



## **Columbia Public Safety Committee Meeting Minutes Tuesday, March 10, 2026**

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### **Call to Order**

The Columbia Public Safety Committee conducted a meeting on Tuesday, March 10, 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 1:10 p.m. The Honorable Tina N. Herbert, Mayor Pro-Tempore and The Honorable Peter M. Brown were present.

### **Approval of Minutes**

1. February 17, 2026 Public Safety Committee Meeting Minutes

Upon a motion made by Mr. Brown and seconded by Ms. Herbert, the Committee voted unanimously to approve the February 17, 2026 Public Safety Committee Meeting Minutes.

### **Presentations**

2. Columbia Fire Department 2025 Annual Report - Mr. Aubrey Jenkins, Fire Chief

Mr. Aubrey Jenkins, Fire Chief / Columbia Fire Department provided an overview of the 2025 Annual Report, highlighting activity across administration, public information, professional services, and recruitment. He reported that the department responded to over 40,000 calls in 2025, which is a 4.1% increase from 2024. He noted an estimated \$18 million in property loss and \$6 million in contents lost. Call volumes were highest in January, March, and October, with Station 1 identified as the top responding location. He also shared that the Public Information Office issued 30 media press releases and highlighted key outreach efforts, including engagement through the NextDoor Neighbor platform.

Ms. Teresa Wilson, City Manager asked about the definition of the Station 1 boundary.

Mr. Aubrey Jenkins, Fire Chief / Columbia Fire Department explained that Station 1 is mostly downtown Columbia including Five Points, Shandon, St. Andrews, and North Main Street.

Mr. Anthony Holloway, Assistant Chief of Operations / Columbia Fire Department explained that the department's performance is measured by the Insurance Services Office (ISO), with emphasis on response and turnout times, including a goal of four-minute arrival and rapid dispatch and deployment. He noted the department has maintained a Class 1 ISO rating for several years by keeping turnout times low, though response gaps may indicate the need for additional stations and resources. He also highlighted operational challenges in high-demand areas such as the Broad River corridor, where reliance on mutual aid impacts response standards. To address this, the department is exploring phased solutions such as adding a ladder company, constructing new stations, and expanding battalion support.

Mr. Bengie Leverett, Fire Education Officer / Columbia Fire Department explained that NextDoor Neighbors is a platform similar to a neighborhood-specific version of Facebook, where residents within defined communities can share information and receive real-time notifications about local events and concerns.

Mr. Mickey Folsom, Assistant Chief of Administration and Community / Columbia Fire Department shared that the department has completed a space needs study focused on its older stations. The study reviewed structural deficiencies, dormitory space, bathroom needs, privacy concerns, and overall modernization requirements. The study also provided options for either repair / renovation or full replacement. He noted that the analysis also reflects current health and safety standards, including cancer prevention measures such as hot, warm, and cold zones, as well as the need to accommodate a more diverse workforce. He explained that the study serves as both an educational tool and a step-by-step guide for prioritizing future station improvements.

Mr. Christopher Kip, Assistant Chief of Professional Services / Columbia Fire Department shared that the department has strengthened community engagement to support recruitment and retention through outreach, virtual sessions, and updated marketing. He noted that pre-recruit open houses help introduce applicants to department expectations and culture. He also shared the Narcan administration efforts, which track increases in opioid-related responses. These efforts support both workforce development and response to public health needs.

Mr. Albert Owosu, Division Chief of Occupational Safety and Health / Columbia Fire Department reported a downward trend in firefighter injuries since 2019. In 2025, the department recorded 76 apparatus-related incidents and 65 on-duty injuries, with no serious injuries or hospitalizations. He noted that infrastructure improvements during training helped reduce preventable injuries. He also highlighted the department's focus on firefighter wellness, including participation in the City's Employee Assistance Program and the Family Life Officer Wellness Program. These efforts provide 24/7 behavioral health support for firefighters and their families.

There was discussion about the status of the building in Greenvew after the fire; fire prevention marshals; a cost benefit analysis; individual station versus overall department needs according to space study; construction and renovation pricing; CA Johnson High School's program feeding into recruitment; Olympia Fire Station; full capacity staffing; cost of a new ladder truck ; land purchased for Station 6; and a 10-year plan for all stations.

## **Adjournment**

The meeting was adjourned at 2:32 p.m.

Respectfully Submitted:

Erika D. Moore Hammond, MMC, CPM  
City Clerk