



Colleton County Council Regular Meeting Minutes

Date: April 6, 2026

Time: 6:00 p.m.

Pursuant to the Freedom of Information Act, the news media was notified, and notice was posted 24 hours prior to the meeting.

Call to Order: Chairman Biering called the meeting to order at 6:00 p.m.

Roll Call: Chairman Scott Biering, Council Vice-Chairman Bubba Trippe, Councilman Steve Murdaugh, Councilman Johnny Frank, and Councilman Phillip Taylor were present. Chairman Biering declared a quorum was present.

Invocation & Pledge of Allegiance: Councilman Taylor gave the invocation and led the Pledge of Allegiance.

Approval of Agenda: Chairman Biering requested a motion to approve the agenda. Councilman Murdaugh made a motion to approve the agenda, seconded by Vice-Chairman Trippe. The motion carried unanimously.

Approval of Minutes: Chairman Biering requested a motion to approve the minutes of the Regular Meeting of March 2, 2026, the Council Workshop of March 19, 2026, and the Joint County/City of Walterboro Council Meeting of March 24, 2026. Vice-Chairman Trippe made a motion to approve the minutes, seconded by Councilman Frank. Discussion followed. The motion carried unanimously.

Awards and Recognitions:

a. Proclamation Honoring Mrs. Ruth Brown Johnson on her 100th Birthday: Chairman Biering read into the record the Proclamation honoring Mrs. Ruth Brown Johnson. Mrs. Johnson was not in attendance. Councilman Taylor made a motion approving the Proclamation, seconded by Councilman Murdaugh. Discussion followed. The motion carried unanimously.

b. Proclamation Recognizing April 20 – April 26, 2026, as Colleton County Rice Festival Week: Chairman Biering read into the record the Proclamation recognizing April 20 – April 26, 2026, as Colleton County Rice Festival Week. Councilman Taylor made a motion approving the

Proclamation, seconded by Councilman Murdaugh. Discussion followed. The motion carried unanimously

Appearances and Public Presentations:

a. Palmetto Railways Update – Patrick McCrory, Palmetto Railways President & CEO: Mr. McCrory updated Council on the upcoming start of operations on the Salkehatchie Rail Line, and the safety precautions that will be taken at railroad crossings that only have stop signs or yield signs.

b. Colleton County Library “Library of Things” Initiative – Carl Coffin, Colleton County Library Director: Mr. Coffin presented to Council the “Library of Things” initiative at the library.

Public Comment: (3 minutes per person/max time 20 minutes)

Carol Black: Ms. Black expressed her concerns regarding the financial health of the County.

Felicia Johnson: Ms. Johnson discussed the need for more streetlights on the street near her home.

Marsha Johnson: Ms. Johnson expressed concerns that the agenda does not provide sufficient information for the public to understand matters before Council or how to become involved.

Jeff Jones: Mr. Jones thanked Council for their efforts regarding the new Veterans Park and emphasized the importance of remembering and honoring veterans.

Administrator’s Briefing: Administrator Higgs provided an update on the following:

- The recent joint meeting with the City of Walterboro City Council, including discussions on establishing shared goals and working collaboratively.
- Efforts to improve transparency through implementation of new financial software for both internal use and public access via the County website.
- Progress of the budget season and development of a sound financial plan.
- Coordination with municipal partners to develop a strategic plan to benefit the County as a whole.
- Updates on Capital Project Sales Tax projects; and
- Development of a professional services agreement with Vance Consulting to review County ordinances and land use language.

Public Hearing: Vice Chairman Trippe made a motion to open the Public Hearing for the following topics:

a. An Ordinance to Provide for the Issuance and Sale of Not Exceeding Fifteen Million Dollars (\$15,000,000) Aggregate Principal Amount of General Obligation Bonds of Colleton County, South Carolina, in One or More Series; to Prescribe the Purposes for Which the Proceeds Shall be Expended; to Provide for the Payment Thereof; and to Provide for Other Matters Related Thereto

b. An Ordinance Authorizing the Dissolution of Colleton County's Interest in a Portion of Real Property Identified as TMS #132-00-00-028

The motion was seconded by Councilman Murdaugh and carried unanimously.

Public Comments:

Item a:

Carol Black – Ms. Black inquired whether general obligation bond proceeds must be used solely for capital projects or if they may be used for other purposes. The County's bond attorney, Lawrence Flynn, responded that such proceeds may be used for any lawful public purpose as determined by Council.

Ms. Black also asked how the County plans to service the debt. Administrator Higgs responded that internal efficiencies have been identified to support repayment of the bonds.

Ms. Black made additional comments regarding matters not related to the public hearing topic. Administrator Higgs stated that such discussion was not appropriate at that time.

Ms. Black requested a general overview of general obligation bonds, and Attorney Flynn provided a summary explanation.

Item b:

Councilman Taylor explained that the property is jointly owned by the County and the City and that the City has a water tower on the site. As the County has no interest in maintaining ownership, the ordinance would dissolve the County's interest in the property. There was no public comment on item b.

Councilman Murdaugh made a motion to close the Public Hearing, seconded by Vice-Chairman Tripp. The motion carried unanimously.

Old Business

a. Third Reading of an Ordinance to Provide for the Issuance and Sale of Not Exceeding Fifteen Million Dollars (\$15,000,000) Aggregate Principal Amount of General Obligation Bonds of Colleton County, South Carolina in One or More Series, to Prescribe the Purposes for Which the Proceeds Shall be Expended, to Provide for the Payment Thereof, and to Provide for Other Matters Related Thereto: Councilman Murdaugh made a motion to approve

the 3rd Reading of the Ordinance, seconded by Councilman Taylor. The motion carried unanimously.

b. Third Reading of an Ordinance Authorizing the Dissolution of Colleton County's Interest in a Portion of Real Property Identified as TMS #132-00-00-028: Councilman Murdaugh made a motion to approve the 3rd Reading of the Ordinance, seconded by Councilman Frank. The motion carried unanimously.

New Business

a. Resolution of Colleton County Council Awarding the Contract for CTC-30 SC303 Sidewalk Project: Councilman Taylor made a motion to approve the Resolution, seconded by Councilman Murdaugh. The motion carried unanimously.

b. Resolution of Colleton County Council Awarding the Contract for Construction Engineering and Inspection Services for the CTC-31 SC303 Sidewalk Project: Vice-Chairman Trippe made a motion to approve the Resolution, seconded by Councilman Frank. Discussion followed. The motion carried unanimously.

c. Resolution to Award the Contract for an Impact Fee Study to Tischler Bise: Councilman Taylor made a motion to approve the Resolution, seconded by Councilman Frank. The motion carried unanimously.

d. A Resolution to Approve Amendment of the Agreement for Development for Joint County Industrial Park, By and Between Charleston County, South Carolina and Colleton County, South Carolina, Providing for the Development of a Jointly Owned and Operated Industrial/Business Park, so as to Include Additional Property in Charleston County as Part of the Joint County Industrial Park: Councilman Taylor made a motion to approve the Resolution, seconded by Councilman Murdaugh. The motion carried unanimously.

e. Resolution to Accept a Grant Award from the South Carolina Department of Commerce (LocateSC Fund) and Authorize Execution of a Grant Agreement: Councilman Taylor made a motion to approve the Resolution, seconded by Councilman Murdaugh. The motion carried unanimously.

f. A Resolution to Establish Priorities for the 2026 Annual CDBG County Needs Assessment: Councilman Frank made a motion to approve the Resolution, seconded by Councilman Murdaugh. Discussion followed. The motion carried unanimously.

g. A Resolution to Provide Additional Funding for a PARD Grant for Improvements to the Ruffin Community Center: Vice-Chairman Trippe made a motion to approve the Resolution, seconded by Councilman Frank. The motion carried unanimously.

h. Resolution Designating April 2026 as Fair Housing Month: Councilman Murdaugh made a motion to approve the Resolution, seconded by Councilman Taylor. The motion carried unanimously.

i. Resolution to Approve a Policy of Non-Discrimination on the Basis of Disability Status and to Designate an ADA Coordinator: Councilman Frank made a motion to approve the Resolution, seconded by Councilman Taylor. Discussion followed. The motion carried unanimously.

j. A Resolution to Appoint Members to Board, Commission, and Committee Vacancies: Council proceeded with the appointment of members to various board, commission, and committee vacancies. Voting was conducted by secret ballot. The Clerk to Council tallied the ballots, and the results were verified by Administrator Higgs. Administrator Higgs announced the results. Based on the results, the following individuals were appointed:

Colleton County Board of Disabilities: Katrina Bowman

Colleton County Accommodations Tax Advisory Board: Henry Hiott

Colleton County Library Board of Trustees: Kimber Santorella, Mary Theresa Caldwell, Olivia Padgett

Colleton County Planning Commission: Ian Padgett

Colleton County Recreation Commission: Mark Tomedolskey, Ashley Shearin, Daquan Moultrie

Vice-Chairman Trippe made a motion to accept the results and to approve the Resolution, seconded by Councilman Murdaugh. The motion carried unanimously.

Council Time: Councilman Murdaugh discussed the fiscal responsibility of County Council and factors that contributed to the County's financial challenges. Councilman Murdaugh concluded his remarks by stating that Colleton County has a bright future ahead.

Chairman Biering discussed the importance of transparency, highlighted the new administration's efforts to promote it, and recognized staff's work in developing a strong financial plan moving forward.

Executive Session: Councilman Frank made a motion to go into Executive Session to discuss the following topic:

a. Receipt of Legal Advice Concerning Land Use Matters


The motion was seconded by Vice-Chairman Tripp. The motion carried unanimously. Council entered into Executive Session at 7:24 p.m.

Public Session: Councilman Taylor made a motion to return to Public Session, seconded by Councilman Frank. Council returned to Public Session at 8:21 p.m. Chairman Biering stated that no action was taken during Executive Session.

Adjournment: Councilman Frank made a motion to adjourn, seconded by Councilman Murdaugh. The motion carried unanimously. The meeting was adjourned at 8:21 p.m.



COLLETON COUNTY COUNCIL


By: Scott Biering, Chairman

ATTEST:


Martha B. Thompson, Clerk to Council

Approved: 5/4/26

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