



COLUMBIA CITY COUNCIL MEETING MINUTES TUESDAY, MAY 20, 2025

CALL TO ORDER

The Columbia City Council conducted a Budget Workshop on Tuesday, May 20, 2025 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 1:03 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. Levanie S. Summerville, Assistant 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.

Councilor Herbert introduced Mr. Jay Patel, legal assistant for the Mickle & Bass Law Firm.

Councilor McDowell thanked his colleagues for participating in the Black Expo. This year's event featured a new health-focused narrative that led to 2,000 diagnostic tests for individuals with diabetes and kidney disease.

CITY COUNCIL DISCUSSION

1. Fiscal Year 2025/2026 Proposed Budget - Ms. Missy Caughman, CPM, MPA, Assistant City Manager / Strategic Initiatives & Innovation

Ms. Teresa Wilson, City Manager emphasized the need to advertise the budget for a public hearing and two readings prior to July 1, 2025. The general fund has been finalized and reflects Council's endorsement of step increases for the Police and Fire Departments; Finlay Park operations; Public Works' beautification initiatives; and staffing and programs for Homeless Services. There is no room in the general fund budget for additional cuts. She stated that it is a big deal when aid to subdivisions, state funding, and other revenue sources for the general fund are at risk.

Ms. Missy Caughman, CPM, MPA, Assistant City Manager / Strategic Initiatives & Innovation explained that the fiscal year 2025/2026 budget goals are to align the budget with strategic priorities; maintain service levels while managing increased costs; and to enhance customer service. Key budget drivers include investing in



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critical infrastructure; balancing growth and resources; preserving core services; and performance management & pay-for-performance.

Ms. Teresa Wilson, City Manager added that there are also one-time costs such as this year's election.

Ms. Missy Caughman, CPM, MPA, Assistant City Manager / Strategic Initiatives & Innovation explained that we started with absorbing a net increase of \$10 million; continuation of recent investments; and an average of \$4 million in revenue growth. To balance the budget, we reduced departments' operating requests; reduced the capital replacement program to \$4 million; increased the use of fund balance from \$3 million to \$5 million; transferred \$750,000 from the tourism development fee; and utilized other one-time approaches. General fund revenues total \$161 million, which is a 4% increase. Revenues with transfers-in total \$183 million. The budget does not reflect a property tax increase. She explained that the local government fund is another source of revenue that comes from the State of South Carolina. The estimated allocation for this year is \$3.7 million. The overall budget is a net reduction of \$4.8 million. Additional budgets include water and sewer (\$217 million); stormwater (\$34.4 million); and parking (\$13.3 million).

There was discussion about capital replacements; external requests; fund balance; departmental operating requests and reduced vacancies; additional staffing for Finlay Park; contract services; the local government fund; rising project costs; growth projections; and a plan to review parking increases in January.

Ms. Missy Caughman, CPM, MPA, Assistant City Manager / Strategic Initiatives & Innovation explained that the proposed water and sewer capital improvement program is \$93 million with \$20.6 million in water improvement projects and \$72.4 million in wastewater improvement projects. The stormwater capital improvement program is \$19.6 million. The budget public hearing and first reading is scheduled for June 10, 2025; second reading is set for June 17, 2025; and we are required to pass a budget by June 30, 2025.

EXECUTIVE SESSION

Upon a motion made by Mr. Bailey and seconded by Ms. Herbert, Council voted unanimously to enter into Executive Session at 1:55 p.m. for the discussion of **Item 2** and for the receipt of legal advice related to matters covered by attorney-client privilege pursuant to S.C. Code §30-4-70(a)(2) - Aid to Subdivisions.



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

- *Convention Center*

ADJOURNMENT

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

Respectfully submitted:

Erika D. Moore Hammond, CMC
City Clerk