



GREENVILLE COUNTY COUNCIL

Minutes
Regular Meeting
June 17, 2025
6:01 p.m.

Council Chambers
301 University Ridge
Greenville, South Carolina

Council Members

Benton Blount, *Chairman, District 19*
Rick Bradley, *Vice-Chairman, District 26*
Liz Seman, *Chairwoman Pro Tem, District 24*
Joey Russo, *District 17*
Kelly Long, *District 18*
Stephen Shaw, *District 20*
Curt McGahhey, *District 21*
Frank Farmer, *District 22*
Alan Mitchell, *District 23*
Ennis Fant, Sr., *District 25*
Garey Collins, *District 27*
Dan Tripp, *District 28*

Pursuant to the Freedom of Information Act, notice of the meeting date, time, place and agenda was posted online, at 301 University Ridge, Greenville, and made available to the newspapers, radio stations, television stations and concerned citizens.

Council Members Absent

None

Council Members Remote Participation

None

Staff Present

Joe Kernell, *County Administrator*
Chris Antley, *County Attorney*
Regina McCaskill, *Clerk to Council*
Jessica Stone, *Deputy Clerk to Council*
Pam Gilliam, *Administrative Assistant*
Julie Wallace, *Administrative Assistant*
Terrence Galloway, *Information Systems*
Caleb Hudson, *Information Systems*
Bob Mihalic, *Governmental Affairs Officer*

Ted Lambrecht, *Assistant County Administrator*
Ronald Hollister, *Assistant County Administrator*
Hesha Gamble, *Assistant County Administrator*
Nicole Wood, *Assistant County Administrator*
Tavia Gaddy, *Greenville Area Development Corporation*
Ruth Parris, *Budget Director*
Deneise Branyon, *Management and Budget*
Lisa Shealey, *Management and Budget*
Maria Tooley, *Management and Budget*

Others Present

Sheriff Hobart Lewis, *Greenville County Sheriff's Office*

Call to Order

Chairman Blount

Invocation

Councilor Farmer

Pledge of Allegiance

Item (4) **Approval of Minutes**

a. June 3, 2025 – Regular County Council Meeting

Action: Chairwoman Pro Tem Seman moved to approve the minutes of the June 3, 2025 – Regular County Council meeting.

Motion carried.

Item (6) **Appearances – Current Agenda Items**

- **Jack Logan** – appeared regarding Item 10.b. FY 2026 Greenville County Budget
- **Ruth Patton** – appeared regarding Item 10.b. FY 2026 Greenville County Budget
- **Becky Godbey** – appeared regarding Item 10.b. FY 2026 Greenville County Budget
- **Thomas LeGrand** – appeared regarding Item 10.b. FY 2026 Greenville County Budget
- **Amber Stewart** – appeared regarding Item 10.b. FY 2026 Greenville County Budget
- **Matt Rollins** – appeared regarding Item 10.b. FY 2026 Greenville County Budget
- **Denise Ernul** – appeared regarding Item 10.b. FY 2026 Greenville County Budget
- **Tracey Byrd** – appeared regarding Item 10.b. FY 2026 Greenville County Budget
- **Lee Turner** – appeared regarding Item 10.b. FY 2026 Greenville County Budget
- **James Hoard** – appeared regarding Item 10.b. FY 2026 Greenville County Budget
- **Ed Paxton** – appeared regarding 12.b. Greenville County Zoning Ordinance Text Amendment – Altamont Road Access (CZ-2025-044)

Item (7) **Public Hearings**

a. Land Development Regulation Amendment / Cluster Housing

A public hearing was held for the purpose of receiving comments from the public regarding an ordinance to delete Article 11 of the Greenville County Land Development Regulations and to prohibit new cluster development in Greenville County.

- **Steve Bichel** – appeared in favor of the proposed
- **Deborah Manning** – appeared in favor of the proposed

- **Sherry Barrett** – appeared in opposition to the proposed
- **Emily Poole** – appeared in opposition to the proposed

There being no other speakers, Vice-Chairman Bradley declared the public hearing closed.

Item (8) **Consent Agenda**

- a.** Initiate Zoning Text Amendment / ESD-PM Sections 4, 6, and 8:5 – Proposed Ordinance
- b.** Greenville County Redevelopment Authority / 2025-2029 Consolidated Plan including PY2025 Annual Action Plan
- c.** Community Project Application / City of Simpsonville - Upstate Backpack Blessings \$3,000.00
- d.** Community Project Application / Dunklin Fire & Rescue District – Turnout Gear \$7,000.00
- e.** Community Project Application / City of Mauldin – Wreaths Across America \$2,500.00

- f. Community Project Application / City of Mauldin – Mauldin Cultural Center Improvements \$5,000.00)
- g. Community Project Application / Clear Spring Fire & Rescue District – Low Pressure Fire Fighting Nozzles \$5,228.00
- h. Community Project Application / City of Simpsonville – Simpsonville Area Chamber of Commerce Map Project \$5,000.00
- i. Community Project Application / Parker District Fire Department – Kids 4 Christ Feeding Program \$4,000.00
- j. Community Project Application / Greenville County Historic Preservation Commission – Designation Plaques \$2,323.40
- k. Community Project Application / Greenville County Sheriff's Office – Drones \$7,500.00
- l. Community Project Application / City of Mauldin – Mauldin Amphitheater Improvements \$5,000.00
- m. Community Project Application / Greenville Transit Authority – Greenlink Plaque \$5,000.00

Action: Chairwoman Pro Tem Seman moved approval of the Consent Agenda items.

Motion carried.

Item (9)

Resolutions

- a. **Resolution to Initiate an Impact Fee Ordinance and Associated Capital Improvement Plan in Greenville County**

Action: Councilor Collins moved for adoption a resolution directing the Planning Commission to initiate and review studies to make a recommendation for a County of Greenville Impact Fee Ordinance and associated Capital Improvement Plan covering the unincorporated area of Greenville County.

Councilor Tripp inquired as to why the Planning Commission would make a recommendation to Council.

Mr. Antley stated, as required by state statute, the Planning Commission was to develop the capital improvement plan as well as the proposed ordinance for the impact fees.

Councilor Tripp asked why the item was being introduced.

Chairman Blount stated it was his opinion, as well as others, that developers had profited from Greenville County, but had not invested in its infrastructure. He stated it was a tool the top five counties in the State, minus Greenville County, had implemented as they were experiencing the same issues with developers.

Councilor Tripp stated the developers would pay the fee and pass it on to the homebuyers. He stated he had heard the proposed fee would be \$4,500 per house, for the builder. That amount would be charged back to the buyer. He stated that would make housing unaffordable.

Chairman Blount stated he did not completely disagree with Mr. Tripp and that was the purpose of the study. He had also heard the market rate value could only go so high, thus limiting the increase in a home's price.

Councilor Tripp stated he felt the proposed item was "a mistake."

Action: Councilor Tripp moved to table the item and send it back to the appropriate committee.

Mr. Antley stated to table the item would "kill" it; the item would not go back to the Committee.

Councilor Tripp stated he had a clear record; he was not "pro developer", he was "pro taxpayer."

Chairman Blount stated the proposed resolution was for the implementation of a study and had nothing to do with actually starting the process of impact fees. The study should provide the information needed for Council to make an informed decision about implementing impact fees or not. Mr. Blount stated there would also be workshops regarding the issue.

Councilor Shaw stated the resolution should specify what kind of study was to be conducted. The Supreme Court required a rational nexus, meaning the fees collected must be connected to specific infrastructure. In his opinion, it sounded like the intended study was something different. He inquired as to the nature of the study.

Chairman Blount stated a study was required by the State to determine if the County met the qualifications to even look at impact fees and to determine if they could be applied.

Councilor Shaw stated Council needed to know that the study would not indicate whether the County could or should go forward with the implementation of impact fees.

Chairman Blount stated State law required the study; it was the only avenue available to begin the process.

Councilor Shaw stated he was in favor of impact fees, but it was important to understand they were not a growth curbing tool. If impact fees were eventually implemented by Greenville County, there would be increased money for infrastructure, but growth would not be decreased whatsoever.

Chairman Blount stated if decreased growth was a benefit, the County would certainly take it. He felt impact fees would address creating proper infrastructure versus plowing up ground, putting something down and having to re-address it 20 years later.

Councilor Seman asked if members of the Planning Commission would conduct the study or would they appoint an ad hoc committee. She also inquired how the stakeholder piece would work.

Mr. Antley stated the Planning Commission could set up its own procedures; however, he stated he had never seen a study done without the appointment and hiring of an expert in the field to meet the statutory requirements of the capital improvement plan.

Chairwoman Pro Tem Seman asked if there were funds available in the budget to pay for that service.

Mr. Kernell stated funding would have to come from the Planning Department budget.

Motion to table was denied by a roll call vote of four (McGahhey, Mitchell, Fant and Tripp) in favor and eight (Russo, Long, Blount, Shaw, Farmer, Seman, Bradley and Collins) in opposition. *

Action: Chairwoman Pro Tem Seman moved to hold the item until the next regularly scheduled Council meeting in order to obtain additional information.

Councilor Tripp asked if Council would have any input in the process.

Mr. Antley stated Council's input would be needed when a product was produced which required approval, denial or amendment of a capital improvement plan and a proposed ordinance. The process would be very similar to the Comprehensive Plan Review. The Planning Commission would present it to Council as a body, to be voted on in accordance to State law.

**Councilor McGahhey stated he had intended to vote against Councilor Tripp's motion to table and requested his vote be recorded as such.*

Revised Vote:

Motion to table was denied by a roll call vote of three (Mitchell, Fant and Tripp) in favor and none (Russo, Long, Blount, Shaw, McGahhey, Farmer, Seman, Bradley and Collins) in opposition.

Councilor Fant stated Council had looked at fees in 2019 and eventually decided not to pursue the issue. When a developer purchased a lot, the fee was passed on to the builder and eventually to the buyer. He stated impact fees were not just "a money grab." State law restricted how and where the money could be used. For instance, money collected in Simpsonville could not be used for a road project in Greer. In 2022, a person making the median income in Greenville County could purchase a median priced house in Greenville County. Since 2022, that number had dropped precipitously. He stated housing prices were skyrocketing and suggested Council be cognizant and thoughtful before trying to "dump on developers", because they were not going to allow themselves to be dumped on. They would put those fees toward the buyer's cost.

Action: Councilor McGahhey moved to amend the proposed resolution to state, the Planning Commission had to report back to Council within 360 days instead of the 180 days indicated in the resolution. He felt that would give the Planning Commission adequate time.

Chairman Blount asked Mr. Antley to weigh in on the timeframe indicated in the proposed resolution.

Mr. Antley stated there was no required timeframe indicated in the State statute; staff included one for possible discussion.

Chairwoman Pro Tem Seman stated her motion was on the floor and required a vote prior to Council taking up Mr. McGahhey's motion.

Action: Chairwoman Pro Tem Seman called for the question on the motion to hold.

Without objection, motion to call for the question carried.

Motion to hold the item until the next Council meeting (July 15, 2025) carried by a roll call vote of eight (Russo, Shaw, Blount, Mitchell, Seman, Fant, Bradley and Tripp) in favor and four (Long, McGahhey, Farmer and Collins) in opposition.

Item (10) **Ordinances – Third Reading**

a. Glassy Mountain Fire Service Area / General Obligation Bond Request

Action: Councilor Collins moved for adoption at third reading an ordinance to provide for the issuance and sale of not exceeding \$1,100,000 Greenville County, South Carolina, General Obligation Bonds (Glassy Mountain Fire Service Area Project), Series 2025b; to prescribe the purposes for which the proceeds shall be expended; to provide for the payment thereof; and other matters related thereto.

Motion carried.

b. FY 2026 Greenville County Budget

Action: Vice-Chairman Bradley moved for adoption at third reading an ordinance adopting the County of Greenville FY 2026 Budget.

Amendment 1:

Action: Councilor Mitchell moved to amend the FY 2026 budget to provide funding in order to establish a workforce housing down payment assistance program for Greenville County employees as follows:

Under the Affordable Housing Fund

<i>Increase Other Revenue</i>	<i>\$750,000</i>
<i>Increase Transfer-in from Infrastructure Bank</i>	<i>\$1,250,000</i>
<i>Increase Operational Support (acct. #500290)</i>	<i>\$2,000,000</i>

Under the Infrastructure Bank Fund

<i>Increase Transfer-out to Affordable Housing Fund</i>	<i>\$1,250,000</i>
<i>Reduce Transfer-out to Road Program (acct. #509090)</i>	<i>\$1,250,000</i>

Under the Road Program Fund

<i>Reduce Transfer-in from Infrastructure Bank</i>	<i>\$1,250,000</i>
<i>Reduce Design/Build Contract (acct. #503000)</i>	<i>\$1,250,000</i>

Councilor Shaw stated the South Carolina Department of Education website included information about the Palmetto Heroes Program. The program was a housing finance and development authority initiative available to law enforcement, correction officers, teachers, firefighters, veterans, nurses and EMS personnel. Mr. Shaw stated the proposed amendment appeared to duplicate that program.

Councilor Mitchell stated his proposed amendment was not a duplication of the Palmetto Heroes Program.

Chairwoman Pro Tem Seman stated several of the evening's speakers had expressed concerns about the number of available affordable housing units in the County. While she saw the proposed amendment as a great way to help County employees, she worried that it did not address the lack of available units. Ms. Seman stated \$2 million could do a lot in terms of construction, repair and housing for senior citizens. She would love to have a program that helped Greenville County employees and put more units on the market.

Councilor Mitchell stated he agreed wholeheartedly with Councilor Seman. The number of available units needed to be increased. He stated the goal of his amendment was to maintain the level of funding already in place. Mr. Mitchell stated the proposal in Amendment 5 would cut the funding to \$500,000, which would devastate the County's Affordable Housing Program. He would like to maintain the funding level at \$3 million, which would allow maintaining current units and possibly increasing the number.

Councilor Fant stated for the last eight years, Council had pushed a false narrative regarding Workforce Housing and its occupants. He stated Workforce Housing was not for people who did not work, who sat on the front porch smoking cigarettes, playing cards and drinking beer. Workforce Housing funds helped essential workers such as law enforcement, firefighters, paramedics, nurses, school teachers and librarians. Mr. Fant stated there were current Council Members who said their constituents did not want tax dollars used for Workforce Housing; that was failed leadership because they were allowing the false narrative to persist. He stated those same people were tax adverse, spending money and campaigning against any elected official that ever voted to raise taxes, even if it was necessary. Workforce Housing produced additional property tax revenue over the life of the property, keeping the County from having to raise property taxes in the future. New housing construction was an important economic engine of any community. Mr. Fant stated the \$2 million in question was .4 of 1% of the County's total budget. He asked everyone in the audience who believed that every person was an equal member of the human family, regardless of social economic status, and that having a safe, decent place to live was not a privilege, but a basic, fundamental human right to stand.

Councilor McGahhey thanked Mr. Fant for his "passionate bloviating." He stated in 2024, GCRA received \$4,152,524 in federal grants and its total revenues were \$8.173 million. In that same year, GCRA spent \$2.9 million in Housing Services, \$450,000 in Public Works, \$1.65 million for Special Projects/Sub-recipients and \$1.697 million for Administrative costs. Mr. McGahhey stated he recently asked Mr. Smith, the Director of GCRA, how much they spent on administrative costs and he was unable to provide an answer.

Mr. Kernell stated the County did not receive any monies from GCRA for administrative fees.

Councilor Mitchell's motion to amend was denied by a roll call vote of five (Russo, Mitchell, Seman, Fant and Tripp) in favor, six (Long, Blount, Shaw, McGahhey, Bradley and Collins) in opposition and one (Farmer) abstention.

Amendment 2:

Action: Councilor Russo moved to amend the FY2026 Budget to provide an additional three percent (3%) pay increase for specified Public Safety personnel including Class 1 officers, Class 2 officers, Class 3 officers, medical staff, Emergency Medical Technicians, Paramedics, Dispatchers, and Coroners (excluding elected positions and directors) as follows:

Under the General Fund

<i>Increase Transfer-in from Infrastructure Bank</i>	<i>\$2,177,877</i>
<i>Increase salaries and benefits for EMS</i>	<i>\$515,568</i>
<i>Increase salaries and benefits for Public Safety</i>	<i>\$766,576</i>
<i>Increase salaries and benefits Sheriff's Office and Coroner</i>	<i>\$895,733</i>

Under the Medical Charities Fund

<i>Increase salaries and benefits for Detention Medical</i>	<i>\$159,825</i>
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Under the Infrastructure Bank Fund

<i>Increase Transfer-out to General Fund</i>	<i>\$2,337,702</i>
<i>Reduce Transfer-out to Road Program (acct. #509090)</i>	<i>\$2,337,702</i>

Under the Road Program Fund

<i>Reduce Transfer-in from Infrastructure Bank</i>	<i>\$2,337,702</i>
<i>Reduce Design/Build Contract (acct. #503000)</i>	<i>\$2,337,702</i>

Councilor Russo stated Public Safety was the number one priority in the County's budget. He stated it was important to get as much money into the roads as possible and the proposed amendment would have a minimal impact on the roads; less than \$2.5 million dollars. The funds would go directly to the men and women who put their lives on the line every single day to protect the citizens of Greenville County.

Chairwoman Pro Tem Seman asked if Animal Control Officers and Code Enforcement Officers would be included. Many of them also work the front lines, working hand-in-hand with law enforcement and were also in harm's way. Ms. Seman asked if the additional monies would affect the Step Program that was in place.

Mr. Kernell stated Animal Control Officers would qualify for the additional monies.

Councilor Russo stated the Step Program capped at Sergeant. The proposed increase would cover pay disparities; it was actually more lucrative to be a Sergeant working overtime than a Lieutenant or Captain, who were not eligible for the additional pay afforded by the Step Program.

Councilor Farmer asked if the proposed amendment deleted the positions that the Sheriff was unable to fill.

Councilor Russo stated both the Sheriff's Office and EMS had decreased the amount of positions they were initially scheduled to receive.

Mr. Kernell stated the 12 new positions for the Sheriff's Office had been deleted; there were no deletions for EMS.

Councilor McGahhey stated he was very sympathetic to everything Mr. Russo had said and his proposed amendment was very similar. The difference was someone making \$130,000 a year did not need a 6% raise in Greenville County, especially not on the back of taxpayers. He stated if an individual was a public servant, they entered public service knowing that it was not the highest paid job. The public did not see all the benefits that went along with being a "state employee." Most people did not receive a pension and health care for the rest of their lives after retirement. He agreed that public safety was government's number one job, but to give people making \$120,000 and more per year a 6% raise was unconscionable. Officers making \$50,000 per year absolutely deserved a 6% raise. To say a sergeant could make more with overtime than a Lieutenant was a red herring. He was open to an amendment that tiered the increases, based on current salary. He stated the point he was trying to make was that the more money a person made, the less they needed a large raise.

Councilor Russo stated law enforcement officers did not receive lifetime benefits.

Councilor Russo's motion to amend carried by a roll call vote of nine (Russo, Blount, Shaw, Farmer, Mitchell, Seman, Fant, Bradley and Tripp) in favor and three (Long, McGahhey and Collins) in opposition.

Amendment 3:

Action: Councilor Long moved to amend the FY2026 Budget to provide funding for a Performance Review of Greenville County Operations as follows:

Under the General Fund

<i>Increase Transfer-in from Infrastructure Bank</i>	<i>\$500,000</i>
<i>Increase Non-Departmental Performance Review</i>	<i>\$500,000</i>

Under the Infrastructure Bank Fund

<i>Increase Transfer Out to General Fund</i>	<i>\$500,000</i>
<i>Reduce Transfer Out to Road Program (acct. #509090)</i>	<i>\$500,000</i>

Under the Road Program Fund

<i>Reduce Transfer-in from Infrastructure Bank</i>	<i>\$500,000</i>
<i>Reduce Design/Build Contract (acct. #503000)</i>	<i>\$500,000</i>

Councilor Long stated the purpose of the amendment was to provide funding for a performance review; the citizens of Greenville County had asked for one. The performance review would allow Council to see how the County was doing with its fiscal operations and if staff was following policy and procedures. Ms. Long stated they hoped to find efficiencies that would save money that could be applied for things that were more important for the County.

Chairwoman Pro Tem Seman asked Ms. Long how they arrived at the amount of \$500,000, and if it would be enough. She asked what kind of expertise would be needed in terms of firms chosen, and if one firm could do the entire review or would multiple firms be needed. She also inquired if all departments would be reviewed or just some. Ms. Seman asked what would happen if Council determined that the allocated funding was not enough or if the review indicated higher wages, more staff and additional resources were needed.

Councilor Long stated a Request for Proposal (RFP) would be sent out for bids. She was familiar with audits as she had worked in banking. Ms. Long stated the amount requested would be a good start; they would not be looking at the financial operations of the entire County. She stated they would be looking for different efficiencies based on recommendations from the auditor as well as interviews with staff.

Chairwoman Pro Tem Seman asked if the amount was enough and questioned the course of action if the bids came in well over the \$500,000.

Councilor Long stated they could choose to audit certain departments or request additional funding.

Chairwoman Pro Tem Seman asked what would happen if the audit revealed the County was super-efficient, but under resourced, in need of more technology and staff was woefully underpaid.

Councilor Long stated they would advise Mr. Kernell of the findings. Council, and the Finance Committee, would have to review the situation and come up with solutions.

Chairwoman Pro Tem Seman asked what would happen if more money was needed.

Councilor Long stated the Finance Committee would make recommendations to Council as a whole.

Councilor Fant stated it appeared to be one of those "gotcha moves." He asked Mr. Kernell to explain the current audit process that was in place for the County.

Mr. Kernell stated the County was required to undergo a financial audit on a yearly basis as required by State, Federal, Bonding and Grant laws. The outside audit firm would complete a review of the County's financial operations and would issue an opinion. He stated that opinion was very important, along with the reviews from the rating agencies in New York. The audits were done according to the Generally Accepted Accounting Principles. The information was shared with Council every year and was posted on the County's website. Mr. Kernell stated it was his understanding that the type of audit Councilor Long was requesting would look at actual operations, such as adequate staffing, procedures and efficiency.

Mr. Kernell stated it was very interesting to note that Greenville County was able to function with fewer staff than in other entities. He stated the concern regarding the risk of having the auditors indicate more staff or resources were needed was very likely. The County was significantly understaffed in a number of areas. It would be a challenge to come up with additional money.

Councilor Fant inquired about the County's bond rating.

Mr. Kernell stated Greenville County's current bond rating was Triple A (AAA) from all three rating agencies; it was the highest rating possible. He stated he did not have the latest numbers, but there were approximately 330 counties in the country and only about 28 had that rating. He stated that number may have increased in last couple of years.

Councilor Fant asked if Greenville County had fewer employees per capita than most of the other counties in the State.

Mr. Kernell stated based on statistics tracked by the South Carolina Association of Counties, Greenville County was the lowest and had always been in the lowest two or three. He stated Greenville was the largest county, which was counterintuitive.

Councilor Tripp asked Ms. Long to explain why the audit was necessary.

Councilor Long stated they would be looking at efficiencies, policies, procedures and positions. The company that performed the County's yearly audit basically gave a financial statement; they did not provide information regarding processes and performance. Ms. Long stated the proposed audit would go deeper to ensure the County was spending money correctly and things were being done the right way.

Councilor Tripp stated a forensic audit started with a perceived problem or premise that needed investigating. He asked what was going on that would necessitate spending \$500,000 and what would happen if the auditors indicated everything was great.

Councilor Long stated that would be great news. The people of Greenville County deserved to know that their tax money was being spent in the correct way.

Councilor Tripp stated he did not feel there were any residents in his district that wanted the County to spend half a million dollars to figure out if it was spending money correctly. The State required the County to have a yearly financial audit. Greenville County was "under the microscope from Wall Street" to obtain and maintain its AAA bond rating. He stated there did not appear to be a working premise of what was broken in Greenville County. He asked what was "broken" in the County.

Councilor Long stated the purpose of the audit was to make sure the County was operating in the highest efficiencies. She stated her constituents in Greer would say an audit was "way past due." The County underwent a financial audit yearly, not a policy and efficiency audit.

Action: Councilor Tripp moved to send the recommended \$500,000 for a Performance Review back to the taxpayers of Greenville County in the form of a millage reduction.

Chairman Blount stated there was a “sea of people” in Greenville County that did not trust government. Mr. Blount stated he felt the money should be spent on the audit in order for the citizens of Greenville County to feel satisfied their tax money was being spent correctly. If the audit found inefficiencies, every citizen in the County would want Council to make the necessary changes to ensure services were being properly provided. It was not just about finding corruption or missing money; it was about transparency.

Councilor Tripp stated if the word transparency was said, people assumed there was a problem; if performance audit or performance review was said, enough people would think there was a problem. He stated the proposed audit was a solution looking for a problem. He requested someone show him the problem and they could figure out a way to solve that problem without spending half a million dollars. He suggested not spending it on some “fancy law firm or accounting firm”, instead, send it back to the taxpayers.

Chairman Blount stated he felt it was strange to argue about studying efficiency. The proposed audit would find what was there and address the issues, if any. It was a tool that should have been used for the past 20 years.

Councilor Collins stated no one was trying to find problems. The citizens of Greenville County did not trust government with their money and something had to be done about it. There were some departments that had not had an internal efficiency review for a long time. Mr. Collins stated if he had an independent consultation that indicated additional staff was needed in a department, he would have a matrix that could be presented to the public. He stated the money that could be saved was well worth the half million dollars.

Chairwoman Pro Tem Seman asked if any other counties in the State had done performance audits. If so, what was the cost and the outcome.

Chairman Blount stated the figures he found were anywhere between \$225,000 to \$500,000. He asked when was the last time Greenville County had undergone a performance review.

Mr. Kernell stated he could not recall one being done during his time with the County. However, the County’s budget staff had audited many of departments over the years, continuously looking for efficiencies and identifying areas that could be changed. The same procedure had been done a number of times as part of the budget process, identifying programs and opportunities where they could shift emphasis. For example, EMS had been looked at over the years. Consultants were brought in and there was a recommendation to transition EMS to the hospital system a few years ago. That move would have saved the County a significant amount of money; however, it was rejected and the savings did not occur. Mr. Kernell stated there had been a number of efforts over the years to accomplish what was being proposed and the County had met with some success and some failures.

Councilor Shaw stated the audit should not just focus on the performance of employees. It should also review the performance of the County’s real estate holdings. Mr. Shaw stated the yearly audit was “bare bones” according to the auditing company and State law was “basically a joke” compared to other states. The main point was when the County budgeted for something, there was confidence in knowing the money was spent appropriately.

Councilor Tripp's motion to send the recommended \$500,000 for a Performance Review back to the taxpayers of Greenville County in the form of a millage reduction was denied by a roll call vote of two (Fant and Tripp) in favor and ten (Russo, Long, Blount, Shaw, McGahhey, Farmer, Mitchell, Seman, Bradley and Collins) in opposition.

Councilor Long's motion to provide funding for a Performance Review of Greenville County Operations carried by a roll call vote of eight (Russo, Long, Blount, Shaw, McGahhey, Farmer, Bradley and Collins) in favor and four (Mitchell, Seman, Fant and Tripp) in opposition.

Amendment 4:

Action:

Councilor McGahhey moved to amend the FY 2026 budget so that Public Safety employees receive a 6% increase for those making under the AMI, and employees above that level would receive the standard 3%. Employees earning over \$135K would receive no raise (150% of AMI). To remove new deputy slots for the Sheriff's Office; use the GADC monies returned to the County for Public Safety raises, and that employees making over \$135K receive no raise.

Under the General Fund

<i>Increase Transfer in from Infrastructure Bank</i>	<i>\$1,093,093</i>
<i>Increase Other revenue</i>	<i>\$750,000</i>
<i>Increase salaries and benefits for EMS</i>	<i>\$500,291</i>
<i>Increase salaries and benefits for Public Safety</i>	<i>\$726,934</i>
<i>Increase salaries and benefits Sheriff's Office and Coroner (net 12 positions)</i>	<i>\$718,304</i>
<i>Reduce expenditures for Administrative Services</i>	<i>\$32,361</i>
<i>Reduce expenditures for Department of General Services</i>	<i>\$11,347</i>
<i>Reduce expenditures for Department of Public Works</i>	<i>\$11,716</i>
<i>Reduce expenditures for Elected & Appointed Officials/Judicial</i>	<i>\$29,621</i>
<i>Reduce expenditures for Elected & Appointed Officials/Fiscal</i>	<i>\$17,462</i>

Under the Parks, Recreation and Tourism Fund

<i>Reduce expenditures for salaries and benefits</i>	<i>\$17,505</i>
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Under the Medical Charities Fund

<i>Reduce expenditures for salaries and benefits</i>	<i>\$5,427</i>
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Under the Stormwater Fund

<i>Reduce expenditures for salaries and benefits</i>	<i>\$15,715</i>
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Under the Infrastructure Bank

<i>Increase Transfer-out to General Fund</i>	<i>\$1,093,093</i>
<i>Reduce Transfer-out to Road Program (acct. #509090)</i>	<i>\$1,093,093</i>

Under to Road Program Fund

<i>Reduce Transfer-in from Infrastructure Bank</i>	<i>\$1,093,093</i>
<i>Reduce Design/Build Contract (acct. #50300)</i>	<i>\$1,093,093</i>

Councilor McGahhey stated he supported raises for Public Safety employees and he felt bad that he and Mr. Russo had disagreed. It was unbelievable that some Council Members called themselves Republicans and wanted to increase taxes. The County was in good shape, but that did not mean lavishing raises on people making more than \$150,000. Mr. McGahhey felt his amendment was fair for everybody.

Chairwoman Pro Tem Seman stated the County's employees were its biggest resource; they served the public every day. One way to be more effective and efficient was to continue to recruit and retain the best people possible and one way to do that was by rewarding them through a good working environment, training, and pay. She stated some of the employees making more than \$135,000 were supervisors, responsible for training and managing people. Ms. Seman stated it was not fair to penalize some of the County's top performers. And by doing so, there was no way Greenville County could continue to retain the best people, be more efficient and more effective. She stated she could not support Mr. McGahhey's amendment.

Action: Councilor Fant called for the question.

Councilor McGahhey asked Mr. Kernell how many people making more than \$100,000 had resigned and complained about their salary.

Mr. Kernell stated he was unable to answer that question.

Mr. Antley stated Mr. Russo's amendment would be negated if Council approved the item in question, due to the fact that the two amendments addressed the same subject matter.

Councilor McGahhey attempted to speak.

Councilor Fant stated the question had been called.

Chairman Blount stated he would like to use his power to allow the debate to continue, unless someone wanted to appeal the decision.

Councilor Fant stated the motion to call for the question was non-debatable and was not at the Chairman's discretion.

Councilor McGahhey stated Mr. Blount was the Chairman and was allowed under Mason's to change the rules if he wanted to do so.

Mr. Antley stated the motion to call for the question was non-debatable under Council rules. But, ultimately, the decision of whether something was in order or not was up to the Chairman.

Chairman Blount stated he would allow Mr. McGahhey to continue because everyone was talking over each other. He heard the motion to call for the question while someone else was speaking.

Councilor McGahhey stated his proposed amendment was about targeting those employees who needed pay raises the most; it was not about withholding raises. A number of the evening's speakers had talked about the need for affordable housing. He stated his amendment would target those individuals who needed workforce housing. Mr. McGahhey stated employees making more than \$100,000 per year did not need a 6% raise. They were not homeless and looking for housing.

Councilor Russo stated he felt a decent number of employees left the County due to salary issues. He agreed with Ms. Seman's statement about those employees making more than \$100,000 per year. They had massive responsibilities, especially in Public Safety. They were supervisors, working overtime for free. They were on call, 24/7, and they deserved a raise. Councilor Russo requested a roll call vote.

Councilor McGahhey's motion to amend was denied by a roll call vote of three (Long, McGahhey and Collins) in favor and nine (Russo, Blount, Shaw, Farmer, Mitchell, Seman, Fant, Bradley and Tripp) in opposition.

Amendment 5:

Councilor Shaw stated the all 44 of his amendments were predicated upon Council approving the Performance Audit. If the audit had not passed, he would have withdrawn a number of them. The first priority was the taxpayer; they were Council's boss. The main things taxpayers were concerned about were public safety and roads. Mr. Shaw stated he tried to find reductions based on his experience and talking to people. Some of the amendments were anecdotal and some were conservative philosophy. He stated the audit would reveal more information and the budget process would be easier.

Amendment 5.1 – Greenville County Sheriff Office Salary Increase

Salaries (Full and Part Time): 6% increase

All Elected Officials 0% increase

\$205,187.53 @ 3% = -\$6,155.62

Councilor Shaw withdrew this amendment. He stated it would nullify Mr. Russo's amendment.

Amendment 5.2 – County Council and Clerk of Council

Remove Overtime ***-\$4,500.00***

Councilor Shaw stated Mr. Kernell added two positions in Forensics in order to reduce overtime. Mr. Shaw stated his "day job" was seeing County employees as most of his practice was Probate. He had heard from employees in both the Probate Court and Register of Deeds offices about the difference in the proposed raises between law enforcement and other County employees. It would be nice if all County employees received a 6% raise.

Action: Councilor Shaw moved to amend the FY 2026 budget by removing overtime pay for County Council and the Clerk of Council office.

Councilor Tripp stated part of the overtime was needed because of the lengthy Council meetings.

Councilor Shaw stated there were four employees in the Clerk to Council office. The extra hours would be covered if they came to work later on those days. He asked if it was possible for them to do that.

Mr. Kernell stated Mr. Shaw had requested removal of overtime for a number of departments, not just the Council office. His concern for the Council office would be coverage for meetings, as it was impossible to determine how long a meeting would last. He stated it was not as if the employees were sitting around during the day not working. Attending the Council meetings were in addition to their other duties. Mr. Kernell stated they could discontinue signing people up to speak. He stated Mr. Shaw had also submitted a request to cut overtime for the IT staff. They could discontinue streaming meetings as well as having a tech available nights and weekends. He stated Animal Care employees were called out after hours as well employees in Public Works. The County experienced a hurricane in September; staff was out working after hours and on weekends. He stated overtime could be cut for all those departments and when a call was received after hours the response could be, "Call us Monday when we can get to it." Mr. Kernell stated he did not think Council really wanted the County to operate like that. In response to Mr. Shaw recommending overtime cuts in Forensics, he stated crime was not going to pay attention to whether the County wanted to pay for overtime or not.

Councilor Shaw stated the overtime issue had been resolved in Forensics with the addition of the two new positions.

Mr. Kernell stated those employees would still get called out after hours if a big event should occur. He could not guarantee there would not be a need for overtime. If employees were asked to work overtime, they had to be paid. Mr. Kernell stated if Council wanted to cut back some of the public services the County was providing, staff could fashion something to accomplish it; however, just going through departments and cutting all those different things would not work.

Councilor Shaw asked Mr. Kernell if he would commit to reviewing his amendments and try to find positions that would not require overtime.

Mr. Kernell stated some areas were more difficult. For instance, the Sheriff's Office and EMS. They had built in overtime because of the shift work. With Solid Waste, it was a separate operation that charged user fees to pay for itself. The amount Mr. Shaw had requested to remove was \$238,000 for that department. Mr. Kernell stated the employees at Emergency Management had worked hundreds of overtime hours during the hurricane and wildfires. The amount of overtime budgeted for that department was \$15,000.

Councilor Shaw stated he did not think he had included Emergency Management.

Mr. Kernell stated he did.

Councilor Shaw stated those employees would receive the 6% pay increase.

Mr. Kernell stated Emergency Management employees were not included in the 6% pay increase. He stated they were constantly watching and monitoring department payrolls. When a department reported a lot of overtime, it was questioned heavily and safeguards were put in place to try to prevent it. He stated employees did not decide to work extra hours; it was for bona fide reasons.

Councilor Collins stated there was a Clerk, Assistant Clerk, and two other employees in the Council Office. He stated he had been asked many times why was there no flex time or rotational time implemented. He stated he felt it was a legitimate concern or objective that needed to be looked at.

Mr. Kernell stated it would not hurt to look at the possibility of flex time. He would talk with Ms. McCaskill about the staffing. The office normally had three employees; however, the current Council was more active than in the past. The number of meetings had increased as well as the length. Staff also worked on special projects.

Councilor Farmer asked if the amount of \$4500 was the entire overtime budget for that office or just a fraction of it.

Councilor Shaw stated it was the amount budgeted for overtime for that office. He asked if hours could be rearranged all over the County in order to make adjustments.

Councilor Farmer asked if eliminating overtime was a violation of labor laws.

Mr. Antley stated an employee could be asked to leave in order to avoid paying overtime.

Councilor Farmer asked Mr. Kernell if the County had ever used all of its budgeted overtime. He stated he was going to give "some grace" and exclude the hurricane.

Mr. Kernell stated EMS, Sheriff's Office and the Detention Center were the departments that always presented a challenge in terms of overtime. Excluding those departments, the overtime was not always used; it was only there to be used if it was absolutely necessary

Councilor Farmer asked where the funding went if it was not used.

Mr. Kernell stated it stayed in the General Fund, like any other unspent expenditure.

Action:

Councilor Farmer moved to deny all amendments that deleted overtime pay.

Councilor Shaw stated he could withdraw those amendments as it would be procedurally better to do so.

Councilor Farmer agreed and his motion was withdrawn.

Councilor Shaw's motion to remove overtime pay from the County Council and Clerk to Council office was denied by a roll call vote of two (Shaw and Collins) in favor and ten (Russo, Long, Blount, McGahhey, Farmer, Mitchell, Seman, Fant, Bradley and Tripp) in opposition.

Amendment 5.3 – Administration

Administrator is Contractual

<i>Assistant Administrator(s)</i>	<i>0% increase</i>
	\$175,000
	\$175,000
	<u>\$170,000</u>
	\$520,000 @ 3%
<i>Taxpayer Savings</i>	<i>-\$15,600.00</i>
<i>Discontinue Governmental Relations Position</i>	<i>-\$120,389.62</i>
<i>All other Administration Personnel</i>	<i>3% increase</i>

Councilor Shaw stated the next amendment did not remove overtime. He stated the proposed amendment was related to Mr. McGahhey's point regarding allowing increases on high salaries. Mr. Shaw stated he had identified three employees with salaries totaling approximately \$520,000. If those employees were not granted the 3% increase, it would save the taxpayers about \$15,600.

Chairman Blount asked if those three employers were in the same department.

Mr. Kernell stated they were not; they were Assistant County Directors with one in Administration, one in Detention and one in Public Works.

Councilor Blount inquired about the salary for the employee in Administration.

Mr. Kernell stated he thought that employee's salary was \$175,000.

Chairman Blount asked if Council could vote on all three or would they have to be separate votes.

Councilor Farmer asked who currently served as the Governmental Relations Officer.

Mr. Kernell stated Bob Mihalic served in that position, which was created by Council many years ago. Mr. Mihalic was responsible for media work, along with producing the Council and Council-related meetings. He was also responsible for website development for County departments, including the Animal Care campaigns and EMS recruitment. Mr. Kernell stated he was very confused as to why Mr. Shaw wanted to discontinue the position, as he had recently introduced a friend of his that was being laid off from her job.

Councilor Shaw stated it was inappropriate for Mr. Kernell to bring that up. He stated Mr. Kernell had created a new job for \$55,000 and subsequently filled the position.

Mr. Kernell stated he did create the Social Media job for \$55,000. The employee currently in that position had been with the County for quite some time.

Councilor Shaw stated he introduced his friend to Mr. Kernell as he wanted a Council spokesperson, similar to the School Board, as they had no one speaking on their behalf.

Mr. Kernell stated it was Mr. Mihalic's responsibility to fill that role, if the issue pertained to County business.

Chairman Blount repeated his question regarding the correct procedure to vote on the three salaries.

Mr. Antley stated it would be better to vote on them separately within their departments; however, as it was written, it would be fine to vote on them together.

Councilor Seman stated Council had three employees and inquired about Council's authority to discontinue a job outside its jurisdiction.

Mr. Antley stated Greenville County had a *County Administrator – Council* form of government, which gave the County Administrator the authority to hire and fire employees of the County. He stated his office would need to do some research on the issue of whether Council could discontinue the position or not.

Councilor Seman stated since the performance audit passed, Council would be better served to wait for the results of the audit. Council may ask the firm to look at specific items such as overtime and different staffing models, as opposed to just cutting the budget. She stated that would be a much more efficient way to handle any concerns Council may have.

Councilor Shaw stated he agreed with Ms. Seman. His proposed amendments were a way to not take so much money from the roads; he was just trying to save taxpayer money.

Councilor Tripp stated the proposed discontinuation of Mr. Mihalic's position was not germane to the Assistant County Administrator's salaries. He suggested separating the amendment.

Councilor Shaw stated he could not understand why all three salaries could not be part of the same amendment. He stated the salary information he had obtained simply had the positions listed as Assistant Administrators with no department information. He asked if it really mattered and suggested Council just vote.

Action: Councilor McGahhey moved to strike 'discontinuation of the Governmental Relations position' from the proposed amendment.

Councilor Collins stated he had looked at many counties across the State and there were some salaried employees who were not eligible for overtime.

Councilor McGahhey's motion to strike 'discontinuation of the Governmental Relations position' from the proposed amendment carried.

Councilor Shaw's motion to disallow 3% raise for three Assistant County Administrator positions was denied by a roll call vote of three (Shaw, McGahhey and Collins) in favor and nine (Russo, Long, Blount, Farmer, Mitchell, Seman, Fant, Bradley and Tripp) in opposition.

Amendment 5.4 – County Attorney

All Full-time Personnel 3% increase

Discontinue Part-time -\$23,434.00

Councilor Shaw withdrew this amendment.

Amendment 5.5 – Human Resources

All Full-time Personnel 3% increase

Discontinue Part-time Expansion -\$24,000.00

Councilor Shaw withdrew this amendment.

Amendment 5.6 – Information Systems

All Full-time Personnel 3% increase

Discontinue Full-time Overtime -\$15,000.00

Councilor Shaw withdrew this amendment.

Amendment 5.7 – Emergency Management

All Full-time Personnel 3% increase

Discontinue Full-time Overtime -\$15,000.00

Councilor Shaw withdrew this amendment.

Amendment 5.8 – EMS

EMS Directors Increase 3% (not 6%)
\$95,390.10
\$118,246.44
\$90,245.48
\$109,146.18
\$95,390.10
\$110,000.02
\$145,202.76
\$763,621.08

@ 3%

Taxpayer Savings -\$22,908.63

All other EMS personnel 6% increase

Must have efficiency audit.

Councilor Shaw withdrew this amendment.

Amendment 5.9 – Animal Care

All Other Personnel 3% increase

Discontinue Full-time Overtime -\$29,040.00

Eliminate Training/Travel/Conference -\$35,000.00

GCAC must have funding to repair leaking roof

Mandatory Quarterly Reporting of 2nd Chance Fund to Council

Councilor Shaw withdrew this amendment.

Amendment 5.10 – Engineering

All Personnel 3% increase

Discontinue Full-time Overtime -\$2,121.00

Councilor Shaw withdrew this amendment.

Amendment 5.11 – O’Neal Maintenance

All Personnel 3% increase

Discontinue Full-time Overtime -\$4,774.00

Councilor Shaw withdrew this amendment.

Amendment 5.12 – Southern Bureau Maintenance

All Personnel 3% increase

Discontinue Full-time Overtime -\$9,548.00

Councilor Shaw withdrew this amendment.

Amendment 5.13 – Code Enforcement

All Personnel 3% increase

Discontinue Full-time Overtime -\$9,548.00

Auto Repairs -\$33,809.00

Councilor Shaw withdrew this amendment.

Amendment 5.14 – Northern Bureau Maintenance

All Personnel 3% increase

Discontinue Full-time Overtime -\$4,774.00

Councilor Shaw withdrew this amendment.

Amendment 5.15 – Property Management

All Personnel	3% increase
Discontinue Full-time Overtime	-\$9,051.00
Auto Repairs	-\$14,000.00

Councilor Shaw withdrew this amendment.

There was no Amendment 5.16 or 5.17

Amendment 5.18 – Planning

All Personnel	3% increase
Discontinue 2 FTE Planner Position, allocate funds to out-sourcing of overlay (etc.) projects to local planning firms.	
Administrator must increase all development / permit fees by 20%	
Require an Efficiency Audit	

Councilor Shaw withdrew this amendment.

Amendment 5.19 – Forensics

All Personnel	6% increase
Discontinue Full-time Overtime	-\$49,993.00
Auto Repairs	-\$7,790.00
Require an Efficiency Audit	

Councilor Shaw withdrew this amendment.

Amendment 5.20 - Records

All Personnel	3% increase
Discontinue Full-time Overtime	-\$8,215.00
Auto Repairs (Why isn't Fleet Management covering this?)	-\$1,200.00
Include in Efficiency Audit	

Councilor Shaw withdrew this amendment.

Amendment 5.21 – Indigent Defense

All Personnel 3% increase

Include in Efficiency Audit

Councilor Shaw withdrew this amendment.

Amendment 5.22 - Solicitors

All Personnel 3% increase

Auto Repairs -\$2,000.00

Include in Efficiency Audit

Councilor Shaw withdrew this amendment.

Amendment 5.23 – Clerk of Court

All Personnel 3% increase

Eliminate Full-time Overtime -\$2,798.00

Elected Officials 0% increase

Auto Repairs -\$1,200.00

Councilor Shaw withdrew this amendment.

Amendment 5.24 – All Magistrates

All Personnel – Except Elected Officials 3% increase

Eliminate Full-time Overtime -\$10,000.00

Elected Officials 0% increase

Cut Training/Travel/Conference 50% -\$30,000

Councilor Shaw withdrew this amendment.

Amendment 5.25 – Master of Equity

Appointed Master of Equity Judge No increase

\$239,621.16 @ 3% = -\$7,188.63

All Personnel – except Master of Equity Judge 3% increase

Councilor Shaw withdrew this amendment.

Amendment 5.26 – Probate

Elected Judge

No increase

$\$233,204.71 @ 3\% = -\$6,996.14$

All Personnel – except Probate Judge

3% increase

Councilor Shaw withdrew this amendment.

Amendment 5.27 – Public Defender

Appointed Public Defender

No increase

$\$130,000 @ 3\% = -\$3,900.00$

All Personnel – except Appointed Public Defender

3% increase

Auto Repairs

$-\$2,700.00$

Councilor Shaw withdrew this amendment.

Amendment 5.28 – Auditor

Elected Auditor

No increase

$\$150,212 @ 3\% = -\$4,506.38$

All personnel – except Elected Auditor

3% increase

Councilor Shaw withdrew this amendment.

Amendment 5.29 – Register of Deeds

Elected Register of Deeds

No increase

$\$159,531.69 @ 3\% = -\$4,785.95$

All Personnel – except Elected Register of Deeds

3% increase

Councilor Shaw withdrew this amendment.

Amendment 5.30 – Treasurer

Elected Treasurer

No increase

$\$150,212.69 @ 3\% = -\$4,506.38$

All Personnel – except Elected Treasurer

3% increase

Councilor Shaw withdrew this amendment.

Amendment 5.31 – Coroner

Elected Coroner	No increase
	$\$154,448.24 @ 3\% = -\$4,633.45$
All Personnel – except Elected Coroner and new positions	3% increase
Auto Repairs (Why isn't Fleet Management covering this?)	$-\$12,450.00$

Councilor Shaw withdrew this amendment.

Amendment 5.32 – Human Relations

Without Fair Housing Grant	$-\$4,633.45$
With Fair Housing Grant	3% increase
Training/Travel/Conference	$-\$2,100.00$
Must be subject to Performance Audit	

Councilor Shaw withdrew this amendment.

Amendment 5.33 – Registration and Elections

Director	No increase
	$\$119,217.28 @ 3\% = -\$3,576.59$
All other positions	3% increase
Must be subject to Performance Audit	
Training/Travel/Conference	$-\$15,000.00$

Councilor Shaw withdrew this amendment.

Amendment 5.34 – Outside Agencies

Greenville Transit Authority	\$500,000
All \$500,000 must be allocated 100% to <i>paratransit</i>	
Taxpayer Savings	$-\$3,000,000.00$

Amendment 5.35 – Outside Agencies

Greenville Transit Authority	\$500,000
All \$500,000 must be allocated 100% to <i>paratransit</i>	
Taxpayer Savings	$-\$3,000,000.00$

Councilor Shaw withdrew this amendment as it was a duplicate of Amendment 5.34.

Action: Councilor Shaw moved to allocate \$500,000 to Greenville Transit Authority and the funding must be used for paratransit.

Councilor Shaw stated Amendment 5.34 and Amendment 5.35 were duplicates. The motion would remove \$3 million per year from the County's allocation to Greenville Transit Authority, leaving \$500,000 that must be allocated to paratransit only. He stated those monies would protect the most vulnerable citizens. Mr. Shaw stated the current transit system was not working for Greenville. He stated the County spent twice as much as the City of Greenville and suggested private businesses, such as BMW, should get involved as some of their employees rely on public transit.

Councilor Farmer asked if the amendment was approved, could Council designate how the funds must be spent.

Mr. Antley stated the legal department would have to research that issue.

Chairman Blount stated he had received an email from Mr. Earl who indicated the Federal Government had requirements as to how monies were to be spent.

Councilor Shaw stated the problem was the federal government looked across the nation as "one size fits all" for transit programs.

Councilor Collins stated he had spoken to a GTA representative and was advised that paratransit had to be assigned to a designated route per federal guidelines. On those designated routes, door-to-door service was provided by appointment. He stated federal guidelines prohibited weekend paratransit service if the route did not work.

Councilor Seman stated the actual amendment would be to take \$3 million from the proposed amendment, leaving \$500,000.

Councilor Shaw stated he was not "putting any strings" on how GTA could use the funds; he stated they could take the \$500,000 and spend it the way they saw fit, not tied to a federal program.

Councilor Fant inquired as to where the \$3 million would be spent, if Council approved the amendment.

Councilor Shaw stated the monies could be used for raises or given back to the taxpayers in the form of a mil. He stated there was a 7 mil increase approximately 2 years ago. Mr. Shaw stated he was not angry at anyone or hated them, but the people who rode the busses could be given cars with the amount of money the County and the City gave to GTA.

Councilor Shaw's motion to reduce the allocation to Greenville Transit Authority to \$500,000 was denied by a roll call vote of three (Long, Shaw and Collins) in favor and nine (Russo, McGahhey, Farmer, Bradley, Blount, Seman, Mitchell, Fant and Tripp) in opposition.

Amendment 5.36 – Natural Resources Fund

Zero funding this year

-\$1,000,000.00

This allocation transferred to Parks and Recreation for additional youth sports rectangular fields at Greenville County Westside Park

This will immediately double capacity in Northern Greenville County to provide children and yours (and their parents) of diverse backgrounds with irreplaceable sports opportunities year-round.

Zero net effect upon taxpayers

\$0.00

Action:

Councilor Shaw moved to provide no funding for Historic and Natural Resources Trust and to give the proposed allocation of \$1,000,000 to Parks and Recreation.

Councilor Shaw stated the Historic and Natural Resources Trust was created “out of thin air” approximately two years ago. He stated he had received phone calls from prominent Democrats asking him to support it and he did. Mr. Shaw stated it was his understanding that the Historic and Natural Resources Trust had anywhere from \$1.4 to \$2.4 million in the bank; the current proposed allocation would provide an additional \$1 million. Mr. Shaw stated he agreed with trying to preserve irreplaceable places in the County; however, Council could immediately make an impact on the area’s youth by allocating that \$1 million to build year-round fields at West Side Park. Doing so would double the capacity on the north and west sides of the County, providing fields for kids to be able to play rectangular field sports.

Chairman Blount asked how would allocating those funds to Parks and Recreation affect the overall budget.

Mr. Kernell stated Parks and Recreation was a separate fund. The HNRT had purchased another piece of property and was down to about a \$1.4 million fund balance. He stated the proposed funding could be moved, if that was what Council wanted.

Chairman Blount asked if Parks and Recreation had already allocated monies for fields.

Councilor Shaw stated money was already allocated for a turf field at Herdklotz Park in the coming year. Those monies were not related to the proposed amendment. He stated all kids needed a place to play and learn.

Councilor Fant asked if Parks and Recreation had its own millage.

Mr. Kernell answered in the affirmative.

Councilor Fant stated Parks and Recreation had given a presentation to Council a few months ago. Not only did they do an outstanding job with their millage, they usually had a surplus of funding that was carried over to the next year and it appeared as if they did not need additional funding.

Point of Order

Councilor McGahhey stated it was not up to Councilor Fant’s discretion to determine Parks and Recreation needed additional funding or not.

Councilor Fant stated he wanted to be clear that Parks and Recreation had its own millage and ran a very “tight ship” in terms of finances.

Councilor Tripp stated he found it ironic that Mr. Shaw was proposing to take funding from a fund that benefitted all of Greenville County and put it into one park that did not represent the whole County. HNRT had literally preserved green space all over the County. In his opinion, the transfer of that funding would be using one time money for a recurring expense, which was not allowed when it came to budgets.

Councilor Shaw stated there was a severe lack of fields on the north and west sides of the County. Other areas of the County had all they needed. He stated parents on the north and west sides of the County had to get in their cars and drive to the parks, getting in wrecks with all the potholes. His proposed amendment would provide another playing field at West Side Park. The capacity was too low in those areas for the kids to do the type of activities that brought in money by way of tournaments, bringing in A-Tax and H-Tax funding. It would be less expensive to build another field at the same time as one was being built at Herdklotz Park.

Chairman Blount asked if Parks and Recreation had given any input as to whether they had monies set aside for projects at West Side Park.

Councilor Shaw stated it was his understanding that the groups running the soccer programs had consulted with Parks and Recreation. Mr. Shaw stated more fields meant more opportunities for the children. If certain departments were resistant, parents would complain that the County was not giving their children a legitimate place to play.

Chairman Blount stated he was not being argumentative; he was trying to determine if Parks and Recreation had a plan in place to address the issue.

Councilor Shaw stated there was no plan in place for West Side Park. Tremendous progress had been made at Herdklotz Park. He suggested giving the funds to Parks and Recreation and they could figure out another place to put the field. Mr. Shaw stated HNRT was good at preserving land; however, most people could not use those lands. Children needed places to play ball and that could not be done on the lands that HNRT had preserved.

Mr. Kernell stated the amount allocated for Herdklotz Park was \$1.4 million for one field. The Soccer Club was supposed to be raising another \$1.4 million, which would provide enough funding for two fields.

Councilor Tripp stated HNRT was doing a very good job. For every dollar the County spent, HNRT brought in approximately \$7 - \$9. The proposed amendment took money out of everybody's pocket for a small number of people in the County. He stated it was also “one time money” being used for something with recurring expenses. He asked what would happen next year when there was no extra funding to maintain the field.

Councilor Shaw stated Mr. Tripp had CESA on his side of town. CESA made a tremendous amount of A-tax and H-tax money, which would be more than recouped. He stated the field could be used for more than just soccer.

Action: Councilor McGahhey called for the question.

Chairman Blount stated he would allow Mr. Bradley to comment as he had been waiting to do so.

Vice-Chairman Bradley stated Carlton Owens recently addressed Council and verified HNRT had money in reserves. Mr. Bradley stated they had pending purchases and most of the money in reserves would be used for them. HNRT had not accessed all of its available funds as all the work involved had not been completed. It would just be a matter of time when that funding was depleted. The funding was earmarked for upcoming expenses.

Councilor Shaw's motion to provide no funding for the Historic and Natural Resources Trust and to give the proposed allocation of \$1,000,000 to Parks and Recreation was denied by a roll call vote of four (Shaw, McGahhey, Farmer and Collins) in favor and eight (Russo, Long, Bradley, Blount, Seman, Mitchell, Fant and Tripp) in opposition.

Amendment 5.37 – Natural Resources Fund

Zero funding this year \$1,000,000.00

HNRT still has well over \$1 million existing funds to work with this year.

Return to taxpayers in reduced millage *-\$1,000,000.00*

Action: Councilor Shaw moved to provide \$0 funding to Historic and Natural Resources Trust and return \$1,000,000 to the taxpayers in reduced millage.

Councilor Shaw's motion was denied by a roll call vote of three (McGahhey, Shaw and Collins) in favor and none (Russo, Blount, Long, Farmer, Mitchell, Seman, Fant, Bradley and Tripp) in opposition.

Amendment 5.38 – Outside Agencies

Greenville Transit Authority \$500,000.00

Must be allocated 100% to paratransit

Transfer of allocation to Public Safety for Raises *-\$3,000,000.00*

Councilor Shaw withdrew this amendment.

Amendment 5.39 – Parks and Recreation

Parks and Recreation Director 0% increase
Taxpayer Savings \$146,181.10 @ 3% = -\$4,385.43

All other Personnel 3% increase

Eliminate full-time overtime -\$35,000.00

Councilor Shaw withdrew this amendment.

Amendment 5.40 – Fleet Management

<i>All Personnel</i>	<i>3% increase</i>
<i>Eliminate full-time overtime</i>	<i>-\$16,131.00</i>

Councilor Shaw withdrew this amendment.

Councilor Shaw asked why Auto Repairs were listed in different departments, given the fact that the County had its own Fleet Management department.

Mr. Kernell stated the County had an Internal Service Fund for its fleet. It was a separate entity that fixed County cars, trucks, tractors, ambulances, and other equipment. Each department was charged for repairs and maintenance in order to track those expenses.

Amendment 5.41 – Solid Waste

<i>All Personnel</i>	<i>3% increase</i>
<i>Eliminate full-time overtime</i>	<i>-\$238,000.00</i>

Councilor Shaw asked Mr. Kernell to explain the overtime needs for Solid Waste.

Mr. Kernell stated there were a number of operations at the convenience centers. When trash came into the landfill, they had no choice but to get it covered that night. It could not be left uncovered.

Councilor Shaw asked Mr. Kernell to commit to finding alternative ways to handle overtime for that department.

Mr. Kernell stated he would certainly try to do so.

Councilor Shaw withdrew this amendment.

Amendment 5.42 – GCSO Salary Increase

Salaries (Full and Part time): **6% increase*

All Elected Offices: *0% increase*

\$205,187.53 @ 3% = -\$6,155.62

**Contingent on passing funds for performance/efficiency audit.*

Councilor Shaw withdrew this amendment.

Amendment 5.43 – Hospitality Tax

Amend allocations within Hospitality Tax

Amendment 5.44 – Accommodations Tax

Amend allocations within Hospitality Tax

Councilor Shaw stated he had heard a lot of things about disagreements in terms of how those taxes were allocated. He asked his colleagues to weigh in on the issue.

Councilor Blount stated neither proposed amendment listed how or what was to be amended. He stated he was not certain Council could actually vote unless there were specific things Mr. Shaw wanted to change.

Mr. Kernell stated there was a separate ordinance for Hospitality Tax allocations. Council had amended that ordinance several times. Mr. Kernell stated there were a number of bonds tied to the ordinance; it was very specific regarding how those bonds were to be paid. The budget simply followed the ordinance. Mr. Kernell stated Accommodations Tax allocations were just recently approved by Council.

Councilor Shaw stated he thought they were included in the budget because the Finance Committee had just approved them; he assumed the Finance Committee was responsible for picking and choosing how that funding was allocated. He asked his colleagues if they were concerned about the fact that BMW received \$100,000 per year to run a golf tournament; those funds could be spent on a child or a bond could be written for soccer fields. He stated the Highland Games received a large amount of money as well.

Chairwoman Pro Tem Seman stated the Accommodations Tax Advisory Committee was responsible for making recommendations for A-Tax allocations. She stated Council had been very clear about following that committee's recommendations and she had no concerns. The allocations had been recently approved by the Finance Committee and Council. The A-Tax Committee had been able to account for all the dollars that were coming back to the County in additional tax monies from their recommendations. Councilor Shaw asked Ms. Seman if she would agree they were just studies.

Chairwoman Pro Tem Seman stated they were not studies. There was a process and an application in place that each organization had to fill out; they had to prove "heads and beds" in order to obtain funding.

Councilor Shaw asked if the golf tournament actually brought in \$85,000 in tax money.

Chairwoman Pro Tem Seman stated it was more than that.

Councilor Shaw stated he would like to see the actual impact. He was concerned that no Council Members had really gone through the allocations.

Chairwoman Pro Tem Seman stated the Finance Committee had initially reviewed the proposed allocations and forwarded the information to Council; the allocations were recently approved by Council. She stated Mr. Shaw could have raised his concerns when the item was presented to Council for full approval.

Councilor Shaw stated he saw the recommendations on the Finance Committee agenda a few weeks ago and he was under the impression they would be approved with the budget.

Councilor Farmer stated he and Ms. Seman served on the Visit Greenville SC Board. He would be more than happy to provide all the necessary information about the Accommodations Tax allocations. He reminded everyone that Council was being asked to approve a one year budget; they would be looking at the second year in the near future and could make changes at that time.

Chairman Blount ruled Amendment 5.43 and Amendment 5.44 out of order as they did not provide any information regarding specific funding.

Chairman Blount stated the Greenville County FY 2026 Budget as amended was on the floor for Council vote.

Motion as amended was denied by a roll call vote of six (Russo, Blount, Farmer, Seman, Bradley and Collins) in favor and six (Long, Shaw, McGahhey, Mitchell, Fant and Tripp) in opposition.

The meeting recessed at 9:10 p.m.

The meeting resumed at 9:28 p.m.

Action: Chairwoman Pro Tem Seman moved to reconsider the Amended FY2026 Greenville County budget, as amended.

Motion carried.

Action: Councilor Shaw moved to reconsider his amendment to take \$1 million from the Historic and Natural Resources Trust to be used for soccer fields. (*Amendment 5.36*)

Motion to reconsider was denied by a roll call vote of four (Shaw, McGahhey, Farmer and Collins) in favor and eight (Russo, Long, Blount, Mitchell, Seman, Fant, Bradley and Tripp) in opposition.

Action: Councilor McGahhey moved to reconsider his amendment for tiered salary increases for Public Safety employees. (*Amendment 4*)

Motion to reconsider was denied by a roll call vote of four (Blount, Shaw, McGahhey and Collins) in favor and eight (Russo, Long, Farmer, Mitchell, Seman, Fant, Bradley and Tripp) in opposition.

Action: Chairwoman Pro Tem Seman moved to reconsider Mr. Mitchell's motion to provide funding in order to establish a workforce housing down payment assistance program for Greenville County employees. (*Amendment 1*)

Motion carried by a roll call vote of eight (Russo, Blount, Farmer, Mitchell, Seman, Fant, Bradley and Tripp) in favor and four (Long, Shaw, McGahhey and Collins) in opposition.

Action: Chairwoman Pro Tem Seman moved to amend the amendment to take the \$750,000 in excess funding from GADC combined with \$250,000 from the General Fund to be used for affordable housing.

Councilor Fant asked if any monies would be taken from the roads for this amendment.

Councilor Seman stated no funds would be taken from the roads.

Mr. Kernell stated the additional funding from GADC was due to a number of unfilled positions. They went through quite a transition in the past year with a couple of high level people leaving.

Chairman Pro Tem Seman's motion to amend carried by a roll call vote of seven (Russo, Farmer, Mitchell, Seman, Fant, Bradley and Tripp) in favor and five (Long, Blount, Shaw, McGahhey and Collins) in opposition.

Motion to approve the FY 2026 Greenville County Budget as amended carried by a roll call vote of eight (Russo, Blount, Farmer, Mitchell, Seman, Fant, Bradley and Tripp) in favor and four (Long, Shaw, McGahhey and Collins) in opposition.

Item (11) **Ordinances – Second Reading**

a. Zoning Ordinances

- i. **CZ-2025-030,** Property of Gary McGill Chandler and Edna Kay Chandler, located at 317 Rocky Creek Road, requesting rezoning from PD to R-S. The Planning Commission and Committee recommended approval.

Action: On behalf of the Committee, Vice-Chairman Bradley moved approval of the ordinance at second reading.

Motion carried.

- ii. **CZ-2025-031,** Property of Douglas E. Sprayberry and Kimberly D. Sprayberry, located at 2726 Fork Shoals Road, requesting rezoning from R-S to S-1. The Planning Commission and Committee recommended approval.

Action: On behalf of the Committee, Vice-Chairman Bradley moved approval of the ordinance at second reading.

Motion carried.

- iii. **CZ-2025-033,** Property of R & K Equity, LLC, located at 210 Earle Drive and Larry Court, requesting rezoning from R-M20 to AG. The Planning Commission and Committee recommended denial.

Action: On behalf of the Committee, Vice-Chairman Bradley moved to deny the ordinance at second reading.

Motion to deny carried.

b. Land Development Regulations Amendment / Cluster Housing

Action: Vice-Chairman Bradley moved for approval at second reading an ordinance to delete Article 11 of the Greenville County Land Development Regulations and to prohibit new cluster developments in Greenville County.

Councilor Tripp stated there had been a lot of back and forth on cluster developments. It was a tool the State provided. He asked if the County would be disarming itself by deleting Article 11. Mr. Tripp suggested a possible resolution asking the Planning Commission to not consider cluster developments for a specified amount of time.

Councilor Farmer stated he agreed with Mr. Tripp. The main reason he planned to vote against the item was Council had been promised a workshop on cluster developments; in his opinion, it was imperative to have one before moving forward.

Councilor Fant stated there were some good aspects of cluster developments as well as some challenges. Council had not been given the opportunity to really discuss them. Mr. Fant suggested discussions with stakeholders, developers, builders, home builders and conservation groups. Currently, a third more homes were being built with cluster than the original zoning allowed; that was problematic. Mr. Fant asked if the item could be held in order to conduct workshops and give the Planning and Development Committee the opportunity to work on the issue.

Vice-Chairman Bradley asked if it was possible to put cluster development “on hold.”

Chairman Bradley stated he was under the impression some cluster developments only went to the Planning Commission, depending on location, and were not subject to Council’s approval. It appeared as if the only way to address the issue would be a moratorium.

Mr. Fant stated Council would be “eaten alive” if they tried to do a moratorium; however, he was in favor of a moratorium until things could be fixed.

Councilor Tripp asked if they could tighten up on items such as roads, retention ponds and other open space areas in regards to cluster developments.

Vice-Chairman Bradley stated it was possible but there had to be something done in the interim. He asked what could be done to put a stop to cluster developments for a short period of time until a permanent solution was found.

Councilor Tripp asked if there were any “clusters in the pipeline.” He stated he did not want to take a tool “off the table” that could potentially be used.

Vice-Chairman Bradley stated he would like to see it fixed. He was concerned about the density that could be done in the next couple of weeks. He asked Mr. Antley if Council had the authority to put a temporary halt on cluster developments.

Mr. Antley stated he was not comfortable with answering that question and it would require some research on his part. He stated it sounded as if a moratorium of some sort would be the best temporary solution. Mr. Antley stated he would do some research and get back with Council.

Councilor McGahhey stated he felt there would be a problem if the item was held. He had watched Council meetings the previous year and observed how that Council operated. If the item was held, it would be sent into “the oblivion of promises of this and that”, nothing would happen. In four months, people in his district would be upset about cluster developments going up in neighborhoods that did not even resemble them. He stated sometimes the only way to fix things was to “kill them.” Council was just spinning its wheels, doing nothing again. He suggested approving the proposed deletion of Article 11. Doing so would create some urgency to fix it and bring it back correctly.

Vice-Chairman Bradley stated he would rather fix it. He could come back in a month with amendments; he did not think it would be too difficult to make the needed changes.

Action: Councilor Tripp moved to hold the item until the July 15 Council meeting.

Motion to hold carried by a roll call vote of seven (Russo, Farmer, Mitchell, Seman, Fant, Bradley and Tripp) in favor and five (Long, Blount, Shaw, McGahhey and Collins) in opposition.

c. Storm Water Ordinance Revisions

Action: Councilor McGahhey moved for approval at second reading an ordinance to amend the Greenville County Storm Water Management Ordinance to implement requirements and procedures in compliance with Federal and State Regulations pursuant to the County’s NPDES Permit.

Action: Councilor McGahhey moved to amend the red-lined version to add the following highlighted phrase:

Land disturbing activities on agricultural land for production of plants and animals useful to man, including but not limited to: forages and sod crops, grains and feed crops, tobacco, cotton, and peanuts; dairy animals and dairy products; poultry and poultry products; livestock, including beef cattle, sheep, swine, horses ponies, mules, or goats, including the breeding and grazing of these animals; bees; fur animals and aquaculture, except if retail sales not directly related to products produced on the property will be part of the activity on the parcel, supports Agritourism or the construction of an agricultural structure resulting in the disturbance of one or more acres of land are not exempt from the provisions of this Ordinance.

Councilor McGahhey stated the proposed amendment would prevent event barns, wine barns and other similar establishments as they were not directly related to the products produced on the property. They were not subject to permitting requirements or land development regulations. Currently in Greenville County, establishment of those types of businesses were disturbing more land than allowed, basically skirting the intent of the law.

Councilor Long inquired how the exemption of one or more lands would be affected by the proposed amendment.

Councilor McGahhey stated construction of an agricultural structure resulting in the disturbance of one or more acres was not exempt from the provision.

Motion to amend carried.

Action: Councilor McGahhey moved to approve the ordinance as amended.

Motion as amended carried.

d. Chapman Grove Road / Transfer of Property

Action: Councilor Collins moved for approval at second reading an ordinance to authorize the sale of a county-owned approximately 5.3-acre parcel of real property located on Chapman Grove Road, Pelzer; and to authorize the Chairman of County Council and the County Administrator to execute appropriate deeds and agreements.

Action: Councilor Collins moved to amend the ordinance to reflect the changes outlined in the red-lined version included in the agenda packet.

Motion to amend carried.

Action: Councilor Collins moved approval of the ordinance as amended.

Motion as amended carried.

Item (12) **Ordinances – First Reading**

a. Zoning Ordinances

Vice-Chairman Bradley presented for first reading Zoning Dockets CZ-2025-038 and CZ-2025-040 through CZ-2025-042.

Chairman Blount referred the items to the Planning and Development Committee.

b. Greenville County Zoning Ordinance Text Amendment / Altamont Road Access (CZ-2025-044)

Vice-Chairman Bradley presented for first reading an ordinance to amend Section 8:5 (ESD-PM, Environmentally Sensitive District – Paris Mountain) of the Greenville County Zoning Ordinance regarding district intent and protecting public safety on Altamont Road.

Chairman Blount referred the item to the Planning and Development Committee.

Item (13) **Committee Reports**

There were no Committee Reports.

Item (14) **Public Comments**

There were no speakers.

Item (15) **Administrator's Report**

No report.

Item (16) **Requests and Motions by Council Members**

There were no requests or motion by Council Members.

Item (17) **Adjournment**

Action: There being no further business, Vice-Chairman Bradley moved to adjourn.

The motion carried and the meeting was adjourned at 9:58 p.m.

Respectfully submitted:

Regina McCaskill
Clerk to Council