



COLUMBIA CITY COUNCIL MEETING MINUTES TUESDAY, SEPTEMBER 7, 2021

The Columbia City Council conducted a meeting on Tuesday, September 7, 2021 at the Busby Street Community Center, 1735 Busby Street, Columbia, SC 29203. The Honorable Mayor Stephen K. Benjamin called the meeting to order at 2:13 p.m. and the following members of Council were present: The Honorable Sam Davis, The Honorable Tameika Isaac Devine, The Honorable Howard E. Duvall, Jr., The Honorable Mayor Pro-Tempore Edward H. McDowell, Jr., The Honorable Daniel J. Rickenmann, and The Honorable William Brennan. 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. The minutes are numbered to coincide with the order of the meeting.

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

INVOCATION

The Honorable Mayor Pro Tempore Edward H. McDowell, Jr. offered the invocation.

ADOPTION OF THE AGENDA

Upon a motion made by Mr. Davis and seconded by Mr. Duvall, Council voted unanimously to adopt the agenda, subject to taking presentations up first and deferring appointments to the Citizens Advisory Committee to Columbia Police Department.

PRESENTATIONS

1. Resolution No.: R-2021-100 Approving the Honorary Naming of Richland Street between Two Notch Road and Oak Street "Trinity Baptist Church Way" – *Approved*

Upon a motion made by Mr. McDowell and seconded by Mr. Duvall, Council voted unanimously to approve Resolution No.: R-2021-100 Approving the Honorary Naming of Richland Street between Two Notch Road and Oak Street "Trinity Baptist Church Way".

Mayor Benjamin said Trinity Baptist Church has been a pillar of the community for many years and I am excited to do this.

Deacon Reginald Reardon thanked Council on behalf of Trinity Baptist Church.



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2. Extraordinary Headhunters, LLC Business Spotlight - Ms. Melissa Lindler, Office of Business Opportunities Director – *Received as information. No action was taken.*

Ms. Melissa Lindler, Office of Business Opportunities Director said The City of Columbia Office of Business Opportunities is pleased to recommend Ms. Kiara Streater, president and CEO of Extraordinary Headhunters, LLC, as the 2021 Small Business Spotlight Honoree. The company is a full service staffing and marketing firm headquartered in Columbia. The three-year-old company recently opened four new operations in Colorado Springs, Colorado; Denver, Colorado; Seattle, Washington; and Grand Rapids, Michigan. Her story is certainly one of triumph and resiliency. In the spring of 2018 a terrible car accident left her with a serious brain injury that would require speech therapy and memory recovery. She used her principles of faith and the foundation of family to mold what recovery would look like. Those principles became the foundation that allowed Extraordinary Headhunters not only to evolve but to prosper even in the midst of adversity. Over the past 18 months, the company has provided more than 70,000 free COVID-19 tests in South Carolina, New Jersey, and New York. They have also been able to secure employment for 10,000 people and donated over \$450,000 to those affected by the pandemic. Ms. Streater has been recognized by South Carolina Women in Business 2021, the Best and Brightest Under 35, and the Better Business Bureau. She serves on the Forbes Business Council Committee, South Carolina Chamber of Commerce Business Committee, Columbia Chamber of Commerce Business Council and as a member of United Ways Young Leaders Society and Women in Philanthropy.

Mrs. Kiara Streater, Founder and CEO of Extraordinary Headhunters, LLC said when you are working so hard you don't realize all the things that you have done. I am honored and grateful for this amazing opportunity. Thank you all so much. We make a lot of sacrifices because we are committed to the community. We changed our entire business model before the pandemic. We never did anything with medical but we wanted to be a positive resource to the community. We partner with a company to provide free COVID testing all over the state of South Carolina. Next Tuesday, we are doing free COVID testing in all the local schools in the low country. I am so grateful for all the opportunities we have been able to provide. We love South Carolina, we love Columbia and we are going to continue to make you proud.

- *Extraordinary Headhunters, LLC Business Spotlight Honoree for 2021 Proclamation - The Honorable Mayor Stephen K. Benjamin*

Mayor Benjamin and the members of City Council proclaimed Extraordinary Headhunters, LLC as the Business Spotlight Honoree for 2021 in the City of Columbia.



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3. Award of Excellence from the International Association of Business Communicators South Carolina Chapter 2020 Palmetto Awards – Ms. Leshia Utsey, Director of Public Relations, Media and Marketing

Ms. Leshia Utsey, Director of Public Relations, Media and Marketing said I am very excited to announce that we won the award for our Resilient Columbia micro-site. It was born out of a need for an online hub for business information, education, safety tips, and resources for our citizens. It started in April 2020 and it is still going. We are updating information daily and it truly has served as a resource for the city. We thank everyone for their input on a daily basis. We thank our Mayor, Council and City Manager for their vision and for pushing us to find new ways to communicate during the pandemic.

Ms. Teresa Wilson, City Manager took a moment of personal privilege to recognize the following City of Columbia employees:

- Erika D. Moore Hammond, City Clerk for 20 years of service
- Chanique Belton, Executive Assistant to Council for 10 years of service
- Pamela Benjamin, Chief of Staff for 10 years of service
- Ashley Jenkins Woods, Executive Assistant to the City Manager for 10 years of service

Mayor Benjamin said congratulations to all of you and thank you for your service.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

4. Council is asked to approve the August 5, 2021 Emergency Meeting and August 17, 2021 City Council Meeting Minutes. – *Approved*

Upon a motion made by Mayor Benjamin and seconded by Mr. Davis, Council voted unanimously to approve the August 5, 2021 Emergency Meeting and August 17, 2021 City Council Meeting Minutes.



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CONSENT AGENDA ITEMS 5 THROUGH 29

Upon a single motion made by Mr. McDowell and seconded by Mr. Duvall, Council voted unanimously to approve **Consent Agenda Items 5 through 29**.

5. Council is asked to approve Fiscal Year 2021/2022 Contract Renewal for Services Related to Supporting our Military, Retention of Military Personnel, and Operations located at Fort Jackson, as requested by the Economic Development Department. Award to the Greater Columbia Chamber of Commerce in the amount of \$53,500.00. This firm is located in Columbia, SC. – *Approved*

Funding Source: ED Special Projects (5518419-638500). The original budget amount is \$53,500.00.

6. Council is asked to approve an Agreement for Voice and Data Cabling Services for an initial term of three years with the option to renew for two additional one-year periods, as requested by the Information Technology Services Department. Award to M/D Technologies, LLC in the amount of \$75,000.00. The firm is located in Columbia, SC. – *Approved*

Funding Source: Telecomm Central Stores - Wiring Charges (6208962-632120). The original budget amount is \$75,000.00.

7. Council is asked to Repeal the Professional Services Agreement for Federal Lobbying Services for Fiscal Year 2021/2022 Awarded to CapitalEdge Strategies, LLC in an amount not to exceed \$83,750.00 approved on August 3, 2021 and Replace with a Professional Services Agreement for Federal Lobbying Services for Fiscal Year 2021/2022, as requested by the Office of Governmental Affairs. Award to CapitalEdge Strategies, LLC in an amount not to exceed \$90,000.00. This firm is located in Washington, DC. – *Approved*

Funding source: Governmental Affairs (1011103-636600) The original budget amount is \$90,000.00.

8. Council is asked to approve the Renewal of Coban Data Video Mobile Service Solution Maintenance, as requested by the Columbia Police Department. Award to COBAN Technologies using the HGAC Contract in the amount of \$99,378.67. This vendor is located in Houston, TX. – *Approved*

Funding Source: Police Administrative Services - Maintenance & Service Contract (1012402-638200). The original budget amount \$99,378.67.



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9. Council is asked to approve the Purchase of Palmetto 800 MHz Radio Airtime for Fiscal Year 2021/2022, as requested by the Columbia Fire Department. Award to Motorola, Inc. using the SC State Contract in the amount of \$129,600.00. This vendor is located in Blythewood, SC. – *Approved*
Funding Source: Fire Suppression - Maintenance & Service Contract (1012303-638200). The original budget amount is \$129,600.00.
10. Council is asked to approve the Renewal of Kronos Telestaff Software Support Services, as requested by the Budget & Program Management Office. Award to Kronos Inc., in the amount of \$87,737.55. This vendor is located in Chelmsford, MA. – *Approved*
Funding Source: Program Management Office - Maintenance & Service Contract (6218950-638200). The original budget amount is \$87,737.55.
11. Council is asked to approve the Renewal for EnerGov Software Maintenance, as requested by the Budget & Program Management Office. Award to Tyler Technologies, Inc., in the amount of \$125,510.32. This vendor is located in Duluth, GA. – *Approved*
Funding Source: Engineering Administration (5511701-638200) \$55,772.08; Engineering Stormwater Improvements (5534202-638200) \$20,384.00; Business License (1011403-638200) \$7,488.00; Development Services (1014101-638200) \$19,864.00; Police Administrative Services (1012402-638200) \$22,002.24. The original budget amount is \$125,510.32.
12. Council is asked to approve the Renewal for Elevator Maintenance Services, as requested by the Support Services Division. Award to Otis Elevator using the OMNIA Agreement in the amount of \$125,520.00. This firm is located in West Columbia, SC. – *Approved*
Funding Source: Utilities Lake Murray Water Plant - Maintenance & Service Contract (5516207-638200) \$15,000, General Support Services - Maintenance & Service Contract (1011201-638200) \$16,080, Drew Wellness Center - Maintenance & Service Contract (1015115-638200) \$2,700, Support Service Public Building - Maintenance & Service Contract (5511219-638200) \$27,360, Parking Taylor Street Deck - Maintenance & Service Contract (5313107-638200) \$4,560, Parking Sumter Street Park - Maintenance & Service Contract (5313106-638200) \$9,120, Parking Arsenal Hill Deck - Maintenance & Service Contract (5313103-638200) \$3,420, Parking Lady Street Deck - Maintenance & Service Contract (5313104-638200) \$9,120, Parking Washington Street Deck - Maintenance & Service Contract (5313108-638200) \$4,560, Parking Park Street Deck - Maintenance & Service Contract (5313109-638200) \$5,400, Parking PJ Cannon Deck - Maintenance & Service Contract (5313114-638200) \$9,120, Police Administrative Services - Maintenance & Service Contract (1012402-638200) \$4,560, Parking Lincoln Street Deck - Maintenance & Service Contract (5313112-638200) \$5,400, Parking Devine Street Deck - Maintenance & Service Contract (5313115-638200) \$9,120. The original budget amount is \$125,520.00.
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13. Council is asked to approve the Renewal of the Excess Workers Compensation Insurance Policy for Fiscal Year 2021/2022, as requested by the Safety and Risk Management Department. Award to Safety National in the amount of \$173,097.10. This vendor is located in Chicago, IL. – *Approved*

Funding Source: Worker's Compensation Administration Insurance and Bonding (6098939-636200). The original budget amount is \$173,097.10.

14. Council is asked to approve the Renewal of Property Insurance Policies for Citywide Buildings and the Columbia Canal Hydroelectric Generating Facility for Fiscal Year 2021/2022, as requested by the Safety and Risk Management Department. Award to Willis Towers Watson in the amount of \$327,530.00. This vendor is located in Chicago, IL. – *Approved*

Funding Source: Premiums and Policies (6058935-644100). The original budget amount is \$327,530.00.

15. Council is asked to approve a Contract for Citywide Safety Shoes and Boots for a term of one year, as requested by the Procurement and Contracts Department. Award to Tyler Brothers Safety Shoes in an amount not to exceed \$212,000.00. This firm is located in Wagner, SC. – *Approved*

Funding Source: Supplies - Safety Clothing and Supplies (6208956-625900). The original budget amount is \$212,000.00.

16. Council is asked to approve a Contract for the Lancaster Street Paving Project, as requested by the Public Works Department. Award to Palmetto Corp in an amount not to exceed \$56,905.00. This firm is located in Conway, SC. – *Approved*

Funding Source: County Transportation Committee Fund - Street Resurfacing Capital Project Cost (4079999-SR911348-658650). The original budget amount is \$153,567.00.

Palmetto Corp is the prime contractor and will provide paving services at 92.04% (\$52,375.00) of the total contract amount.

The following subcontractors will provide additional services:

Weaver Construction Services of Longs SC, will provide pavement marking services at 7.96% (\$4,530.00) of the total contract amount.



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17. Council is asked to approve a Contract for the Chestnut Hills Paving Project, as requested by the Public Works Department. Award to Eurovia Atlantic Coast dba Blythe in an amount not to exceed \$845,627.33. This firm is located in West Columbia, SC. – *Approved*

Funding Source: County Transportation Committee Fund - Street Resurfacing Capital Project Cost (4079999-SR911347-658650). The original budget amount is \$1,620,000.00.

Eurovia Atlantic Coast dba Blythe is the prime contractor and will provide paving services at 91.49% (\$773,664.45) of the total contract amount.

The following subcontractors will provide additional services:

Coogler Construction of Irmo SC, will provide CMRB/Milling services at 7.51% (\$63,506.61) of the total contract amount.

Peek Pavement Markings, LLC of Columbus, GA, will provide striping services at 1.00% (\$8,456.27) of the total contract amount.

18. Council is asked to approve the Purchase of a Side Loader for the Solid Waste Division, as requested by the Fleet Services Division. Award to National Auto Fleet Group, using the Sourcewell Cooperative Contract, in the amount of \$126,107.00. This vendor is located in Watsonville, CA. – *Approved*

Funding Source: Capital Replacement - Auto, Trucks, Heavy Equipment - Capital (6308972-658500). The original budget amount is \$126,107.00.

19. Council is asked to approve the Purchase of Replacement Auto and Light Truck Parts, as requested by the Fleet Services Division. Award to Napa Auto Parts, using the State Contract, in an amount not to exceed \$216,000.00. This vendor is located in Atlanta, GA. – *Approved*

Funding Source: Equipment Services Fuel Parts & Repair - Repair Parts (6308970-672700). The original budget amount is \$216,000.00.

20. Council is asked to approve the Purchase of Sewer Equipment for the Wastewater Maintenance Division, as requested by the Fleet Services Division. Award to Jet-Vac Equipment, using the Sourcewell Cooperative Contract, in the amount of \$436,172.00. This vendor is located in Sumter, SC. – *Approved*

Funding Source: Utilities Wastewater Maintenance (5516205-658500). The original budget amount is \$450,000.00.



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21. Council is asked to approve a Contract for Project SS7578; New 8" Sewer Extension at 519 Winmet Drive, as requested by Columbia Water. Award to Smoak Construction, LLC in an amount not to exceed \$74,466.00 which includes contingency. This firm is located in Little Mountain, SC. – *Approved*

Funding Source: Engineering - Water & Sewer Improvements (5529999-SS757801-658650). The original budget amount is \$74,466.00.

This is a Mentor Protégé Program Protégé Led project. Smoak Construction, LLC, a Minority Business Enterprise (W) located in Lexington, SC, is the protégé and will provide equipment and personnel services at 85.00% (\$52,695.53) of the total contract amount.

The following subcontractors/suppliers will provide additional services/supplies:

Fortiline Waterline LLC, located in Columbia, SC, will provide fittings, manhole and sewer pipe at 15.00% (\$9,359.47) of the total contract amount.

22. Council is asked to approve the Purchase of Purate (Sodium Chlorate/Hydrogen Peroxide) for the Lake Murray Water Plant, as requested by Columbia Water. Award to Water Solutions, as a Sole Source in an amount not to exceed \$200,000.00. This vendor is located in West Haven, CT. – *Approved*

Funding Source: Utilities Lake Murray Water Plant - Chemicals (5516207-624800). The original budget amount is \$200,000.00.

23. Council is asked to approve a Contract for Project SD8467; Falling Springs Improvements, as requested by Columbia Water. Award to RCG Construction, LLC in an amount not to exceed \$331,648.50 which includes contingency. This firm is located in Lexington, SC. – *Approved*

Funding Source: Engineering - Water & Sewer Improvements (5549999-SD846701-658650). The original budget amount is \$419,008.00.

This is a Mentor Protégé Program Protégé Only project. RCG Construction, LLC, a Minority Business Enterprise (W), is the protégé and will provide storm drain installation at 69.90% (\$201,592.00) of the total contract amount.

The following subcontractors will provide additional services:

Palmetto Corp. of Lugoff, SC will provide paving services at 4.90% (\$14,000.00) of the total contract amount.



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L.A. Barrier & Sons, Inc., a Minority Business Enterprise (W) of Lexington, SC, will provide hauling at 25.20% (\$72,798.00) of the total contract amount.

24. Council is asked to approve the Contract for Landfill Waste Disposal Services for an initial term of five (5) years with the option to renew for an additional five (5) year period, as requested by Columbia Water. Award to Waste Management of SC, Inc., in an amount not to exceed \$440,000.00. This firm is located in Elgin, SC. – *Approved*

Funding Source: Solid Waste Disposal - Solid Waste Tipping Fee (6208955-631900). The original budget amount is \$440,000.00.

25. Council is asked to approve a Memorandum of Agreement for In-Contract Utility Relocation SCDOT Project ID# P027198; City of Columbia Water Line Relocation due to Construction and Improvements of Sidewalk Installation along Patterson Road and Caroline Road, as requested by Columbia Water. Award to SCDOT in the amount of \$531,593.10. – *Approved*

Funding Source: This work will be funded through the Water Improvement Funds from FY 21/22 CIP WM335521 & WM335522 – Utility Conflicts Annual. The original budget amount is \$531,593.10.

26. Council is asked to approve an Agreement for Project WM442202; I-26 Widening Inspection Services for an initial term of two years with the option to renew for two additional one-year periods, as requested by Columbia Water. Award to Michael Baker International in an amount not to exceed \$552,345.93. The firm is located Columbia, SC. – *Approved*

Funding Source: Water and Sewer Capital Projects - Capital Project Costs (5529999-WM442202-658650). The original budget amount is \$552,345.93.

This is a Mentor Protégé Program project. Michael Baker International is the mentor and will provide overall project management, program scheduling, and construction management services at 80.00% (\$441,845.93) of the total contract amount. Chao and Associates, a Minority Business Enterprise of Columbia, SC, is the protégé and will provide construction observation and reporting services at 20.00% (\$110,500.00) of the total contract amount.

27. ZONING TEXT AMENDMENT to Amend the text of the Unified Development Ordinance - *First reading approval was given on August 17, 2021 – Approved on second reading.*



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Ordinance No: 2021-062 Amending The Unified Ordinance of the City of Columbia, South Carolina, Article 3: Zoning Districts, Sec. 17-3.7 Overlay Districts, (c) OV-A: Airport Safety Overlay District and Article 4: Use Regulations, Sec. 17-4.2. Principal Uses (c) Standards for Specific Principal Uses (1) Residential Uses, b. Group Living Uses, 2. Private Dormitory, and Table 17-4.2(C)(2) A.1: Permissibility of Bulk Requirement for Wireless Communication Facilities According to Support Structure - First reading approval was given on August 17, 2021 – Approved on second reading.

Proposal: Amendments to the new Chapter 17 of the Columbia Code of Ordinances entitled “Unified Development Ordinance” adopted August 20, 2019 and effective August 30, 2021 updating text related to Wireless Communication Facilities, Private Dormitories, and the Airport Height Overlay.

Applicant: Rachel Bailey, Zoning Administrator

Staff Recommendation: Approval

PC Recommendation: 06/07/2021; Approval (8-0)

28. Ordinance No.: 2021-067 Fifth Supplemental Ordinance Providing for the Issuance and Sale of a City of Columbia, South Carolina Special Obligation Refunding Bond (Hospitality Fee Pledge), Series 2021, in the aggregate Principal Amount of Not Exceeding \$31,000,000 in Order to Refund all or a Portion of the City of Columbia, South Carolina, Special Obligation Bonds (Hospitality Fee Pledge), Series 2014, Authorizing the Mayor, the City Manager and the Assistant City Manager for Finance and Economic Services, or any two of them acting together, to determine certain matters with respect to the Bond; Prescribing the Form and Details of Such Bond; and Other Matters Relating Thereto - *First reading approval was given on August 17, 2021 – Approved on second reading.*
29. Ordinance No.: 2021-072 Authorizing the City Manager to execute a Purchase and Sale Agreement between the City of Columbia and Latitude 32 Development, LLC for the sale of 2221 Devine Street, Richland County TMS #11312-02-03 - *First reading approval was given on August 17, 2021 – Approved on second reading.*

EXECUTIVE SESSION

Upon a motion made by Mr. Duvall and seconded by Ms. Devine, Council voted unanimously to enter into Executive Session at 2:34 p.m. for the discussion of **Item 30**.



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

COVID-19

- Intergovernmental Collaboration
- Premium Pay

Upon a motion made by Mr. Duvall and seconded by Mr. Davis, Council voted unanimously to resume the meeting at 3:29 p.m.

CITY COUNCIL DISCUSSION / ACTION

31. COVID-19 Update and Related Policies and Protocols - The Honorable Mayor Stephen K. Benjamin

Mayor Benjamin said as we look at the legal battle that we lost in the Supreme Court last week, we want to remind people that this is not about who can and can't prevail in a courtroom, but how we can best protect our most vulnerable citizens, particularly our children. All of our conversations should be centered on one guiding star, which is keeping our kids safe. As of last Thursday, more than 17,000 children under the age of 10 have been diagnosed with COVID-19 in the six weeks since schools opened back up in late July. Children under 10 make up 12% of all COVID-19 cases according to DHEC's data. The surge in infections among young children is forcing schools to suspend in-person classes and taxing children's hospitals across the state. We are very fortunate to have Dr. Caughman Taylor with us today. He is chair of the Palmetto Health - USC Medical Group Department of Pediatrics and Senior Medical Director at Prisma Health Children's Hospital. It's important to note that a public health crisis creates an education crisis. Mom and dad have to go home to take care of the most important people in their lives. As of Thursday afternoon, more than four dozen schools in at least 20 South Carolina districts have temporarily transitioned to full virtual learning because of the COVID-19 outbreaks. More schools are closing their doors each day according to the Department of Education. We have to do so much more to protect our children and give our doctors and nurses a much needed break. The state superintendent of education, districts supervisors, teachers, pediatricians, children's hospital doctors and nurses, and DHEC all agree that we have to work harder to protect our children. I am very proud of the leadership that this Council has shown in that regard.

Dr. Roger "Caughman" Taylor, Chair of the Palmetto Health - USC Medical Group Department of Pediatrics and Senior Medical Director at Prisma Health Children's Hospital - Midlands said it has been a very challenging time in our children's hospitals and across our community. We as



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human beings have a hard time processing numbers and data but I can tell you we are living it. Seeing the sadness, anxiety, and fear of the families that we take care of has been very difficult but our team has been up to the challenge. It is unlike anything in my 35 years of being a pediatrician and leader of our children's hospital since 2002. South Carolina leads the nation in new cases per capita. Admissions, deaths, and hospitalizations all follow those numbers. Today, there are 33 children hospitalized across the state. Half of those are in the ICU and half of those are on ventilators. I can tell you that we peaked at about 15 admissions per day in the children's hospital. When we were all locked down and everybody was taking precautions, we never got over six. Luckily we are down to seven, the lowest number I have seen in three to four weeks. I want to stress that in every children's hospital today, everybody who is there is unvaccinated. About half the children are under 12 so they have no opportunity to be vaccinated. It falls on us as adults, parents, and the community to protect them. The other half have been kids who were eligible, but did not get vaccinated. This is very difficult to see. Advocating for vaccinations, pushing for vaccinations, and providing vaccinations is about all we can do for the older kids, which also protects the younger children. I have led children's hospitals since 2002 and we have never gone more than five or six nights but not five or six weeks where every night we have been full. We have had to hold children in the pediatric emergency room. Our wait time has sometimes been four or five hours. We have engaged our private pediatrician community and they have responded tremendously. They hold children in their offices until we can get beds available, they also encourage people not to come to our emergency room for simple illnesses, and they are also working hard and seeing more kids themselves. Today Greenville's Pediatric Intensive Care Unit (PICU) is at 100% and we are also at 100%. The ramifications of holding children in our emergency room and being at full capacity in the PICU is that many children and families are leaving without being seen. Sometimes a minor illness translates into a more severe illness because the child is not seen. This delta variant is more contagious and spreads more easily. It may be a thousand times more infectious than other variants that we've had. It's easier to contract the disease and that's why children didn't get it before. Our children were protected when this first came out. We all kind of hunkered down, we had businesses close to a large extent, we had social distancing, people didn't go to large gathering, and people were wearing masks. The schools that were open mandated masks and social distancing. If you were looking for the proof of masks, the data is there. Our children's hospital was not busy last winter. According to the CDC, there was one death in the whole United States from the flu, compared to about 150 to 200 every year in children. If you have a more contagious variant it can spread more easily and we are concerned it will spread more easily through the schools. The children that typically are higher risk are those who have underlying health conditions. Yes, we are seeing healthy children get this but the vast majority of the children who are the sickest are kids who have obesity. South Carolina is one of the top states for obesity rates. We have about one in four to one in five kids classified with obesity. We also have one in 10 to one in 12 kids with asthma



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and we also have diabetes and other risks. This is not like the flu or respiratory syncytial virus (RSV). With the flu we build up natural protection after exposure. The other thing is the flu vaccine does prevent against death and hospitalization. We are able to vaccinate children that are six months and older. We also have drugs to give children who are high risk. RSV typically only affects really young children and we are able to give a product to children who are high risk. For COVID we don't have either. I can't vaccinate under 12. I can't give them a monoclonal antibody. We don't have those tools for children but yet we are facing a more contagious virus that is spreading more often. We as pediatricians are advocating for vaccinations. The tools that we have right now to protect children are masking and vaccinations. Vaccinations of children between 12 and 17 have risen to about 25%. The data is very clear; where there are low rates of vaccination there are high rates of hospitalization and higher risk of death. I'm not talking about the children populations because all the data is unvaccinated until recently. This weekend Prisma Health Richland had the highest number of patients we have had at any point. This is a true emergency. I am there every day hearing it in my people's voice how tired they are and how hard they are working. We appreciate your support to push for vaccinations by being role models.

Mayor Benjamin applauded all health care providers for protecting our children.

Councilor Devine said I am glad that you stressed that the tools we have to protect ourselves are masks and vaccinations. We have to understand that this is not political and it is just science. Vaccinations are really where we have to push. There are still so many people who have thoughts about the vaccination. From your experience being in the hospital, speaking to parents that have unvaccinated children that are eligible to be vaccinated, is there any information, any anecdotal data, that you can give us that may have broken through to some people who may have initially not wanted to get vaccinated? Is there any information that you feel is more helpful when you're talking to people and educating them about the importance of being vaccinated?

Dr. Roger "Caughman" Taylor, Chair of the Palmetto Health - USC Medical Group Department of Pediatrics and Senior Medical Director at Prisma Health Children's Hospital - Midlands said when we talk about impacting individuals as being a pediatrician, I want to be able to have factual data. We find that factual data doesn't always work. We have to remind them that they don't see things like smallpox, polio and measles because vaccinations work. Personal relationship is key. Sometimes it takes for a relative or close friend to be impacted. I wish it wasn't that way. It's kind of tough to see because as a pediatrician we believe in vaccination. Kids are healthy because of vaccinations but this is just a different time. Try to get rid of misinformation, provide information, try to address the fears, and use people they trust.



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Councilor Rickenmann said the number that was most shocking to me was that only 25% of children between 12 to 17 are vaccinated. Do we need to convince the parents or what can be done?

Dr. Roger “Caughman” Taylor, Chair of the Palmetto Health - USC Medical Group Department of Pediatrics and Senior Medical Director at Prisma Health Children’s Hospital – Midlands said pediatricians were just recently able to get vaccinations some weeks ago so there wasn’t access. The numbers have improved. It is going to take efforts from the people they trust like their local pediatrician or family physician. It would be great if DHEC and our schools can work together to provide vaccinations on site. We have electronic forms so the parents don't have to be present. If we could get them vaccinated it would help a lot, at least in your middle schools and high schools where some of your highest rates of obesity and lung disease are.

Councilor Brennan said a lot of the residents of the city, county, and state don't have the easy communication outlets to healthcare providers that a lot of us do. Is there a hotline, a direct access for communication, to talk to a healthcare professional that Prisma offers for parents that might not have the resources to get those questions answered?

Dr. Roger “Caughman” Taylor, Chair of the Palmetto Health - USC Medical Group Department of Pediatrics and Senior Medical Director at Prisma Health Children’s Hospital – Midlands said we do have where you can engage with a health care worker, get screened, and have conversations online. I will get our people who handle those systems to provide that information to you all so you can share it.

Mayor Benjamin said what I take away from this conversation is recognizing that everyone who is choosing not to be vaccinated right now is not a whole bunch of folks who have just given into the social media conspiracies but that everyone has a different story and a different reason. We need to take that personalized approach to intervening and encouraging vaccination before a devastating event occurs. The more people you get vaccinated, the less people you have in hospitals. Particularly those that are not yet eligible for the FDA approved vaccine and those still under emergency use authorization. Again, just our greatest appreciation to you and all of the men and women that you represent who are laboring the in vineyards every single day over avoidable circumstances. We appreciate you and what you represent.



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- *COVID-19 Situational Report - Mr. Harry Tinsley, Emergency Management Director*

Mr. Harry Tinsley, Emergency Management Director said according to DHEC from Thursday to Sunday, the cumulative cases were just over 20,000. In Richland County, there were 1,100 cases for that reporting period. In our last meeting we were averaging about 3,000 cases per day in the state and now we are averaging about 5,000 cases per day over the last 14-day cycle. There have been almost 10 million tests to date; 500,000 of those were in the last 14 days. The confirmed case count for today is 3,453 confirmed and 304 probable [cases] for a total of 3,757. That is a 12.3% positivity rate. Unfortunately, 23 new confirmed deaths were reported today; five of those were probable. That brings the confirmed total of deaths for the state to 9,583. Over the last 14-days, 652 cumulative deaths have been reported by DHEC. In Richland county, the confirmed case count stands at 48,983. Today's case count is 146 confirmed and 24 probable [cases]. Unfortunately, we have had 564 confirmed deaths in the county due to COVID-19. As far as the 14-day recent disease activity incident rate, we are still high with a 10.1% positivity rate in the county. Hospitalizations are at 81.8% as of today. Unfortunately, there are 2,486 patients currently hospitalized as of today due to COVI-19. In Richland County, there are 177 patients hospitalized. We are seeing an uptick in vaccinations. Almost 4.6 million vaccinations have been administered in the state. As of September 5th, 48.7% of South Carolina's population greater than 12 years of age have been fully vaccinated and 57.7% have received at least one dose. In Richland county, 60.8% of residents have received at least one dose and 51.8% have completed their vaccination process. According to the CDC as of September 4th, 62% of the U.S. population has been vaccinated.

- *Premium Pay, Cost of Living Adjustments, and Vaccination Incentive Package - Ms. Teresa Wilson, City Manager – Approved*

Ms. Teresa Wilson, City Manager said for the duration of the pandemic the work ethic shown by City of Columbia employees has been nothing but impressive. We have worked through the pandemic and worked differently, but nevertheless kept working the whole time. As the federal government allows through the American Rescue Plan funds, we have identified our frontline essential workers. It is those in critical infrastructure sectors like police, fire, public works, Columbia Water, etc. We also had essential workers that may not have been frontline but were also in critical infrastructure sectors performing central work and making sure that our frontline essential employees did their jobs and that all of our citizens never had to miss a beat with the essential services that we provide as a city. We are at a point to move forward with the premium pay package for our employees. This will consist of a \$2,500 premium pay out to frontline essential workers. This is the net amount that they will receive and we will take care of the taxes. If they are vaccinated, we are working on a vaccination incentive that will include an additional



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\$500 for a total of \$3,000. Essential workers as described will receive \$1,250 and an additional \$500 if they are vaccinated, for a total of \$1,750. Any employee in the city that becomes fully vaccinated by November 1st will also receive the \$500. Anyone can receive that whether or not they were deemed frontline essential or essential during the pandemic. We know that having these funds in their hands right now is not the end all, but we do think it is something that is well-deserved. As a manager you are always wanting to ensure that your staff is always moving forward in their pay bands. We have implemented cost of living adjustments. We will implement a 3% pay adjustment in February for all city employees. By the end of this month all of the frontline essential and essential employees will receive the premium pay and vaccination incentive and we will implement a cost of living adjustment in February 2022. I do understand that employees have different philosophical reasons for getting vaccinated. I have always told them that the workplace where they have chosen to work is a service provider. What I am seeing and witnessing on a daily basis is troublesome. We find ourselves as a community being impacted by the high rates of positive cases. This has caused a lot of vacancies. We also have individuals who because their children are having to quarantine, they are having to stay out of work. On November 1st, we will be moving forward with mandatory COVID-19 testing, if not before, and a mandatory vaccination policy. We are giving another 45 days for city employees to be the example and take advantage of the incentives that this Council has allowed me to offer. Hopefully we will see an uptick in our rate of vaccinations for our employees between now and November 1st.

Upon a motion made by Mayor Benjamin and seconded by Mr. Rickenmann, Council voted unanimously to approve the premium pay, cost of living adjustment, and vaccination incentive package as presented.

Mayor Benjamin said we recognize that the ultimate way out of this is through vaccinations. We mitigate that in the interim with solid testing. We are asking all of our folks to help us get to a point where we can continue to render the quality of services to the people of the city that so many of them did so well throughout the earliest days of the pandemic. This is a strong move in the right direction. The vaccine incentive is consistent with what we are seeing both in the public sector and private sector. We have to really spend some quality time looking at places that have had some success in vaccine adoption. I want to thank staff for their leadership and helping us pull this together. No approach is perfect but we know it's important to never let the perfect be the enemy of the good.



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32. Fiscal Year 2021/2022 Hospitality Tax Supplemental Allocations - Ms. Melisa Caughman, Budget & Program Management Director

Upon a motion made by Mr. Duvall and seconded by Mr. Rickenmann, Council voted unanimously to approve the following Fiscal Year 2021/2022 supplemental allocations from the Hospitality Tax Fund: Parks & Recreation Foundation \$35,000 of which \$10,000 is designated for Education Leaders of Color [501(c)3 organization]; Midlands Authority for Conventions, Sports, and Tourism \$35,000; Jam Room Foundation \$35,000; and Ann Brodie's Carolina Ballet \$25,000.

ORDINANCES - FIRST READING

33. Ordinance No.: 2021-063 Amending the 1998 Code of Ordinances of the City of Columbia, South Carolina, Chapter 15, Parks and Recreation, Sec. 15-1 Prohibited acts in parks and Sec. 15-4 Hours of operation – *Approved on first reading.*

Upon a motion made by Mr. Duvall and seconded by Mr. Davis, Council voted unanimously to give first reading approval to Ordinance No.: 2021-063 Amending the 1998 Code of Ordinances of the City of Columbia, South Carolina, Chapter 15, Parks and Recreation, Sec. 15-1 Prohibited acts in parks and Sec. 15-4 Hours of operation.

RESOLUTIONS

34. Resolution No.: R-2021-084 Authorizing the City Manager to accept the transfer of approximately 31.43 acres of Surplus Property located between SC Highway 277 and Park Street and to accept as Consideration for the Transaction portions of Grace Street; Henderson Street, Washington Street, Wayne Street, Chester Street, Aiken Street, Honors Road, and Crowson Road; Richland County TMS#09115, 09114, 09111, 09110, 09109, 09182 and to authorize the City Manager to execute any documents approved by the City Attorney necessary to consummate the transfer – *Approved*

Councilor Duvall said this is a long awaited resolution where we are taking over some property that was designated for 277 at one time. We have promised that we will not make any definite use of this property until we go to the bordering neighborhoods and get their input on how it should be done. This is a great project for us to undertake and it will give us a lot of flexibility to do some things that need to be done.



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Councilor Davis said I agree on the intent. I think it's important that we have some discussions about what happens to this property. We need to do that in a way that it keeps us mindful of how we go about doing things and how we go about obtaining properties and the impact on the people who live there.

Councilor Devine said I have been at the Downtown Neighborhood Association meetings several times talking about this specific property. The staff is well aware and I think Ms. Gentry and Ms. Wilson have some ideas about what the public participation process will look like. I know that staff is very aware that the community needs to be not only engaged but involved as we move forward. This is now our public property and we have to go through a very transparent process about what will happen.

Mayor Benjamin said this is a real opportunity to right a historic wrong. The decisions we made about an automobile centric infrastructure over a half a century ago destroyed neighborhoods and unearthed cemeteries. Some were bold enough decades ago to preserve Elmwood Park and parts of Cottontown. This is a real opportunity; we are very much in the vanguard of good things happening in this space. I know it has taken years to get here and we are not done yet. By the time this is all done we will finally have a real balance of property that ought to be in the public domain.

Upon a motion made by Mayor Benjamin and seconded by Mr. Davis, Council voted unanimously to approve Resolution No.: R-2021-084 Authorizing the City Manager to accept the transfer of approximately 31.43 acres of Surplus Property located between SC Highway 277 and Park Street and to accept as Consideration for the Transaction portions of Grace Street; Henderson Street, Washington Street, Wayne Street, Chester Street, Aiken Street, Honors Road, and Crowson Road; Richland County TMS#09115, 09114, 09111, 09110, 09109, 09182 and to authorize the City Manager to execute any documents approved by the City Attorney necessary to consummate the transfer.

35. Resolution No.: R-2021-089 Certifying Two (2) Building Sites as Abandoned Buildings Pursuant to the South Carolina Abandoned Buildings Revitalization Act, Title 12, Chapter 67, Section 12-67-100 et seq., of the South Carolina Code of Laws (1976), as amended, regarding the property located at 1216 Taylor Street, Richland County TMS # R09014-09-03 – *Approved*

Upon a motion made by Mr. McDowell and seconded by Mayor Benjamin, Council voted unanimously to approve Resolution No.: R-2021-089 Certifying Two (2) Building Sites as Abandoned Buildings Pursuant to the South Carolina Abandoned Buildings Revitalization Act,



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Title 12, Chapter 67, Section 12-67-100 et seq., of the South Carolina Code of Laws (1976), as amended, regarding the property located at 1216 Taylor Street, Richland County TMS # R09014-09-03.

36. Resolution No.: R-2021-099 City of Columbia Policy on the Carry of Concealable Weapons during permitted, organized events within the jurisdiction of the City of Columbia and while on City premises or workplaces – *Approved*

Upon a motion made by Mayor Benjamin and seconded by Mr. Davis, Council voted unanimously to approve Resolution No.: R-2021-099 City of Columbia Policy on the Carry of Concealable Weapons during permitted, organized events within the jurisdiction of the City of Columbia and while on City premises or workplaces.

EVENT RESOLUTIONS

Councilor McDowell said with the cases continuing to rise, do we want to continue to have these kinds of events that can perhaps become super spreaders.

Mayor Benjamin said I share the same concerns. I am not sure how many of these we have in the pipeline. We just passed Resolution 2021-099. Will all of these events be made aware of this new policy?

Ms. Teresa Wilson, City Manager said yes sir.

Mayor Benjamin said one of the greatest challenges we have is that we are not socially distancing anymore. People are just tired of COVID. We are not dealing with the same virus we dealt with last year when these protocols were put in place. We are dealing with a much more contagious variant than what we dealt before. We have to figure out how to balance the ultimate objective of preserving life and the important objective of preserving livelihoods.

Ms. Teresa Wilson, City Manager said we have looked at protocols in other cities and things that they are doing. In some cities they are looking at proof of vaccination for certain events. We never want to put the event planners in a predicament waiting for approval. I know they would at least probably need two weeks if I had to imagine. We can certainly hold these until the next council meeting.



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Councilor Devine said I think we have to be very cautious. If these aren't approved some of these events will push people indoors, which is even worse. We are having outdoor events and we continue to stress social distancing and the need to comply with COVID protocols. Maybe adding to the protocols based on the previous executive order or start doing capacity. I think those are some things that we might want to consider before we think about not approving at all.

Councilor Duvall said my decision process is that all of these events are outdoor events and that all of the people should be 21 years of age because we are talking about beer and wine permits. They have the vaccine available to them. If you want to take the risk and go out unvaccinated into a crowd, then that is your choice. I would let the people make that choice since they all outdoor events.

Councilor Davis said I think we need to continue to communicate our intentions when it comes to prevention even if that means going back and tweaking the guidelines. As we continue to interpret the data we should remain flexible to tweak as we go.

Mayor Benjamin said we maintain the prerogative to cancel events if in fact the data indicates a great public threat. I would include that liability. We have to be sensitive in making sure everyone knows that. We should probably reevaluate each of these events in two weeks. I would completely support an idea to look at vaccination proof for entry to events. These are private events; mostly non-profit events. I'm going to be sensitive to that but we are in a different time and different times call for different measures.

37. Resolution No.: R-2021-087 Authorizing consumption of beer and wine only at the Gervais Street Bridge Dinner on Sunday, October 10, 2021 – *Approved*

Upon a motion made by Mr. Brennan and seconded by Mr. Duvall, Council voted six (6) to one (1) to approve Resolution No.: R-2021-087 Authorizing consumption of beer and wine only at the Gervais Street Bridge Dinner on Sunday, October 10, 2021. Mr. Brennan, Mr. Rickenmann, Mr. Duvall, Ms. Devine, Mr. Davis, and Mayor Benjamin voted aye. Mr. McDowell voted nay.

38. Resolution No.: R-2021-094 Authorizing consumption of beer and wine only within Boyd Plaza adjacent to the Columbia Museum of Art for CMA Contemporaries Present Beer and Brats on Boyd Plaza on Thursday, October 21, 2021 – *Approved*



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Upon a motion made by Mr. Brennan and seconded by Mr. Duvall, Council voted six (6) to one (1) to approve Resolution No.: R-2021-094 Authorizing consumption of beer and wine only within Boyd Plaza adjacent to the Columbia Museum of Art for CMA Contemporaries Present Beer and Brats on Boyd Plaza on Thursday, October 21, 2021. Mr. Brennan, Mr. Rickenmann, Mr. Duvall, Ms. Devine, Mr. Davis, and Mayor Benjamin voted aye. Mr. McDowell voted nay.

39. Resolution No.: R-2021-096 Authorizing consumption if beer and wine only at Jerry Fest at the Five Points Fountain on Sunday, October 3, 2021 with a rain contingency date of Sunday, October 10, 2021 – *Approved*

Upon a motion made by Mr. Brennan and seconded by Mr. Duvall, Council voted five (5) to two (2) to approve Resolution No.: R-2021-096 Authorizing consumption if beer and wine only at Jerry Fest at the Five Points Fountain on Sunday, October 3, 2021 with a rain contingency date of Sunday, October 10, 2021. Mr. Brennan, Mr. Rickenmann, Mr. Duvall, Ms. Devine, and Mr. Davis voted aye. Mr. McDowell and Mayor Benjamin voted nay.

40. Resolution No.: R-2021-097 Authorizing consumption of beer and wine only at the Bierkeller at Riverfront Park Fall Happy Hours in the Amphitheater Area of the Riverfront Park Tuesdays, September 21, 2021, September 28, 2021, October, 5, 2021, October 12, 2021, October 19, 2021, October 26, 2021 and November 2, 2021 with rain contingency dates of Thursdays, September 23, 2021, September 30, 2021, October 7, 2021, October 14, 2021, October 21, 2021, October 28, 2021 and November 4, 2021 – *Approved*

Upon a motion made by Mr. Duvall and seconded by Mr. Brennan, Council voted five (5) to two (2) to approve Resolution No.: R-2021-097 Authorizing consumption of beer and wine only at the Bierkeller at Riverfront Park Fall Happy Hours in the Amphitheater Area of the Riverfront Park Tuesdays, September 21, 2021, September 28, 2021, October, 5, 2021, October 12, 2021, October 19, 2021, October 26, 2021 and November 2, 2021 with rain contingency dates of Thursdays, September 23, 2021, September 30, 2021, October 7, 2021, October 14, 2021, October 21, 2021, October 28, 2021 and November 4, 2021. Mr. Brennan, Mr. Rickenmann, Mr. Duvall, Ms. Devine, and Mr. Davis voted aye. Mr. McDowell and Mayor Benjamin voted nay.

41. Resolution No.: R-2021-098 Authorizing consumption of beer and wine only at the Bierkeller Art Along the Trail in the Amphitheater Area of the Riverfront Park Saturday, October 2, 2021 with rain contingency date of Saturday, October 9, 2021 – *Approved*



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Upon a motion made by Mr. Duvall and seconded by Mr. Brennan, Council voted unanimously to approve Resolution No.: R-2021-098 Authorizing consumption of beer and wine only at the Bierkeller Art Along the Trail in the Amphitheater Area of the Riverfront Park Saturday, October 2, 2021 with rain contingency date of Saturday, October 9, 2021.

PUBLIC INPUT ON ROAD CLOSURE

42. Resolution No.: R-2021-092 Public Input on Closing of Rugby Road adjacent to Richland County TMS #09305-04-18, 09305-04-19, 09212-01-01, 09309-15-11, 09309-15-08, 09212-02-01 and 09212-02-12 – *Received as information. No action was taken.*

Council opened the public hearing at 4:58 p.m.

No comments were received at this time.

Council closed the public hearing at 4:58 p.m.

APPOINTMENTS

43. Citizens Advisory Committee to Columbia Police Department – *Deferred*
44. Municipal Election Commission – *Approved*

A motion was made by Mr. McDowell and seconded by Mr. Brennan to appoint Mr. Austin Nichols to the Municipal Election Commission.

A motion was made by Mr. Rickenmann and seconded by Ms. Devine to appoint Mr. Pete Kennedy to the Municipal Election Commission.

Mr. Brennan voted for Austin Nichols.
Mr. Rickenmann voted for Pete Kennedy.
Mr. McDowell voted for Austin Nichols.
Mr. Duvall voted for Austin Nichols.
Ms. Devine voted for Pete Kennedy.
Mr. Davis voted for Austin Nichols.
Mayor Benjamin was not present for the vote.



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By majority vote, Mr. Austin Nichols was appointed to the Municipal Election Commission for a term of six years.

CITY COUNCIL COMMITTEE REFERRALS / REPORTS

Councilor McDowell said the Administrative Policy Committee met this morning and we had a good kickoff. I want to acknowledge that one email was sent in reference to the health officer. That email can be circulated to you guys so that you might read it. It was a very productive meeting. There are some things that will come before you all once the staff continues to do its work.

Councilor Devine said due to the COVID numbers, the Mayor's Walk Against Domestic Violence will be virtual this year. One thing that doesn't get a lot of attention is the fact that domestic violence numbers went up during quarantine. It is now very important that we continue to shed light on this issue and support Sister Care's local shelter. I would ask that everybody continue to amplify the message. Staff is doing a good job but when people hear virtual they think they don't have to participate. We still want to have as much attention around this issue as we would if we had hundreds of people marching.

PUBLIC INPUT

Ms. Jennifer Powers, small business owner said I want to address your mentor protégé program for the city and some issues that I have with the water and sewer engineering department. I have been trying since 2014 to enter the general contracting and public utility water sewer construction industry. I have had some serious problems over the years getting postured and positioned for that. In 2014, I asked what I could do to get into the system. I received a pretty concise plan to be certified. Bonding was a huge hurdle for me as it is for all small contractors. I am certified with the DOT and with the state as a minority business. For years I have heard about the mentor protégé program. I went through the mentor protégé college to discover that this mentoring business is really individuals that are partnering up with each other based on personal or professional preference. It has not really worked for me. In the program I have noticed that there are the same players and the same prime contractors. There have not been any provisions set aside for a minority business to do their own work. As a taxpayer, I would ask this Council to look into the feasibility of this program and if it is working. I am not seeing that a business person with my background and ability can enter this program and be successful. The city spends millions of dollars in water and sewer work and could benefit from having an engineering mentoring program for contractors like myself and my subs. I have been doing business here



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since I was 14 years old. I am aging out and I can't seem to get my company in the game. I have all of the necessary tools to help city engineering do water and sewer work.

Councilor Davis said we need to continue the dialogue. We have had some successes but we need to keep trying and see what else we can do. It is still important that we help grow smaller businesses in our community. The city has to show we are growing and developing the skills to have the dollars stay in the community.

Voicemail received from unidentified caller: I would like to be told how many tax dollars were wasted by City Council and the Mayor in defending their illegal ordinance.

Mayor Benjamin said we disagree that the ordinance was illegal. All services rendered to the City were rendered pro bono. We saw amazing intergovernmental support from municipal lawyers and professionals from all across the state, public and private sector.

EXECUTIVE SESSION

Upon a motion made by Mr. Duvall and seconded by Mr. Davis, Council voted unanimously to enter into Executive Session at 5:20 p.m. for the discussion of **Items 45 and 46**.

Councilor Rickenmann left the meeting at 5:21 p.m.

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

*COVID-19
Sylvia Copeland vs. COC
Rugby Road*

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

Legislative Affairs

Councilor Devine left the meeting at 6:02 p.m.



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ADJOURNMENT

The meeting was adjourned at 6:07 p.m.

Respectfully submitted:

Erika D. Moore Hammond, CMC
City Clerk