



COLUMBIA CITY COUNCIL WORK SESSION MINUTES TUESDAY, FEBRUARY 3, 2026

CALL TO ORDER

The Columbia City Council conducted a Work session on Tuesday, February 3, 2026 at City Hall (Mayor's Conference Room), 1737 Main Street, Columbia, South Carolina 29201. The Honorable Daniel J. Rickenmann, Mayor called the meeting to order at 2:06 p.m. and the following members were present: The Honorable Edward H. McDowell, Jr., The Honorable Will Brennan, The Honorable Tina N. Herbert, Mayor Pro-Tempore, The Honorable Peter M. Brown, The Honorable Tyler D. Bailey, and The Honorable Sam P. Johnson. Also present were Ms. Teresa Wilson, City Manager and Ms. Erika D. Moore Hammond, City Clerk. This meeting was advertised in accordance with the South Carolina Freedom of Information Act.

INVOCATION

The Honorable Edward H. McDowell, Jr. offered the invocation.

ADOPTION OF THE AGENDA

Upon a motion made by Mr. Johnson and seconded by Mr. Brown, Council voted unanimously to adopt the agenda subject to adding the discussion of matters relating to the proposed location, expansion, or provision of services encouraging location or expansion of industries or other businesses in the area served by the public body pursuant to S.C. Code §30-4-70(a)(5) - Convention Center Hotel as Item 3.

CITY COUNCIL DISCUSSION

1. Columbia Homelessness Consulting Services Project Kickoff — Ms. Kameisha Heppard, Director of Homeless Services; Ms. Trish Marsik, MSW, Principal Co-Project Director / Health Management Associates, Inc.; and Ms. Zipatly Mendoza, MPH, Project Manager / Health Management Associates, Inc.

Ms. Teresa Wilson, City Manager stated that the city is moving forward on homelessness initiatives through the Homeless Services Ad Hoc Committee. The committee has advanced a strategic blueprint and is now engaging a consultant to assess existing programs, identify service gaps, and provide an external perspective. Health Management Associates, Inc. was selected as the consulting partner and is presenting an overview of the firm and the next phases of work.

Councilor Brennan emphasized the value of an independent, third-party perspective to help shape a regional blueprint that could attract state and federal support.



COLUMBIA CITY COUNCIL WORK SESSION MINUTES TUESDAY, FEBRUARY 3, 2026

Councilors Brown, Bailey, McDowell, Johnson, and Herbert expressed a shared interest in better aligning resources, coordinating services, and developing a holistic, compassionate, and long-term approach to reducing homelessness.

Mayor Rickenmann stated that the City's ultimate goal is a structured, results-driven process that leads to measurable reductions in homelessness while addressing mental health and addiction without overburdening residents.

Ms. Teresa Wilson, City Manager noted staff's commitment to supporting Council policy direction and welcomed an external evaluation to strengthen partnerships and improve service delivery.

Ms. Trish Marsik, MSW, Principal Co-Project Director / Health Management Associates, Inc. outlined the firm's 40 years of national experience in supporting publicly funded programs for vulnerable populations, including Medicaid, behavioral health, housing, and homelessness. She shared national best practices centered on prevention, crisis response, and housing, citing examples from Santa Clara County, Denver, and Dallas, where flexible financial assistance, targeted outreach, and landlord incentives led to measurable reductions in homelessness and cost savings.

Mr. Charles Robbins, MBA, Principal Co-Project Director / Health Management Associates, Inc. described a data-driven, partner-informed approach to evaluating homelessness services in Columbia. The project will include a needs assessment across housing, mental health, and substance-use services; program mapping of the existing service network; and actionable recommendations developed through a four-phase process. Community input will be central, with feedback gathered through interviews, focus groups, surveys, and a town hall to ensure the final roadmap reflects local needs and lived experiences.

There was discussion about expanding local and state resources beyond the downtown area; using public health dashboards to inform decision-making; adopting a multi-layered approach to homelessness that considers social factors, local conditions, and resource investment; identifying service gaps and aligning organizational efforts; evaluating the benefits and limitations of existing programs to avoid duplicative work; rebuilding public trust through transparency and measurable outcomes; engaging the community early in the process; understanding project timelines and phases; recognizing that the presence of services does not always equate to effectiveness; acknowledging the limitations of local government; coordinating service delivery and care; creating visible change; and the value of direct outreach combined with data from engagement.



**COLUMBIA CITY COUNCIL WORK SESSION MINUTES
TUESDAY, FEBRUARY 3, 2026**

EXECUTIVE SESSION

Upon a motion made by Mr. Brennan and seconded by Mr. McDowell, Council voted unanimously to enter into Executive Session at 3:18 p.m. for the discussion of Items 2 and 3 as amended.

2. Discussion of negotiations incident to proposed contractual arrangements pursuant to S. C. Code §30-4-70(a)(2)
 - Health Management Associates, Inc.

3. Discussion of matters relating to the proposed location, expansion, or provision of services encouraging location or expansion of industries or other businesses in the area served by the public body pursuant to S.C. Code §30-4-70(a)(5)
 - Convention Center Hotel

ADJOURNMENT

The meeting was adjourned at 4:15 p.m.

Respectfully submitted:

Erika D. Moore Hammond, MMC, CPM
City Clerk