



**HEALTH, SOCIAL AND ENVIRONMENTAL AFFAIRS COMMITTEE
MEETING MINUTES
TUESDAY, SEPTEMBER 30, 2025**

CALL TO ORDER

The Health, Social and Environmental Affairs Committee conducted a meeting on Tuesday, September 30, 2025 at City Hall (Mayor's Conference Room), 1737 Main Street, Second Floor, Columbia, SC 29201. The Honorable Aditi Bussells, Chair called the meeting order at 1:07 p.m. and the following members were present:

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

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

1. Approval of July 15, 2025 Health, Social, and Environmental Affairs Committee Meeting Minutes – *Approved*

Upon a motion made by Mr. Bailey and seconded by Mr. McDowell, the Committee voted unanimously to approve the July 15, 2025 Health, Social, and Environmental Affairs Committee Meeting Minutes.

COMMITTEE DISCUSSION

2. Animal Services Update: Enforcement Staffing - Mr. Robert Anderson, Director of Public Works – *Received as information.*

Mr. Robert Anderson, Director of Public Works provided an update on Animal Services staffing and operations. The division currently has five enforcement positions, with four filled and one supervisory vacancy. Recruitment has improved following salary adjustments to match regional levels. A part-time veterinarian and kennel supervisor positions remain open due to statewide shortages. The department's live release rate stands at 82%, with a goal to reach 85% next year. He also noted the successful launch of the redesigned Animal Services webpage and announced that Dr. Bonovich was recently recognized as the State's Best Veterinarian.

There was consensus of the committee to receive a compressive update in October.



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3. City of Columbia Gateway Signage Update - Mr. Robert Anderson, Director of Public Works – *Received as information.*

Mr. Robert Anderson, Director of Public Works presented visuals of the new gateway and tertiary signage to be installed throughout the City. The presentation included renderings of signs for North Main, Bull Street, Harbison, I-126, and Huger Street, as well as new city logo signs to be mounted on light poles along Main Street. He announced that the North Main sign near I-20 is scheduled for installation on October 30, 2025 with additional sign installations at Bull Street, Harbison, and I-126 planned for November 17–19, 2025.

There was discussion about the press conference; placement of light pole signs; lighting signs; and plans for maintenance.

4. Midlands Business Leadership Group Gateway Beautification Project – Mr. Robert Anderson, Director of Public Works – *Received as information.*

Mr. Robert Anderson, Director of Public Works provided an update on the Midlands Business Leadership Group (MBLG) beautification initiative. Formed under former Mayor Benjamin, the group identified eight sites. The first project, along Highway 302 in Cayce, received about \$1.2 million in funding, including \$500,000 from Lexington County. Regional partners include Columbia, West Columbia, Cayce, Lexington, Richland County, and Forest Acres. He noted that the Forest Drive/I-77 project is next, with maintenance costs to be shared among participating jurisdictions.

There was discussion about meeting with Council of Governments and overlapping of signage.

5. Canal Recovery: Resilient Water Supply Project - Mr. Clint E. Shealy, P.E., Assistant City Manager for Columbia Water – *Received as information.*

Mr. Clint Shealy, P.E., Assistant City Manager for Columbia Water provided an update on the City's Resilient Water Supply and recovery projects. Three major efforts are underway to improve infrastructure following the 2015 flood: replacement of the canal head gates, repair of the embankment and hydroelectric station, and construction of an independent resilient water supply. The \$12 million head gate project, partially funded by a federal mitigation grant, is set to move forward by year's end following recent federal approval.



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The embankment repair, estimated at \$60–80 million, will be fully funded by FEMA and state matching funds with construction anticipated to begin in early 2026. The \$62 million resilient water supply project began construction in January 2025 and is expected to reach substantial completion by spring 2027.

There was discussion about both alternative and supplemental funding.

ADJOURNMENT

The meeting was adjourned at 1:46 p.m.

Respectfully submitted:

Erika D. Moore Hammond, MMC, CPM
City Clerk