CITY OF DARLINGTON

REGULAR CITY COUNCIL MEETING/PUBLIC HEARING

HELD IN THE OLD COUNCIL CHAMBERS

400 PEARL STREET, DARLINGTON, SC

TUESDAY, MARCH 3, 2026, 6:00 PM

Present: Mayor Curtis Boyd, Councilpersons Shelia Baccus, Angela McRavin, John Milling, John Segars, Elaine Reed, and Bryant Gardner. Also, present were Interim City Manager Gloria B. Pridgen, Chief Jimmy Davis, Celeste Dubose, Hunter Thomas, Gloria Hines, and others.

News Media Present: Ms. Alexis Cooper with TV15.

The meeting was called to order at 6:00 PM by Mayor Boyd.

Mayor Boyd did the invocation which was followed by the Pledge of Allegiance.

PUBLIC HEARING ON ORDINANCES TO APPROVE THE SALE, TRANSFER AND/OR CONVEYANCE OF REAL PROPERTY OWNED BY THE CITY OF DARLINGTON

Mayor Boyd opened the floor for the Public Hearing at 6:03 PM. **Councilman Gardner made a motion to open the Public Hearing on Ordinances to Approve the Sale, Transfer And/or Conveyance of Real Property Owned by the City of Darlington. Councilwoman Reed seconded the motion. Councilpersons Milling, McRavin, Segars, Baccus and Mayor Boyd voted in favor of the motion**. Councilwoman McRavin said this Public Hearing is for the property on 151. The property was purchased several years ago. It technically has already been sold. The purpose of today's Public Hearing is us doing the ordinances; we're trying to make certain that we are in compliance with both our city ordinances as well as state ordinances so we are creating that so we can remain compliant. Mayor Boyd asked if there were any questions or comments, and upon hearing none. **Councilman Milling made the motion to close the PUBLIC HEARING ON ORDINANCES TO APPROVE THE SALE, TRANSFER AND/OR CONVEYANCE OF REAL PROPERTY OWNED BY THE CITY OF DARLINGTON. Councilman Gardner seconded the motion. Councilpersons McRavin, Segars, Reed, Baccus and Mayor Boyd voted in favor of the motion.**

Approval of Minutes

Councilwoman McRavin made a motion to approve the minutes of the Regular City Council Meeting on Tuesday February 3, 2026. Councilwoman Baccus seconded the motion. Councilpersons Milling, Segars, Reed, Gardner and Mayor Boyd voted in favor of the motion.

Councilwoman McRavin made a motion to approve the minutes of the Special City Council Meeting/Public Hearing on Friday February 13, 2026, a few typographical errors the clerk has already taken care of so with those amendments, yes, I will make the motion. Councilwoman Baccus seconded the motion. Councilpersons Milling, Segars, Reed, Gardner and Mayor Boyd voted in favor of the motion.

Councilwoman Reed made a motion to approve the minutes of the Work Session Meeting held on Tuesday February 17, 2026. Councilman Segars seconded the motion. Councilpersons Milling, McRavin, Baccus, Gardner 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.)***

Regina Denham

Ms. Denham said I've gotten three years of police harassment, brutality, assault, false tickets, and false charges against me. They keep getting dropped. I was recently assaulted in the judge's chambers after being postponed for seven months on three traffic tickets that were clear retaliation. Every month I would come to court, and I got postponed after I got to court. Ms. Denham said several times I got letters in the mail two days before I was supposed to be at court postponing me for another month. This has gone on the whole year of 2025 from January until October when I finally had a notice to appear in September for the same charges. She said two days before I was supposed to be here, I got another letter saying, no it would be October, so I didn't come. And the very next day I got a letter in the mail stating that my driver's license would be suspended for not coming. The same judge keeps postponing me because it's all because of information that I have on the lead investigator. All this started three years ago when I came in to ask him for help with tickets that were written against me falsely to cover up when I was assaulted on my job at Pizza Hut. I called 911, the officers came; those officers are no longer here. An hour later, after getting a victim's report, I got a phone call from him asking if he could come by and see me and that he needed to talk to me. I said sure. He said, well, I need to let you know before I

get there that you're not in any kind of trouble in any kind of way. I said sure because I hadn't done anything. And when he showed up, he had Officer Jordan with him, which I don't think is here anymore either it was very strange because it was the first time I'd ever seen that man. He was talking to me about stuff that I didn't even know about. The next thing I know Hayes is writing me a ticket for assault and one for larceny. He said now bring your attorney to court; we're all going to be there. I came to court, but not with an attorney because I had not done anything. I thought that I was coming to have my day for being assaulted at my job. The judge told me that he would get me an attorney. He asked can you afford an attorney? I said no sir, I didn't think I needed one. He said, well we will get you an attorney. Ms. Denham said I got excited because I thought I was going to get my day. After months and months and months, finally I called and asked Erin, another one that's not here, when was my court date going to come up? Miraculously, I got one in the next couple of days. I came to court and I had an attorney that was assigned to me. He was not a public defender. He was a defense attorney, which also made me excited because I knew he was going to help me. I came to court and I noticed that nobody's there but me. The judge wasn't there. The attorney wasn't there. The girl that assaulted me was not there. I sat through the whole court for them (Officer Hayes), who is no longer here, to tell me that they had dropped the charges. I said I don't want the charges dropped. They are false charges. Ms. Denham said it was all to cover up something to do with this lead investigator because he threw himself under the bus with me before I knew who he was. I was illegally arrested over some drugs the week before the assault at the Pizza Hut. I know now that he was the center of that. When I came up here to get help with the tickets that had been dropped, the girl told me I will let you speak to our lead investigator. I said that would be great. When he came out, I was sitting there waiting for him and he looked at me like I was dirt under his feet, and he kept on with a private conversation that he was having with some guy. The clerk of court was standing there, and he says to this guy, they're talking about some man, and he says, this guy that he's talking to, well, you know who he is, right? The lead investigator says, I don't care who he is. I'm going to terrorize him every time he comes to town. And the girl says, guys, should we be talking about that in front of people? I said, that's OK. I've been terrorized before. So, we started talking. He knew who I was, but I didn't know who he was. Mayor Boyd said that I hate to cut you off, but your five minutes are up. I'll have the city attorney to call you in the morning. She said yes sir I appreciate it. You know what, I don't have a phone. I have nothing. Mayor Boyd said write down your name and address and somebody will come by and talk to you. Ms. Denham said thank you so much. Mayor Boyd said you are welcome.

Audrey Childers

Audrey Childers said I am here on behalf of the Darlington County School District. Today, our school district serves 9,000 students in Darlington, Hartsville, Lamar, Society Hill, and our surrounding areas. In 2024, the school district commissioned an updated facilities study to take a clear, honest look at the condition, capacity, and long-term viability of all of our school buildings. This work builds on studies that were done in 2012 and in 2019, including enrollment information, site visits to every campus, and input from our school and district leaders. Over the past 20 years, the school district has made real progress, including new elementary and middle schools, the Darlington County Institute of Technology, Black Creek Elementary School, and numerous renovations. But at the same time, many of our buildings were constructed in the '50s, '60s, and '70s, with some wings now older than 75 years old. While that's not too bad for a person, it's not so good for some of the facilities. The study confirms what many of our families and staff have already experienced. Some buildings cannot be adapted to meet today's safety, accessibility, and instructional expectations. At a certain point, renovation becomes more disruptive and costly than replacement, especially when safety and learning are involved. So, over the next coming weeks, the new study, the 2024 study recommends that we have the three next steps. And those three steps are in Darlington to combine Pate and Brockington into a brand-new elementary school, which would mean that every student in Darlington would end up attending a brand-new school. In Lamar, we would have a new Spaulding Middle School, which would provide every student in Lamar with a new elementary and middle school. And in Hartsville, the highest need in Hartsville is a new high school because of the age and layout of the buildings. So, we are going to be having a series of community listening sessions. And it's called a community listening session because the board wants to hear from our community. We want to listen and make sure that we're on the right track. So, the community listening sessions will be on March 10th at six o'clock at Lamar Spaulding Elementary; March 17th, at six o'clock at the new Black Creek Elementary School in Darlington and March 19th at Hartsville High School at six o'clock. I'm here tonight to invite each of you and any of the viewers and community members to come to join us for those meetings to hear about these potential next steps and give feedback so that we know that we're headed in the right direction or that we might need to step back and reevaluate. Thank you very much for your time.

Gloria Hines

Ms. Hines said I know you know that the City of Darlington is being watched by many people for the bad decisions they have made in the past. I would hope and pray that council will do the right thing this time when they hire the next city manager. A City manager is typically recruited, required to hold a bachelor's degree in public administration, business, or related fields. Key qualifications include five to 10 years of progressive

municipal experience, strong leadership, financial management skills, and familiarity with local government. Some of the key traits are the ability to maintain public trust and confidence, professional demeanor under pressure, strong organizational and problem-solving skills. You should not choose your city manager because they're your classmates, your buddy, or someone that you hire will be bad bidding from the city that may result in the city being sued. A person that you hire for doing wrong that you want to help you do wrong, that's not the person to hire. It should not matter the race of the city manager. I know you know what I'm trying to say, and I need to say more, but I don't have time. 1John 4:20, If anyone says, I love God and hates his brother, he is a liar. For he who does not love his brother, whom he has seen, cannot love God whom he has not seen, brothers and sisters come in many colors. Thank You.

OLD BUSINESS

Second Reading on Ordinance 2025-07: To Approve the Sale, Transfer, and/or Conveyance of Real Property Owned by the City of Darlington and Identified As 3.51 acres on Harry Byrd Highway, Darlington, SC 29532, TMS# 126-00-02-098 to Venue 151 LLC. **Councilman Milling made a motion to approve Second Reading on Ordinance 2025-07: To Approve the Sale, Transfer, and/or Conveyance of Real Property Owned by the City of Darlington and Identified As 3.51 acres on Harry Byrd Highway, Darlington, SC 29532, TMS# 126-00-02-098 to Venue 151 LLC. Councilman Gardner seconded the motion. Councilpersons McRavin, Segars, Reed, Baccus and Mayor Boyd voted in favor of the motion.**

Second Reading on Ordinance 2025-08: To approve the Sale, Transfer, and/or Conveyance or Real Property Owned by the City of Darlington and Identified As 107.87 acres on Harry Byrd Highway, Darlington, SC 29532, TMS# 126-00-02-063 to Palmetto Pavement Company. Councilman Gardner said that this property being a relative of mine I'm just going to step away from the podium. **Councilwoman Reed made a motion to approve Second Reading on Ordinance 2025-08: To approve the Sale, Transfer, and/or Conveyance of Real Property Owned by the City of Darlington and Identified As 107.87 acres on Harry Byrd Highway, Darlington, SC 29532, TMS# 126-00-02-063 to Palmetto Pavement Company. Councilman Segars seconded the motion. Councilpersons Milling, McRavin, Baccus and Mayor Boyd voted in favor of the motion.** Mayor Boyd informed Councilman Gardner that he can come back in to join the meeting.

New Business

Resolutions & Proclamations

Councilman Segars read the proclamation for Recognizing March as American Red Cross Month. He presented the proclamation to Kara Byrd. Mayor Boyd said we appreciate all your support and efforts.

Councilman Gardner read the proclamation Recognizing March as Disability Awareness Month. He presented the proclamation to a representative. Mayor Boyd asked him did he have anything he would like to say**.** He said No, just thank you. I'm new to the community. I love what I've been doing for 20 years. He said this is very new to me, but I love working with disability and special needs. Thank you all.

Mayor Boyd read the proclamation Recognizing Dedicated Community Bank for 40 years of service. He presented the resolution to Mrs. Ellen Berry. Mayor Boyd asked Mrs. Ellen Berry if she had anything she would like to say. Mrs. Ellen Berry said that we at Dedicated Community Bank love Darlington, as evidenced by the community involvement we have. We try to participate in all types of community activities, supporting the whole city, as well as the Florence community, too, now that we're in that area. Our motto or what we live by is, customer first, and we try to maintain that. So, thank you very much. And we really do appreciate you. Mayor Boyd said, I'm a living testimony that for over 29 years in business, I was turned down constantly for trying to get loans to buy my buildings and stuff like that. I took my turn down letter to Dedicated Community Bank and I took it to a bank in Florence and the bank in Florence was 1% cheaper than Dedicated Community Bank but I said, well, I found out that everybody on the Board that approved me they are in Darlington and I live in Darlington, so we will support it. That was about eight years ago. So, it's been a while. But since then, I think it's about 10 loans, and they haven't never turned me down. They haven't kicked me out yet. And they're all super nice when you walk in the door. You don't have to talk to a machine. You get to talk to a person. And so again, in my business, I have people say, we can make things automated and you notice a lot of places are being automated. That personal touch makes a big difference when you walk in, and somebody knows you by name. And so, my son is here and he just came back from Vegas, and I've told him over and over, they don't know you out there in Vegas, but I can walk through town and they know me. So, I can walk into the bank and they know me. Mrs. Berry said we do try to look out for our customers and the community. We want to participate in any activities that we can.

New Business

Housing Authority Food Forest - Jamie Steen (Was not present)

Discussion of Increasing Parking Ticket Pricing – Chief Jimmy Davis

Chief Davis said thank you for your time. He said it's time for us to order new parking ticket books, citations. This is the time for any changes we need to make on them. I am coming to you to ask you if we can increase the fines. The last time that I know of the fines were increased was in 2002. I'll go over them as quick as I can. Parking overtime one- or two-hours zone is currently at $10. I would ask you to allow me to change it to $15. Parking in a no parking area is currently $10; I would ask that you allow me to change that to $20. Improper parking currently is at $10. I asked that you allow me to change that to $15. Parking at a fire plug, I would like to change the wording and the price on that. Chief Davis said not everybody understands the fire plug, but I believe it should be changed to hydrant and or fire zone and change that from $25 to $40. Parking at the curb at the courthouse, I don't recommend any change on that. The courthouse has a special set of rules since it is the county courthouse. Reserved handicap we currently have at $100. I would ask that you allow me to change that to $125. I know it's not a lot of increase on it, based on other towns or other bigger towns that have parking departments that just enforce parking. Their fines are about $40 for overtime, but we are still simple Darlington, and we would still like to keep it as a friendly reminder to not park over the time limit. Councilwoman Reed asked what was the first one? Chief Davis said parking overtime in a one- or two-hour zone increased from $10 to $15. Councilman Gardner said that I thought you said no parking twice after that. The first one $10 to $20, then the next $10 to $15. What were those two? Chief Davis said Parking in no parking area would go from $10 to $20 and then improper parking would be $10 to $15. Councilman Milling asked Chief Davis to explain improper parking. Chief Davis said You and I would call it double parked. You get nice cars, they like to park and eat up two spaces, so nobody's door hits them. I can understand it, I get it. But if you do it and get caught, it's going to cost you. I would like for it to be $15. No parking was up to $20. No parking is just parking kind of where you want to. The improper parking could be an accident. You didn't realize that the right tire was over the line when you parked. I'll give them a little bit because maybe they didn't realize they were improperly parking, but the no parking, no parking signs or you just decide to park where you want to. Councilman Gardner asked what about people who are regularly parking overtime, parking illegally, doing it multiple times, not paying the tickets? Do you have any way to amplify the cost? Chief Davis said we do not have any multiplier that was going in for third or fourth offense. The only thing we have is someone that would not pay their parking fines we have put a boot on the car before. Chief Davis said with the set off debt, if it makes it to January 2nd, I

can put it against their taxes and collect the money that way. Mayor Boyd said does that go against their license or anything? Chief Davis said it would go against the vehicle license, or it could. He said that if you let me borrow your car and I park wrong your driver's license should not be affected. Chief Davis said none of these fines that we are talking about carry point violations and to the best of my knowledge does not get turned into their insurance company however all of these laws can be written on a blue ticket, which would be points, a higher fine, and go against insurance. But this way is a lot simpler, just a parking fine. Councilwoman McRavin said, so you said you're ordering new ticket books. So typically, how long, because you're making a change now, how long would these increases be in effect when would be the next time you will be able to increase it without having to……. Chief Davis said I've tried to get this in front of you all back in March of 2024, but it was not put on the agenda, so I had to order them in 2024 and then again in two years. Mayor Boyd said when would you want this to take effect? Chief Davis said soon as I got the new ones in hand. Councilman Milling said how long will it take you to get your new ones? Chief Davis said that's a good question. They are usually here, I would say within a month, nothing else has changed on them. (As far as the back of the ticket goes and the second page and things like that). Councilman Milling said if we made it effective April 1st that would give you time to have your new ticket books. Chief Davis said if they were not here yet, we would still go with the old ones until the new ones got here. Ms. Pridgen said we must have first reading, then you've got to have a public hearing since it includes a rate increase. Ms. Pridgen said you could put it on the agenda for April, for first reading, then we'd have to schedule a public hearing, and we could have a second reading after that. Councilman Gardner said you might be out of tickets. Chief Davis said If I am, I'll just order what I have and go with it and have it ready for when we run out again. Mayor Boyd said we will put it on the agenda for April. Chief Davis said thank you. Councilman Milling said do we need to have a discussion, is this an item that needs to be voted on since we're changing the structure? Ms. Pridgen said the first reading in April. The mayor said then we will vote on the first reading.

Discuss Upgrading/Replacement to LawTrak Software – Chief Jimmy Davis

Chief Davis said I will go as fast as I can. I know your time is valuable. Again, thank you for your time. Darlington Police Department, our records management system is called LawTrak. That's where our incident reports go, this is how our crime is tracked for us to solve it, how the case develops, where it goes next, how the state gets our information as far as our crime, our victims fund, our victim's representative in Columbia, everything about police work is based on the records management system. We have been with LawTrak since around 2001, and we have had a good run with them, because they are a local company and very affordable. They were bought out by a company, ARMS, and they had an

end of life to LawTrak of late this year. ARMS is revamping it, so it can be used, but Lawtrak is at its end. The South Carolina Criminal Information System (CJIS) says that we have to have in place by April 1st a what are we going to do? They want us to have a signed contract by April 1st for replacing a system that to me was not going to die until the end of the year. What was the April 1st rush? They said it's got to be done. I have reached out to Columbia, everybody with LawTrak in the state is having to do the same thing I'm doing right now. We had a demonstration of all companies interested in Columbia. There were about 15 of them there in watching their demos, some of them were from other states that had not gotten the approval of CJIS yet. I reached out to seven of the 15, asking for personalized demos and quotes, especially the one that has taken over LawTrak. ARMS has not contacted me yet. I have three quotes from companies that our system will work with, and they work with the state. The first one, Southern Software, the quote that we have is for our server to work with it. All the other ones are cloud-based; they provide the server. I asked Southern Software for a cloud base quote also; they have not responded yet. I have been talking to our IT people. We have already purchased the server. It should last two to four years. You don't have to replace it yet; you can always go to the cloud when it needs replacing. The total for ARMS was$ 51,001. The Mobile Data Information System is an additional $11,312 for $62,313 total. The optional interface for NCIC where they can run criminal histories from the car, I did not recommend it, but that is the price. It's an option. I don't recommend it, if you put that type of capability in the car and an officer was to leave that car unlock or somebody was to grab that laptop, they could have access to information that we don't want them to have. Even with the car being locked, the laptop being in the cradle is locked, the password ..... The next page on this Southern Software is just a breakdown of licenses, the conversion data where they will convert our old files into new files where they can be read on their system, support, and training. They broke that $51,001 down if you care to look at it. On the cover page that I had attached to this; you will see Southern software is my first line item. Chief Davis said you see the 62,313, the first year on all of them are paid up. It's the second year, third year and so on and so on every year assuming they never increase their rate. So, for a run of five years Southern Software would cost $89,513. The next quote I got was from Patrollogix they are cloud-based I would not have to worry about maintaining the server. Their initial startup cost was $26,000, which covers the data transfer, data conversion, training, the installation and then every year after $21,000 so at the end of five years you have $110,000 that we would spend with them. The third one is for GovHost. They are also cloud-based. Cloud records management installation and cloud records management subscription is $35,000 along with an additional $15,000 to convert our current LawTrak files to their files. So, if you wanted to go back seven years and see where somebody broke into a house or assaulted someone, you'd be able to do it. If the data didn't get converted this year, we lose it. But every year after, GovHost wants an

additional $35,000 plus $15,000, they gave us a startup fee of $50,000 with an annual subscription of $20,000. So, at the end of five years, we would spend $130,000. All three companies are good. All three are reputable. All three of them would get the job done. We were with Southern Software back in 2001 before we went to LawTrak. Southern Software did give us a discount for that. The Darlington County Sheriff's Office uses Southern Software. The City of Hartsville uses Southern Software and our dispatch system uses Southern Software. If we went with Southern software, the talking between agencies, mainly dispatch would be very easy. The information that dispatch would type in when they receive a 911 call; when the officer got through with the call, he hits his received button, and all that information is on his report from dispatch. (Councilman Gardner asked from the other Jurisdictions as well). Chief Davis said the other jurisdictions, we would be able to share data, but I wouldn't be able to see theirs unless they gave me permission for certain cases, just like I wouldn't want them to look at mine. Looking at it is one thing, but when you start sharing like that, the information and the ability to interfere with that case is so close, you would have to hire an additional person just to watch it. Councilwoman Reed asked Do you feel that is the easiest transformation for you. Chief Davis said Southern Software, I believe it is because of what I would pick up on the back end of it with the interchange of information. It's like an Apple phone talking to an Android phone. They both work. They both work great. But each of them is different. But an Apple phone talking to an Apple phone.... Councilwoman McRavin said so, if I'm understanding correctly, if we went with the Southern Software, some of it, it would save time for your officers because some of the information from 911 would automatically generate on that report. So, that's going to save us some time. Chief Davis said yes. Councilwoman Baccus asked Is this our server? Are we getting a new server? Chief Davis said we currently have a server over here. Councilwoman Baccus asked how old is the server? Chief Davis said maybe two years. Councilwoman Baccus asked what would happen if the server crash? Chief Davis said we would have to replace it. Councilwoman Baccus asked what would it cost to replace it? Chief Davis said10,000 to 15,000 but currently we have two to four years left of life on that one according to my IT guy today. Councilwoman Baccus said two to four years. Chief Davis said that one would have to be replaced in two to four years. Councilwoman Baccus asked if the server crash, will we lose everything? Chief Davis said No, ma'am, we have backup. Councilwoman McRavin said but Southern Software, this quote that we have here is going to provide us with a new server, right? Chief Davis no ma'am. We would provide the server and with the cloud base in order for my laptop to get that information to the cloud, I have got to have some type of internet, Wi-Fi or SIM card or hot spot type to get to ..... and that's eventually coming, but that could be budgeted for next year. Getting officers hot spots for the cars would be a help, also. Mayor Boyd said do you have a projected place to pull the $62,000, they're not going to give us any grants to cover anything. Chief Davis said

I’m afraid not. We knew it was going to end this year, but then telling me, you have got to have it by next month. Chief Davis said that they will work with me, but I got to have that contract showing that by the time it dies, I will already have something in place working. Mayor Boyd said Do you have it in your budget? Chief Davis said I do not have it in my budget. Mayor Boyd asked Ms. Pridgen, are there any monies in the General Fund you can pull from? Ms. Pridgen said it's a possibility. Mayor Boyd said when do we need to let you know by? Chief Davis said I would love to be able for you to give the interim manager permission to sign a contract with a company owner before April 1st. Mayor Boyd said to Ms. Pridgen that will give you time to figure out where it's coming from. Councilman Milling said do you know if the City of Hartsville as well as the Sheriff's Department, if they're using a server or whether they are cloud? Chief Davis said that is a good question. I did reach out to the sheriff. I have not reached out to Hartsville. Chief Davis said the sheriff is using his server. Councilman Milling asked do we have the ability, as Councilwoman Baccus was concerned, I had that same question that if our server goes down in two years to convert to a cloud. Chief Davis said I believe that we would be able to; what the cost would be Southern Software has not responded yet. So, the annual $6,800, if its cloud based, they're going to want to get maintenance on their server so that when it dies it can be replaced. So, I imagine that $6,800 would increase but by then we will know where our hot spots are. We can even buy hot spots for the cars or the officer's phones can be used as hot spots while they're in the cars. Mayor Boyd said at this moment Southern Software doesn't have the cloud. Chief Davis said yes sir they do, they just did not quote me for it. Councilman Milling said that's what we're waiting on. Chief Daivs said I asked my IT guy which is better. He recommends cloud. He says you still got 2 to 4 years left on it. If you go to the cloud today, you're going to have a server that you just bought. Councilman Milling said I'm just wondering if the server gets rid of us, what's the best way to go? Chief Davis said if the server got rid of us tomorrow; we could call whatever company that we were going with, they would put us on the cloud. Councilman Milling asked can we handle this thing as sort of a work session special meeting and put it on the 17th and you tell the software people that we need a quote by then? Chief Davis said that all three of these companies know I have to have a sign contract. More than one person talking at once..... they were asking to have the quote by Southern Software by the 17th about the cloud. They are all taking at the same time. Chief Davis said unfortunately, on the 17th, I will be out of the country, but I will have that information for you. Ms. Pridgen said that he is going to have to take all of that into consideration because I know he's going to be asking for raises because of his department being short. Councilwoman Reed said that there is a possibility that the money is there. Chief Davis said thank you for your time, if you come up with a question, you can e-mail me. I can get it back out to everybody as fast as they lay it in my hand. Thank you for your time. Mayor Boyd said thank you.

Discussion & Vote on Interim City Manager

Mayor Boyd said Ms. Pridgen has been put in as interim for us and stressed to me that she wanted to do that for a short period of time. I discussed it a while back last year with Mr. Ward, who used to be a strong mayor. He was interested in possibly helping us last year, but we weren't quite ready. He is willing to step up to the plate to assist us with the budget process and with everything else until we can have the 17th presentation for working towards trying to get a permanent city manager. We don't know how long that will take. Without having to continue to put more stress on Ms. Pridgen, I am asking for a motion to approve Mr. Ward. Mr. Ward has agreed to come in as interim city manager for a base pay of $340 a week just to say that he's an employee. He is still willing to sign a 30-day notice from both sides. He can give us 30-day notice and leave, and we can give him 30-day notice, and he can leave. I would like to see if I can get a motion to approve that so we can move the City of Darlington forward. **Councilman Segars made a motion to hire Mr. Ward as our interim city manager at that base rate. Councilwoman Reed seconded the motion**. Councilwoman McRavin said so you say base rate of $340 what are the other fees that are increasing, over time what else? Mayor Boyd said he would be salary. Councilwoman McRavin said just to make certain are there any other fees? Mayor Boyd said I don't know for sure that we have to provide insurance or can he opt out of insurance? Ms. Pridgen asked if he was going to be full-time. Mayor Boyd said yes. Ms. Pridgen said is he going to be on a contract? Mayor Boyd said yes. Ms. Pridgen said that he can opt out of insurance. Mayor Boyd said there should be no additional fees. Councilwoman McRavin said what about vacation time and paying overtime when you work more than forty hours. Councilwoman McRavin said he's going to work over 40 hours for this same fee that's all I am asking. Mr. Ronnie Ward said I agreed that I will do this on an interim basis to try to help you guys out. I don't like to see you in a bind. I have been asked a couple times before and said, no, I'm retired. I don't want to do it. I gave up this time. I really loved Darlington. I want to try to help everybody with this problem until you can find a new manager, which I hope is soon. I told the mayor when he asked me about it, just pay me minimum wage. I'm not doing it for the money, but I had to have some sort of salary on there as an employee. I really don't need anything else. I don't want to change my lifestyle all that much. I am retired. I like to play golf on Wednesday afternoons and sometimes on Friday here and there, but I will make up for that in other times that I'll be here and I'm not going to punch a clock. I am pretty much giving you, my time. I am already in the State Retirement System. They may require you all to take some money out for retirement or whatever. It's not about the money. I'm not going to demand any money. I've got some things lined up to do vacation wise and otherwise and I'm going to do it. I'm not asking you all to give me any vacation, just let me do what I've already got to do when I want to do it so that I cannot totally change

my lifestyle in order to come in here and help you guys. Mr. Ward said I have some ideas. I want to talk to everybody. I want to talk to all the council members. I want to talk to all the department heads to kind of see what's going on, what you think and what you think needs to be done so we can all start pulling together. He said if you didn't love Darlington, you wouldn't be sitting up there at least that's what I'm counting on. I would not have done it for 20 years as a mayor if I didn't love Darlington. I want to talk to department heads and employees. The budget is due by the end of June; that's something that needs to be looked at and done pretty quick so that you got something going forward. I am certainly not perfect, and I probably will make some mistakes. I will do what's right and if it's wrong, then you get somebody else because I'm not going to do it. So therefore, as I say to everybody on here, I will do my best to help you out. I feel like you can find somebody good, and I will certainly be looking and trying to help you find somebody. I'm going to get on Gloria; she should keep it for a lot longer. Mr. Ward said she does a great job. I'm going to depend on them and all of you all and between all of us, I think we can get a lot of things done, get some things straightened out and move forward and do what's right. So that's my story. I'll leave if you don't want to vote for me, if you don't vote for me, you won't hurt my feelings. I don't want to put any pressure on anybody. You can do what you want to. Do you have any more questions for me? Mr. Ward said I might even call on the former mayor over there. Ms. Hines said I will make sure he stay straight. Mr. Ward said if you don't vote for me, I'll go back to enjoying retirement. Councilwoman Reed said it's a done deal Ronnie. Councilman Gardner asked are there any more discussion. **Councilpersons Gardner, Milling, McRavin, Baccus and Mayor Boyd voted in favor of the motion.** Mayor Boyd said it will take effect March 4th which will be tomorrow morning. Mr. Ward asked what time to come to work. Ms. Pridgen said Mr. Ward, you can come anytime you want to. Councilman Gardner said Ms. Pridgen thank you for everything you have always done to keep the boat steady. Mayor Boyd said he asked Mr. Scott and Mr. Joseph to present on the 17th to council to decide if you want to go that way or another way. They had asked about it so I put them on there so we can start getting the ball rolling for a new path. Mayor Boyd said that I have asked Ms. Pridgen to present some numbers so that we can compensate her for her time. Mayor Boyd thanked Ms. Pridgen.

Reminders / Upcoming Events

Tuesday March 17, 2026, Council Work Session, 6:00 PM

Monday March 30, 2026, Joint City/County/School/Delegation Meeting, Hartsville Country Club, 6:00 PM

Friday April 3, 2026, Good Friday – City Offices Will Be Closed

Tuesday April 7, 2026, Regular City Council Meeting, 6:00 PM

Adjournment

Councilwoman Angela McRavin made a motion to adjourn the meeting at 7:04 PM. Councilman Bryant Gardner seconded the motion. Councilpersons Milling, Baccus, Reed, Segars and Mayor Boyd voted in favor of adjourning the meeting.

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Mayor

ATTEST:

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Asst. Clerk & Treasurer