



MINUTES

Regular Council Meeting
Tuesday, October 21, 2025, 6:00 PM

South Congaree Town Hall, Council Chambers
119 West Berry Rd., West Columbia, SC 29172

COUNCIL PRESENT:

Cindy Campbell, Mayor
Kitty Spires, Mayor Pro Tem
Brian Jackson
Debbie McIver
Dwayne Prosser

COUNCIL ABSENT:

STAFF AND OTHERS PRESENT:

Pastor Terrie Cutter, Safe Harbor Worship Center
Crystal Bouknight, Town Administrator
Kelli Ricard, Town Clerk
Lt. James Marchant, South Congaree Police Department
Cpl. Ty McComas, South Congaree Police Department
Susan Battles, Deputy Town Clerk
Wally Shangle, Planning Commission, Chairman
Joseph Dickey, Town Attorney
Dennard Smalls, Haynsworth, Sinkler, and Boyd

MEDIA NOTIFICATION:

The agenda was posted at Town Hall, and The State, Free Times, Lexington County Chronicle, Cayce-West Columbia News, The Columbia Star, COLADaily.com, as well as radio and television stations, were notified by email on October 20, 2025.

I. Call to Order

Mayor Campbell called the meeting to order at 6:00 PM. A quorum was present.
Mayor Campbell led in the Pledge of Allegiance. Pastor Terrie Cutter, Safe Harbor Worship Center led the invocation.

II. Presentation

Mayor Campbell recognized the Town Clerk, Kelli Ricard, who read the resolution honoring Mrs. Betty Vining on the celebration of her 95th birthday. Mayor and Council presented a copy of the resolution to Mrs. Vining and family. Council Member Jackson made a motion to approve the resolution and Council Member McIver seconded the motion.

The motion passed unanimously.

III. Approval of Minutes

Mayor Campbell entertained a motion to approve the minutes for the September meetings. Mayor Pro Tem Spires made a motion to approve the September 9, 16, 24, and 26, minutes collectively. Council Member Jackson seconded the motion.

The motion passed unanimously.

I. Public Comments

Mayor Campbell opened the floor for public comments. Town Clerk, Kelli Ricard, stated each citizen must state their name and address for the record and they would be limited to three minutes.

- a. Mr. Larry Jackson of 750 Ramblin Road stated he had three items to bring to Council's attention.

The first item being a disagreement with the recent vote to extend Council terms by one and a half years. He stated that Council should not have the authority to extend their terms beyond the four years specified in the Town's ordinance.

Mr. Jackson emphasized the importance of prioritizing sewer infrastructure along Main Street to support the town's growth. He noted that while water lines were installed in 2008 or 2009, the addition of sewer lines should have followed. He stated that sewer infrastructure should take precedence over the construction of a new Town Hall, as it would enable the town to attract new businesses and generate additional revenue.

Mr. Jackson also urged Council to slow down on spending, expressing concern that continued high expenditure could impact on the Town's ability to adequately staff the Police Department.

- b. Mr. Ben Vining of 163 W. Berry Road recommended that Council consider adjusting the length of the next two Council terms to three years and seven months. He stated that this approach would simplify the election process and allow the Town to return to four-year terms in 2029 and 2031. Mr. Vining expressed his belief that this adjustment would be acceptable to the Town, its citizens, and the Election Commission.
- c. Mr. Glenn Creech of 169 W. Berry Road addressed Council regarding the proposed ordinance to extend current Council terms by eighteen months. He cited the South Carolina Ethics Act (S.C. Code § 8-13-700), stating that such an extension would constitute a personal benefit to elected officials by providing additional salary, power, and prestige.

Mr. Creech referenced amendments made in January 2025 to Chapter 15 of the South Carolina Municipal Elections Code, which outline provisions for general elections in municipalities held in both even and odd years, in April or November. He noted that the amended code specifies when terms expire based on election timing but does not prohibit municipal elections from occurring in April.

He further cited S.C. Code § 5-15-40, which establishes that municipal mayors and council members are elected for terms of either two or four years. He stated that municipalities do not have the authority to enact ordinances that deviate from this term structure. According to Mr. Creech, the proposed ordinance violates this statute by extending current terms beyond the legally permitted duration.

While acknowledging that S.C. Code § 5-15-50 allows municipalities to set the timing of general elections by ordinance, Mr. Creech emphasized that this provision does not permit current officeholders to extend their own terms beyond what they were elected to serve.

- d. Mr. Bob Gilroy of 1442 Anthony Drive was unable to attend the meeting but requested the Town Clerk to read his comments to Council. A written statement was submitted to Council regarding the proposed change to Town election timing.

Mr. Gilroy expressed full support of Council's unanimous vote to move elections to November of odd-numbered years beginning in 2027. The statement noted that aligning Town elections with Lexington County elections would likely improve voter turnout and reduce confusion regarding voting locations.

Mr. Gilroy agreed with Council's decision to delay implementation until 2027, to allow sufficient time to inform the electorate of the new election date and location, identified as the American Legion Hut. It was also noted that an earlier change to November 2025 would unfairly shorten the campaign period for potential candidates.

While acknowledging that this change would extend current Council terms, the commenter expressed no objection, citing the Council's ongoing work and commitment to the Town. The statement also recognized that some Council members may not wish to serve an extended term and supported the option for voluntary resignation, with a special election to fill any resulting vacancy.

The commenter concluded by expressing confidence in the current Mayor's and Council's leadership and decision-making, while voicing concern over divisive political rhetoric from past unsuccessful candidates. The statement encouraged the Town to reject such divisiveness and continue moving forward constructively.

- e. Mr. Garrett Campbell of 1459 Pine Street was unable to attend the meeting but submitted a written statement to be read by the Town Clerk.

In his statement, Mr. Campbell strongly urged Council to vote no on the proposed repeal of the election ordinance change. He expressed concern that repealing the ordinance would reverse recent progress and return the Town to practices lacking transparency and accountability.

Mr. Campbell stated that the ordinance had been passed to ensure fairness, consistency with state guidance, and alignment with the electoral structure used by all other municipalities in Lexington County, except Gaston. He argued that repealing the ordinance would suppress voter participation by reinstating off-cycle elections held on obscure dates, which historically resulted in low voter turnout.

He further asserted that the repeal effort appeared to be led by Council Member Jackson and characterized it as an attempt to delay reform and maintain outdated procedures.

Mr. Campbell questioned why South Congaree should be held to a lower electoral standard than neighboring municipalities such as Cayce, West Columbia, Swansea, and Batesburg-Leesville.

In closing, Mr. Campbell stated that the residents of South Congaree were tired of political games and called for stability, transparency, and responsible leadership. He urged Council not to repeal the ordinance, stating that doing so would be a disservice to the citizens they were elected to represent.

II. Unfinished Business

Mayor Campbell entertained a motion for Second Reading Consideration of an Ordinance to Repeal Ordinance No. 2024-05, Adopting a Special Events Permit Chapter 96, Section .01 through .07, Pertaining to Special Events in the Town of South Congaree. Mayor Pro Tem Spires made a motion to repeal the Special Events Ordinance, and Council Member Prosser seconded the motion.

The motion passed unanimously.

III. New Business

- a. Mayor Campbell entertained a motion for consideration to approve PowerSource as the lowest responsible responsive bidder for the electrical work at South Congaree Town Hall. Council Member Jackson made a motion to approve PowerSource, and Council Member McIver seconded the motion.

The motion passed unanimously.

- b. Mayor Campbell entertained a motion for consideration to approve CivicPlus bundle agreement for website services. Council Member Jackson made a motion to approve CivicPlus, and Council Member Prosser seconded the motion.

The motion passed unanimously.

- c. Mayor Campbell entertained a motion for first reading consideration of an ordinance amending the business license ordinance of the Town of South Congaree to update the class schedule as required by Act 176 of 2020. Council Member Jackson made a motion to approve the first reading to amend the business license ordinance, and Mayor Pro Tem Spires seconded the motion.

The motion passed unanimously.

- d. Mayor Campbell entertained a motion for first reading consideration of an ordinance adopting by reference the Lexington County Stormwater Management Ordinance 19-10 and Land Development Manual, Excluding Flood Damage Prevention Portion and Other Matters Related. Council Member Jackson made a motion to approve the first reading to adopt the Lexington County Stormwater Management Ordinance 19-10, and Council Member McIver seconded the motion.

The motion passed unanimously.

- e. Mayor Campbell entertained a motion for consideration to approve the budget for the 2025 Christmas Tree Lighting, Christmas decorations, and Christmas Parade. Mayor Pro Tem Spires made a motion to approve the budget for the 2025 Christmas events, and Council Member Jackson seconded the motion.

The motion passed unanimously.

- f. Mayor Campbell entertained a motion for consideration to approve the Town Administrator's recommendation for changes to the operating hours at Town Hall. Council Member Jackson made a motion to approve the new operating hours at Town Hall, and Council Member Prosser seconded the motion.

Council Member Prosser asked the Town Administrator to restate the hours. The hours would be Monday, Tuesday, Wednesday, and Friday from 9 AM until 5 PM. Thursday would be 9 AM to 12 PM to allow staff uninterrupted time to work.

Mayor Pro Tem Spires asked the Town Clerk to publish the new hours on the Town's website, electronic sign, and on Facebook, as well as post it outside of Town Hall.

The motion passed unanimously.

IV. Adjourn to Executive Session

Mayor Campbell made a motion to adjourn to Executive Session for matters as listed on the agenda.

- a. Discussion of Personnel Matters Related to the Police Department (Pursuant to S.C. Code Ann. § 30-4-70 (A) (1))
- b. Receipt of Legal Advice Related to Town of South Congaree Personnel Policies and Personnel Matters (Pursuant to S.C. Code Ann. § 30-4-70 (A) (2))
- c. Receipt of Legal Advice Related to Proposed Changes in Municipal Ordinances (Pursuant to S.C. Code Ann. § 30-4-70 (A) (2))
- d. Receipt of Legal Advice Related to Town Hall Financing (Pursuant to S.C. Code Ann. § 30-4-70 (A) (2))
- e. Receipt of Legal Advice Related to Pending Litigation (Pursuant to S.C. Code Ann. § 30-4-70 (A) (2))

Council Member Jackson seconded the motion to adjourn to Executive Session. Council adjourned to executive session at 6:34 PM.

The motion passed unanimously.

IV. Reconvene to Regular Session

Mayor Campbell stated no votes were taken during the executive session and made a motion to adjourn the executive session and reconvene to the regular session. Mayor Pro Tem Spires seconded the motion. Council reconvened at 7:36 PM.

The motion passed unanimously.

V. After Reconvening to Regular Session, Action May be Taken by Council Regarding Matters Discussed in the Executive Session

Mayor Campbell asked if there were any motions for consideration after leaving the executive session.

- a. Council Member McIver made a motion to allow the Town Administrator to move forward with both personnel matters discussed in executive session. Council Member Jackson seconded the motion.

The motion passed unanimously.

- b. Council Member Prosser made a motion to approve the employee handbook as discussed in executive session. Mayor Pro Tem Spires seconded the motion.

The motion passed unanimously.

V. New Business Continued

Mayor Campbell entertained a motion for First Reading Consideration of an Ordinance to Repeal the July 29, 2025, Ordinance Amending Title 3, Chapter 34, Section 34.02 of the Town of South Congaree Code of Ordinances Regarding Municipal Elections and Other Matters Related Thereto. Council Member Jackson made a motion to approve the first reading of the ordinance to repeal the ordinance regarding municipal elections, and Council Member McIver seconded the motion.

Mayor Campbell opened the floor for discussion. Council Member McIver stated that she supported the recommendation made by Mr. Ben Vining to retain the current election date in April. She proposed that, for the next two election cycles, candidates be informed that their terms would be limited to three and a half years. Following those two elections, the Town would return to a standard four-year election cycle. Council Member McIver noted that this approach would help align South Congaree with other municipalities on the same odd-year election schedule, making it easier for the Election Commission to manage.

Mayor Pro Tem Spires expressed concern about making continual changes to the election schedule. She stated that she preferred to leave the dates as previously approved and supported moving the election date to November 2027. She noted that holding the election in 2025 would not provide sufficient time to properly publicize the change to the electorate.

Mayor Pro Tem Spires also pointed out that if the Town did not move the election to November, it would be responsible for covering the costs associated with staffing the April election. Additionally, she addressed misinformation circulating on social media, clarifying that Council was not discussing the matter behind closed doors. She explained that executive sessions are used appropriately to receive legal advice on such issues.

Council Member Jackson asked whether there was a legal requirement for the municipality to change the election date. Following additional discussion, Town Attorney Joseph Dickey clarified that there is no mandate requiring the change. He stated that the election date may remain in April if the Town chooses to do so.

Mayor Campbell called for the vote to approve the repeal of the ordinance regarding municipal elections. Council Members Jackson and McIver voted in favor of the repeal, and Mayor Campbell, Mayor Pro Tem Spires, and Council Member Prosser voted in opposition.

The motion failed with two votes in favor of the repeal and three in opposition.

VI. Adjournment

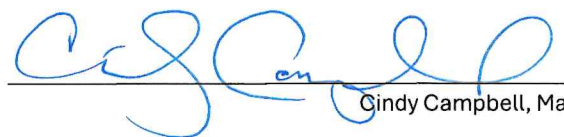
Mayor Campbell entertained a motion to adjourn. Mayor Pro Tem Spires seconded the motion.

The meeting adjourned at 7:51 PM.

The motion passed unanimously.



Kelli Ricard, Town Clerk



Cindy Campbell, Mayor

Date Approved: 11/18/25