City of Darlington
400 Pearl Street, Darlington, SC 29532
Special City Council Meeting & Work Session
Held in the Old Council Chambers
April 21, 2026 At 6:00 PM

Present: Mayor Boyd, Ronnie Ward, Gloria Pridgen, Councilpersons McRavin, Baccus, Reed, Milling, Gardner, and Segars. Also present were Hunter Thomas, Mr. Vaughan, Steve Abbott, Sean Odom, and Police Chief Jimmy Davis and others.

Invocation
The invocation was by Mayor Curtis Boyd.

Pledge of Allegiance

Mayor Boyd opened the floor for the Public Hearing on increasing the parking ticket fines at 6:00 PM. There was no comment from the public nor council members. Councilman Milling made a motion to close the public hearing at 6:03 PM. **Councilman Gardner seconded the motion. Councilpersons McRavin, Segars, Reed, Baccus and mayor Boyd voted in favor of the motion.** Councilwoman Baccus asked, what is the purpose, the urgency of having a special meeting? She said special meetings are for urgency or matters that can't wait until a regular council meeting, so what is the urgency of this special meeting? Mayor Boyd said, "I spoke with Mr. Scott, and he said if we had things to vote on even if it was a work session we are allowed to call a special meeting or work session. Mayor Boyd said, "So I have already spoken to Mr. Scott about that. Councilwoman Baccus said, "I didn't ask you about Mr. Scott. I asked you what the urgency is." Mayor Boyd said, "I'm just telling you I have the authority to call a special meeting or work session according to Mr. Scott. Councilwoman Baccus said, "Well, Mr. Scott is wrong. The State of South Carolina says you can't.

Old Business
Second Reading on Ordinance 2026-01 to Increase Parking Ticket Fines – Chief Jimmy Davis
Chief Davis said Assistant Chief Michael Cooke came to the meeting to present the request and he's here to ask that it be approved. Councilman Gardner asked Chief Davis to go over the amounts for the public.

(a) *Parking Overtime 1–2 Hour Zones: $25.00; (b) Parking in No Parking Area: $25.00; (c) Improper Parking: $25.00; (d) Parking at Hydrant or in Fire Lane: $100.00; (e) Parking at Curb, Courthouse: $25.00 – remains the same price; and (f) Reserved Handicapped Parking: $250.00.* **Councilman Milling made a motion to approve Second Reading on Ordinance 2026-01 to Increase Parking Ticket Fines. Councilman Gardner seconded the motion. Councilpersons McRavin, Segars, Reed, Baccus and Mayor Boyd voted in favor of the motion.**

Councilwoman Reed said she don't understand that our policemen can give information to the news media and not us. Chief Davis asked her what information was passed on to the news media that wasn't passed on to you. Councilwoman Reed said that there was a shooting incident and that someone was hurt and those were the questions she asked. She said she was coming from a meeting in Hartsville and saw the flashing lights and she went around and parked. Councilwoman Reed said she talked with sheriff department deputies and they let her know they were there to assist. She said she walked around and asked one of the officers, what is it I'm hearing that it was a shooting and was anybody hurt, and they said it's an ongoing investigation. Councilwoman Reed said, the news said it was from a police report so I 'm just saying as a councilperson I kind of think ……Councilman Gardner said, "I guess what she's asking, is that in the past you relay information over to the city manager and the city manager or someone relays it back to us to keep us abreast of situations. Chief Davis said, "You have to forgive me, I was out of town, and I also got contacted by the news before my guys could contact me. The news is sometimes quicker than I am, or the guys are because it's hard to stop investigating a crime and call when evidence could be tampered with when the news is getting the gossip, getting the hearsay. Chief Davis told Councilwoman Reed, you saw the flashing lights and stopped but somebody is already there taking pictures and sending it to the news. Chief Davis said, for the guys to stop doing what they are doing and talk to each councilmember that shows up …. And then a county official, or a state official will show up, I'm having to stop what you're paying me to do to answer those questions. Chief Davis said, "It's nothing against you or council but one question will lead into about two hundred. Chief Davis said it's not that we don't want you or the public to know, it's hard to stop. Councilwoman Reed said, "On the newsbreak, it just said information from the police. She said I just felt like some of that information could have been given to us …just the basic.

New Business

First Reading on Ordinance 2026-02 Sale of Property on Exchange Street – Mayor Boyd

Mayor Boyd said, "He and Mr. Milling asked if there was an issue with the tax break the past person got that purchased the property, so I addressed Mr. Ron Scott, and he confirmed that it didn't matter what the tax break that it was up to him whoever we sold it to brought it from that they determine what the tax break was and it didn't affect anything from hereout. (There was no ordinance presented so the agenda item will be on the agenda for May if we get the ordinance from the Attorney Ron Scott.)

Discussion of Planning for Trash and Picker Trucks – Mayor Boyd

Mayor Boyd said he asked to have this on the agenda but he's not sure if we have the exact numbers yet. His understanding is we're about a year and a half out before the trucks are paid for. Mayor Boyd asked Steve Abbott about the status of the picker truck that was taken to Lexington to be repaired. Mr. Abbott said they took the truck today and they said they would try to get it ready for us by Friday and they will probably run it on Saturday. Mayor Boyd said I think we're about a year and a half out before it's paid off. (Councilman Gardner said two garbage trucks & two pickers) Mayor Boyd asked Mr. Abbott if all three trucks are running at this moment. Mr. Abbott said, "Two. One is in the shop on the By-Pass. Mr. Abbott said the recycle

truck and the trash truck are running. Mayor Boyd said, “so the public knows we haven’t started back the recycling; you’re calling it a recycling truck, but we haven’t started back doing a recycling route yet. Mr. Abbott said, “No.” Councilman Gardner asked what is getting repaired on the garbage truck that is in the shop. Mr. Abbott said, “That’s a question for Kendrick.” Councilman Gardner wanted to know if all our routes are running on schedule. Mr. Abbott said in the last two weeks they ran the Country Club area and all the way uptown and the guys in pickup trucks are going along, picking up everything in plastic bags that they can throw on a trailer and in the back of pickup trucks. Councilman Gardner said, “I don’t want to get into management, but I guess if we’re going to be picking up or behind, we need this spread it out and try to get the route as best we can across town so that everybody sees a little bit getting picked up. Mr. Abbott said Broad Street got picked up today. He said that’s the first time his debris has been picked up in nine weeks. Councilman Gardner said when it comes to the picker truck, we just repaved Country Club Road in 2020 and the picker truck has pulled so much dirt …. If you look in front of my father’s house, it’s got to be 3’ to maybe 4’ down worth of dirt that they’re pulling when the picker truck is picking up the debris so much so that the brand-new road is caving in. He said if you go by his and John’s house it’s the same thing. He said all through town he’s had the same complaint brought to him recently. Councilman Gardner asked Mr. Abbott if he could look into that and see what we’re doing wrong or maybe what we need to do. Mr. Abbott told Councilman Gardner if he would give him the addresses, he will be happy to check on it. Councilwoman Reed wanted clarity on what was being said about the picker truck. Mr. Ward said when the claw goes down to pick up the trash it gets dirt underneath the trash and eventually it keeps taking a little bit each time until they ‘ve got a deep hole there. He said in the past they would go back and dump dirt in the hole to bring them back up. He said that’s what needs to be done. Councilwoman Reed said from what John is saying all of it has been picked up and there has been a significant decrease in the complaints for the yard debris being picked up. She said in her area it seems like the calls have increased for them picking up yard debris; however, to you all’s defense a lot of that is furniture that’s in there, it’s not just yard debris. Councilwoman Reed said, “I know you all have been doing a great job because there has been a significant decrease in the folk complaining about that. Mayor Boyd said the public has every right to fuss at us for trucks being behind and so forth, but the public needs to chip in and realize as Mr. Ward just said you put your trash in the same spot over and over and you sit and watch the truck with this massive claw come down and sometimes you ride by and there’s one twig out there and they expect for them to stop and pick up that one twig and every time that truck stops and starts and those hydraulics goes in and out it’s where and tear on a truck sometimes they put stuff the size of this room in here and they think you’re going to pick it up. Sometimes they put mattresses and furniture and all kinds of stuff in there. I watched the other day the driver takes the rake…. the woman sent me an email, and she was fussing because they didn’t go across the street…. They picked up hers, but they didn’t go across the street to pick up trash. Mayor Boyd said I couldn’t see if the truck was full, but I watched the video that she sent me, and the guys should be applauded because they took time to rake it up. Some cities go to the point of saying it has to be in bags, or they won’t pick it up. He said the citizens should be given a citation of a warning if the driver should be, and this is my opinion. I’m not speaking for all of council. I’m speaking to the public to please do not put furniture and mattresses in there because they can’t separate all of that out. It can’t go in the dump with the

yard debris. So the city is not supposed to pick up anything except yard debris so if you go and put that out there what should happen in my opinion is the driver should then call the codes department and the codes department should then go out there and write the person a citation and say you've got five days to move it or you're going to get a fine. And if in five days it's not moved then they get a citation. Mayor Boyd said that's why I brought this up for us to continue to discuss what to do so the town doesn't look bad. Councilwoman McRavin said we're talking about trash trucks and pickers at some point I guess someone can give us some financial reports so we can take a look and see about a path to purchasing a truck. She said our citizens are paying for sanitation, they're paying for pick up so we need to be able to provide services on a consistent basis and it's not their fault that we're having some of these issues. Councilwoman McRavin said in 2021 or 2022 you all had a discussion about bulky refuse and what you would pick up she said in the minutes that I've read no one ever said that they would not pick it up. She said it was talked about and then when you all passed everything it was kind of like if you don't say no it's there but either way whether you're saying that you are or you're not, at some point I feel that we need to have a pick up day whether we do it once a quarter or twice a year and say at this time we'll be able to pick up what is normally considered bulky refuse for our citizens because an 84 year old grandma does not have a pick up truck on the ability to take her mattress off or an old piece of furniture or some other things that are in her home that she can't get so it would be nice if at least a couple of times a year we designate days where they can put things out. There's been an issue where are the magistrate evicts people and they put their stuff by the road those people don't always come back and get it and it sits there it's not just that people are dumping stuff all the time, but people were evicted from a house, the magistrate put it there on the side of the road and they didn't have a way to come get it and it has been sitting there. So, we've got to figure out how to take care of that so that our city streets are not littered with trash. Councilman Gardner said I agree. I think we need to have a discussion on that. He said we have brought that subject up so many times we've gone back-and-forth. We didn't know what to do then and we probably still don't know what to do now, but it's something worth talking about. He said when it comes to the trash picker and the trash trucks, we are a year and a half out and I'd love for us to start making a plan on what we want to do. He said previously we were in such a bad situation that we had about two pick up trucks and two trash trucks at the exact same time which now has gotten us into a situation where all of them are failing at the exact same time so it's my hope that we we've had a position that's been open for a while so maybe we utilize some of those funds, but it's also my hope that we stagger our purchasing over the next couple of years. Maybe we get a pick a truck and a trash truck and in the next 2 to 3 years we get another one but figure out some way to stagger the purchasing of the new trucks so that they won't start failing at the same time, Councilwoman Reed said I want to bring this up because it was such an issue and we did act upon it about picking up furniture along with the yard debris. She said I remember this was under Alex Gainey when he was over the street department, he said a part of the reason for raising the fee that it might be on a quarterly basis that we did have a designated time to pick up furniture she said, even if the understanding is not that, that's what the public understanding is. She said we need to clear it up and do something about it along with what Angela is saying and what Bryant is saying when we make plans to buy one, but we also clear up this ordinance Councilwoman Reed said let's just make it clear what the city is able to do. Councilwoman Baccus said when Alex was here we had this discussion

we raised citizens fees $6.00, and it was clearly said that we were going to pick up your debris and other items; not stoves and refrigerators and things like that but other items if they put them on the street, she said the whole purpose of that conversation was because people were dumping it on empty lots and we said it wasn't fair to make the citizen who owned that lot pick up that trash or hold them accountable when they didn't put it there somebody else dumped it on their lot. She said the city was picking it up off the empty lots anyway. And Alex brought it to us and said if the city is going to pick it up off the empty a lot, we might as well charge a fee, and we would pick it up of the street instead of citizens dumping it on empty lots. That was the whole purpose of that, and we raised it six dollars. Mayor Boyd said when we raised the fees, this isn't really the discussion. The discussion is to try and figure out how we can get a trash truck, so the public knows it was clearly stated that we're not going to pick up yard debris and I'll be glad to pull the minutes also. He said we're going to just drop it because everybody has a different opinion on how they read it. He said if you allow everybody to put yard debris and furniture out then your whole town would be a mess. When the truck goes by and picks up the yard debris it's not supposed to pick up furniture and mattresses along with it because when they take it to the landfill, they cannot dump it together. He said as a council this size they want to try to do it once a month twice a month or however, often they can but as of now they're not supposed to put out yard debris that was not the reason it was raised the subject tonight was to try to determine a pathway so we can purchase trucks. Councilwoman Baccus said when Alex was here it was set in place when they pick up your debris, they would not pick up those other items. They were specifying a certain day in the week or in the month that we're going around picking up these other items. It was already in place. Councilwoman Reed asked Mayor Boyd what he remembers the increase was for. Mayor Boyd said, "The increase was for because we were behind the eight ball. Councilwoman Reed said, "So, let's clear it up. It's clear that is an issue as to what we remember, but it is in the minutes, and we and a decision was made because as I remember we raised a commercial as well as the …. Councilwoman Baccus said we raised both of them, residential and commercial. Councilwoman McRavin said, so it sounds like we need to make an ordinance, and we can do an ordinance about what we're going to pick up, but we need to go ahead, and it sounds like an update the ordinance. We can update the ordinance about the bulky refuse, about what we're going to pick up, and but truly, when we do that, we need to make provisions for our citizens to be able to get rid of the items that they have. We are in a small town where a lot of our citizens don't even have their own transportation. So, when you are asking them to take furniture off and you say, well, we're not going to pick it up, they're relying on public transportation to get where they're going, how do you expect them to get rid of the bed that's broken, or the mattress or anything else. They don't have the means to do that. So, at some point instead of it sitting beside the road where they just pulled it out to the vacant lot we as a city need to make provisions to take care of that, so we don't become a dumping ground. She said it doesn't have to be every month, but we do need to update our ordinance and make it clear what we're going to pick up, how frequently, because if it's just once a quarter, so that we keep our city looking good and make provisions for those people who cannot. And you were talking about the trash let's hear the plan for getting that because we need to order a trash truck it takes about six months depending on the specs so we needed to be placing an order for a trash truck within the next couple of months so we can have a new one on hand before the end of the year. I think we can at least do one. We should be able to find the

funding to do at least one of those, so I'd like to see that. Councilwoman Baccus said, “Well there should be money in the capital fund that should be able to cover that. Mayor Boyd said Mr. Gardner said earlier, and we've talked about we don't know the exact numbers that are available from the economic planning development. There's not been anybody in that department in the last two years, so this year before this year rolls out, I've asked to start with this department tonight. We can possibly take some of those funds and use them toward the purchase of a trash truck, a picker truck, or whatever direction we want to go. Mayor Boyd said we're here to make the town look good for everybody and provide the service that we're supposed to provide. Councilman Segars said, “Let's revisit the bulky refuse pick up again. He said if that 84-year-old lady goes out and buys a mattress, she should make provisions with whoever she buys that mattress from to dispose of the old mattress. He said I offer that service when somebody buys a mattress from me or a refrigerator or a range. I make sure that I haul the old one off and I dispose of it. I have to pay the extra fee to take it to the landfill or whatever. So, it's kind of up to the individual to make provisions to get rid of that stuff if they don't have a truck to haul it off themselves. That service is available from whoever you buy it from. You may have to pay a few bucks to get rid of it. Mr. Ward said, “What I would do is make a recommendation; we have drop off places that the county provides with stuff like that and if somebody's got to get a heavy piece of furniture out of their house, somebody's got to carry it for them if they can't do it themselves. Somebody's got to get it to the street. Those people can get it to the drop off at the landfill sites which are pretty close by. He said I'm afraid if we give them, let's say we're going to tell them we're going to pick it up once a month or twice a month or whatever that doesn't mean that that's the time, they're going to put it out there. They're going to be putting it out just like they're doing now and we're still not going to be going by but once or twice whenever that time is. So, it's sort of a catch 22 thing. Mr. Ward said, I would say, we can try to make a special time if you know, if somebody has a particular problem but encourage people to get the company that they're dealing with to haul it off or whoever's helping them with it, get them to drop it off at the landfill sites which are not too far away if they can do that. He said I'm not saying don't help people. I'm just saying that we're still going to have a similar problem with the stuff being out there because they're not going to put it all out the day, we pick it up it's going to be put out all month long. Councilwoman Reed said, All I'm going to say again is I think we need to verify what decision was made because I'm telling you that is the opinion. Mayor Boyd said, “Again, the objective tonight was. I would like for somebody … Mr. Ward or Mr. Ward to appoint somebody from the sanitation department…. I got a price for a picker truck just so I could get an idea about where it was at there's one out there that's available right now we'd have to get multiple prices; I didn't ask for anything else just trying to get a ballpark figure on where we’re at on stuff, but we need to go ahead and start getting prices on trash trucks and picker trucks and how much more we owe on the other trucks and what funds we have available in the budget this year that we possibly can go ahead and start with at least one like Mr. Gardner said so that way they aren't all on the same exact timeline. As everybody sees, you know it's our responsibility and the public doesn't like that and it looks bad on us and we're not here to look bad. We want to make sure it looks like it should. So, maybe by the May meeting we can see what trucks are available out there and the correct type of truck that you need.

Review of Budget for Planning / Economic Development – Mayor Boyd

Mayor Boyd said we don't have anybody in the economic planning division to come up so I picked this one first to start with. Councilmembers discussed the planning department budget and asked questions about several line items. Mr. Ward said we have $65,000 in the budget for a planner. I've been looking for a planner and it's going to take $80,000 to probably to get a planner. He said we need to prorate it because I would hate to find somebody to fill that position and not have any money in the budget to hire them. Mr. Ward said I've got a recommendation tonight in the water department where they need to move some money from one account to another because of all the collapses in the water leaks and the problems that they've been having which are … Mr. Ward said we are at the end of the budget year so we just need to be careful where we pick this excess money from that we think we might have because it can be tricky. Mayor Boyd said I understand that, but my question here is that we're showing in that one department $204,000 leftover and so you still may use some of that, and then you still may want to use some of that to hire an employee higher than $65,000 so my question is … Mr. Ward said, I would just say don't take it all. Mayor Boyd said, but again knowing that this department wasn't used, the money is budgeted there, there's still $180,000, $190,000, whatever that could go ahead and work toward that. I just quickly pulled up today, I didn't go and research every truck and what's the best buy out there or anything, but just quickly, a glance, somebody said they got a picker truck, and it looks like what we use is $285,000, but we don't have enough to buy the whole truck. But if you chose … if council chooses to buy that one truck, we might can buy a new trash truck for the $190,000, or only the $30,000 on it and sell the other trash truck in with it or something, but those numbers need to be looked at because it's between now and July, because between now and July, we can go ahead and take this money out of here to get this ready so that we show to the public that we're trying. He said you may decide to buy a trash truck. If you go ahead now… again, you may go ahead and have to take $150,000 of whatever it is and go and put it down toward one that may take us six months as they had said before, but there are trucks out there that we can get we need to research that now and don't wait for July and go and it's gone and then we can't use that money. Councilman Gardner said, I concur and I want to know what payment plans are like we did previously just for long-term planning, but I want to be able to look forward and see what the payment plan is realistically. Can we help the city out if we do have this account that we go to and put $100,000 into it as a down payment instead of putting $30,000. He asked if the yearly payment is 30 grand, 50 grand, or what it is so that we can go ahead and start budgeting this year. Councilman Gardner said next year may be tight, but by the time next year gets over, we're going to have four come off of the payment plan. He said but I too would like to know what the payment plan realities right now at this buy-in at a couple different levels. Mayor Boyd said the way I look at it is we have budgeted …I'll use my house as an example. We have budgeted $218,000 to take care of the yard and out of that $218,000 we only spent $14,000 and we got $204,000 left that we were going to spend to manicure our yard but we're not but we're still driving around in a car that can hardly get me around and I ain't got no money to buy a car, why can't I take my grass money … at least the majority of it and come back and buy me a car. So, the same with the trucks. We can go ahead and pay down as much as we can on it so that way down in the future, we can still start putting our money to the side like we've been doing to make payments. That's how you're supposed to do it. So that way, in five years from now we take that truck off the market, you'll get another truck in five years. They're only supposed to last five years, not 10 years. Councilman Milling

said If we're borrowing from Peter to pay Paul, we're going to also to have to not only look at trash trucks and pickers, but we're also going to have to look at other equipment and not just allocate all the extra money on one thing. We need to have an overall plan as to here are our most pressing needs from an equipment standpoint. And if we have 50, 100, or 150 that can be utilized, we've got to make a decision as to where it's best to do it. And while we all know we need a cherry picker, if we've got something else that's even more pressing, then we might have to patch the cherry picker and address the other thing. I think that's what Mr. Ward is saying is part of the budget planning we've got to look at the entire system that we operate and see where the expenditures are getting ready to hit us the worst. Mr. Ward said and the thing you need to look at too, if you're looking at the planning, you'll notice that all of this is expenditure, it's not any revenue coming into this department, it's all expenditure. So, you have to go back, and you have to check the revenue that you've got coming in and match that with not only this piece of the budget but the rest of the budget that that that revenue is allocated for. So, you've got all expenses and it's in the budget as an expense, but do we have that money? Is revenue allowing for all the items that we have? So that's the thing you got to match up with what you've got coming in versus what you've got going out. Mayor Boyd said and I understand that, but we typically if that person had been in here would have typically spent all that money and again, I'm not saying take it all to buy. I just used the picker truck as an example, I'm asking council to determine and I'm asking the administration to determine shortly… I'm gonna start sending everybody administration the emails and texts that I get. And if the rest of the council want to send the e-mail and texts that everybody else gets because for the stupidity of questions that were asked for - Trash truck, picker truck, my yard debris - Those are high importance to our people and our people, our citizens expect it to be picked up. And as a council member and a mayor, we have to make sure that we provide that service. And I don't care if we buy one truck, put $10,000 on it or whatever, but it needs to be addressed before July the 1st with what money we have available as an emergency. Because there's so many more things that we should be looking at, but we shouldn't have to fill these calls from angry citizens that have every right public, you have every right to be upset for yard debris sitting out there for nine months, nine weeks, ten weeks, whatever. You have a right to be upset about that. If it's down one time, that's fine, but it's constantly down and it's not being addressed correctly. I'm asking for it to be addressed. I'm asking for the numbers to be given. I'm asking for it to be given the utmost attention because my face and these people's face are on the billboards and we're expected to make sure that we provide a service for the public. And so that's what I'm asking for. I've been told to calm down. I'm not going to calm down. I'm going to get angry, madder, and worse because you have not seen Yang. When Ying comes to the council, it's nice, but Yang is going to dress and Yang is going to be very upset because I get tired of seeing the trash around there just as much and I tell everybody that calls me I am more upset than you are, okay? It's in your yard and it's in my town and these people's town and we don't want it out there. So, I'm asking that it be addressed. If there's money out there, let's find it and address where it's at. I'm trying my best not to be ugly; I'm not being mad at anybody, but I am concerned and diligent to make sure that this is addressed. Councilwoman Reed said Mayor, I've shared your emotion, but when you look at a historical area like West Broad Street from Main Street and coming down, you've got new residents that's coming in that's not aware, maybe about all of our particular policies and they're fixing up their houses, now they're cleaning up their yards, they're doing

things. And outside there, which is traditionally very well kept, you are now finding several homes with trash, yard debris, furnishings that they're putting there because they're not… That's why I'm telling you, we have got to get clear about what we can, because the public, I don't care how angry we get, this is what we need to do. They are feeling like, and those are areas, it's not traditional, not normal areas that would have things like bulky materials out there, but it's quite a lot. There are quite a few homes that are having those things there and I just want us to address it. Mayor Boyd said, "I understand that I agree with you on that, but the city has to provide vehicles that are available. We've known this for a while we keep putting it under the rug and when I bring up a detention then it's always a diversion and so I'm asking for everybody to get and make sure that we figure out where we got some money at, if it's a dollar or $500 or $5 million, that's fine …. What we got, where we can use it at. Let's find out what revenues are coming in, and what we're missing from revenue. It's got to be addressed because it's a ticking time bomb. And when those trash trucks, I've told you before, when those trash trucks go down again, we've gotta go back out there by hand and pick up trash. It does not look good, and nobody wants to have to hand pick up by trash. Councilwoman McRavin said, "Since we're talking saying in the same vein about budget stuff that when you all are looking for that, like you said, we have money here and we also need to be mindful and we're not trying to maybe buy that truck outright because we need to free up enough budget enough of our debt. So, if you go when you come back to us, if we can get our debt ratio, our revenue. Financial reports should be given to us as well as department heads every month. It's hard for a department to know where their budget is if they don't get updates. It's hard for us to make decisions when we don't know where we are in the budget. She said I worked for the county for a while, and every month I was in charge of giving each department their work, they had their budget, how much they spent every month, and they knew where they were. I would like to see us get that information and start disseminating it to each department as well as to us on a monthly basis. So, as we're moving towards this budget, our police need vehicles. They are down vehicles and instead of us buying we need to be in a lease program but we know lease looks just like debt so we need to know how much debt we have where we are in this debt analysis so that we know if we can get into a lease program so that we can rotate these vehicles out and keep our police officers with new vehicles. And get our trash truck. She said we've got so many needs here in this in the city and we've got to find a way to meet it. If we bring in 15 police officers and we don't have a vehicle for them to drive, what's the point? So, we have to find a way to do this, but we've got to have these numbers in order to do it and have all of the information. Mr. Ward said, no, I was going to say this. That's our job. I've been here a month and a half and we're trying to get to the bottom of all this stuff. We can't have everybody coming in and demanding this information, demanding that information, because on a daily basis, it's really difficult for them to keep up with what they've got to do. I mean, they are busy. They are really busy. So, just direct the questions to me and let me try to find out. And I wasn't saying that you know you shouldn't just take all of this. We go through and we know what we need. We know we need these trucks. We've gotten a lot of police cars back online because we can't keep up with it. So, I said send it to the local people like Singletary's and get these things fixed and put them back where they need to be. Gloria, Cheryl, Lacie and all of the people at the water department, Charlotte …. they are busy, busy, busy and they … to take time to give a whole bunch of stuff that we need, it's really hard on them is what I'm trying to say. And it's not that we don't think you need the information, but

you need to say okay y'all what we have extra in the budget. And I've been told, you know, what do we have extra in the budget that we can find to try to buy some of these things that we need to buy? We're digging into these things to try to find out where we can rob Peter to pay Paul. I can't move anything out of a budget item without running it by you guys because, you know, if I start pulling revenue off of somebody else's budget and putting it somewhere else, it doesn't match up with what we got. I'm not going to do that without coming to y'all and say, okay, we got this little bit of money here. All I'm saying is we understand where the needs are. Our job is to run the finances and figure out where we are, how much money we've got, how we're going to fix these trucks, how we're going to plan for maintenance, who we're going to hire to do this and who we're going to hire to do that and keep it all informed, as we try to do that. We love your ideas. You all have taxed us to you know to try to make those things happen. So that's what we're trying to do. We'll get in here and we'll dig and we'll try to find revenue items and see what we come up with. So, understand from our standpoint that we're trying to do all these things that y'all want done. And if you will direct questions, and the issues and the things to me and then we'll try to go from there and get done what you want done. All I'm saying is just try not to inundate them with things to do because they've got so much to do now just keeping up with all these figures and the revenue and expenses and the payrolls and all the things that they're tasked to do. Councilwoman Baccus said, “Well, I have simple requests that I've come to you with that can't seem to be getting done. First request, I came eight times at least already about that big hole on F Avenue. And they can't seem to get over there and put rocks and dirt in the hole, so I don't understand what the problem is. She said if anybody hit that hole on F Avenue and it knocked their car on the line; the city is responsible. Mr. Ward said, “And the water department is doing that now, but the problem is, there's a thousand holes out there. Councilwoman Baccus said, “But this hole been there for a year. It doesn’t take a year to put rocks and dirt in the hole. Mr. Ward said, “I give them that information. They had to order asphalt to put in those holes. Well, they finally got some. And they went around this past week trying to patch the hole and I mentioned that one to him again. I told him to pave Magnolia. Sam's got to bid on that. He's doing all this other paving. Well, he ain't got around to it yet because he couldn't, but he's he knows to do it. So, I'm just saying, let me know. If it doesn't get done tomorrow, maybe the next day but they know to get to it. Some of them are too big for us and we have to get other people to do it if it's more than they feel like they can handle. Councilwoman Baccus said on that hole on F Avenue, simply put rocks and dirt in it and that will solve their problem until they can get to it. But you don't leave a hole that big in the street. Simply just put rocks and dirt in it. Mr. Ward said, “Well, they told us one time that they put rocks in the holes, and they had videos of people coming with wheelbarrows and digging the rocks out. Mayor Boyd said, “Mr. Milling I understand what you're saying and again I want to clarify to make sure everybody knows that I picked this department because I know that we can't go steal from the police department or the water department, or other departments. This department, I felt there should be money there …there is money there. I know our urgent need, I feel like it is some type of trash truck or picker truck. We need police cars where we can disperse that money. That's what I'm asking council to think about tonight. If there are funds here, do you want to spend $100 of it or do you want to spend all of it? We need to look at that to see before it rolls away and then it's not in the budget. Administration will determine what we actually have that can be spent. Mayor Boyd said I'm not saying tonight take that money from anywhere but

I'm saying that we know that there should be some money here. This is the only department that I felt like there should be some money in there. The other departments are usually pretty much on point. But again, I'm just asking council to address that and let's be diligent to see if we can figure out what we need to do with a plan before the time comes again.
Councilman Milling said One of my questions that was going to come along later with Mr. Ward is just when we are going to start getting the budget numbers together so that we do find out what the revenue really is versus the leftover expenses so that we can say we've got 50,000 or we got 70,000 or we only got 10,000. So, I was just wondering where we were in the budget process, but you can wait and address that when you're talking about either roll carts or transferring funds.

Mayor Ward said I've got a printout of the expenses and revenue and through April the 20th.

Purchase of Roll Carts – Mr. Ronnie Ward

Mr. Ward stated the Sanitation Department is out of rolls carts. He said they have two bids, one for $17,776.12 and one for $1377.00. He wanted to recommend going with the lowest bid and be given permission to go ahead and purchase them since they were budgeted. **Motioned by Councilman Gardner to authorize the city manager to spend up to $17,776.12 for the purchase of new trash bins residential. Seconded by Councilwoman Reed. All in favor.**

Budget Amendment Request for Water and Sewer Department – Mr. Ronnie Ward

Mr. Ward stated that the water department wants to take the money out of line item 914-595, direct services and move it over to 914-278c which is sewer line repairs. He said as you all know we have spent all that we have in that and still have stuff to do, there's $146,000 in the direct services line item that they want to move over to 914-278c, sewer line repairs**. Motioned by Councilman Gardner to move $146,000 in the direct services line item over to 914-278c, sewer line repairs. Seconded By Councilwoman McRaven. All in favor.**

Mayor's Updates For the City

Mayor Boyd said I was just going to give the public a quick update on some things that are occurring downtown. People have been asking about the issues. Mayor Boyd said the parking lot on Cashua Street behind Wells Fargo and next to the old Chanti's Wings parking lot there across from the Our Pat off of Cashua Street. That parking lot was part of the grant. The grant is about a five-year-old grant is finally coming to finish. It was a $750,000 grant that we got along with the county. And with that grant we paved the parking lot of the Carnegie Library. We also painted buildings behind the new courthouse area. And then they're finishing the parking lot there and they are going to stripe that; I saw today that was all completely paved. So as far as I know, the parking lot should be opened up this week. I think he's going to hopefully line it tomorrow, but within the next few days about the end of the week they can start being able to start parking back there. That's the parking lot beside Chanti's Wings and Wells Fargo Bank that belongs to the county now. The trail, 10-year trail has finally come to start. It's paved today and it starts at the voter registration building that goes to the back of the library. They still have to put fencing up; they have to put landscaping up there and landscaping in the parking lot. They have to put cameras and stuff on the trail areas because it was included in that grant. Hewitt Street,

which is beside Merle Norman and the little alleyway that goes back there, is being shut off to where there will be blockers and planters there so people can't drive through. The county had asked for that to be shut off and so the grant is making that a seating area with planters and pavers all through there. So, the new steps coming off the back of that area by Vaughan Insurance and Carolina Bank building over there: all that's going to be readdressed and lights going up over there. It's going to look really nice over there. Nice seating area in that corner. Also, Mr. Vaughan is here tonight. We appreciate him and as we said before Carolina Bank allowed me to put the lights through the little, small alleyway over there. That property belongs to Mr. Vaughan, and they gave us permission to put lights across that and get that area cleaned back up. The Hewitt Lane area, the parking lot behind Vaughan Insurance, is not going to be paved and belongs to multiple entities. That's Mr. Ward's job to get a new contract on that. Everybody talking …Mayor Boyd said it was announced the other day that we are getting a $500,000 grant for sewer that will be announced soon. So, just kind of give a little drop seed on that. That's going to come for the water and sewer funds. I appreciate those that are involved with that when we get that announced. Deli 46 on the Public Square has opened. Todd has also opened the place beside it's going to be another event hall until …He's got a lot of events going to replace it. The Deli 46 is a really good restaurant along with all the other restaurants throughout town that have been here for a long time and batting cages out on Blue Street. We appreciate Jeff opening those up out there and doing a great job with that. Blue Street, also Blue Fish opened up for a fresh fish market going there and super nice guy got a fresh fish of all types. He is beside the market on Pearl Street. We appreciate Genesis Healthcare all their efforts and support. They're getting close to being finished with the parking lot and all the buildings all looking great there. They have done a tremendous job there and it's coming along looking really good. There's a concert, Mr. Thomas is working really hard for the concert this Friday the 24th of April. It starts at 6PM. The name of the band is Julio and the Saltines. The Square will shut down at 4:30. So, bring your lawn chairs and come out. I'm sure there will be some food trucks and all that there during that time. Freedom Fest is coming up soon with the sponsored by the city for the drone show. So, the fireworks show so you can bring your animals out, they won't have to worry about being scared now. So, we'll see how that works out. Hopefully, it'll be a great turnout and something new for the whole area. So, spread the word for everybody. Councilwoman Baccus asked about the update on that lift station on corner of Southern Pine and Limit Street. She wanted to know what's the hold up? Mr. Ward said Michael would have to explain where they are on that. They have had some problems with the lift station out on McIver Road. Mr. Ward said he would have to check with Michael. Councilwoman Baccus we need to find out because those people on Farm Street is tired of raw sewage on their street and in their apartments. Councilwoman McRavin asked do we have a date for splash pad opening that we can announce? Mayor Boyd said Mr. Andrews has said Memorial Day. Councilwoman Reed said that's the same weekend Gandy Pool is opening up as well. Councilwoman Reed said I have an update that I had a citizen sent to me. Her concern was about the trail. She's a member of the Beautification Board and they want input. They just feel like they don't have any and they were concerned that the trees that have been planted there by the voter registration and all along there has been bulldozed down. And why did that have to be that way? Councilman Gardner said I noticed those trees got bulldozed down. That was very unfortunate. I wish they would have salvaged those trees and moved them. Unfortunately, one

of the issues we had with that is, and I'm not sure why the beautification board did this, but they put the trees right down the middle of where the trail was going to be when they put them down in the 1st place. I remember when I saw them installed, it was too late they had already put them in the ground that it unfortunately flustered me as well because they knew the trail was going there, so why would you put the trees in the middle of it? So, it is unfortunate that we wasted if we purchase those trees, we wasted money on those funds on that for sure. And in the future, if we're going to be doing another part of the trail, we planted the trees, maybe we should make sure that we transplant those, remove those somewhere else. But also, we know we're going to put a trail somewhere we shouldn't be putting trees in the middle of them. Councilwoman Reed said I'm just going to mention to the council, which is an issue that has been brought to us. We need a little bit more communication with our committees. We have not had any reports in some time. So, we need to start requiring it, so that they can meet. The Beautification Committee seems to be quite active and wants to be a part of things like the Main Street Project and things of that sort. So anyway, I just want us to set up some guidelines where we can require committees like that to report to us on a regular basis. Mr. Ward said I got a list of all the committees. I pulled that thing soon after I got here. They haven't been active because we haven't had a planner. The planner was keeping up with those and a lot of the positions and the people there, their terms have expired. They haven't met. So, what we are trying to do is to get somebody in that job that can refresh that and take over, you know, operating and meeting and making sure that those communities are active again because they have just been kind of sitting there. Mr. Ward said I have talked with the Beautification Board and the Tree Board. There are several of them they just need somebody to coordinate all that with them and get them going and meeting on a regular basis. It needs to be reactivated because it's just been sitting there with nobody in control of those committees and they need to have updates and reelections because a lot of those people's terms have expired. Some of them probably don't even know whether they're still on it or not because they haven't met in a while and each of them has a function. They just need to be active and somebody looking after them and telling them where they are and updated. So, I'm aware of that. I agree with you 100% that needs to be activated again. Councilman Gardner said to piggyback on top of that, what they're going to be doing. And when they're coming about budgetary items, or usually in that budgetary period, some of the boards that were allocating funds would kind of say, you know, these are some projects we're interested in. Do you like A or B? And then we would kind of choose and kind of coordinate together on that. And we've just had budgeting items, and they've been going and using them, however. There needs to be a little more responsibility to make sure we're communicating on budgetary items as well. Mayor Ward said our planner was taking care of it for us. Councilwoman McRavin said our ordinance as well as state ordinance says that any boards are an extension of us. Their minutes are supposed to be online and are subject to FOIA. They're not supposed to be making decisions. They're supposed to be making recommendations and bringing it to us. And unfortunately, there have been decisions made and things done that we weren't a part of. They've just gone and done a few things, a couple of them. Councilwoman McRavin said, "And that's really not fair to us, because ultimately, when citizens have concerns, they're not going to a member of the Beautification Board to gripe they are coming to us to gripe about it, you know, and then we're sitting here going, oh…… left to give an explanation for things that if it had it been presented to us and we've given an

opportunity. Mr. Ward said you are not getting mixed up with the garden club. Councilwoman McRavin said No, but you know, that's something we just have to keep in mind. Hunter is now over Beautification. The Planning Committee has not met. We've heard from one of those committee members that's been up here a couple of times about them not meeting and there are things that they should have been meeting about that they should have been meeting and coming to us about. We have got to find a way to get them back on board. Councilman Gardner said take our last meeting. We discussed that board in particular when we're talking to the attorney about figuring out our zoning and stuff. And so, I'm assuming they'll be coordinating. Councilwoman McRavin said she spoke with Mr. Don Strickland with PDRTA and they would like for the council to do a bus tour so we can see where the bus goes here across our city and really get a feel for the services that they provide. We have a couple of dates that he's thrown out to want to see what date works best for everyone if you can check your calendars for ither Wednesday April 29th they would both be at two o'clock in the afternoon or on Friday, May 1st, if neither of those dates work for you, you know, if you can let me know by tomorrow and let him know or check your calendar tonight. Councilwoman McRavin said that we could not do it any later because currently the bus stops at 4 o'clock in the afternoon. Councilman Milling asked can you give me any information about location of the benches at the bus stops that we proposed? Councilwoman McRavin said that's a whole different discussion. It really is because the are about benches because we lost 80 grand. They had 80 grand allocated from the ……. for Darlington when we could have done bench enclosures for our bus stops but because we didn't use it last year because there was a 20% match. Marion County got our funds. Mayor Boyd said did he tell us about that? Councilwoman McRavin said, "He actually said he spoke… he did say he spoke to you about that, and you weren't really interested. Mayor Boyd said, "No, no ma'am. For the record and to be clear, he did not. Councilwoman McRavin said So, at any rate, there are funds available again if we're interested, it's a 20% match. They get funds for that. You can make it as elaborate as you like with Wi-Fi and all of that to just a basic, ……... Councilwoman McRavin said it's not that we're talking about right now we want to see about the route, the hours need to be extended. Mayor Boyd said last time that he was here we asked him about that and he said that they were really expensive. He never addressed anybody, especially me, about that there is any grant money. Councilwoman McRavin said I am not going to get into that. Councilwoman McRavin said check your calendars to see which date you all can take the ride on the bus so that we can actually see the service. Mayor Boyd asked do I have a motion to go to executive session? Ms. Pridgen said the ordinance that the attorney sent, he has the wrong ordinance number on it. It should be 2026-01, so the one that you all have he needs to change it. It was advertised correctly, and it's also on the agenda correct. And also think about the raises that we want to give the employees this year. I know you want equipment and stuff, but we've got to do something for our employees.

Adjournment

Upon motion of Councilman Gardner seconded by Councilwoman McRavin the meeting adjourned at 7:06 PM. All Council members voted in favor of adjourning the meeting.

Mayor

ATTEST:

Clerk & Treasurer