



Columbia Public Safety Committee Meeting Minutes Tuesday, February 17, 2026

Call to Order

The Columbia Public Safety Committee conducted a meeting on Tuesday, February 17, 2026 at City Hall (Mayor's Conference Room), 1737 Main Street, Columbia, South Carolina 29201. The Honorable Will Brennan, Chair called the meeting to order at 1:30 p.m. The Honorable Tina N. Herbert, Mayor Pro-Tempore and The Honorable Peter M. Brown were present.

Approval of Minutes

1. June 25, 2025 Public Safety Committee Meeting Minutes

Upon a motion made by Ms. Herbert and seconded by Mr. Brown, the Committee voted unanimously to approve the June 25, 2025 Public Safety Committee Meeting Minutes.

Presentations

2. Place-Based Crime Reduction in the Millwood Avenue Corridor - Mr. William "Skip" Holbrook, Police Chief / Columbia Police Department

Mr. William "Skip" Holbrook, Chief / Columbia Police Department, introduced Captain Jeff Brink, Southeast Region Commander; Investigator Cannon Fulmer, Crime Analyst; and Dr. Hunter Boehme, Assistant Professor of Criminology at the University of South Carolina. He highlighted Captain Brink's participation in the Policing Leadership Program at the University of Chicago. The team will present this evidence-based initiative at a national symposium in May to share how the strategy can be replicated in other communities.

Investigator Cannon Fulmer, Crime Analyst / Columbia Police Department presented findings from a 90-day intervention in the Millwood Avenue corridor. He explained that gun violence in Columbia is geographically concentrated, with about 40 percent of shootings occurring within roughly three percent of the city's area and often limited to specific streets rather than entire neighborhoods. The intervention focused on these hotspots, where officers conducted more than 2,000 high-visibility calls for service during the 90-day period. Code Enforcement also played a key role by addressing environmental conditions linked to crime, including securing abandoned buildings, clearing overgrown vacant lots, and re-mediating other blight-related issues throughout the neighborhood.

Captain Jeff Brink, Region Commander of the Southeast Region / Columbia Police Department explained that the Millwood Avenue corridor initiative was developed as part of a capstone project completed during the Policing Leadership Academy. Drawing on experience with hotspot policing, the project focused on reducing gun violence in areas with concentrated incidents, often linked to poverty and limited economic opportunity. The initiative emphasized targeted, high-visibility patrols in problem areas and incorporated a multipronged strategy that also addressed code enforcement and environmental conditions contributing to crime.

There was discussion about single-family/apartment increase in density; charges for code enforcement; light repairs; rental properties; door hanger distribution; sanctioned properties; and empty lots.

3. Office of Neighborhood Safety and Engagement Update — Mr. Trevon Fordham, Ed.D., MSCJ, Director / Office of Neighborhood Safety and Engagement (ONSE)

Dr. Trevon Fordham, Ed.D., MSCJ, Director / Office of Neighborhood Safety and Engagement (ONSE) provided an update on the City's community-based violence prevention efforts. ONSE developed a "Pathways to Peaceful Neighborhood" activity booklet and has recently welcomed a formerly incarcerated mentor to their team, who shares personal experiences to encourage positive decision-making. He highlighted the office's public health approach, which includes early intervention, community engagement, and feedback from over 2,000 plus resident surveys. Through neighborhood outreach, training, and partnerships with local organizations and schools, ONSE promotes personal safety, conflict resolution, and workforce readiness.

Ms. Krystle Holmes Gay, LMSW, Program Manager / Office of Neighborhood Safety and Engagement (ONSE) shared that the City recently hosted a Teen Dating Violence Awareness event attended by 105 students ages 14 to 20. The program included presentations from Pathways, Sistercare, and One Love, focusing on healthy relationships, conflict resolution, warning signs of abuse, and trauma-informed approaches. The session aimed to provide a safe space for open discussion and equip young people with tools to recognize and respond to unhealthy relationship dynamics.

There was discussion about the Community Violence Intervention Workshop; tutoring/ after school services; and potential partnerships with workforce development organizations and community youth.

Councilor Brennan asked staff to research the scope of boarding and transitional housing in the neighborhoods and a survey of vehicular noise in hospitality districts.

Councilor Herbert also asked staff to research the process of establishing new boarding and transitional housing.

Adjournment

This meeting was adjourned at 2:42 p.m.

Respectfully Submitted:

Erika D. Moore Hammond, CMC, CPM
City Clerk