

**City Council Minutes
March 18, 2025**

Orangeburg City Council held its regularly scheduled meeting on Tuesday, March 18, 2025, at 6:00 pm in Council Chambers, 933 Middleton Street with Mayor Michael C. Butler presiding.

PRESENT:

Michael C. Butler, Mayor
Annette Dees Grevious
Jerry Hannah
Dr. Kalu Kalu
L. Zimmerman Keitt, Mayor Pro Tem
Richard Stroman

PRESENT VIRTUALLY:

Sandra P. Knotts

Mayor Butler opened the Public Hearing Consideration of an ordinance amending the City of Orangeburg Zoning Ordinance regarding tobacco retail establishments. The public hearing was closed as there was no one to speak.

A motion was made by Councilmember Stroman, seconded by Councilmember Kalu to approve February 27, 2025, Strategic Plan Workshop minutes. The motion was approved 6-0-1. Councilmember Knotts abstained.

A motion was made by Mayor Pro Tem Keitt, seconded by Councilmember Grevious to approve March 4, 2025, minutes. The motion was approved 6-0-1. Councilmember Knotts abstained.

City Administrator Evering addressed Council concerning second reading of an ordinance amending the City of Orangeburg Zoning Ordinance regarding tobacco retail establishments. He stated "This ordinance would amend the zoning ordinance to restrict the density, the number of vaping shops within City limits. This ordinance would not run anyone out of business as this does not apply to current vape shops. The planning commission met on February 27, 2025, and passed a resolution that recommended approval. The amendment would prohibit vaping shops from being opened in residential areas, A-1, A-2, and A-3. Office Institutional O-I and General Business B-1. In addition, they would not be permitted in any planned development districts or historical conservation districts. They would be permitted in Central Business B2 and Neighborhood Business B3. They cannot be within 2,000 feet from another vape shop or within 1,000 feet of a place of worship, educational facility, or establishment whose principle gross revenue is distribution of alcohol and beverages."

A motion was made Mayor Pro Tem Keitt, seconded by Councilmember Hannah to approve second reading of an ordinance amending the City of Orangeburg Zoning Ordinance regarding tobacco retail establishments. The motion was unanimously approved.

City Administrator Evering addressed Council concerning consideration of adoption of the Strategic Plan. He stated, "As you may recall, on February 27, a workshop was held in the which Charles Sexton with Strategic Location Advisers presented the Strategic Plan. This consulting group was selected by the South Carolina Department of Commerce. This strategic plan was completed at no cost to the City and the Department of Commerce will provide \$250,000 grant toward a project that would support the strategic plan. I ask, if it pleases Council, that you adopt this plan so we can formally move forward with it."

A motion was made by Councilmember Kalu, seconded by Mayor Pro Tem Keitt to approve the adoption of the Strategic Plan. The motion was unanimously approved.

City Administrator Evering addressed Council concerning approval of entering an Automatic Aid Agreement between the City of Orangeburg Department of Public Safety (City Fire) and Orangeburg County Fire District (County Fire). He stated, "This is a mutual aid agreement that we have had that would require us to provide aid if the County Fire District needs it and vice versa if we needed additional fire support services, the County would render aid. We request you authorize us to enter into this mutual aid agreement."

A motion was made by Mayor Pro Tem Keitt, seconded by Councilmember Hannah to authorize approval of entering an Automatic Aid Agreement between the City of Orangeburg Department of Public Safety (City Fire) and Orangeburg County Fire District (County Fire). The motion was unanimously approved.

DPS Chief Austin addressed Council concerning update on City of Orangeburg Crime Statistics. He stated, "This year from 2023 to 2024, we experienced a 7.25% decrease in the overall crime rate in the City. We measure crime in two categories violent crime and poverty crime. The violent crime rate in the City decreased by 21% but we are still concerned because we have seen activity among young people between the ages of 13 and 19 that causes us concern. We are continuing to reach out to stakeholders throughout the community in hopes of forming partnerships that will allow us to apply for resources. We have the Mentors Matters Program within the Department of Public Safety working in close harmony with Serve and Connect and other stakeholders throughout the area and we do believe we can make a difference. We will continue to work to build those partnerships and hopefully the next report we present to you will show another decrease. The aggravated assault rate dropped 25%. Again, we still have a concern because 30% of those involved domestic violence crimes. We will reach out to stakeholders because we need to figure out what we can do to not only address this from a legal standpoint but also what resources we can offer the victim, children, and the perpetrator. We want to look at a holistic approach to dealing with the issue of domestic violence. We had a slight up tick in the number of reported robberies. Most robberies involved individuals. We realize we need to apply different resources to that problem to get it under control and to further reduce violent crime. We are concentrating on aggressively prosecuting individuals involved in criminal activity, particularly violent crimes within the City of Orangeburg. Poverty crime decreased by 4% during the last year. One of our biggest challenges dealt with thefts from autos. The 13-19-year-old group that tends to roam the streets late into the night, early into the morning will shake vehicle doors and search for laptops, tablets, and weapons. We want to continue to encourage our residents to lock vehicles. We joined the national campaign, Hide, Lock, and Take. The message is Hide your valuables (putting them away in the glove box, trunk, or a place not out in the open.) Lock your vehicle and Take your keys. We want to unveil the program again in a positive way. I commend our DPS personnel for the job they have done. I also want to thank Council, the City Administrator and Assistant City Administrator for your support. We realize there is still work that needs to be done and we are committed to doing that as anything above one crime is too many."

Mayor Pro Tem Keitt asked, "Are you working closely with the parents of the young people committing the crimes? Do you send them to programs in the City or do you talk with the schools?"

Chief Austin stated, "When we have a youth involved in a crime, one of the aspects of our investigation is to determine if there is someone in the family who might be a hindrance to our investigation. If we find that is the case, we will hold that person accountable. We want to be sure that we are offering programs that will help parents identify that a child engages in criminal activity. Then we would expect them to collaborate with us to correct it. We have had instances where parents have come to us to talk about the situation with their child. If we cannot identify local programs, then we search for other available programs to refer them to."

DPU Manager Harley addressed Council concerning first reading of a Series Ordinance making provision for the Terms and Conditions of Combined Public Utility System Revenue Borrowing of the City of Orangeburg. He stated, "This is an ordinance that would permit the DPU to move forward on a bond issue on this previously discussed project. As you may recall during our budget process, we discussed a water treatment plant project of improvements to the plant and the flood lagoon. This project would allow us to get more flexibility and capacity in the plant as we manage future growth. It would also give some redundancy in managing the residuals from our plant as well as extending the life of the lagoon. The lagoon was last cleaned or dredged in around 2005. We project that it would give us an additional 50 years of life on the current lagoon. It is a much-needed project. As we mentioned to you in our budget process, it will help us as we look at potential growth and effects on our system. As that happens, we will need this project well ahead of that growth. We have an extended capital needs program and have planned these projects and scheduled them for over a five, ten, fifteen-year plan. Without this loan, we cannot do this project. It meets the needs of our capital needs improvement as we move forward. This would be a 20-

year term for \$13.1 million at a rate of 2.1%. This issue would come from the South Carolina State Revolving Fund.”

A motion was made by Councilmember Kalu, seconded by Mayor Pro Tem Keitt to approve first reading of a Series Ordinance making provision for the Terms and Conditions of Combined Public Utility System Revenue Borrowing of the City of Orangeburg. The motion was unanimously approved.

A motion was made by Councilmember Stroman, seconded by Councilmember Grevious to go into Executive Session concerning Discussion of negotiations incident to proposed contractual arrangements and proposed sale or purchase of property, the receipt of legal advice or other matters covered by the attorney-client privilege – Project Riverview S.C. Code Sec. 30-4-70(a)(2), Performance Evaluation Discussion – City of Orangeburg Municipal Judge S.C. Code Sec. 30-4-70(a)(1) and Personnel Matters S.C. Code 30-4-70(a)(1) Mauldin and Jenkins CPAs & Advisors. The motion was unanimously approved.

Council did not return from Executive Session. There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned.

Respectfully submitted,

Linda McDaniel

Linda McDaniel
City Clerk

