



GREENVILLE COUNTY COUNCIL

Minutes
Regular Meeting
February 17, 2026
6:10 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

Alan Mitchell, *Council District 23*

Council Members Remote Participation

None

Staff Present

- Joe Kernell**, *County Administrator*
- Ted Lambrecht**, *Deputy County Administrator*
- Chris Antley**, *County Attorney*
- Regina McCaskill**, *Clerk to Council*
- Julie Wallace**, *Administrative Assistant*

- Bob Mihalic**, *Governmental Affairs Officer*
- Phillip Simmons**, *Information Systems*
- Hesha Gamble**, *Assistant County Administrator*
- Ronald Hollister**, *Assistant County Administrator*

Others Present

None

Call to Order

Chairman Blount

Moment of Silence – Honoring Reverend Jesse Jackson

Councilor Fant requested a moment of silence in memory of Reverend Jesse Jackson, a proud native of Greenville. From humble beginnings, Reverend Jackson became a global voice for civil rights, justice, and economic empowerment. Through decades of advocacy, he challenged the nation to live up to its highest ideals of equality and opportunity for all, regardless of political perspective. Mr. Fant stated his impact on American history was undeniable.

Pledge of Allegiance

Item (4) **Approval of Minutes**

a. **February 3, 2026 – Regular County Council Meeting**

Action: Chairwoman Pro Tem Seman moved to approve the minutes of the February 3, 2026, Regular County Council Meeting.

Motion carried.

Item (5) **Appearances – Current Agenda Items**

- **Rob Rowen** - appeared regarding Item 9(a)(iii) CZ-2026-002
- **Carl Gerhiser** - appeared regarding Item 9(a)(iii) CZ-2026-002
- **Sergey Tsushko** - appeared regarding Item 9(a)(iii) CZ-2026-002
- **Suzanne Gervais** - appeared regarding Item 9(a)(iii) CZ-2026-002
- **Mark Forthaus** - appeared regarding Item 9(a)(iii) CZ-2026-002
- **Jeff Wilson** - appeared regarding Item 9(a)(iii) CZ-2026-002
- **Janna Buckey** - appeared regarding Item 9(a)(iii) CZ-2026-002
- **Drew Torres** - appeared regarding Item 9(a)(iii) CZ-2026-002

Item (6) **Public Hearings**

a. **Greenville Arena District / General Obligation Bonds**

A public hearing was held for the purpose of receiving comments from the public regarding an ordinance finding that the Greenville Arena District, South Carolina may issue not exceeding \$40,000,000 of General Obligation Bonds in one or more series; to authorize the Board of Trustees of the Greenville Arena District, South Carolina to issue such bonds and to provide for the publication of notice of the said finding and authorization.

- **Casey Harden Scott** - appeared in favor of the proposed
- **Nea Zambrano** - appeared in favor of the proposed
- **Beth Paul** - appeared in favor of the proposed

- **Diane Vreeland** - appeared in opposition to the proposed
- **Audrey Pasin** - appeared in opposition to the proposed

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

b. **Project Pioneer / Fee in Lieu of Tax Agreement**

The public hearing was cancelled.

Item (7) **Resolutions**

a. Resolution Recognizing Value of Farms and Rural Communities

Action: Vice-Chairman Bradley moved for adoption a resolution to recognize the economic, cultural, historic, and environmental value of farms and rural communities in Greenville County and to request staff evaluation of voluntary, market-friendly land stewardship tools and a review of regulatory and permitting requirements affecting agricultural operations.

Motion carried.

b. Resolution Establishing the Greenville County Agricultural Task Force

Action: Vice-Chairman Bradley moved for adoption a resolution establishing the Greenville County Agricultural Task Force.

Action: Vice-Chairman Bradley moved to amend *Section 3. Terms* of the Resolution to read:

“Members shall serve four-year terms. Initial appointments shall be staggered to establish continuity. For the initial term, two members shall serve a term of two years, and three members shall serve a term of four years. After the initial term. All members shall serve four-year terms.”

Motion to amend carried.

Action: Vice-Chairman Bradley moved adoption of the resolution as amended.

Motion carried.

Item (8) **Ordinances – Third Reading**

a. Greenville Arena District / General Obligation Bonds

Action: Vice-Chairman Bradley moved for adoption at third reading an ordinance finding that Greenville Arena District, South Carolina, may issue not exceeding \$40,000,000 of General Obligation Bonds in one or more series; to authorize the Board of Trustees of the Greenville Arena District, South Carolina, to issue such bonds and to provide for the publication of notice of the said finding and authorization.

Action: Councilor Long moved to refer the item back to the Committee of the Whole.

Councilor Long requested the item be placed on the next Committee of the Whole meeting agenda in order to discuss and consider having the issue decided by the voters by referendum in the next General Election.

Councilor Tripp asked if Council had statutory authority to put the item on the ballot. He stated he was not aware that it could be done in South Carolina.

Chairman Blount stated, based on the information he had received, it was unclear at the moment whether it was allowed.

Councilor Tripp stated he was opposed to referring the item back to the Committee of the Whole and asked for a roll call vote.

Councilor Long stated it appeared the public did not understand the item, given the emails, phone calls, and in-person visits to her home she had received. She stated the ordinance did not specifically indicate an amphitheater was part of the proposed renovations.

Councilor Long read the following from the proposed ordinance:

“In the event District revenues and the debt service reserve fund monies are insufficient to meet debt service payments, the tax levy mentioned in the following sentence will be used to make the debt service payments. For the payment of the principal of and interest on such bonds as they respectively mature, and for the creation of such sinking fund as may be necessary therefore, the full faith, credit and taxing power of the District shall be irrevocably pledged, and there shall be levied annually a tax on all taxable property in the District sufficient to pay such principal of and interest on said bonds as they respectively mature, and to create such sinking fund.”

Councilor Long stated if there was a possibility the taxpayers in the Arena District could be responsible for paying the debt, they should be able to make the decision to approve the bonding, not Council.

Chairman Blount stated he wanted to be clear about the language used in the ordinance. It was his understanding it was standard for every General Obligation bond, such as those issued for the fire departments. They were issued many times without a referendum.

Mr. Kernell stated a General Obligation bond was backed by the full faith and credit of the issuer.

Chairman Blount asked if the County had ever defaulted on paying a General Obligation bond.

Mr. Kernell stated he did not think the County had ever defaulted on one.

Councilor Tripp reminded his colleagues they were elected to do a job, not push it off “to the people.”

Councilor Long stated Council was elected to represent the taxpayers, and her request was part of that representation.

Motion to refer the item back to the Committee of the Whole was denied by a roll call vote of three (Long, Shaw and Collins) in favor, eight (Russo, Blount, McGahhey, Farmer, Seman, Fant, Bradley and Tripp) in opposition, one (Mitchell) absent.

Vice-Chairman Bradley stated many citizens living in his district had reached out and expressed they were in favor of the item.

Motion as presented carried by a roll call vote of nine in favor (Russo, Blount, Shaw, McGahhey, Farmer, Seman, Fant, Bradley and Tripp) two in opposition (Long and Collins) and one absent (Mitchell).

b. Greenville Arena District - Intergovernmental Agreement Amendment / Accommodations Fee Revenues

Action: Vice-Chairman Bradley moved for adoption at third reading an ordinance approving an amendment to an Intergovernmental Agreement related to the County's Accommodations Fee Revenues among Greenville County, Greenville Arena District, the City of Greenville, and an escrow agent; approving an amendment to an escrow agreement among Greenville County, the City of Greenville and an escrow agent; and other matters related thereto.

The Chairman declared the motion had carried.

Councilor McGahhey stated he was under the impression if there were any dissenting votes on an item, a roll call vote was in order. He stated he was in the affirmative, but wanted to ensure all the voices were heard and marked appropriately.

Mr. Antley confirmed a roll call vote was in order.

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

c. Hospitality Tax Revenue Bonds / Second Supplemental Ordinance

Action: Vice-Chairman Bradley moved for adoption at third reading a second supplemental ordinance providing for the issuance and sale by Greenville County, South Carolina, of not exceeding \$100,000,000 Hospitality Tax Revenue Bonds in one or more series and the issuance and sale of Hospitality Tax Revenue Bond Anticipation Notes in one or more series, and other matters relating thereto.

Councilor McGahhey stated hospitality and accommodation tax funds must be used for tourism, with no exceptions. He stated the monies generated by those taxes could cover the debt of the proposed bond. The Arena would continue to generate additional revenue to pay the bond. He stated, after reviewing the financials, it appeared the Arena District was in a strong position to pay the bonds, with no risk to the County.

Councilor Shaw asked Mr. Kernell if there would be sufficient H-Tax funding available to provide the citizens with other opportunities, such as recreation and parks, after paying the bond debt.

Mr. Kernell stated the current H-Tax fund balance was significant and would not be used for the transaction. The bonds would be issued over the next two to three years.

Motion as presented carried by a roll call vote of nine (Russo, Blount, Shaw, McGahhey, Farmer, Seman, Fant, Bradley and Tripp) in favor, two (Long and Collins) in opposition, and one (Mitchell) absent.

Item (9) **Ordinances – Second Reading**

a. Zoning Ordinances

- i. CZ-2025-073,** Property of Robert D. Mangum located at 1500 Cedar Lane Road and Orchid Drive, requesting rezoning from C-2 to S-1. The Planning Commission recommended approval and the Committee recommended denial.

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

Motion to deny carried.

- ii. CZ-2026-001,** Property of Etowah LLC, located at 506 & 508 South Buncombe Road and 1710 Hood Road, requesting rezoning from S-1 to I-1. The Planning Commission and the Committee recommended approval.

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

Motion carried.

- iii. CZ-2026-002,** Property of Stone Ridge Golf, LLC, located at 105 Pebble Creek Drive and Kindlin Way, requesting rezoning from PD to PD-MC (Major Change). The Planning Commission and the Commission recommended denial.

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

Councilor Shaw stated he felt Green City and its supporters were good people, trying to do the “right thing.” He stated providing affordable housing for the project in question was the “wrong thing in the wrong place.” He encouraged his colleagues to vote in opposition to the proposed.

Motion to deny carried.

- iv. CZ-2026-003,** Property of Hounds Brae, LLC, located at 333 Gibson Drive, requesting rezoning from R-S to R-15. The Planning Commission and the Commission recommended denial.

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

Chairman Blount stated he had spoken with the developer and there was a potential avenue for them to acquire sewer through discussion with another entity. As that was one of the deciding factors, he wanted to give them time to do their due diligence.

Action: Vice-Chairman Bradley moved to hold the item for two weeks.

Motion to hold carried.

- v. **CZ-2026-004.** Property of 2706 White Horse, LLC, located at 2706 White Horse Road, requesting rezoning from C-2 to C-1. The Planning Commission and the Committee recommended approval.

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

Motion carried.

b. Project Pioneer / Fee in Lieu of Tax Agreement

Action: Councilor Collins moved for approval at second reading an ordinance authorizing the execution and delivery of a fee in lieu of tax agreement by and between Greenville County, South Carolina and an entity or entities identified by the county as Project Pioneer with respect to certain economic development property in the County, whereby such property would be subject to certain payments in lieu of taxes, including the provision of certain special source credits; authorizing the assignment and amendment of an existing fee in lieu of tax agreement applicable to a portion of the project, whereby such portion of the project would be subject to certain payments in lieu of taxes, including the provision of certain special source credits; and other matters related thereto.

Action: Councilor Collins moved to refer the item back to the Finance Committee.

Motion carried.

Item (10) Ordinance – First Reading

a. Zoning Ordinances

Vice-Chairman Bradley presented for first reading Zoning Dockets **CZ-2026-006 through CZ-2026-010.**

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

Item (11) Committee Reports

Chairman Blount stated during Council’s recent Planning Retreat, the decision was made to give each committee chairperson the opportunity to provide updates regarding their respective committee.

a. Committee of the Whole

i. Board and Commission Policy Revisions

The item remained in Committee. No action was required.

b. Committee on Finance

There was no report.

c. Committee on Communications and Governmental Affairs

Councilor Farmer stated the February Committee of Communications and Governmental Affairs was cancelled as SCDOT was unable to make its presentation. He stated SCDOT and GADC would both provide presentations at the March meeting.

d. Committee on Planning and Development

Vice-Chairman Bradley stated the Planning and Development Committee met the previous evening. In addition to the rezoning requests, they had discussed concurrency and impact fees. The concurrency issue was passed along to staff for further review. Ms. Bradley stated the committee chose to put impact fees on hold until further notice. The cluster development ordinance was still a work in progress and was taking longer than had been anticipated.

e. Roads, Infrastructure and Public Works Committee

Councilor McGahhey stated the County was moving forward with \$36 million in road funding for the current year. Plans were underway to fix several bridges and improve roads. He stated they hoped to see similar funding allocated for roads in the upcoming budget. Mr. McGahhey invited everyone to attend the meeting and welcomed any insight they may have.

f. Committee on Public Safety and Human Services

Councilor Collins stated the fire districts were working overtime to secure their ISO ratings. He was attempting to visit two fire departments monthly; he enjoyed seeing the camaraderie among the personnel and how it contributed to the great job they were doing. The Courthouse needed quite a bit of work. The Clerk of Court had been very gracious and patient about the situation. He stated the County needed to “step up” and get the work done. Councilor Collins acknowledged Ronald Hollister, Assistant County Administrator for Public Safety, and the great job he and his staff were doing at the Detention Center. Mr. Collins stated he planned to spend time at the Coroner’s Office so he could “sell them to the public,” as most citizens knew only the Medical Examiner’s Office from television shows like *CSI*. He stated the Coroner and his staff were doing an excellent job. Mr. Collins stated he was scheduled to ride along with EMS personnel in the near future. Those shifts were very daunting, but he needed to know how they worked and what they needed. It was important to convey that to his constituents, especially if he were to propose an extra mil in taxes for additional funding. He stated E-911 was crucial, too. When citizens called 911 in an emergency, someone was there to answer. Mr. Collins stated Law Enforcement was the “blood” that kept Greenville County safe. He stated it was necessary to look at increased pay for them in a concise, measured way. The County’s number one focus should be Law Enforcement’s retainability.

g. Oversight Ad Hoc Committee

Councilor Long stated she had been working with staff to prepare the RFP for performance audits of both the Sheriff’s Office and EMS to identify efficiencies and save money. She stated a draft had been completed and would be ready for Council’s approval in the near future.

Item (12) **Public Comments**

- **Audrey Pasin** - appeared regarding settling cases early and often
- **Ed Paxton** - appeared regarding several recommendations
- **Daniel Gamble** - appeared regarding neighborhood car noise at night
- **Lane Lewis** - appeared regarding eviction filings
- **Jack Logan** - appeared regarding the Detention Center

Item (13) **Administrator's Report**

Mr. Kernell stated earlier in the day, the County received a fully executed RAISE Grant Agreement from SCDOT in the amount of \$20,335,000. Of the more than 700 communities that applied from across the country, 148 grants were approved. Greenville County was the only one approved in South Carolina. Of the 148 approved, fewer than 40 had been executed to date. The project would enable more communities to connect to the Prisma Health Swamp Rabbit Trail network. It would include bridges over major roads in the San Souci community and neighborhoods to the east and west. The County was approved for the grant in July of 2024 and had been working hard since then to secure a fully executed agreement. The grant did not require any local match. Mr. Kernell recognized Ty Houck with the Parks, Recreation, and Tourism Department for his continued efforts to see the grant come to fruition. It was quite an accomplishment given the changes in Washington since the grant was approved; quite a few of the others had been pulled back.

Mr. Kernell provided an update on the Fire District Study the County had undertaken. The recent ice and snowstorms had delayed the consultant; they had rescheduled several times. He stated some local fire districts were already trying to gather information, and there had not been a “kickoff meeting” yet. Mr. Kernell stated that the meeting was now scheduled for the following week, and the original deadline had been extended. He hoped the extension would put the fire districts at ease and allow them to get a good study underway.

Greenville County's new GIS system was implemented earlier in the day. He stated staff had been working on the system for a number of years. The old system was outdated and 13 years old. Mr. Kernell reminded everyone to clean their browser cache to access the new system. He stated the new system was very powerful and a bit different. It may take some time to get accustomed to.

Item (14) **Requests and Motions by Council Members**

- Councilor Collins thanked the Planning and Development Committee for not pursuing impact fees; he felt it was a good move. He stated implementing a concurrency program would help protect infrastructure going forward by ensuring that new projects had the public facilities services necessary for support.
- Chairman Blount stated RAISE Grants were typically awarded for large bridges or highway expansions. The grant Greenville County received was literally a trail connector that would provide access to many underserved areas in the county. It was a testament to the work of Greenville County and, especially, Ty Houck. He commended Mr. Houck on a job well done.

Item (15) **Adjournment**

Action: There being no further business, Councilor Tripp moved to adjourn.

The motion carried and the meeting was adjourned at 7:44 p.m.

Respectfully submitted:

Regina McCaskill
Clerk to Council