



Columbia City Council Meeting Minutes Tuesday, February 17, 2026

Call to Order

The Columbia City Council conducted a regular meeting on Tuesday, February 17, 2026 at City Hall (Council Chambers), 1737 Main Street, Columbia, South Carolina 29201. The Honorable Daniel J. Rickenmann, Mayor called the meeting to order at 3:00 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.

Executive Session at 3:00 p.m.

Upon a motion made by Ms. Herbert and seconded by Mr. Brown, Council voted unanimously to enter into Executive Session at 3:01 p.m for the discussion of **Items 1** through **3**.

1. Receipt of legal advice relating to matters covered by attorney-client privilege pursuant to S.C. Code §30-4-70(a)(2)
 - Council Communications

Received as information. No action was taken.

2. 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
 - 2221 Devine Street

Received as information. No action was taken.

3. Receipt of legal advice relating to a pending, threatened or potential claim pursuant to S.C. Code §30-4-70(a)(2)
 - City of Columbia vs. The Estate of Ashley Brown, Jeffery A. Griffin, Erlic Lubaton, and Love and Care Transport, LLC

Received as information. No action was taken.

Regular Meeting at 4:00 p.m.

Council adjourned the Executive Session at 4:09 p.m. and convened the regular meeting at 4:18 p.m.

Invocation

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

Pledge of Allegiance

Adoption of the Agenda

Upon a motion made by Mr. McDowell and seconded by Mr. Johnson, Council voted unanimously to approve the adoption of the agenda as presented.

Public Input

Individuals are allotted up to three minutes to address City Council about items on the agenda. Items requiring a public hearing cannot be addressed at this time.

Ms. Joan Proffitt, President / St. Marks Wood Neighborhood Association spoke in support of **Item 19** (Ordinance No.: 2026-009 - Repealing Ordinance No.: 2025-054 that Established a Moratorium on the Issuance of New Permits in Residential Areas Pursuant to Columbia's Short-Term Rental Ordinance at Columbia Code Section 5-400 et seq., as amended). She stated that her neighborhood is still reviewing existing rentals and would like additional time to address concerns related to safety, parking, noise, property values, covenant compliance, and potential tax rate issues.

Mayor Rickenmann clarified that City Council has already passed an ordinance prohibiting new short-term rentals within neighborhoods, except along designated major corridors. He noted that property tax classification falls under the county's authority if a property is not owner-occupied. He suggested for her to forward any additional questions to Mr. Andrew Livengood, Zoning Administrator.

Approval of Minutes

4. Council is asked to approve the February 3, 2026 Work Session and Regular Meeting Minutes.

Upon a motion made by Mr. McDowell and seconded by Mr. Johnson, Council voted unanimously to approve the February 3, 2026 Work Session and Regular Meeting Minutes.

Presentations

5. University of South Carolina Student Government Local Advocacy Bureau Update — Ms. Teia Perez, Director of the Local Advocacy Bureau

Ms. Teia Perez, Director of the Local Advocacy Bureau shared that the Bureau represents University of South Carolina students to local government by researching key issues and presenting student-informed solutions. This year's report highlights concerns including infrastructure, safety, transportation, food insecurity, housing, and environmental equity. It aims to strengthen collaboration and improve both the University and the broader Columbia community.

Mayor Rickenmann thanked the students for their continued engagement and for presenting concerns to both the University and the City each year. He acknowledged past discussions on issues such as parking, rental costs, campus safety, transportation, game day traffic, and lighting. He noted that progress has been made in several areas and that additional improvements are underway.

Consent Agenda Items 6 through 15

Upon a single motion made by Mr. McDowell and seconded by Mr. Johnson, Council voted unanimously to approve **Consent Agenda Items 6** through **15**.

6. Council is asked to approve Reimbursement of the November 4, 2025 Municipal Election and the November 18, 2025 Municipal Runoff Election Expenses, as requested by City Clerk's Office on February 6, 2026. Award to the Richland County Voter Registration and Elections Office in the total amount of \$177,311.08. This vendor is located in Columbia, SC.
Funding Source: Citizens Support Services - Election Expenses (1011119-637100). The original budget amount is \$200,000.00.
7. Council is asked to approve the Purchase of Computer Hardware Upgrades to Support Microsoft's transition to Windows 11, as requested by the Information Technology Department on January 22, 2026. Award to Dell Marketing LP, using the South Carolina State Contract in the amount of \$155,844.00. This vendor is located in Round Rock, TX.
Funding Source: Capital Replacement - Equipment-Capital Lease (6308972-658550). The original budget amount is \$155,844.00.
8. Council is asked to approve the Purchase of UKG Time Clock Replacements, as requested by the Program Management Office on December 30, 2025. Award to UKG Kronos Systems, LLC, in an amount not to exceed \$462,014.28. This vendor is located in Lowell, MA.
Funding Source: Program Management Office - Computer Equipment / Hardware (6218950-627500). The original budget amount is \$462,014.28.
9. Council is asked to approve the Purchase of Vehicles for several City Departments, as requested by the Fleet Services Division. Award to multiple vendors using the South Carolina State Contract in the total amount of \$178,046.00.

Item	Vendor and Location	Description	Procurement Method	Funding Source	Amount
a.	Dick Smith Ford, Inc. Columbia, SC	One (1) 2026 Ford 250XL Crew Cab Truck for the Solid Waste Division, as requested on December 18, 2025	SC State Contract #4400035139	Solid Waste Street Sweeping — Auto, Trucks, Heavy Equipment — Capital (5534408-658500). The original budget amount is \$51,036.00.	\$51,036.00
b.	COS Chevrolet, LLC, dba Hendrick Chevrolet Columbia, SC	Two (2) 2026 Chevrolet Silverado 2500 4x4 Trucks for the Water Distribution and Maintenance Division, as requested on January 13, 2026	SC State Contract #4400037566	Utilities Water Distribution and Maintenance — Auto, Trucks, Heavy Equipment—Capital (5516203-658500). The original budget amount is \$127,010.00.	\$127,010.00
Total					\$178,046.00

10. Council is asked to approve the Purchase of Repairs on Waste Return Pump #2 at the Columbia Canal Water Treatment Plant, as requested by Columbia Water on December 11, 2025. Award to Charles R. Underwood, Inc. in the amount of \$57,334.32. This vendor is located in Sanford, NC.

Funding Source: Utilities Columbia Canal Water Treatment Plant - Machinery and Equipment-Capital (5516206-658300). The original budget amount is \$57,334.32.

11. Council is asked to approve Contract Amendment #4 for Project WM4393 / SS7409; Leesburg Road Widening, as requested by Columbia Water on January 23, 2026. Award to CDM Smith, Inc., in an amount not to exceed \$107,595.00. The current term of the contract ends on July 1, 2026. This firm is located in Columbia, SC.

Funding Source: Water and Sewer Capital Projects - Leesburg Road Widening - Capital Project Costs (5529999-WM439301/SS740901-658650). The current budget amount is \$722,182.00. The budget amount for this amendment is \$107,595.00. The revised budget amount is \$829,777.00.

This is a Mentor Protégé Program project. CDM Smith, Inc., is the mentor and will provide evaluation and design phase administration and engineering services during construction at 80.00% (\$86,076.00) of the amendment amount.

DESA, Inc., located in Columbia, SC, is the protégé and will provide project closeout services at 20.00% (\$21,519.00) of the amendment amount.

12. Council is asked to approve a new Construction Contract for the Washington Street Parking Deck Capital Improvement Project, as requested by General

Services on December 18, 2025. Award to Restocon, LLC, in an amount not to exceed \$399,492.50, which includes contingency. The initial term of the contract will take effect upon issuance of the Notice to Proceed with an end date ninety (90) days from commencement. This contractor is located in Tampa, FL.

Funding Source: Capital Project Costs - Parking Washington Street Deck (658650-PG001131-5313108). The original budget amount is \$399,492.50.

13. Ordinance No.: 2025-098 - Consenting to the Inclusion of Property in a Multi-County Industrial/Business Park (Project Rocky, Portion of Richland County TMS # R09113-16-01)

Endorsed by the Economic Development and Infrastructure Committee on November 11, 2025.

First reading approval was given on December 2, 2025.

14. Ordinance No.: 2026-008 - Granting an encroachment to Palmetto Citizens Federal Credit Union for the use of the right of way areas of the 1300 block of Sumter Street and the 1300 block of Lady Street for the installation and maintenance of sidewalks, concrete stairs with handrails, bike racks, an accessible ramp, landscaping and irrigation adjacent to 1300 and 1310 Sumter Street and 1305 and 1313 Lady Street, Richland County TMS# 11401-01-08, 11401-01-09, 11401-01-10 and 11402-16-01

First reading approval was given on February 3, 2026.

15. Ordinance No.: 2026-010 - Granting an encroachment to 604 Huger LLC for the use of the right of way areas of the 500 block of Blossom Street, the 600 block of Huger Street and the 600 block of Pulaski Street for the installation and maintenance of sidewalks, seat walls, landscaping and irrigation adjacent to 604 Huger Street, Richland County TMS# 08914-01-10

First reading approval was given on February 3, 2026.

Public Hearing & First Reading for Zoning/Planning Matters

Council opened the public hearing at 4:36 p.m.

16. ANNEXATION, FUTURE LAND USE MAP AMENDMENT, AND ZONING MAP AMENDMENT for 700 Jacobs Mill Pond Road

Ordinance No.: 2026-011 - Annexing 700 Jacobs Mill Pond Road, Richland County TMS# 28800-01-04 into the City of Columbia, South Carolina, and incorporating said property into Columbia Compass: Envision 2036 and the Official Zoning Map

Proposal: Request assignment of the land use classification of Urban Edge Mixed Residential (UEMR) and assign zoning of Planned Development (PD) for a pending annexation. The property is currently classified as Neighborhood (Medium Density) and zoned Planned Development (PD) by Richland County.

Council District: 4

Applicant: Madison Pickrel, Woodcreek Development LLC

Staff Recommendation: Approval

PC Recommendation: 01/15/2026; Approval (6-0)

No one appeared at this time.

Upon a motion made by Mr. Brown and seconded by Mr. McDowell, Council voted unanimously to give first reading approval to the Annexation, Future Land Use Map Amendment, and Zoning Map Amendment for 700 Jacobs Mill Pond Road **and** Ordinance No.: 2026-011 - Annexing 700 Jacobs Mill Pond Road, Richland County TMS# 28800-01-04 into the City of Columbia, South Carolina, and incorporating said property into Columbia Compass: Envision 2036 and the Official Zoning Map.

17. ANNEXATION, FUTURE LAND USE MAP AMENDMENT, AND ZONING MAP AMENDMENT for RR142, 150, 156, NX156, 160, and N/S Jacobs Mill Pond Road

Ordinance No.: 2026-012 - Annexing RR142, 150, 156, NX156, 160, and N/S Jacobs Mill Pond Road, Richland County TMS# TMS# 25800-03-22, 25800-03-25, 25800-03-39, 25800-03-36, 25800-03-21 and 25800-03-37 into the City of Columbia, South Carolina, and incorporating said property into Columbia Compass: Envision 2036 and the Official Zoning Map

Proposal: Request assignment of the land use classification of Urban Edge Residential Small Lot (UER-1) and assign zoning of Planned Development (PD) for a pending annexation. The property is currently classified as Neighborhood (Medium Density) and zoned Residential Transition (RT) by Richland County.

Council District: 4

Applicant: Harriet B. Kneece / Troy A. & Cook S. Turnipseed / Desiree Ross / Joann R. & Art K. Richardson / Madison Pickrel, HVP3 Development LLC

Staff Recommendation: Approval

PC Recommendation: 01/15/2026; Approval (6-0)

No one appeared at this time.

Upon a motion made by Mr. Brown and seconded by Mr. Bailey, Council voted unanimously to give first reading approval to the Annexation, Future Land Use Map Amendment, and Zoning Map Amendment for RR142, 150, 156, NX156, 160, and N/S Jacobs Mill Pond Road **and** Ordinance No.: 2026-012 - Annexing RR142, 150, 156, NX156, 160, and N/S Jacobs Mill Pond Road, Richland County TMS# TMS# 25800-03-22, 25800-03-25, 25800-03-39, 25800-03-36, 25800-03-21 and 25800-03-37 into the City of Columbia, South Carolina, and incorporating said property into Columbia Compass: Envision 2036 and the Official Zoning Map.

18. AMENDMENT TO THE UNIFIED DEVELOPMENT ORDINANCE for Owner-Occupied Short Term Rentals

Ordinance No.: 2026-013 - Amending the 1998 Code of Ordinances of the City of Columbia, South Carolina, Chapter 17 (Unified Development Ordinance), Article 4: Use Regulations Sec. 17-4.2 Principal Uses and Article 9: Definitions and Rules of Measurement Sec. 17-9.4 Definitions

Proposal: Request to amend the Unified Development Ordinance, Chapter 17 - Article 4: Use Regulations Sec. 17-4.2. Principal Uses (b) Principal Use Table and (c) Standards for Specific Principal Uses; and Article 9: Definitions and Rules of Measurement Sec. Sec. 17-9.4 Definitions, to modify standards for short-term rentals (STR) in Residential Base Zoning Districts to exempt owner-occupied dwelling units

Applicant: Andrew Livengood, Zoning Administrator

Staff Recommendation: Staff Sponsored

PC Recommendation: Approved (7-0)

Mr. Andrew Livengood, Zoning Administrator / Planning and Development Services explained that under the current standards approved on January 6, 2026, short-term rentals in residential areas are limited to properties located on arterial or collector roads with four through lanes. However, the proposed change would allow owner-occupied homes to operate as short-term rentals regardless of roadway classification. If the property's owner-occupied status changes, the short-term rental use would no longer be permitted. He clarified that no other adopted maps or standards are being modified, the Unified Development Ordinance regulates location only, and enforcement is handled by Code Enforcement.

Mayor Rickenmann clarified that the amendment restores the ability for owner-occupied properties to operate short-term rentals, including accessory dwelling units or limited rental of their primary residence. He noted that under state law, homeowners may rent their property for up to 70 days before the tax rate changes from four percent to six percent.

Ms. Jacqueline Bobo asked if this pertains to duplexes.

Mayor Rickenmann clarified that the amendment applies to owner-occupied residences. He noted that under state law, rentals are permitted for up to 70 days before the property is reclassified as commercial and becomes subject to the six percent tax rate.

Upon a motion made by Mr. Brown and seconded by Mr. Johnson, Council voted unanimously to give first reading approval to Ordinance No.: 2026-013 — Amending the 1998 Code of Ordinances of the City of Columbia, South Carolina, Chapter 17 (Unified Development Ordinance), Article 4: Use Regulations Sec. 17-4.2 Principal Uses and Article 9: Definitions and Rules of Measurement Sec. 17-9.4 Definitions. Mr. Brennan abstained from voting due to a conflict of interest.

Council closed the public hearing at 4:45 p.m.

Ordinances - First Reading

19. Ordinance No.: 2026-009 - Repealing Ordinance No.: 2025-054 that Established a Moratorium on the Issuance of New Permits in Residential Areas Pursuant to Columbia's Short-Term Rental Ordinance at Columbia Code Section 5-400 et seq., as amended

Upon a motion made by Mr. McDowell and seconded by Mr. Johnson, Council voted unanimously to give first reading approval to Ordinance No.: 2026-009 - Repealing Ordinance No.: 2025-054 that Established a Moratorium on the Issuance of New Permits in Residential Areas Pursuant to Columbia's Short-Term Rental Ordinance at Columbia Code Section 5-400 et seq., as amended. Mr. Brennan abstained from voting due to a conflict of interest.

Resolutions

20. Resolution No.: R-2026-017 - Approving the Installation of the Vista Neighborhood Association Lincoln Street Tunnel Gateway Project

Endorsed by the Arts, Historic Preservation and Philanthropy Committee on February 10, 2026.

Upon a motion made by Mr. Bailey and seconded by Mr. Johnson, Council voted unanimously to approve Resolution No.: R-2026-017 - Approving the Installation of the Vista Neighborhood Association Lincoln Street Tunnel Gateway Project.

Event Resolutions

21. Resolution No.: R-2026-010 - Authorizing consumption of beer, wine and liquor at the Main Street Latin Festival in the 1300 and 1400 blocks of Main Street between Hampton Street and Lady Street, and the 1100 block of Washington Street between Assembly Street and Main Street on August 22, 2026 with a rain date contingency of August 29, 2026

Upon a motion made by Mr. Johnson and seconded by Mr. Brennan, Council voted unanimously to approve Resolution No.: R-2026-010 — Authorizing consumption of beer, wine and liquor at the Main Street Latin Festival in the 1300 and 1400 blocks of Main Street between Hampton Street and Lady Street, and the 1100 block of Washington Street between Assembly Street and Main Street on August 22, 2026 with

a rain date contingency of August 29, 2026.

22. Resolution No.: R-2026-013 - Authorizing consumption of beer, wine and liquor at the "St. Pat's in Five Points Festival" and authorizing the City Manager and the Parks and Recreation Director to sign Park Rules for the St. Pat's in Five Points Festival on Saturday, March 14, 2026

Upon a motion made by Mr. Brennan and seconded by Mr. Johnson, Council voted unanimously to approve Resolution No.: R-2026-013 — Authorizing consumption of beer, wine and liquor at the "St. Pat's in Five Points Festival" and authorizing the City Manager and the Parks and Recreation Director to sign Park Rules for the St. Pat's in Five Points Festival on Saturday, March 14, 2026.

Appointments

23. Planning Commission

There are two vacant positions and seven applications have been submitted for your consideration. The term is three years.

Upon a motion made by Mr. McDowell and seconded by Mr. Brennan, Council voted unanimously to approve the appointments of Ms. Madison Pickrel and Ms. Lauren Rogers to the Planning Commission for a three-year term.

24. Historic Preservation / Design Review Commission

There are seven vacant positions and 11 applications have been submitted for your consideration. The term is three years.

Upon a motion made by Mr. Johnson and seconded by Mr. Bailey, Council voted unanimously to approve the appointments of Mr. Hunter Mackenzie, Mr. Josh Shelton, Mr. John Sherrer, Ms. LaTrell Harts, Ms. Denise Wellman, and Mr. Charlie Leedecker to the Historic Preservation / Design Review Commission for a three-year term.

The position for contractor/craftsperson with experience in historical structures will be advertised for applications.

25. Urban / Design Review Commission

There are five vacant positions and five applications have been submitted for your consideration. The term is three years.

Upon a motion made by Ms. Herbert and seconded by Mr. McDowell, Council voted unanimously to approve the appointments of Mr. John Gregory, Ms. Emily Gallo, Ms. Mary Beth Branham, Mr. Cristobal Bentoncourt, and Ms. Lasenta Lewis-Ellis to the Urban/Design Review Commission for a three-year term.

Upon a motion made by Mr. Brennan and seconded by Mr. Johnson, Council voted unanimously to increase the board composition from five to seven members.

Other Matters

26. Fiscal Year 2025/2026 Hospitality Tax Grant Program 2nd Round Funding Requests - Ms. Missy Caughman, Assistant City Manager for Strategic Initiatives and Innovation
 - a. Ivy Heritage Foundation of Irmo
 - b. SC High School League
 - c. Black Expo

Upon a motion made by Mr. Johnson and seconded by Ms. Herbert, Council voted six to one [6-1] to approve the Hospitality Tax funding allocations in the amount of \$80,000 to Black Expo, \$25,000 to SC High School League, and \$15,000 to Ivy Heritage Foundation of Irmo. Mr. Johnson, Mr. Bailey, Mr. Brown, Ms. Herbert, Mr. Brennan, and Mayor Rickenmann voted aye. Mr. McDowell voted nay.

City Council Committee Reports, Referrals and New Business

Councilor Brennan reported that the Public Safety Committee met and received a presentation from the Columbia Police Department on place-based crime reduction efforts in the Millwood Avenue corridor. He thanked CPD and Code Enforcement for their collaboration with neighborhood leaders. The committee also heard from Dr. Trevon Fordham of the Office of Neighborhood Safety and Engagement regarding ongoing community bridge-building efforts.

Upon a motion made by Mr. Brennan and seconded by Mr. Johnson, Council voted unanimously to refer the scope of boarding / transitional housing in communities and a survey of vehicular noise within hospitality districts to the Public Safety Committee.

Upon a motion made by Mr. Johnson and seconded by Ms. Herbert, Council voted unanimously to refer the Food Share SC Veggie RX Program to the Community Development Committee and exploration of the increase of river buffers and an update from the Tree and Appearance Commission to the Health, Social, and Environmental Affairs Committee.

Upon a motion made by Mayor Rickenmann and seconded by Mr. Bailey, Council voted unanimously to approve the creation of an Executive Management Committee. The Executive Management Committee is established to strengthen alignment between policy vision and operational execution through regular collaboration between City Council and City Management. This strategic body will continue to modernize city governance by providing oversight on catalyst projects and ensuring legal and administrative strategies are synchronized with Council priorities. Additionally, the committee will formalize accountability by leading a continuous performance review process for the City Manager and City Attorney.

Councilor Herbert reported that the Community Development Committee met today and received an update on the Mobile Market and Tom's Creek, including discussion of its intended business model. They also received a presentation regarding a food pantry app. The app from NeedNoMore is aimed at improving coordination and creating greater

synergy among service providers. She stated the Columbia Housing Authority would be present at the next meeting.

Upon a motion by Ms. Herbert and seconded by Mr. Brennan, Council voted unanimously to refer the review of the collaboration with NeedNoMore to staff.

Public Input

Individuals are allotted up to three minutes to address City Council about matters not on the agenda. Items requiring a public hearing cannot be addressed at this time.

Ms. Diane Wiley, President / Belvedere Neighborhood Association thanked City Council members for their service and specifically commended Councilman Bailey for speaking out about concerns related to Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE). She questioned the need for federal immigration enforcement presence, citing confidence in local law enforcement leadership, and urged City Council to stand up for residents and protect the community.

Ms. Oveta Glover thanked City Council for more than 20 years of support for the Annual Statewide Black History Parade and Festival, noting that 2025 marked its final year. She expressed opposition to ICE's presence in the City of Columbia, stating that they are not needed here.

Mayor Rickenmann acknowledged the recent hiatus and expressed his desire to continue discussions about bringing the event back in the future.

Ms. Jessica Thomas, 1330 Kingston Road urged City Council to act proactively regarding the proposed ICE legislation and local field office. She called for greater transparency about any City cooperation, limits on the use of City resources, protection of access to services regardless of immigration status, and a requirement for judicial warrants before CPD or City staff assist with outside enforcement actions.

Mr. PJ Whitehurst expressed concerns about the presence of an ICE office in the city. He urged City Council to clearly state their position, demonstrate leadership, and publicly stand with constituents who feel targeted or intimidated.

Mr. Anson Foster, 1000 Whaley Street thanked Councilman Bailey for his statement. He urged City Council to take a public stance opposing the presence of the ICE office on Main Street. He expressed concerns about administrative warrants, transparency, and the impact on immigrant families.

Ms. Deborah Billings, 2931 Blossom Street expressed concerns about the presence and impact of ICE in Columbia, stating that immigrant families are living in fear. She urged City Council to demonstrate unity in protecting the city's diverse population. She also voiced opposition to potential state legislation that could require local law enforcement to cooperate with ICE.

Ms. Whitney Denton expressed concerns about changing immigration enforcement policies, stating that ICE's presence in schools creates fear and disrupts education for students, including native-born children. She also shared her experience with Code

Enforcement. After requesting assistance related to issues caused by the unsheltered population near her revitalized business, staff misidentified property lines, cited adjacent county-owned properties as her responsibility, and failed to provide guidance on available processes.

Mayor Rickenmann asked Ms. Denton to connect with Mr. David Hatcher, Director of Code Enforcement.

Ms. Tiffany Townsend, expressed opposition to ICE operating in Columbia. She stated that ICE's presence creates fear, trauma, and division. She urged City Council to clearly state their position, asked that ICE not be brought into the community, and emphasized the need for dignity, safety, and protection of civil rights for all residents.

Mr. Frank Stolbe, expressed concerns about ICE's operations and urged City Council to prioritize constitutional protections. Drawing from observations in Minneapolis, he described confusion among federal and local law enforcement and alleged Fourth Amendment violations involving administrative warrants. He asked what safeguards the City would implement to ensure ICE complies with constitutional requirements and at what point local authorities would intervene to protect residents.

Mr. Marcurius Byrd, 1625 Williams Street expressed concerns about the ICE facility and urged City Council to take action to prevent or oppose its presence in Columbia. He shared that many families are experiencing fear, distrust, and mental distress due to ICE operating nearby. He stated that he wants Columbia to remain a welcoming and safe community for all residents.

Mr. Chris Hildreth expressed opposition to ICE operating in Columbia. He voiced concerns about a pending state bill that would further shield the agency from legal consequences and argued that community members lack meaningful recourse when their rights are violated. He urged City Council to publicly oppose ICE's presence and actions.

Mr. Xavier Khalil, 4501 Bentley Drive expressed concerns about ICE being in Columbia and believes them to be acting as an unqualified military agency, as they have demonstrated in Chicago and Minneapolis. He worries about his students and their families regularly. He asked City Council to be the voice of the people.

Ms. Courtney Leach expressed concerns about the presence of ICE in Columbia and its potential impact on educators and students. She warned that without clear guardrails and requirements, these educators could be placed at risk. She urged City Council to take steps to protect the safety and job security of teachers and to provide clear accountability measures.

Mayor Rickenmann stated that the City recently learned that the Department of Homeland Security (DHS) through the General Services Administration leased space for a legal office in Columbia. He said he believes border security is important but emphasized the need for immigration reform, modernization of enforcement practices, proper training, and lawful operations. As a first-generation American, he highlighted the lack of clear pathways to legal status and citizenship for taxpaying immigrants who contribute significantly to the economy. He affirmed the City's commitment to

protecting residents' constitutional rights and public safety. He acknowledged limitations under state law, and stated that while the City cannot prohibit the office, it will monitor the situation and continue advocating for systemic reform.

Councilor Bailey thanked residents for attending and voicing their concerns, noting that recent events nationwide have caused fear. He stated that City Council should explore what actions are within its legal authority to help residents feel safe and emphasized the need for additional information and clarity. He expressed interest in continued dialogue and encouraged City Council to work collaboratively to identify appropriate steps that respond to community concerns without exceeding legal limits.

Councilor Johnson stated that City Council had no prior knowledge of the DHS lease and has been engaged in fact-finding to better understand the situation. He emphasized that while this work may not be visible, City Council is seeking clarity and reviewing available options. He also noted that under South Carolina's home rule structure, municipal authority is limited when the state or federal government has already acted.

Executive Session

Upon a motion made by Ms. Herbert and seconded by Mr. McDowell, Council voted unanimously to enter into Executive Session at 6:00 p.m. to discuss **Items 2** and **3** as previously outlined.

Adjournment

The meeting was adjourned at 6:45 p.m.

Respectfully Submitted:

Erika D. Moore Hammond, MMC, CPM
City Clerk