



COLUMBIA CITY COUNCIL MEETING MINUTES TUESDAY, APRIL 29, 2025

CALL TO ORDER

The Columbia City Council conducted a Budget Workshop on Tuesday, April 29, 2025 at City Hall (Mayor's Conference Room), 1737 Main Street, Second Floor, Columbia, South Carolina 29201. The Honorable Daniel J. Rickenmann, Mayor called the meeting to order at 1:08 p.m. and the following members were present: The Honorable Edward H. McDowell, Jr., The Honorable Will Brennan, Mayor Pro-Tempore, The Honorable Aditi Bussells, The Honorable Tina N. Herbert, The Honorable Peter M. Brown, and The Honorable Tyler D. Bailey. 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.

CITY COUNCIL DISCUSSION

Ms. Teresa Wilson, City Manager opened the workshop by noting that the City is making good progress towards approving the budget for the upcoming fiscal year. She explained that today's presentations represent the final funding requests submitted to City Council.

1. Midlands Authority for Conventions, Sports, and Tourism - Mr. Bill Ellen, President & CEO/ Experience Columbia – *Received as information.*

Mr. Bill Ellen, President & CEO/Experience Columbia provided an update on Columbia's tourism and economic development initiatives. He noted that the Conventions and Visitors Bureau currently receives funds from state accommodations tax; the Sports Council receives both state accommodations and hospitality taxes, and the Convention Center is funded by the tourism development fee. A \$3 million funding request has been submitted to support ongoing efforts.

Ms. Kelly Barbery, Vice President of Marketing & Communications/Experience Columbia emphasized the importance of infrastructure improvements in areas such as the airport and full-service hotels to attract more visitors and increase hospitality-related revenues.



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There was discussion about a booking model to better leverage city assets; the growing impact of sports tourism; partnerships with USC; search engine optimization; and the success of Experience Columbia's ambassador program.

2. Columbia Streams Public Art Program Review - Ms. Payton Lang, Policy and Programs Advisor and Mr. Skot Garrick, Strategic Initiative Administrator – *Received as information.*

Mr. Skot Garrick, Strategic Initiative Administrator provided an overview of the city's Public Art Program, highlighting accomplishments from the past two years and plans for future growth. He defined public art as "a process of engaging artists' ideas in the public realm" and noted that the program launched with \$200,000 in initial funding. To date, more than 45 local artists have been commissioned. Key projects include 36 trout sculptures, 24 community mini libraries, urban canvases, funding for two Soda City Poetry Festivals, an artist roundtable forum, and art-driven place-making efforts.

Mayor Rickenmann requested an additional \$200,000 to expand neighborhood-based artwork, youth engagement through Parks and Recreation, and a branded social media frame to further promote the initiative.

There was discussion about management of the mini libraries and connecting with new subdivisions to engage residents.

3. Fiscal Year 2025/2026 Special Revenues - Ms. Missy Caughman, CPM, MPA, Assistant City Manager / Strategic Initiatives & Innovation – *Received as information.*

- *Hospitality Tax*
- *State Accommodations Tax*
- *Tourism Development Fee*

The Council recessed at 2:40 p.m.

The meeting was reconvened at 2:50 p.m.

Ms. Missy Caughman, CPM, MPA, Assistant City Manager/ Strategic Initiatives & Innovation presented the current hospitality tax revenue outlook without projected increases due to previously aggressive collections and ongoing evaluation of district-level performance. The fiscal year 2025/2026 budget includes a 5%



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increase in allocations for both the Hospitality Tax Committee and line-item agencies. She provided an update on funding for city-sponsored events, including Parks and Recreation activities; \$200,000 requested for Columbia Streams Art; and the City Center Partnership requested \$120,000.

There was discussion about the triage process for requests; carryover funds for proposed downtown restroom facilities; external funding requests from the Columbia Urban League and Literacy Leap; clarification on overlapping program components; alignment with existing city priorities; and seed funding for early childhood literacy.

EXECUTIVE SESSION

Upon a motion made by Mr. Brennan and seconded by Mr. Bailey, Council voted unanimously to enter into Executive Session at 3:46 p.m. to discuss **Item 4**.

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

- *Aid to Subdivisions*

ADJORNMENT

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

Respectfully submitted:

Erika D. Moore Hammond, CMC
City Clerk