about the $12,500 that we had to pay for the PARD grant. these funds If we are awarded could actually be used to pay that $12,500 so we could recoup all of our money, and all of the original plans that representative Williams had could potentially get done. Councilwoman McRavin said, “I requested that she go ahead and submit that since we are on a tight schedule. She said it was the only thing that we had that was complete that we could get in in a couple of days. She said that it has been submitted and hopefully we can get that grant, which is $250,000. This is only the second time that this grant will be awarded. Councilwoman McRavin said that has been submitted, and I requested that she do that because I couldn’t allow us to miss that opportunity of potentially getting that money. I would trust that no one here would have an issue with that since it would be a total recoup, and nothing that we’re having to spend out of pocket. Councilman Milling asked about the approval time on knowing whether or not we’ll get the grant. Ms. Hawkins said it could be several months before we hear anything. She said the letter sent was a “Letter of Intent.” They must approve us to even apply, but you did have to have somewhat of a shovel ready project ready to go. Ms. Hawkins said we’re competing with the Southeast. She said I think we did a pretty good job. I think they deliberate and see what the need is and what we’re asking for and then they give us an opportunity to apply and then there’s another waiting time for that.

Housing Incentive Program - Mayor Curtis Boyd

Mayor Boyd said what you asked for the last time was to add on the bottom paragraph the following: The City of Darlington along with verification that the property is being used as a primary residence and we put in parentheses (4% tax appraisal), because when they check with the county five or ten years from now it could go to five or six percent. Mayor Boyd asked if this has to be an ordinance or a resolution. Kevin Etheridge confirmed that it has to be written as an ordinance and will put it in ordinance form for Council. Councilman Milling asked City Attorney Etheridge, if they like the ordinance can they have first reading in “name only” tonight if it’s down here as housing incentive program Kevin Etheridge said, “Yes Sir.” **Councilman Gardner made a motion to approve the City of Darlington Housing Incentive Program. Councilwoman Reed seconded the motion. Councilpersons Milling, McRavin, Segars, Baccus and Mayor Boyd voted in favor of the motion.** City Attorney Kevin Etheridge is to put in an ordinance form for the council.

FY 25-26 Budget Overview & Discussion - City Manager Hawkins

Ms. Hawkins passed out copies of the proposed 25-26 budget. Ms. Hawkins said the Planning/Economic Development department has about a $312,000 budget. She said, “As city manager I decided not to fill that position. My hope was that we could save about $200,000 in that department so we could buy a new sanitation truck”. I’m looking at it and we are spending over and above what we are bringing in. She said over the years water and sewer has not participated in certain direct services that are offered to water and sewer. She said in her proposal, the $50,000 that they talked about this year to start building an operations center, they want to get a contractor to do that. They said they can do the inside of the building, but a contractor might kill the $100,000 that we put aside, but I’ll leave it to them to decide. Ms. Hawkins told the council if they had not looked in that building, she implored them to do so and see why they need a new operations center that’s heated and has a heated shower, break

room, etc. Ms. Hawkins said on the last page of the water & sewer budget it shows general fund direct services come to $146,078 which is management, council, AP services, HR, and payroll. Ms. Hawkins said," Those services, my services, the council services, are not shared by the water and sewer fund. Traditionally, you spread that to whichever fund benefits from it, so we are going to correct that. We have checked it over with the CPA. She said what I want to do with that is get that sanitation truck but it's still not enough. She said she wants to get a micro excavator for the water and sewer department with a trailer to pull it. They need a boom truck which will take the pump out of the pump station so they can service it with preventative maintenance. We don't have the ability to do that. We would have to hire somebody to do that. They can find a micro excavator for $55,000 and the trailer is about $20,000, so we are going to try to do that in this year's budget and get the boom truck next year. When we get the materials that they ask for they can do a lot more on their own. The contractor we have working on Cashua, Oak and North Streets has finally got through all of the root balls that were in that line. Reservoir Street will be next; Magnolia Street will be starting in July in the next budget year. Ms. Hawkins said Mr. Michael Morris has suggested increasing the administrative fee by $2.50. She said that would be a $2.50 increase on water and a $2.50 increase on sewer. So that's $5.00 more each month on residential and $5.00 more on commercial. Some members of the audience commented about the increase. Ms. Hawkins said, "I don't believe in giving you any surprises. If they approve the rate increase, we will make sure you know in advance." Councilman Milling asked, "If it's not approved, what does that do to the budget for water and sewer? Ms. Hawkins said, "I think we can still make it work. He said he asked for half of $1 million for sewer line repairs this year; we did approximately $230,000. I believe that when they get these capital items, they can do a lot more and get those things replaced. Mayor Boyd asked how much is the increase expected to bring in? Ms. Hawkins said, basically, these conversations came up because water was trailing its revenue for this current year. Councilman Gardner had a conversation with a couple of the citizens. Ms. Hawkins went over the general fund budget. She said many of the folks in admin here at city hall said, "We don't have overtime, but it is because I see it. Ms. Hawkins said she has some contracts she wants to extend for a Boards Administrator and possibly a Grants /Assistant to her, but they would be contracts to handle grants for water & sewer, the project management to maybe split up some of the departments and be like an advisor to her. She said I won't say who that is or who I'm thinking it might be, but it is someone you all are familiar with. Ms. Hawkins continued to go over the general fund budget. She told council if they give her the OK, she would love to take $146,000 from water for direct services. Ms. Hawkins said she did call Mr. Zeigler. He will not be able to come until July 1, but we did talk about developing all the revenues and he will be delighted to come to talk to you all about that. She told the council she would type it up and email what they discussed. At the Coffee with the COG, I think we might take a playbook out of the Town of Cheraw. They have a set of funds set aside for business owners to come downtown. She told the council she would like for them to look online and look at what they are doing. She said if we can squeeze out some money from here, I would like the council to consider that and help our owners downtown to revitalize their property. Ms. Hawkins said no new projects if it's not fully funded from outside sources because we just do not have the funds. There has traditionally been a large write off of utility bills so we're going to look at a new approach to getting people who left here with money owed to the city.

Reminders

Friday June 13, 2025, The Final Community Concert Series on Public Square from 6:00 pm - 9:00 pm

Monday June 16, 2025, Registration begins for the 2025 MASC Annual Meeting in Hilton Head, SC

Tuesday June 17, 2025, at 6:00 PM, Public Hearing for FY 25-26 Budget & Special Meeting/Workshop

Thursday June 19, 2025, City Offices will be closed for the Juneteenth Holiday

Saturday June 28, 2025, Freedom Fest beginning at 4:00 PM

Tuesday July 1, 2025, Regular City Council meeting 6:00 PM

Friday, July 4, 2025, City Offices will be closed for Independence Day

Executive Session

In accordance with SC Code 30 – 4–70, (b) (2) Discussion of negotiations incident to propose contractual arrangements and propose sale or purchase a property, the receipt of legal advice, where the legal advice relates to a pending, threatened, or potential claim, or other matters covered by the attorney, client privilege, settlement of legal claims, or the position of the public agency, and other adversaries situations involving the assertion against the agency of a claim. ***(The council may act following the Executive Session)***

Councilman Gardner made a motion to go into executive session at 7:29 pm. Councilwoman Reed seconded the motion. Councilpersons Milling, McRavin, Segars, Baccus and Mayor Boyd voted in favor of the motion.

Councilman Gardner made a motion to end the executive session at 8:04 pm. Councilman Milling seconded the motion. All council members voted in favor of ending the executive session.

Adjournment

Upon motion of Councilman Milling, seconded by Councilwoman McRavin the meeting adjourned at 8:07 PM. All approved the motion to adjourn the meeting.

Mayor

ATTEST:

Clerk & Treasurer