CITY OF DARLINGTON

REGULAR CITY COUNCIL MEETING MINUTES

Tuesday, July 7, 2026
6:00 PM
Held in the Court Room / Council Chambers – City Hall
400 Pearl Street, Darlington, SC 29532

Present: Mayor Curtis Boyd, Interim City Manager Ronnie Ward, Clerk & Treasurer Gloria Pridgen. Councilpersons Angela McRavin, John Milling, John Segars, Elaine Reed, Sheila Baccus and Bryant Gardner. Also, present were Attorneys Kevin Etheridge & Ron Scott, Judge Stucks, Police Chief Jimmy Davis, Demetrious Wright, Anna DeWitt, Danielle Keen, Krista Abbott, Sean Odom, Carl & Margie Goodson, James Cooper, Steve Abbott, Ernest Boston, Pat Cavanaugh, Carla Dawson and members of the POP group and other attendees.

Call to Order

The meeting was called to order by Mayor Boyd.

Invocation

Invocation given by Mayor Boyd followed by Pledge of Allegiance

Approval of Minutes

Councilman Gardner made a motion to approve the minutes of the June 2, 2026, Regular Meeting. Councilwoman McRavin seconded the motion. Councilpersons Milling, Segars, Reed, Baccus and Mayor Boyd voted in favor of the motion.

Councilman Gardner made a motion to approve the minutes of the June 23, 2026, Special Council Meeting. Councilwoman Reed seconded the motion. Councilpersons McRavin, Milling, Segars, Baccus and Mayor Boyd voted in favor of the motion.

Councilwoman Reed made a motion to approve the minutes of the June 29, 2026, Special Council Meeting. Councilwoman Baccus seconded the motion. Councilpersons Gardner, Milling, McRavin, Segars, 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.)*

1) **Sean Odom** said he wanted to know if anything is in the budget for young people. He said if you can spend $20,000 on drones, where is the money for the young people and for the community. He said what is that saying to our firefighters and police officers who are busting their butts on the streets and you're saying you don't have enough money for raises but you have enough money for drones.

Old Business

Second Reading on Ordinance 2026-04 Updating Language on City Work Sessions.

Councilwoman McRavin said, "So the public is aware, the ordinance now is going to read we're removing language where previously a work session we were unable to make a vote. Previously, during the meeting we were just supposed to have discussion or call it a special meeting. With the new wording we can vote in any meeting at any time when there's a quorum.

Councilman Milling motioned to approve Second Reading of Ordinance 2026-04 updating language on city work sessions. Councilwoman McRavin seconded the motion. Councilpersons Gardner, Segars, Reed, Baccus and Mayor Boyd voted in favor of the motion.

New Business

POP Powerful Youth Leadership Camp – Sheila Baccus / Carla Dawson

Ms. Carla Dawson said being a resident who is originally from Darlington, SC, she felt it was very important to continue to give back to her hometown. Ms. Dawson said they had their fourth annual camp this year. Ms. Dawson did a PowerPoint presentation showing how the camp got started and how it has impacted the young people. She said young people came to her, and she wanted them to know they can start something; they could give back and they could be greater. They can leave a legacy for those who come after them and that's what they have done with that camp for the last four years. They talk about empowering others and being empowered. She said with their organization they have had interns; ambassadors and they also have this camp. Ms. Dawson said six campers have returned for the last four years and that's how they know that they understand that they are powerful. There were several presenters from the camp that spoke about the projects they are working on. Kyle Dawson said her project is about serving the physically disabled and to show others how to be respectful of all different types of people. She said the people she would need to get the project done would be community members, camp counselors at POP and she can work on her project and do it with anybody that's available in the community. The list of supply needs that she used was markers and paper and the budget they use is zero dollars. She said the purpose of this is to show you can make an impact without needing money. Kyle's impact shows empathy. She said it shows empathy by helping other people understand the reason that certain devices exist. She then showed some of the work she did at the camp. Corian Dawson said the plan for his project was to highlight African American culture and to serve the entire community. What he wanted to achieve was to reach out to everyone and help people understand where African American culture comes from, but also music. The people he will need are the people who

can feel the music in their heart and soul. He said the budget for his project was zero dollars. Supplies are just African instruments. This project shows empathy is it will show that we can all understand things about each other. Corian said he has learned how to advocate for social justice in his community it helped him understand that social justice is something we all need to be a part of and to understand that the way to reach out to the community isn't just one way. It's not just financial but it can be doing what you do best. Corian invited everyone to join in on a body percussion exercise at different speeds and then instruments were incorporated along with harmony. The last three presenters came up and talked about fighting gun violence in Darlington and ways to combat it. Ms. Dawson thanked council for allowing them this time to present. She said they hope to have an open mic and how to combat gun violence in Darlington and they would like council's support with that as well as volunteers and publicity. Ms. Dawson told council they will be listening for them, and they are ready to talk with them about the open mic and how they can get volunteers and publicity. Carl Goodson thanked the members of council who came out for the presentation at the camp. He also wanted to thank Councilwoman Baccus who wanted them to bring it to council. Mr. Goodson said he loves his town and you can't make him want to go to Florence to spend his money. He said he spends his money with the local vendors in Darlington as much as he can. He said don't believe all of the hype that people are telling you because everybody is not fighting each other. We are living in a world now where there are a lot of opinions, a lot differences, but our differences are what makes us great. Councilwoman Reed told Ms. Dawson she appreciates the camp and the efforts they put into it. Councilwoman Baccus said this was the first year she attended their camp meeting, she was totally impressed, and I think the City of Darlington should do more to support the young children who are trying to venture out and do something positive. Councilwoman Baccus said I think we need to put something in place in our funding that supports these types of camps. She said I am going to solicit this council to make a donation to these camps to make things better for all our citizens, especially our children. Councilwoman McRavin thanked Ms. Carla because she is currently a resident in Rockhill, but she grew up in Darlington, but she makes a point of coming back and investing in the community that she grew up in.

Reappointment of Municipal Judge for a Two-Year Term

Councilman Gardner made a motion to reappoint Judge Robert Stucks for another two-year term – (July 1, 2026 – June 30, 2028) Councilwoman Reed seconded the motion. Councilpersons Milling, McRavin, Baccus, Segars and Mayor Boyd voted in favor of the motion.

Pilot Club Funding Request for Sweet Potato Festival October 10, 2026 – Danielle Keen /Krista Abbott

Ms. Keen said on behalf of the Pilot Club of Darlington, she is submitting a request for $15,000 in funding support for the 2026 Sweet Potato Festival which will be held on Saturday October 10, 2026, on the Square. The funding will help to expand the family-friendly attractions offered during the festival (amusement rides, children's rides, and inflatables). These funds would allow them to provide theses attractions at no cost to attendees. **Councilwoman McRavin made a motion to give $15,000 out of the Hospitality Fund for the 2026 Pilot Club Sweet Potato Festival which will be held October 10th. Councilwoman Reed seconded the motion. Councilpersons Gardner, Milling, Segars, Baccus and Mayor Boyd voted in favor of the motion.** Councilman Gardner said, can you all maybe come in May or June of next year and then I'll get you all before budget season and that will help us out as well.

Discussion and Possible Vote for The City Taking Ownership of B Avenue – Discussion with Demetrious Wright from Georgia Pacific

Mayor Boyd said we met with DOT and they have the $28 million warehouse that's coming, and the trucks will still be coming in from Avenue B and some of them will also be going out on Old Florence Road. Mayor said DOT presented the other day that it would benefit Georgia Pacific more if the city could take ownership of the road. Mr. Demetrious Wright said he is the Planning Director at the Georgia Pacific Darlington facility. He said the mayor mentioned that it is beneficial to Georgia Pacific and it is, but the real essence behind the B Avenue exit to and from that new facility is for the community. Mr. Wright said when he got here four years ago, one of the things he noticed was the truck traffic coming from our facility and going through the neighborhood. He felt that it would be better to do something a little different along with the warehouse. He said currently the warehouse that Mayor Boyd mentioned…. roughly $28 million is what we petitioned the company to invest in Darlington. He said at this point they have two warehouses, one is the old Wellman Building on McIver Road, and the other building is across the street from Buc-ees. He said the Darlington facility is the largest plate facility that Dixie has. He said he has gotten calls from people in Florence asking if they are going to continue to do work at the warehouse and making him offers. Mr. Wright said money was allocated five years ago to tear the old cups building down. He said they paused on it so that they could tie some things together. He said in his opinion the warehouse was a big ugly rusty building and who would want to live near something like that so that's when the conversation started happening of what can we do in the community besides just tearing the buildings down; could we build better because we've got to have a warehouse? He said let's build the biggest warehouse we can build on the property and when we do that, then we will tear the cups building down. Building a new warehouse and putting roughly $30 million in there, and what I couldn't look past is how this $30 million investment will also benefit the community. Do we now have more trucks going through the neighborhood and kids are playing out on the roads? Mr. Wright said that's when he looked at the map and for years traffic left the cups building and came up B Avenue. He said B & C Avenue was the main thoroughfare for trucks because they

had no other way to get through the community. He told them if they have been out on McIver Road DOT agreed to put in that roundabout because the trucks were knocking down the railroad crossing. Mr. Wright said he talked with several people in the neighborhood and told them he would try to find a way to minimize truck traffic as much as possible. The most direct route or the shortest route, the least impactful would be for the trucks to come up B Avenue because the cups building takes about three-fourths of the avenue on one side. He said after talking to Ms. Lyde and to Uncle Albert they didn't have any objections to it, but I let them know this was just a proposal, and we would have to figure out how do we would make it happen. Mr. Wright told council if they had a HDMI cable, he could put it up so everybody could see what the proposal for B Avenue would look like. (Mr. Wright passed out copies of the proposal for B Avenue) He said the copies are not DOT approved so he can't give them a copy and say this is what it is because DOT still must approve any road modifications. Mr. Wright went over the drawing with council. He said B Avenue is a state-owned road, but he would like for them to take ownership of B Avenue. Mr. Wright said, but for them to do that through the State it is slow and tough to do because the state has different requirements. If the city owns the road the difference is the city can do almost what… not whatever they want to do, but they have a lot more leeway. The right-of- way and setbacks are all different. He said another thing he noticed with all of the houses along B Avenue was that none of them really have a driveway like an apron off the road. He said they would put aprons on everybody's driveway so they can have a real driveway going into their yards. Mr. Wright said if they can do this, we could make the other streets through the neighborhood a non-truck route. Councilwoman Reed had concerns about us maintaining another street and the financial impact. Mr. Wright said the design criteria that they are going to be going after if we are able to do the road would be to DOT specs. Councilwoman McRavin said she is concerned about us taking on a road and not having funding to continue to keep it up. If we were to take this on, I personally feel like we would need to have something in writing for the next 30 years or whatever time period it is that Georgia Pacific would be willing to help with resurfacing and keeping this road up because we as a city can't really afford what we have. Mr. Wright said I can present this to the VPs. Councilman Milling asked Mr. Wright if he talked with the railroad people about possibly improving the railroad crossing on Second Street. Mr. Wright said the railroad owns all the crossings and to build a warehouse, he had to pay them just to have a conversation with him. Mayor Boyd asked Councilman Milling which crossing was he talking about and he said the one by Dixie. Mayor Boyd said they are saying they want to close the one by the credit union and the one just past that is not going to be for truck traffic either. Councilman Segars asked Mr. Wright to explain the traffic pattern for trucks coming and leaving. Councilman Milling asked Chief Davis what kind of issues it would present for you all if the city took over and traffic going in and out at that location. Chief Davis said I'm about like you all are on this. The only thing I can see right now is who is going to pay for the repairs. Council continued to discuss the road ……. Mr. Ward said on S. Main Street when that road was repaved recently, the parking spaces were not drawn back where the lanes were. He

said the citizens want those parking spaces repainted back and I have been trying to get that taken care of. He said it's still going to be wide enough for traffic to come in. He said you just need to think about that because when those lines for parking on the two-lane part of the road are redrawn will that cause issues for big trucks coming through and making the turn. Council members discussed where the parking spaces were. Councilwoman McRavin said, "From the railroad track to C Avenue; those are the people who have been asking to have the parking spaces put back. (Several council members talking at the same time) Councilman Milling said, "I'm sort of like Ms. McRavin; until we've got a detailed proposal of how we're going to pay for this thing 10 years from now and what the highway department is willing to do to ensure that we don't have traffic flow issues coming and going. Councilman Milling said, and what you all need to ensure is that you don't have traffic… It's kind of hard to say yes, we will go ahead and do it because if it's going to take $1.7 million to do all of the other stuff and even if it's $.7 million for the various gas, etc. and $1 million and we've got something that's gonna last 10 to 15 years …we don't $1 million in 10 or 15 years to do anything." Mr. Ward said, "In the agreement can you just say the city agrees to take ownership that Dixie Plate Plant / Georgia Pacific will maintain that road. Mr. Ward said there's no limit on the time of it. It just simply says that if the city takes it, Georgia Pacific will maintain it. Mr. Wright said I can definitely ask that. Councilman Gardner said that it doesn't sound like council has an opposition to it, it's just a funding issue from a long-term perspective. Councilman Gardner said, "Please tell your board or your VPs that we're open to the idea that we can take over ownership as long as you all can help with those long-term costs so it's not an excess burden on us. Councilman Gardner said so you've seen our master plan…. Wells Park. I don't know when you can talk to them about that, but in the long-term focus once we get through this hurtle, I would love to discuss this." Mr. Wright said they had a big water tank on the side of the plant. Mr. Wright said, "That whole area … We have already got an agreement to donate it to the city so you can make Wells Park bigger. When we put up the fence for the cups building the fence line that's there now is going to move, and it will get it surveyed off and now Wells Park can grow and get bigger. So, it will actually be L-shaped. He said when you have your Christmas lighting in the park people are parking in the parking lot and it should still be available for them to use. He said he's working on some other things and has opened up conversations about some other things they can do in the city, but the main thing is to work to get this done first.

Executive Session
SECTION 30-4-70(a)(1)

(a) A public body may hold a meeting closed to the public for one or more of the following reasons:
(1) Discussion of employment, appointment, compensation, promotion, demotion, discipline, or release of an employee, a student, or a person regulated by a public body or the appointment of a person to a public body; however, if an adversary hearing involving the

employee or client is held, the employee or client has the right to demand that the hearing be conducted publicly. Nothing contained in this item shall prevent the public body, in its discretion, from deleting the names of the other employees or clients whose records are submitted for use at the hearing. (Executive Session for Committee Appointments) (Council may vote or may not vote following the executive session.

Councilman Gardner made a motion to go into Executive Session at 7:32 PM. Councilwoman Reed seconded the motion. All approved the motion.

5-minute Break
Back in Regular Session
Councilman Milling made a motion to end executive session at 7:44 PM Councilwoman McRavin seconded the motion. All approved the motion to end executive session.

Board Appointments

Councilman Gardner made a motion to appoint Mark James to the Planning Commission. Councilwoman Reed seconded the motion. Councilpersons Milling, McRavin, Segars, Baccus and Mayor Boyd voted in favor of the motion.

Councilman Gardner made a motion to appoint Gregory A. McCord to the Planning Commission. Councilman Milling seconded the motion. Councilpersons McRavin, Segars, Reed, Baccus and Mayor Boyd voted in favor of the motion.

Councilman Gardner made a motion to appoint David Eads to the Planning Commission. Councilman Milling seconded the motion. Councilpersons McRavin, Segars, Reed, Baccus, and Mayor Boyd voted in favor of the motion.

Councilman Gardner made a motion to appoint John T. Hardee to the Zoning Board. Councilman Milling seconded the motion. Councilpersons McRavin, Segars, Reed, Baccus and Mayor Boyd voted in favor of the motion.

Reminders/Announcements

a. MASC Annual Meeting July 15th – July 19th, 2026, Greenville, SC
b. Friday July 17, 2026, 6:00 PM –9:00 PM, Community Concert Series, Public Square Featuring Level 10 Band
c. Tuesday July 21, 2026, at 6:00 PM -Special City Council Meeting
d. Tuesday August 4, 2026, National Night Out, Pearl Street – 6:00 PM
e. Thursday August 6, 2026, at 6:00 PM– Next Regular City Council Meeting.

Adjournment

Councilman Gardner made a motion to adjourn the meeting at 7:48 PM, which was seconded by Councilwoman Reed. All approved the motion to adjourn the meeting.

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Mayor

ATTEST:

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Clerk & Treasurer