



**HEALTH, SOCIAL AND ENVIRONMENTAL AFFAIRS COMMITTEE  
MEETING MINUTES  
TUESDAY, APRIL 22, 2025**

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**CALL TO ORDER**

The Columbia Health, Social, and Environmental Affairs Committee conducted a meeting on Tuesday, April 22, 2025 at City Hall (Mayor’s Conference Room), 1737 Main Street, Second Floor, Columbia, SC 29201. The Honorable Aditi Bussells, Chair called the meeting to order at 1:10 p.m. and the following members were present:

<b>Attendee Name</b>	<b>Title</b>	<b>Status</b>
Aditi Bussells	Chair	Present
Edward H. McDowell	Member	Present
Tyler D. Bailey	Member	Present

**APPROVAL OF MINUTES**

1. Approval of January 28, 2025 Health, Social, and Environmental Affairs Committee Meeting Minutes - *Approved*

Upon a motion made by Mr. McDowell and seconded by Mr. Bailey, committee members voted unanimously to approve the January 28, 2025 Health, Social, and Environmental Affairs Committee Meeting Minutes.

**PRESENTATIONS**

2. Sanitary Sewer Overflow Update – Mr. Frank Eskridge, Director of Utility Operations, Columbia Water – *Received as information.*

Mr. Frank Eskridge, Director of Utility Operations/Columbia Water presented a 2024 year-in-review on Sanitary Sewer Overflows (SSOs), noting a long-term decline due to consent decree improvements. Hurricanes Debbie and Helene caused a temporary spike. Debbie triggered a major power outage and Helene led to flooding at the Metro Wastewater Treatment Plant. Emergency electrical upgrades have been completed and early FY25 data shows progress. Ongoing efforts include capital projects, root control, and preventive maintenance.

There was discussion about high SSO’s at the plant; upgrades to switchgear; maintenance of performance numbers; system vulnerabilities; investment in capacity and rehabilitation projects; and sun-setting the consent decree.



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3. Solid Waste Division Route Growth/Efficiency - Ms. Samantha Yager, Superintendent/Solid Waste Division - *Endorsed for City Council Consideration.*

Ms. Samantha Yager, Superintendent/Solid Waste Division announced an Earth Day event on April 22, 2025 from 9:00 a.m. – 1:00 p.m. at Boyd Plaza. She shared that the last garbage route adjustment occurred in 1991 despite the addition of 13,000 services since 1995. A hybrid collection system is currently in place and staff are working to analyze growth and balance routes by running an equal number of trucks daily. A proposal to adjust route days and implement a color-coded recycling schedule was presented along with a communications plan.

There was discussion about how services are added; route efficiency; grace period for adjustment; code enforcement; and additional ways of messaging to customers.

There was consensus to target a September 1, 2025 implementation date for the proposed route changes.

4. Undergrounding of Utilities – Ms. Viola Hendley, Chair, Columbia Tree & Appearance Commission – *Received as information.*

Mr. Jim Irvin, member of the Columbia Tree and Appearance Commission presented a proposal for a comprehensive tree inventory, emphasizing the importance of the recent tree survey. He noted the challenge of many trees maturing simultaneously and highlighted a draft ordinance addressing funding, project identification, preservation, and enforcement. The long-term goal is consistent investment in undergrounding utilities. A USDA grant provided over 1,200 trees, with 700 allocated to the City of Columbia and the remainder distributed to Richland, Lexington, and Cayce.

There was discussion about the use of request for proposals by other municipalities to manage tree canopy and the role of canopy coverage in neighborhood health and equity.

Councilor McDowell emphasized the urgency of prioritizing diabetes and kidney health. He announced that on May 17, 2025, Black Expo will feature a health-focused narrative funded by Prisma Health, Johnson & Johnson, and Novartis.



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**ADJOURNMENT**

The meeting was adjourned at 2:25 p.m.

Respectfully submitted:

Erika D. Moore Hammond, CMC  
City Clerk