CITY OF DARLINGTON
REGULAR CITY COUNCIL MEETING HELD IN THE OLD COUNCIL CHAMBERS LOCATED AT
400 PEARL STREET, DARLINGTON, SC
WEDNESDAY NOVEMBER 5, 2025 - AT 6:00 PM

PRESENT AT THE MEETING:
Mayor Curtis Boyd, City Manager Lenessa Hawkins, Councilpersons Baccus, McRavin, Gardner, Reed, Milling, and Segars. Also present was Hunter Thomas, Steve Abbott, Sean Odom, Anna DeWitt, Ruth Dickey, Clarence Chapman, Don Blakney, Katrienne Ham, Ernestine Lyde, Herman Chapman, Mr. Brady Sanford, and others.

News Media Present: Ms. Alexis Cooper with WPDE TV15 and Mr. Stephan Drew with the News & Press.

Invocation was by Mayor Curtis Boyd followed by the Pledge of Allegiance.

Mayor Boyd said Chief Davis asked him to amend the agenda because he has a purchase that he would like to make along with the canine discussion in Item #3. **Council John Milling made a motion to amend Item #3 under new business to allow Chief Jimmy Davis to include in his discussion the purchase of certain equipment. Councilman John Segars seconded the motion. Councilpersons Gardner, McRavin, Reed, Baccus and Mayor Boyd voted in favor of the motion.**

APPROVAL OF MINUTES
Councilwoman McRavin made a motion to approve the minutes from the Regular City Council Meeting of Tuesday October 7th. She said there were a couple of typographical corrections that were very minute that the clerk is going to take care of. Councilwoman Elaine Reed seconded the motion. Councilpersons Gardner, Milling, Segars, Baccus and Mayor Boyd voted in favor of the motion.

Councilman Bryant Gardner made a motion to approve the Special Meeting / Work Session Minutes Tuesday October 21, 2025. Councilman John Segars seconded the motion. Councilpersons Milling, McRavin, Reed, Baccus, and Mayor Boyd voted in favor of the motion.

CITIZENS WISHING TO APPEAR BEFORE COUNCIL
Citizens may speak for up to 5 minutes. Maximum of 30 total minutes for public comments. *(Neither personal attacks nor disruptive behavior are allowed. Please sign in to be heard at this time)*

Mr. Clarence Chapman said he is not coming bearing gifts but asking for something. He said the Darlington County Office of Veteran Affairs will be having their Second Annual Christmas Toy Drive and he wanted to make the council aware of the efforts they are trying to make in this community for their veterans and their families. Mr. Chapman said his second item is we have our "city dump" and its right next door to him. He said there is a gentleman on Chestnut St. who's dumping stuff behind 211 Chestnut Street. And since he's dumping his stuff back there, other people have started dumping their stuff such as mattresses, appliances, etc. He said during the summertime he brought it up to codes enforcement …. I had two cousins working in codes enforcement. He said his cousin James Jett started working on it, but he's no longer there. He said the whole dump site is growing because they are seeing it and bringing stuff and dumping it there. He said another thing about it is it is twenty-five feet from a bus stop because right on the corner of Hickory & Chestnut Street is a bus stop. Mr. Chapman said I am a member of the Planning Commission and I've been to two Planning Commission meetings, just not in Darlington. He said if I'm missing something or not being notified or whatever, just please let me know because I would like for that big master plan book in my office to do something besides collecting dust. He thanked council for allowing him to address them.

Don Blakney congratulated those that won the recent election. He said the last meeting we had during the city council session was pertaining to streets that were supposed to be added to a list here in Darlington to be paved. He asked if we had gotten anything done about that. Has anything come up yet as far as any new streets …. have they come up yet which streets are going to be paved or not be paved? Mayor Boyd reminded Mr. Blakney that this is not for discussion. Just give us what you need, and someone will contact you back. Mr. Blakney said the truck that picks up the trees from the side of the road, we still have an issue with that on my street, the street behind me and the street in front. He said at the last meeting it was said the blue trash can was supposed to be picked up with the green trash can, but it's not being done. Mr. Blakney said, "I'm just saying what was said in the last city council meeting. It's not being done, and I just want to bring that to your attention. Councilman Milling said, "When you said issues with the cherry picker, was the issue that it's not being brought through your neighborhood. Mr. Blakney said, "It's not just my neighborhood. I don't look at it as my neighborhood. It's not being done around Darlington, period."

Sean Odom said he wanted to come back and comment on the special meeting. He said I think it was very untasteful that a chair of this branch would disrespect another council person, especially in her absence. She's an African American female and I'm not sure if it was done because she was absent or just to score political points, but I think our priorities are messed up on this council. Instead of focusing on attacking each other, it should be supplying the citizens with the trash truck, the cherry picker, South Darlington. When you drive through North Darlington you've got all these nice trees, all these nice houses. Sean Odom said, "When a city manager, a sitting city manager gives this council or any council a good and decent budget and she goes back and gives this council a plan to buy a new trash truck or any plan and a council decides, "no, we're not going to do it your way", I found that that is very disrespectful and very untasteful".

New Business

Annexation of Properties on Asbury Street – Mr. Brady Sanford & Michael Morris

(*Mr. Morris was not present at the meeting*) Mr. Brady Sanford said he is the property owner of three out of the five parcels that are subject to annexation. He said the goal is to eventually post annexation and build approximately 11 homes on the property and bring new growth to Darlington. Mr. Sanford said he has owned the property for about a year and a half. Mayor Boyd asked, "These three properties are yours and the other two are Sam Evans which has agreed to annex in also"? Mr. Sanford said, "That is my understanding." Councilman Gardner asked, "You own all of them except 032 & 034, is that correct"? Mr. Sanford said, "Correct." Mayor Boyd asked Mr. Sanford if 034 was Sam Evans' parcel also. Mr. Sanford said, "I own the first, middle and last." Mayor Boyd said Mr. Evans has agreed to annex in 034 & 032, so we just need to do a first reading on that and go through the process of posting it. Councilwoman McRavin asked Mr. Sanford if the three properties that he owns, he wants 11 houses on those. Mr. Sanford said, "Total. The plan is, one parcel will be four homes, the middle will be two and then the corner will be five. Councilwoman McRavin asked him if he is building these homes with the intent of selling them or will they be rental properties. Mr. Sanford said, "I am intending to sell them to a builder who will do them as built for sale. They will not be built for rent intended and there is nothing to stop an investor from buying them to then rent. However, it would be expected that they would be homeowners. The guesstimate cost would be somewhere between $200,000-$250,000. Mayor Boyd said we will do a first reading on it and then go through the process of posting it. He said everybody around the area would be sent a letter and signs have to be posted, and we'll do second reading after that. He said tonight will be First Reading. **Councilman Bryant Gardner made a motion to annex the properties on Asbury Street. Councilman John Segars seconded the motion.** Councilman Milling said, "I have no problem with it… Councilman Milling asked if the forms have been filled out for annexation…the process that we normally have. Has that been completed"? Mayor Boyd said, "My understanding is that it has to be done by the second reading." Councilman Milling asked Mr. Sanford if he has filed the petitions to come into the city"? Mr. Sandford said, "I followed all of the steps that the mayor asked me to. If there are additional forms, I will be happy to bring them to you at your next council meeting. Mr. Sanford said, "At this point, the plan was just conversational as well as saying that the goal was to bring these properties into the city. We need additional agreement from Sam Evans because you can only bring property into the city that is adjacent to the city. Councilwoman Reed said, "You said you followed all of the steps, so the other step that you have done has brought this to our attention and you've got the information. Mr. Sanford said, "Yes ma'am. Councilwoman Reed asked Mr. Sanford if there are other things he need to do before this is done. Councilman Milling said, "I think we need the annexation …. (others talking at the same time) and then an ordinance to actually have before us." Mayor Boyd said Michael said he could sign the papers tonight. Councilman Milling said, "I am tentatively in favor, but I just don't know that we are ready to do anything." Councilwoman McRavin said all annexations have to go through an ordinance and we don't have an ordinance in front of us to vote on. Councilwoman Baccus said, "And the way this is listed it doesn't even say a first reading for that property. It just says annexation of property and discussion." Councilman Gardner said, it sounds like we just need to …. He told Mr. Sanford to put his name on the top of the paper and sign it at the bottom, and we'll put it on the agenda for December. *(No vote was taken after the motion & second).*

First Reading of Water/Sewer Rate Increase for Outside City Residents Ordinance 2025-06 (City Manager Hawkins read the water/sewer rate increase ordinance) Councilman Milling asked about the missing ordinance number. Councilman Gardner made a motion to approve …. Council went to Item #3 while I went to get an ordinance number.

Discussion of Police Department Canine and Purchase of New Equipment - Police Chief Jimmy Davis

Chief Davis said, "Recently, due to career changes we lost our canine officers. He said our canine Chilli did not have a handler. The handler that Chilli was living with went to work for the sheriff's office and I asked that handler to look after Chilli because that is where the kennel was and that is where Chilli was living. I asked the handler to look after the dog until we figured out what the city was going to do. Since then, I have not had any officer to show interest in becoming a canine handler and working with the dog. In talking with the sheriff, the sheriff would like to take possession of Chilli and have an understanding that anytime we would need the canine services, the sheriff's office would send Chilli or whatever dog was working that day. Chief Davis said, the dog did cost money. There were investors and donations that some of the previous officers collected that purchased the dog, but in the amount that we collected, we have gone over that amount. Chief Davis said, to keep the dog with us and not use it and not having a handler, where are we going to house the dog and who's going to tend to it. Chief Davis said we won't get anything out of it. So, by the sheriff offering to adopt the dog it does give us the services of the dog. He said I don't want to give him the dog without your blessing because he is city property. Councilwoman Reed asked, "When you purchased the dog, did we have a handler? Chief Davis said, we had a handler at the time we purchased the dog, but the person that was handling the dog made a career change and moved on. We got another handler and then that person made a career change so right now I'm stuck without a handler, but with an expensive asset for the city. Councilwoman McRavin asked if they are willing to compensate us? Have you all spoken about a compensation package of some sort? Chief Davis said we have tossed it around, but the sheriff did not seem inclined to offer any compensation. Chief Davis said I can go back to try and twist his arm a little bit more, but he was not inclined at the time. Councilwoman Baccus asked, "Are we not ever going to get another handler? or if you hire somebody eventually as a handler for the dogs, would we be able to get the dog back"? Chief Davis said, I would say that the sheriff would be open to it; however, when the dog changes hands like that and it gets used to running with a particular person and to keep swapping it out the dog may not run as well. Councilman Gardner said, I kind of agree with that. If we're going to get pretty used to it, they are going to absorb the cost. Chief Davis said, it is a loss to the city and it is money that was given to us for a canine, but it's going to keep going and going. He said, "If I'm two years without a handler and it sits in a kennel for two years, it's lost everything." Councilman Milling said, our compensation anyhow would be an agreement with the sheriff that we would have access to the dog and the handler anytime we needed it. Chief Davis said, "Yes Sir." Councilman Milling asked Chief Davis if he could get that in writing and he said he is sure he can. Mayor Boyd said each time the canine is transferred to another handler there is the cost and the training of that person. Chief Davis said there is the cost of training the new handler. The dog is still going to remember what each smell is, but now you have to learn the dog

signals, and the dog has to learn your signals. There is always going to be a lag in service on both sides (the officer and the dog) until they get up to speed but there will be a cost with each person you train. **Councilman Bryant Gardner made a motion to approve the transfer of the Police Department's canine to the Darlington County Sheriff's Office. Councilman John Segars seconded the motion. Councilpersons Milling, McRavin, Reed, Baccus and Mayor Boyd approved the motion.** Chief Davis said he will have it in writing before the transfer takes effect.

Chief Davis said, “The current firearms that they are using have not reached their maximum age, but they are getting close and with technology advancing the way it is I would like to replace the weapons that we are currently running to almost identical, very similar, just newer. They have better optics and built-in for attached flashlights and new holsters. The police department currently has the money to purchase the weapons, and it would not affect the city’s budget. The overall state contracted cost of purchasing the guns with the optic sights, the holsters, along with the trade in of our old weapons is 32,505.57. The only additional cost would be ammunition for qualifications, but that is something we would have to do anyway. The question was asked where the funds would come from to pay for the firearms. Chief Davis said the funds would come from the Police Department Misc. Acct. where money comes into it from various sources. **Councilman Bryant Gardner made a motion to purchase the firearms & equipment for $32,505.57. Councilwoman Angela McRavin seconded the motion. Councilpersons Milling, Segars, Reed, Baccus, and Mayor Boyd voted in favor of the motion.**

(Back to Item #2) First Reading of Water/Sewer Rate Increase for Outside City Residents
Councilman Bryant Gardner made a motion to approve First Reading on Ordinance 2025-06 Water/Sewer Rate Increase for Outside City Residents. Councilwoman Elaine Reed seconded the motion. Councilpersons Milling, McRavin, Segars, Baccus and mayor Boyd voted in favor of the motion. Councilman Milling said it looks like we’ll be voting on Tuesday, December 2nd just note that we’ll have a public hearing for that as well.

City Manager’s Report – City Manager Hawkins
Ms. Hawkins said the new Building Official, Mr. Herman Chapman, will start tomorrow. The payment processing system that was requested in inspections is now on its way. The payroll processing system has been engaged with Paycor. Ms. Hawkins said, “As council directed, I spoke with the municipal law office who was used by the City of Hartsville, and they are willing to engage us and help you all with some of your economic development goals. I would like to know if you would agree or have any issue with signing the engagement letter and getting them the information that they need.” One of the citizens mentioned the streets and sanitation department yard debris and the other issue on Chestnut Street. Ms. Hawkins said I’ve already contacted the acting department head, and they’ll take care of it. She said we have been without CDL drivers for the cherry picker, but we have some great candidates that will be signed up soon. Ms. Hawkins said the third truck is not quite finished yet, but we hope to have it back in less than two weeks now. As far as the sanitation services and the RFP, we could not locate the one we did about five years ago so I will have to do one from scratch, but that should be out

within the next five to ten days. Ms. Hawkins said I do have some information that you all can consider as it relates to annexation requirements for new and upgraded utility connections. She told the council she would email the information to them so they could take a look at it. Ms. Hawkins said the bids came in for the Streetscape project (CDBG Downtown Streetscape Improvement Project). The winning bidder was Evans Pavement Services. She said we are going to be waiting on the funding agency to approve that. She said I was told that it would be done possibly by May. That particular project should be started and completed by May. Councilman Gardner asked, “The yard debris ...the trucks fine, it’s just the CDL issue”? Ms. Hawkins said, yes and time.

Executive Session

In accordance with S.C. Code 30-4-70
(a) A public body may hold a meeting that is closed to the public for one or more of the following reasons:
(2) Discussion of negotiations incident to proposed contractual arrangements and proposed sale or purchase of 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 in other adversary situations involving the assertion against the agency of a claim.
(The council may act following executive session)

Councilman Gardner excused himself from the meeting because of a conflict with first item to be discussed (signed conflict of interest form) ***Councilman Milling made a motion to go into executive session at 6:46 PM. Councilman Segars seconded the motion. All approved the motion.***

Councilwoman McRavin made a motion to end the executive session at 9:26 PM. Councilwoman Reed seconded the motion. All approved the motion.

(Back in Session

Reminders

Thursday November 6, 2025, Taste of Christmas sponsored by City Fire & Police Departments

Tuesday November 11, 2025, – Veteran’s Day, City Offices will be Closed.

Thursday November 27, 2025, & Friday November 28, 2025 – Thanksgiving Holiday, City Offices will be Closed.

Tuesday December 2, 2025, Regular City Council Meeting, 6:00 PM

Friday December 5, 2025 “Photos with Santa” in Wells Park at 6:00 PM

Saturday December 6, 2025, Downtown Darlington Christmas Festival, starting st 12 noon.

Wednesday – Friday December 24th, 5th & 26th Christmas Holiday, City Offices Will be Closed.

Adjournment

Upon motion of Councilman John Milling, seconded by Councilwoman Elaine Reed, the meeting adjourned the meeting at 9:29 PM. All approved the motion to adjourn.

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Mayor

ATTEST:

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Clerk & Treasurer