CITY OF DARLINGTON
REGULAR CITY COUNCIL MEETING
HELD IN THE OLD COUNCIL CHAMBERS – CITY HALL
400 PEARL STREET, DARLINGTON, SC 29532

SEPTEMBER 1, 2026, AT 6:00 P.M.

Present: Mayor Boyd, Councilpersons Shelia Baccus, Angela McRavin, John Milling, John Segars, Elaine Reed, and Bryant Gardner. Also, present Interim City Manager Ronnie Ward and Clerk & Treasurer Gloria Pridgen, Diane Sigmon, Joyce Everett, Sharon Blakney, Scott & Diane Pruitt, Rose Pruitt, Anna DeWitt, Steven Abbott, Gloria Hines, St. & Sanitation Supt. Calvin Holloman, Trey Nickelson, Yvonne Nickelson, Allison Carraway, Sean Odom, Police Chief Jimmy Davis, Fire Chief Pat Cavanaugh, K. Jeanette & Marvin Cooper, and Attorney Ron Scott.

Mr. Stephan Drew with the News & Press was also present.

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

Approval of Minutes

Councilwoman McRavin made a motion to approve the minutes of the Regular City Council Meeting on Thursday August 6, 2026. Councilman Milling seconded the motion. Councilpersons Gardner, Segars, Reed, Baccus and Mayor Boyd voted in favor of the motion.

Councilwoman Reed made a motion to approve the minutes of the Special City Council Meeting/Executive Session on Tuesday August 18, 2026. Councilwoman Baccus seconded the motion. Councilpersons McRavin, Segars, Milling, 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.)*

Diane Pruitt

Ms. Pruitt thanked council for giving her this time to speak. I would like to speak with you this evening about contracts for bids offered by the city or not offered by the city, my husband and I own a demolition company. We are a locally owned company and we specialize in demolition. Right now, they're reconstructing the last building that Scott worked on in Darlington, and you know it as the African American Museum. I am very proud of him for the work that he did on that building. If you're not familiar, there was a two-foot gap between that old building and Raceway Restaurant. Two feet. You're not even that close to me. Mr. Pruitt took that building down

without scratching or bumping into her building or causing any damage to anything in the area, that's because it's his job, it's his profession, he's licensed to do it, he's trained to do it, he's insured to do it. Recently, we were aware that when Sheila left, there were demolition houses that were to be scheduled for demolition, but we had to wait. Mr. Pruitt came to speak with Mr. Ward about those contracts and the system for bidding on those contracts with the city. And what he was told is that the city wasn't going to put those demolition jobs out for bid; that those jobs were going to be awarded to the firemen. I'm confused by that because there's a lot of revenue for the city involved in businesses coming to the city, purchasing a license for the jobs that they're operating under, not to mention the million dollars liability insurance that the city requires for us to have to do a job in this city. Now, if you're talking about a company that has a million and a half dollars revenue on the year because you go by our books, when you use your math and your percentages to go by, what does that cost us for our business license? Well, what it costs us is what it's costing you right now, because that's revenue you're not going to get. Does the city have a million dollars liability if, in the course of their action, one of the firemen damages a building next to the structure, or someone gets hurt on the property while they're doing the demolition. Is the city going to be in a financial position to cover that liability? And I would suggest that perhaps not. I don't see where Darlington's in the position to risk that when normally these jobs would be put up for public bid, each individually and as a company, not only us but other small businesses in this area and regionally would have the opportunity to submit a sealed bid on these jobs, and you've taken that away from us, and I'm not sure why. I don't like it. Of course, I don't like it. It's our business, but I don't like it for our city. As hard as this city has struggled to pull up the bootstraps and come up and be something and solve our financial issues, we just can't afford one more risk. That's my assessment of it. I would hope you would think the same way, and I hope you would reconsider the course of action you're taking right now by assigning these jobs to firemen. They have a job. The city's paying them. Their job is not demolition. If they're trained in the field of demolition, that's what they're going to do. I just simply ask: Do they have a business license and a million dollars liability insurance? Because we do, and we need work, and we'd like to continue to work with the City of Darlington, but we can't if these jobs are blocked. And that's all. Thank you.

Mr. Ward explained. I think maybe I was misunderstood to a degree. I apologize if I said that we weren't going to put any of them out for bid. I did say that because of the cost of doing it and the number of buildings that we have, and that the city does not have an abundance of funds to do things with, we have some firemen who have done that in the past, who have torn some houses down and buildings because they are qualified. It costs a lot of money generally to tear a building down. And if we can find an economical way to do it, then we are having good use of what I consider to be the scarcity of tax dollars. I really don't want to take business away from people. That's not my intention. I do want to be able to remove houses that need removing. One of the problems we've had is we don't have the money to do it, so how are we going to go about doing it? We can't put out for bids if we don't have the funds to do what we need to do. So, we fall back on some of the people that we have that are already working for us that are qualified to do that.

I certainly didn't mean to offend anybody or say that we would not do that. I'm just saying that because of the number we have, that sometimes we have to rely on other methods that are less expensive.

Ms. Gloria Hines

Ms. Hines said the deal between Landmark and the City of Darlington occurred between 2005 and 2006, I believe. Council was asked to go to Mullins, South Carolina, to look at the downtown apartments where Mr. Howard Garland was the City Manager. All of council went except Ms. Annette Thomas and me. We felt that it was not a good project for the City of Darlington. Later, the City Manager, Mr. Roger Langley, persuaded Annette and myself to go. Mr. Garland was hired to come to the city to help the mayor, Tony Watkins, put the deal together for the loft apartments downtown. The council had several meetings about the project between the City of Darlington and the Landmark. The first phase was 30-year payback. I told council that it was too long to pay for one thing, 30 years. So, the second phase was 18-year time frame. At that time, Mr. Watkins was the mayor, the only person now on council at that time when the project was done was Mr. Segars. Through all the meetings, Miss Thomas and I voted against the project because it was not something the city could use at that time because of the way it was set up. Some of the apartments have mold now and other issues. I have some pictures that were taken about 10 years ago that somebody gave me. So don't blame it on me. I didn't vote for the project. If anyone would like to know more, do the FOIA and look at the minutes and see how I voted and the transactions between the city and between the city council and landmark. As far as the paperwork was concerned about the project. It was out of my hands. I don't have any. Only thing I received was just minutes from each meeting. You would have to contact the City Manager for that. Decades of multiple agreements are inherently fragile. When a city locks itself into a 30-year timeline, a single economic shift, unexpected or environmental backlash, can instantly transform a landmark achievement into an expensive public relations nightmare. Darlington's history with major structure and infrastructure contracts frequently highlights the extreme difficulty of balancing public funds with private executions. 30 years won't be up until about 2035, I believe, when the city will have full responsibility for the downtown loft apartments. As of now, they are already falling apart. The city will have to start all over again. Bad choice, and it wasn't me because I had nothing to do with because I voted against anything.

Jay Fulmer

Mr. Fulmer said CWS seems to be unaccountable. They're charging me for dumps that I'm not getting. They're hiding behind excuses, saying that people are blocking the dumpster. They're less than helpful. You call them. You know, I don't want to pay for services I'm not receiving. They won't prorate the bill. I call the city. The city commingles, as you all are aware, sanitation, sewer, water. It's all in one basic bill. You know, for the longest time, I've had a cardboard receptacle and a dumpster, a trash dumpster. Right now, they're refusing to pick up the cardboard because one day a gentleman pulled up. I'm standing in the parking lot. I said, "Can you hold on for a

second? I had an employee parked there by the dumpster. I understand he can't get out of his truck every time to come inside, but he does have a cell phone. He does need to get out of the truck to open the gate to dump the dumpster to get back in the truck, back up, shut the dumpster, etc. So, he's getting out a few times. He refused. Me and him got into a slight argument about it, and now they're refusing to pick up my cardboard. Now I have a couple questions that…. I don't know if it's appropriate for you. This is my first time at one of these kinds of things, but is it possible for someone like myself to look at the contract between the city and CWS, because I think they're taking liberties that probably are not contractually in the contract. The driver is making decisions and to me, that's like letting the fox rule the henhouse. The woman that I spoke to in here at the city, I can't remember her name, she is less than helpful. It took me almost 10 days to just get her to respond to me to tell me what days my trash was going to be dumped, so I could ensure that no one was there. To me, also to have this not available for me to bid out, and for me to be able to pick and choose doesn't seem right. I mean, I'm forced to use CWS. I know that, from what I understand, at least what I've been told, there's a map that I assume has a line, and if you're inside that line, that's it. You have to use it. Well, if that's the case, then I need help from you all. All right. I pay a lot of property taxes, hospitality taxes. I employ a good number of people. I've been a good, you know, good business member in the city. I need some help with these people. Mr. Ward's been trying to help me, but to me, I don't know what needs to be done to get to management. To me, it would be coming, for instance, a person coming into your business and your cashier or your person here at the front counter, telling, well, I have a problem, but I don't like the way your tone is, so I'm not going to refer you to management to get this resolved. This trash thing is just; I need it done. It's right behind my building. I need it done regularly. I need it done as you know. Well, I've had arguments about whether the driver should shut the gate, not shut the gate. I just found it curious to see in the contract what they're really obligated to do. I have spoken to Waste Management about it. I don't want to step on any toes in the city, but if CWS needs to do the full job, and they're only going to say they're only going to do 50% of the job, and the truck driver is going to decide what job is going to be done and what's not going to be done, then I don't want to go with them. And what I would request is that the City Attorney give me a note or whatever to allow me to pick another carting company.

Old Business

A) Second Reading on Ordinance 2026-09 Parade and/or Special Event Permit Applications

Motion by Councilman Milling to approve the second reading. Seconded by Councilman Gardner. All in favor.

B) Consideration of Terrace Carraway Fund Request of $5,000

Motioned Councilman Gardner to approve the $5,000. Seconded by Councilwoman McRavin. All in favor.

Discussion and Bids on Garage Truck & Picker Truck – Mr. Ward

Mr. Ward received bids from Florence Truck Center, Velocity Truck Center, and Amick Equipment. Mr. Ward said he talked with Big Truck Rentals, and they rent garbage trucks with various plans. He said a straight-out rental they would take care of transmission, or motor, etc. To lease they charge an amount for 28-day rentals which is $8,500 and that comes to $110, 840 a year to lease it (the picker truck). They have a rent-to-purchase price of $7,750 and at the end of that time you can purchase the equipment. Mr. Ward said they also have a plan where they furnish everything, and it is $9,250 a year. He said even though we are not going to be obligated if something breaks, it is a major expense but it's going to cost us a lot more. He said he thinks the leasing standpoint is too expensive for what we want to do. Mr. Ward said the garbage truck is $7,500 every 28 days and that comes to $97,800 a year to rent it. … (Council continued to discuss the truck purchase) Councilwoman McRavin asked if we are going to have funding to support the other departments that need vehicles. Councilman Gardner said he doesn't want to max it out either. I know they said we have some cushion to have another bond if we needed to. He said his suggestion would be to stagger the purchase of vehicles when we purchase them. Mayor Boyd said this is only a proposal to make sure it's done correctly. Mr. Scott said to Ms. McRavin's question, we have not seen actual proposal in terms of a written agreement so we will need to review that. He said State law allows for lease purchase agreements and if they conform to specific requirements it will count against your debt limit. Mr. Scott said, "I can't say that this does because the company has not provided us with a full agreement to see. He said if you do make a motion to approve this, I would ask that you do it as a motion to authorize the Administrator and legal counsel to negotiate an agreement upon final execution that would be in accordance with lease purchase provisions for the acquisition of these vehicles and they will end that process and make sure the actual agreement conforms with the requirements. Mr. Ward said, "I'm sure they have those agreements for these figures that they gave us. Mr. Scott said that we just wouldn't sign an agreement… Councilman Milling said, I had that same concern because last year about this time we were told that lease purchases counted against our bond indebtedness, so we've got to be sure that we are authorized properly to do it if we decide. Councilman Milling said Mr. Scott would have to take a look at it and be sure it met statutory requirements. Councilman Milling made a motion to approve, if legally possible, the proposal by Amick Equipment for the lease purchase under a five-year program for a picker truck and a garbage truck under approval of …. Councilman Gardner asked if they should set the amounts and Councilman Milling said Mr. Ward is going to try and negotiate the price of the vehicles. Councilman Gardner asked if this would come back to them and Councilman Milling said I think it would need to come back to us. Mr. Ward asked that they go ahead and approve the figures of "no more than." Councilman Milling said he would approve no more than the sum of $51,900.90 per year, total five year-cost of $259,504.50 for the picker and $56,680.90 a year, for a total of $283,404.50 as a five-year cost for the garbage truck. Councilman Gardner seconded the motion. Councilpersons McRavin, Segars, Reed, Baccus and Mayor Boyd voted in favor of the motion.

New Business

Presentation(s) Stellar Award Nominee – Councilwoman Sheila Baccus

Councilwoman Baccus said Mrs. K. Jeanette is a local gospel recording artist from Darlington, South Carolina. Her most recent single, Jesus Is My Friend, one of her other songs was "Shine, and The Wait Is Over. I did give her a proclamation last year. I think it was last year at an event that she had, but I don't want to tell her story. I want Mrs. K. Jeanette to tell her own story. So, please come forward and tell your own story. And this is her husband, but he can come with you if he likes. Mrs. K. Jeanette said Hello, everyone. Councilwoman Baccus said this young lady has been nominated for a Gospel Stella Award. She didn't win the award, but she has been nominated for a Stella Award, which is a huge honor and a red-carpet honor. Yes, I am K. Jeanette. I am a resident. I've been in Darlington, South Carolina, all my life. I am a Mayo High School graduate. I'm married to Marvin Cooper. I have four children and three grandchildren. Singing has been my life. I have been singing since the age of five years old. In 2024 I released a song called "Shine. It was in memory of my mother who passed away with breast cancer. So, then I rebirthed "Jesus Is My Friend, which was a song written and produced by Garland “Miche” Waller. I flew to Philadelphia to record that song, and I was nominated for Traditional Female Artist of the Year. I did not win the award, but that is still confirmation that I belong in the room. So, I'm thankful to God, to the city of Darlington. This is my home. I'm thankful to God for everything that He has brought me through, and I'm not giving up. Councilwoman Baccus said I gave her a proclamation last year, so on behalf of the city of Darlington, we're going to present her with the key to the city. K. Jeanette thanked everyone for their recognition.

Presentation of Stellar Award Winner – Councilwoman McRavin

Councilwoman McRavin said this is our resolution for another one of the Stella Award recipients. And for those of you who may not know, the Stella Awards is a national award in the gospel community. It was the 41st Annual event this year held in Charlotte, North Carolina. So, it's not only for musical artists; it's for those who are on radio and who are a part of the gospel community. It airs nationally on BET. It just aired this past weekend, and I'm sure if you missed it, you could always catch it again. It will air again on September 5th. So be certain to tune in and see some of our locals who are really making the city of Darlington shine. So, we appreciate both of these young people. This one is going to gospel radio announcer Mr. Trey Nickelson, whereas James Trey Nickelson, a native of Hartsville, South Carolina, has distinguished himself through his dedication to gospel radio broadcasting and his commitment to uplifting communities through faith-based programming, and whereas Mr. Nickelson serves as a music programmer and an on-air host for Glory 98.5 and 100.1 WBZF, faithfully sharing gospel music, inspiration, and encouragement with listeners throughout the region and beyond. Whereas through his professionalism, passion for gospel music, and devotion to excellence in broadcasting, Mr. Nickelson has become a respected voice within the gospel music industry and positive influence

in the lives of countless listeners. Whereas the 41st annual Stellar Music Awards held in Charlotte, North Carolina, on Saturday, August 15th, Mr. Nickelson was honored as the 2026 Gospel Radio Announcer of the Year one of the highest recognitions in gospel broadcasting. So, we commend you for that. We thank you for making this community shine. When there's concerts, he's always bringing things and activities right here to the city of Darlington. Attend church right here in Darlington. So, we appreciate all of your efforts and what you do and thank you for making Darlington look wonderful. Councilwoman McRavin presented him with a key to the city. Mr. Nickelson said that I am grateful. Thank you all so much to the city of Darlington. Thank you all. Y'all didn't have to do this. So again, I don't take this for granted. So, thank you, thank you, thank you. I give God all the glory without God nothing will be impossible, and I've never thought that one day, always watching the Stellar Awards, that one day God would bless me to have this with my name on it. My mom used to take me to the radio station when I was eight years old, so I have her with me as well. So, thank you all.

City Department Staffing Recommendation – Weekend/On Call Pay

Mr. Ward said we have our court clerks that are on call over the weekends a lot for having to post bond and do stuff for people. They have to be on call for like three hours during that time, which means that they aren't able to go anywhere and do anything, they have to stay put in case they're called. So, we feel like we need to pay them for the time that they are on call because that's the way it's normally done. Mr. Ward said what I'm proposing is that when they are on call, we pay them for the four hours that they are required to be on call, and to compensate them for their time. Mr. Ward said they have to stay put; they should be compensated. Mr. Ward said the recommendation is to pay a four-hour rate for what they make for four hours that they are on call. Councilwoman McRavin asked how was it being handled? Mr. Ward said we wanted something in writing. Councilwoman Baccus said that the law requires you to pay them anyway, right? Mr. Ward said yes, we just want it in writing. Ms. Pridgen said some departments were doing it this way; other departments were doing it that way. So, I want everybody to be on the same page. If one department is getting paid four hours, the other departments should be paid four hours. So, they have been doing that in the past, and I want to see something in writing. That's why we are bringing it up for documentation. Councilman Milling said do we do something like this by resolution or ordinance, or what do we do with this? Mr. Ward said I think it is a policy change. Attorney Scott said I think this being a policy change, it really needs to go into the employee handbook. Attorney Scott said I think Mr. Dickey talked about that earlier today with Mr. Ward. So, what I probably recommend you do, if you would prefer, you can bring back the employee handbook update with that language in it, so it's clear what you're approving and applicable to all departments. Mr. Ward said as soon as you vote on that, I got one other thing that's related to that.

Councilman Gardner made a motion that we approve the Weekend/On Call Pay hours set at four hours at the status rate. Councilwoman McRavin seconded the motion. Councilpersons Milling, Segars, Reed, Baccus and Mayor Boyd voted in favor of the motion.

Mr. Ward said the other thing is, I would like to recommend that we change our mileage rate. Currently, we are paying something like fifty something cents a mile for reimbursement. The IRS recommends seventy-six cents reimbursement per mile. Mr. Ward said I would like the policy change to say that we agree to pay the amount that's recommended by IRS for reimbursement. That way, if it goes up, if it goes down, or whatever it does, we don't have to keep coming back for the change. We just set it on the scale that IRS sets it on and let that be our mark. Councilman Milling said whatever IRS allows. Mr. Ward said whatever they recommend. They are having a discussion among themselves, cannot hear them. It was stated that this was not on tonight's agenda for discussion.

Police Department Staffing Recommendation - Chief Jimmy Davis

Chief Davis said, in working last year's budget, police department had asked for the increase in salaries to keep up with surrounding agencies, especially departments that are ….I'm not going to use the word stealing but acquiring our officers to go work for other agencies, and some of it is because of salary. Granted, there's hundreds of other reasons closer to home, better schedule, or whatever reason. But the majority of the reasons are salary. In trying to work magic numbers, I presented it to our city manager. He presented it to you all, and y'all worked some incredible magic to give us what you were able to give us, and we are appreciative of that. However, we always love a little more. And I, in being so short for so long, I've come up with an idea, and I'll toss it to you. I hope you'll like it. If we suspend three positions, and by suspend, I mean we just freeze them, we're not going to fill them for at least a year. We can take the monies that have already been budgeted for those three positions and divide it by the number of officers that we currently have and give us an increase in salaries that would put us a couple of $100 over the agency that is acquiring our officers. Councilman Milling asked would you still be in a position to hire additional officers? Chief Davis said currently, I am ten short and freezing three. I've tried to fill these positions for a year now, and I'm unable to. I would get one, and then I'll lose one. I would get two and then lose two. By increasing it, I believe I would be able to get officers and keep them. I'm hurting for a minimum of five right now, so freezing three is not going to hurt me. It might help me get the seven that I'm in desperate need of. Councilwoman McRavin said, so you would be able to increase the new officer salaries as well. Chief Davis said it is across the board, except for me, I would decline mine to put it on everybody else's. Mayor Boyd asked, "Have you calculated what it would put the starting pay for a new officer? Chief Davis said Ms. Pridgen would be able to give you the exact numbers. I would say that freezing three positions would give us approximately $150,000 a year. And if you divided that into twenty-nine officers if we were fully staffed, it's going to cost you between $4,900 and $5,000. Mayor Boyd said my question is what the starting pay for a new officer is. Chief Davis said including this year's raise for an uncertified officer is $46,410. Chief Davis said for a certified officer it is $49,140. Councilman Gardner asked so as soon as they get certified they move up. Chief Davis said Yes, after the graduation. Mayor Boyd asked, "Do we know what it is just outside the city that we are competing with. (Unable to hear) Chief Davis said uncertified officers for Horry is $63,000. Mayor Boyd said I'm just talking about this area. Chief Davis said I do not have Florence. I have really

close to us uncertified is $50,577. Mayor Boyd and Chief Davis are having a discussion about the officers. Mayor Boyd said I think we talked about this once before. I have talked about it before all our vehicles should be wrapped, police officer cars should have some form of advertisement. It says proud supporter of the city of Darlington, and then the business name. Are we allowed to put anything like that on the side of the car? Chief Davis said nothing against any legitimate business out there, but sooner or later, a business that you don't want advertised on the side of your city paid for car is going to want to get on it. And I'm not downing any business at all, but sooner or later, it's just going to be that business that you know that's not the image we want. Would you put it on the side of your vehicle? Councilwoman Reed said any kind of advertising on the police car could show favoritism; I'm not one for that at all. Mayor Boyd said we have to think outside of the box. Councilman Gardner asked do you have the pay range that you were referencing a second ago? Mr. Ward said, "What this all boils down to is all of you know we can't hire or keep people because we're lower than the surrounding areas. What this does is it freezes three spots, and maybe later we can find some money to fill those slots again. But right now, we need to put people in those five or six spots we got available, and we need to keep the good people we got. So, we figured by freezing three of those and applying those funds, as he said, to our patrolman and right up the ladder that we will be able to keep the people we've got, and hire some new people, and make ourselves comfortable in the area so that we can put good people to work without losing them. Councilwoman Baccus said "So, in my opinion, I don't even understand what the problem is. If this is the way Chief figured he can move his department forward, why is this an issue? I don't understand. It shouldn't be a long conversation." Mayor Boyd said it shouldn't be a long conversation because we're discussing around and so forth. (Council continued the discussion about the officers). Mr. Ward said we're getting into executive session stuff at this point. What I would like, if you guys would agree that they need help, and we can take those three positions and use that money, Jimmy and I'll sit down and decide where we think it needs to be across the board, then that's what we'll do. If we need to go a little bit more on the bottom level, we'll try to do that. But the main thing is, we just need to keep the good people and be able to recruit people to fill those slots, but we can work that out if y'all just graciously allow us to do that then we can figure out how best to do that. Attorney Scott said that it would either have to be done by policy to reclassify the positions as he requested unless you have some equity issues with that. So, council would need to approve it by blanket policy, to allow non-specific to a person, but positions to receive adjustments to X. So, I wouldn't quite recommend you do it that way, where you give latitude to determine who it does not. If you wanted to treat it as a classification increase versus a merit bonus or something like that, you could treat it that way as a one-time bonus. I will point out to you if you're talking about freezing the positions, which there's no problem with doing that, but if you do it as a salary adjustment, you're making a permanent pay increase out of otherwise appropriated funds, so those FTEs would either need to be funded with additional funds later because those aren't available to be hired, or you would need to eliminate those FTEs because you permanently appropriated the funds elsewhere. Mayor Boyd said you could still go back later and put them back in. Attorney Scott said Correct, but when you put them back in, you do it with budgeted funds. Mayor Boyd

asked how do we make the motion? Attorney Scott said I think either is fine. If his request is to just freeze tonight, I think it's fine to do that. But I do think you're going to need to deal with that in your next budget cycle because a pay adjustment is different than a one-time bonus or merit pool because it's a permanent adjustment of the salary, so you're not just freezing those funds. You're taking the funds that would have been available not just this year, next year, the year after, year after they're gone. Mayor Boyd said it's probably better if we just eliminate those positions, and then once we get to the point that we can have more funds coming in to up his budget to add in more officers. Discussion back and forth about eliminating the positions. Councilman Gardner said to eliminate three positions tonight, have them come up with a rate classification per tier. Bring that back to council, and we vote on that next month. Is that what you're saying? Attorney Scott said based upon what you're describing, "Yes, I think that is what you need to do if you're going to change the classification, or if you have a number tonight as to what that's going to be, you certainly can approve that. I just haven't seen the number. Councilman Gardner said he's got a number at $4,950 per employee. And so, what my suggestion is actually look at the pay scale at the different tiers and see if it's balanced appropriately. Some levels may need to have more increase, and some may need to have less. And so, my thinking is to make sure we're doing this appropriately. Tonight, we eliminate the three positions and vote that through. Then he meets with our City Manager over the next couple of weeks, and we'll meet back on the 23rd or something, and then they can bring that scheduled tiered pay increase. Attorney Scott said I think that's a wise approach because we're going to adjust the scale itself. Mayor Boyd said we talked about this before. Chief Davis, correct me if I'm wrong, but because I had suggested that we take it and give it to the street officers, if you're short officers on the street, pay that money, dump it into the street officer, bring them up. So just using raw numbers, if a street officer was making $40,000, all of a sudden, you raise his salary to $50,000, then the detective or whoever's been here for 5 or 10 years has more experience than the other guy walking in the door. He's going to be making the same thing. So then, what part of that money had to go to them to kind of keep them from being unhappy? Councilman Milling said isn't that something that the chief and Ronnie need to work out, and we just need to eliminate the positions and authorize them to handle the division and bring it back. Councilwoman Reed said can't we just vote on allowing or approving the proposal that the chief is putting here to be able to? I don't even know whether we need to get into the money thing to be able to raise the salaries or to be competitive with our salaries with others, because that's what I'm understanding. What the whole thing is about is that we're losing them, and we can't keep them and you have come up with a way to try to keep them. So that's all I'm saying is just go ahead and approve what you got there. **Councilman Gardner made a motion to eliminate three positions and adjust our budget as such not to suspend, but to eliminate.** Discussion about eliminating the positions. **Councilman Gardner said I'd like to amend my motion. Councilman Gardner made a motion that we eliminate the three uncertified positions with the police department and eliminate that from our budget. I would secondly like to add to the motion that the Police Chief and the City Manager work on a tiered pay scale to take this division of funds that now are freed up to allocate them across the Police Department's salary.** Councilman Milling said I don't think we

want to eliminate them from the budget. I think we just want to eliminate positions and keep the money in that line item. Attorney Scott said Mr. Mayor, can I just make sure you understand the motion of what you're voting for? ***I just want to be sure I'm restating what Councilman Gardner is saying: is to eliminate three uncertified police officer positions and to reappropriate those budget funds for a reclassification of the pay scale for other officers in the police department, with the recommendation to come back to council at the next meeting on the implementation of that.*** **Councilman Milling seconded the motion. Councilpersons McRavin, Segars, Reed, Baccus and Mayor Boyd voted in favor of the motion.** Councilwoman McRavin asked about the recruiting of officers.

W & S Department Bids – Michael Morris, W & S Superintendent

Mr. Morris said we got three bids for repairs on Cotton Street to Orange Street, and back down Orange towards the entrance to the trailer park. One from Do-All Services, DNG Underground, and Chipley. Councilwoman McRavin said can you tell us a little bit about what's the scope of the project? What's going on? Mr. Morris said 660 feet of sewer pipe going from the curb of Cotton Reservoir all the way back out to Orange, and then another two hundred and something coming back down Orange. Councilwoman McRavin said is this an Issue is that why this is the priority? Councilman Milling said I have one question I want to ask you about the bids. Two of the bids appear to use 12-inch piping, and one of the bids says it's going to install 8-inch piping. Mr. Morris said it is eight inches. We've already purchased the pipe. They're just doing the labor. Mr. Morris said we have already purchased everything other than the labor. Councilman Gardner said any reason why you would recommend one of the others beyond price? Mr. Morris said we've used Do-All to help us with Wells Street. Never used the other two. Both of the other two have done work for the city of Florence as well. Councilman Gardner asked any issues. Have you talked to them about the other two? Mr. Morris said I haven't heard any issues. Councilman Milling asked do all of them have insurance and bonding. Mr. Morris said Yes. Councilwoman Reed asked what do you recommend? Because DNG is the one that seems like the lowest bid. Mr. Morris said they are good. I've never heard anything bad about them. I've researched and talked to them. Councilwoman McRavin asked So, how long has this issue been ongoing? Mr. Morris said two years. Councilwoman McRavin said so we finally have the funding to get this done. Councilwoman McRavin asked approximately how long do you think it would take to complete this one? Mr. Morris said it will take probably a two-week ordeal because everything is in the middle of the road. **Councilman Gardner made a motion to approve DNG for the bid for the water and sewer department for $46,200 to complete the Cotton & Orange Street project. Councilwoman Reed seconded the motion. Councilpersons McRavin, Segars, Milling, Baccus and Mayor Boyd voted in favor of the motion.** Councilwoman McRavin asked can you give us a quick update about our pump stations? Mr. Morris said Limit Street is done. We're going to draw down tomorrow. Only thing we're waiting for is Duke Energy to hook power to it, which they said could be up to five weeks. We pulled new three-phase to the station rather than single-phase with step-up transformers. We actually pulled three-phase. Councilwoman McRavin asked what does that mean? Be a little more specific. Mr. Morris said we are still working on it. Mr. Morris said Roanoke

Street was hit by lightning and ended up damaging a pump, and then we found a pump to go in there, but the bounding brackets weren't the same. Councilwoman McRavin asked about the one by the high school and Spring Street. Mr. Morris said yes that one is done. Everything is done from SCIIP project except for Limit Street, and we'll do the drawdown on it in the morning. Councilwoman McRavin said the issue that we were having with the Allen Street pump station where it got struck by lightning has that been rectified? Mr. Morris said we'd had that up and running for a while, but we just didn't put drives on it. The grant requires us to use drives for energy efficiency. Something happens and they get smoked. You don't have to go back to that. So, we put it back to where it's something we can actually work on. You have to have a laptop to get into the drive, and who knows how much the program costs. Councilwoman McRavin said is it operational. Mr. Morris said everything is perfect. The last thing I got, I have a picture of a generator. We have four water wells in the city. Only one has a generator, and that is the Hampton Street Well, which is actually on Hoole Street. Pine Street, right up here, has a generator on it, and then we noticed when the power went out, it didn't run. So, we got Caterpillar in to check it. When it was purchased, I think after a few years, it was installed on a pad without a fuel tank and there were no wires. The transfer switch is there, but it was never wired into the building. So, it's really just a generator with nowhere to run because it can't even get fuel. When Caterpillar came out and talked to us, that generator was going to be almost maxed out. But it would work perfectly at Auction Avenue behind the gun store on the bypass. This is a huge generator. It comes from McLeod; it's got 184 hours. Comes with a two-year warranty. Got a tank. It'll run Pine Street easily, and we stumbled upon this. We weren't searching for $55,000 for the generator and probably be another $20,000 is what they're estimating to install it, and then at a later time, where they're actually going to move the current one from there and take it over to Auction Avenue. So, all we'll have to do is put in a transfer switch wire and have a tank that would give us three wells operational for ice storm, hurricane, anything. The only bad part is the Hoole Street one, you have to hand prime it and they don't make parts for it anymore, and it sits so low. If we had another 1000-year flood, they would have to shut that well off to keep from damaging to the wellhead motor because it sits so low it would be under the water. Councilwoman McRavin said you are saying to replace the one on Pine Street, not to do anything on the one on Hoole Street. Mr. Morris said this would go straight to Pine Street. Councilwoman McRavin said this comes with a warranty from McLeod. Mr. Morris said not from McLeod. McLeod updated all their stuff, and I guess they traded it in to Caterpillar, who's always maintained and has the service records on it. Councilwoman McRavin said $55,000 to purchase and $20,000 to install. Councilman Gardner said I hate to tell you this, but I think we still need two quotes. Even though two other quotes are going to be for new ones, which will be more expensive. Mr. Morris said the other issue is, it wouldn't be something we have in our budget. Councilman Gardner said so between now and next meeting, can you find us two quotes. Councilman Milling said can you get us the hard numbers. Councilman Milling said will you be installing it yourself, or will you have somebody else install it? Mr. Morris said Caterpillar will handle all the installation warranty, everything. Councilman Milling said get it in writing, so we'll know what everything is. Councilwoman McRavin said would they be willing to move the other

for us and install it. Mr. Morris said they would move the other for us and install it. The ballpark of the total would be $95,000. But the second part, moving it, once we get it moved, we don't have to act on it right then, if we want to roll that through another budget year or plan a little bit ahead, it was just an opportunity presented to us. Mr. Ward said what happened when Hugo came through a lot of trees were blown down, uprooted water lines, and the water was draining out of the tanks and going out of the broken water lines. At the time, we got Duke Energy to get on that immediately, and they got the power going so we could run that well to keep that from happening. What these do is provide the emergency stuff that we need if something like that happens, and all the power goes down, lines are broken, stuff's going on. Those things can come on immediately, keep pumping the water, keeping the pressure on it, so that the impurities don't come in. And it's just a good thing to have when you have emergency weather that causes damage, and it could breach our water supply. So those two things are really good to have on your wells. Mr. Morris said kind of like when everybody was losing pressure during the ice storm last year, we were actually feeding the County water because we didn't lose power and all our stuff was intact, but it would have if our whole town would have lost pressure as well. Mr. Ward said you hope you never have to use it. Mr. Morris said it's significantly cheaper.

Float for Christmas Parade

Ms. Pridgen said you asked about the float the last time. Lee Andrews was checking on that. He said he had a call in to the float company, but he hadn't received a call back. Ms. Pridgen said at the last meeting Ms. Anna Dewitt said this probably should have been done a couple of months back. Councilman Milling said check with Lee Andrews and see if we can find out if maybe we're not going to be able to rent a float again. Ms. Pridgen said Mr. Andrews told her he was waiting on a call back from the company the last time I talked with him. Councilman Milling said he probably needs to call again himself rather than wait on the callback.

Amendment to Contract with Xpert Solutions Group, LLC **(*this item may be discussed in executive session)***

Consideration of Compliance Deadline and Notices Under Ordinance 2026-05 **(*this item may be discussed in executive session)***

Action on Budget Amendment Requests – Mr. Ward

Mr. Ward said do we want to vote on that after we come out of executive session? Mr. Scott said it would be better to defer that until after we come out of executive session.

Councilman Gardner made a motion to go into Executive Session at 7:39 PM. Councilman Milling seconded the motion.

Discussion and Receipt of legal advice regarding appointment of individuals to City boards, committees, and commissions – S.C. Code 30-4-70(a)(1)

a. Discussion and Receipt of legal advice regarding contractual matters regarding utility services – S.C. Code 30-4-70(a)(2)

b. Discussion and Receipt of legal advice regarding contractual matters related to acquisition of real property – S.C. Code 30-4-70(a)(2)

c. Discussion and Receipt of legal advice regarding pending litigation matters – S.C. Code 30-4-70(a)(2)

d. Discussion and Receipt of legal advice regarding contractual matters for the provision of administrative services by Xpert Solutions Group, LLC – S.C. Code 30-4-70(a)(2)

e. Discussion and Receipt of legal advice on employment matters regarding selection of the City Manager – S.C. Code 30-4-70(a)(1)

(**Possible Votes as a Result of Executive Session)**

Councilpersons McRavin, Segars, Reed, Baccus and Mayor Boyd voted in favor of the motion.

5 Minute Break

Upon motion of Councilman Gardner, seconded by Councilwoman Reed, executive session ended at 8:49 PM. All approved the motion.

Board Appointments

Councilman Gardner made a motion to appoint Ms. Letha Martin to the Beautification Board. Councilwoman McRavin seconded the motion. Councilpersons Milling, Reed, Baccus, segars and Mayor Boyd voted in favor of the motion.

Councilman Gardner made a motion to appoint Ms. Becky Ishman to the Beautification Board. Councilwoman McRavin seconded the motion. Councilpersons Milling, Reed, Baccus, segars and Mayor Boyd voted in favor of the motion.

Approval of Ordinance 2026-05

Councilman Milling made a motion to approve Ordinance No. 2026-05 requiring all extraterritorial water and sewer customers to execute a pre-annexation Covenant or a Petition for annexation; That City adopt the following implementation policy and authorize and direct city administration to 1) Provide formal and written notice within 30 days of the effective date of the ordinance to all current outside city water and sewer utility customers and the applicable property owners detailing the requirements of the ordinance and the process for compliance; 2) A compliance window. Granting each customer. 180 calendar days. From the adoption date. Of the ordinance to execute and deliver the required pre annexation covenant or annexation petition to the City; 3) Provide in the written notice that failure to submit the required documentation within the 180-calendar day period may result in utility service disconnection.

Subject to a final 30 calendar day notice of termination and opportunity to cure mailed prior to physical service disconnection. Councilwoman Reed seconded the motion. Councilpersons Gardner, McRavin, Baccus, Segars and Mayor Boyd voted in favor of the motion.

Councilman Garnder made a motion to approve amendment to the contract of Xpert Solutions, LLC as discussed in executive session. Councilwoman Reed seconded the motion. Councilpersons Milling, McRavin, Baccus, Segars and Mayor Boyd voted in favor of the motion.

Councilman Gardner made a motion to approve a budget amendment resolution to freeze the Public Information position to reallocate the funds in the amount of $90,000 to pay for contracted administrative services. Councilman Milling seconded the motion. Councilpersons McRavin, Segars, Reed, Baccus and Mayor Boyd voted in favor of the motion.

Reminders/Announcements

f. Friday, September 4, 2026, Concert Series on the Public Square featuring Andy & Oneida during NASCAR Race Week 5:30 – 8:30 PM

g. Monday, September 7, 2026 - Labor Day, City Offices Will Be Closed

h. Tuesday, September 22, 2026, at 6:00 PM – Special City Council Meeting

II. Adjournment

Councilwoman McRavin made a motion to adjourn the meeting at 8:53 PM. Councilwoman Reed seconded the motion. All approved the motion.

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Mayor

ATTEST:

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Clerk & Treasurer