

**City Council Minutes
September 2, 2025**

Orangeburg City Council held its regularly scheduled meeting on Tuesday, September 2, 2025, at 6:00 pm in Council Chambers, 933 Middleton Street with Mayor 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 (arrived 6:30pm)

A motion was made by Councilmember Stroman, seconded by Mayor Pro Tem Keitt to approve June 23, 2025, DPU Budget Workshop minutes. The motion was unanimously approved. Councilmember Knotts was not present for the vote.

A motion was made by Councilmember Stroman, seconded by Councilmember Grevious to approve August 15, 2025, Special Council minutes. The motion was unanimously approved. Councilmember Knotts was not present for the vote.

A motion was made by Mayor Pro Tem Keitt, seconded by Councilmember Kalu to approve August 19, 2025, minutes. The motion was unanimously approved. Councilmember Knotts was not present for the vote.

Mayor Butler recognized Determined as the September Orangeburg County Community of Character Trait.

Parks & Recreation Director Taylor recognized the 2025 Baseball Tournament Champions for 6U Rookie League Allstars, 10U Boys Allstar District Champions, and 12U Boys Allstar District Champions won the sportsmanship award, the King Dixon Award, that is voted on by coaches, umpires, and the Diamond Youth Baseball (DYB) officials.

Dr. Shawn Foster, Orangeburg County School District Superintendent appeared before Council to present an update of Orangeburg County School District.

Mrs. Brenda Jamerson appeared before Council concerning the Samaritan House. She stated, "This month marks the fifth year the Samaritan House has been back in operation. In 2019 under the direction of Mayor Butler, the board began raising funds to refurbish and reopen the Samaritan House and it reopened in 2020. Since that time, the board and staff have kept the vision and the mission alive of providing a safe place for the unsheltered population by providing resources to assist in securing more stable housing and to improve their lives. We have accomplished much, but we need help moving forward. Our overarching need is in the establishment of a collaborative partnership with City government, County government, service agencies, community and the unsheltered population to achieve community growth to solve the issues of the unsheltered population in Orangeburg County. We have organized a coalition for the homeless, but on that board, we do not have people who can talk to us about money, housing plans, transportation needs, or plans to move forward with the issues of the homeless. It is imperative, as the demand for our services continues to grow, sustaining and expanding our support requires stable funding. For the past five years, the Samaritan House has relied primarily on fundraising efforts and limited grant opportunities; however, moving forward, we cannot continue to operate on fundraising alone as it provides only uncertain projections. Given the current economic climate that affects all of us, it is imperative that City and County Councils allocate a dedicated line in your budget to ensure the continued operation of the Samaritan House. Our organization operates on a lean annual budget of just over \$400,000. On page two of the handout are listed the critical areas of financial needs to include transitional and permanent housing support, transportation support, food assistance,

residents' basic needs, administrative costs, facility and operation costs, and additional facility/affordable housing needs. On the next page our accomplishments are listed."

City Administrator Evering addressed Council concerning third reading of an ordinance amending the budget for the City of Orangeburg for the Fiscal Year October 1, 2024, through September 30, 2025. He stated, "This is the City's annual budget amendment. We are requesting the budget be amended to reflect the increase from \$29.6 million to \$32.6 million. As a reminder some of the drivers are cost of living inflation, and insurance costs have risen an additional \$1 million."

A motion was made by Mayor Pro Tem Keitt, seconded by Councilmember Grevious to approve third reading of an ordinance amending the budget for the City of Orangeburg for the Fiscal Year October 1, 2024, through September 30, 2025. The motion was unanimously approved.

City Administrator Evering addressed Council concerning third reading of an ordinance to adopt a budget for the City of Orangeburg for the Fiscal Year October 1, 2025, through September 30, 2026. He stated, "This is an amendment for Council to consider. We have had conversations with DPU Manager Harley and our budget analyst and would like to propose a cost-of-living increase of 2% for our employees, which would add about \$200,000 to the budget. We will receive that money from DPU, changing the allocation from \$9.1 million to \$9.3 million. As a reminder, that would not include myself, DPU Manager and the Municipal Judge. A few details on the budget. We are asking for \$29,919,000, increasing from \$29,719,000. Some of our challenges, as I have stated in the past, are our City growth. We are talking about annexation and have a plan. Inflation, staff recruiting and retention, and emergency preparedness are things we want to keep in front of our budget. This budget does not include a tax increase for this year. The General Fund revenue is projected to increase \$1.2 million from \$24.7 million to \$25.9 million and expenditure again is \$25.9 million. We would also add \$1 million to our reserve funds. We are recommending continuing the hiring freeze. We are also recommending eliminating ten full-time positions that are currently funded but not at this moment. We do not recommend any additional debt occurring and we also have included some financial policies to provide a better structurally balanced budget. We included the fees and fines schedule with comparisons of other municipalities in your packets. We are suggesting overall permit fees total \$172. Comparison are Orangeburg County \$170, Calhoun County \$245, Moncks Corner \$160, Beaufort \$194 and Tega Cay \$240. We are adding a Plan Review fee for \$86. Comparisons are Orangeburg County \$17, Calhoun County \$24.50, Moncks Corner \$80, Beaufort \$90, and Tega Cay \$60. Other recommended fines and fee increases are Handicap parking violations of \$500. Comparisons are City of Columbia \$500, Beaufort \$400, and City of Aiken \$100 - \$200. Fire lane violations increase from \$50 to \$100. Comparisons are the City of Columbia \$500, City of Greenville does not charge, and Beaufort \$50. Blocking sidewalk from \$20 to \$50. Comparisons are City of Columbia \$50 and City of Greenville \$25. Parks and Recreation City residents' registration per sport from \$30 to \$35. Comparisons are Orangeburg County \$20, Calhoun County \$20, Aiken \$65 and Summerville \$50. For non-residents from \$55 to \$60. Comparisons include Sumter based on age and other cities there is no difference between what they charge in City residents versus non-City residents."

Councilmember Grevious asked, "With Parks and Recreation, do you anticipate a decrease in participation since they can participate in county sports for \$15."

City Administrator Evering stated, "I do not anticipate a decrease. The City has the largest Parks and Recreation Department. The increase is relatively minimal of \$5 to keep up with the cost of living and inflation."

Councilmember Grevious asked, "Is the COLA a one-time payment or is it a salary increase that will have to be sustained over time?"

City Administrator Evering stated, "It is a salary increase."

Councilmember Stroman asked, "Did City employees receive a raise last year?"

City Administrator Evering stated, "No, but all City employees received a bonus last year."

Councilmember Kalu stated, "I suggest Council revisit this portion in terms of cost of living and merit raises in the next budget workshops in Fiscal Year 2026-2027."

A motion was made by Councilmember Kalu, seconded by Mayor Pro Tem Keitt to approve third reading to adopt a budget for the City of Orangeburg for the Fiscal Year October 1, 2025, through September 30, 2026, as amended by City Administrator Evering to include 2% Cost of Living Adjustment (COLA). The motion was unanimously approved.

City Administrator Evering addressed Council concerning second reading of an ordinance amending Chapter 5-31 (Hate Intimidation). He stated, "As you may recall, Richland County was the first local government in the state of South Carolina to pass the hate crimes ordinance. I think South Carolina is only one of two states in the nation that does not have hate crime legislation. Orangeburg County subsequently passed an ordinance at their last council meeting. We have before you an ordinance amendment that would add language to recognize hate crimes here in the City of Orangeburg. Basically, it would be unlawful for any person to cause fear of harm, injury, or damage to a victim or property because of the victim's actual or perceived race, ethnicity, national origin, color, religion, sexual orientation, gender, gender identity. It would provide for up to \$500 fine. It will be a misdemeanor or 30 days in prison or both to be at the discretion of the judge."

A motion was made by Councilmember Grevious, seconded by Councilmember Kalu to approve second reading of an ordinance amending Chapter 5 (Police Regulations) of the City Code, by adding Section 5-31 (Hate Intimidation). The motion was unanimously approved.

P&R Director Taylor addressed Council concerning the review and approval of Accommodations Tax Advisory Committee recommendations. He stated, "In your packet, you have the recommendations for the Accommodations Tax Advisory Committee. The committee met on August 27, 2025. We received four requests to include Orangeburg County Fair Association \$48,463.10, Orangeburg Fine Arts \$30,000, the City of Orangeburg Parks and Recreation Department \$50,000 DYB/DYS State Tournaments and \$10,000 Rose Festival Entertainment, and the S.A.F.E Program \$25,000 for your consideration."

A motion was made by Mayor Pro Tem Keitt, seconded by Councilmember Kalu to approve recommendations of the Accommodations Tax Advisory Committee as presented by Parks & Recreation Director Taylor. The motion was unanimously approved.

DPU Manager Harley addressed Council concerning third reading of an ordinance to amend the budget for the operation of the Department of Public Utilities of the City of Orangeburg for the Fiscal Year October 1, 2024, through September 30, 2025. He stated, "As you recall, we do an amendment to the current budget to more accurately reflect how things came together at the end of the year. I sent a memo with the packet referencing the amendments that we are requesting. The net effect on all the changes is a projected net income of \$2.4 million after the transfers. Some of those include the economic development fund expense that we committed to support the county economic development project and contributed approximately \$5.3 million. Those are the major changes that drive the positive net income on our current year's budget."

Councilmember Grevious asked, "For clarity, will you highlight Page 2 Fiscal Year 2024-2025 Cash Flow revisions?"

DPU Manager Harley stated, "Operating cash flow decreased by \$1 million and non-capital financing cash flow decreased by \$200,000, financing capital related cash flows decreased by \$6.7 million and investing cash flow increased by \$1.3 million. For the record, none of this impacts the rates. We are still asking you to approve the same rates as we go into the next year."

Councilmember Hannah asked, "Will this bring about stability or is it just getting by?"

DPU Manager Harley stated, "These amendments do not impact our ability to continue to operate. It is a cleanup of numbers. As we get closer to the end of the year, we hold those numbers to the last reading. The net impact on these for the fiscal year currently is \$2.4 million increase to the good. So, we ended up with more money than we projected."

A motion was made by Councilmember Kalu, seconded by Mayor Pro Tem Keitt to approve third reading of an ordinance to amend the budget for the operation of the Department of Public Utilities of the City of Orangeburg for the Fiscal Year October 1, 2024, through September 30, 2025, as presented by the DPU Manager. The motion was unanimously approved.

DPU Manager Harley addressed Council concerning third reading of an ordinance to adopt a budget for the operation of the Department of Public Utilities of the City of Orangeburg for the Fiscal Year October 1, 2025, through September 30, 2026, (2) adopt amended Electric rates effective October 1, 2025, (3) adopt amended Natural Gas rates effective October 1, 2025, (4) adopt amended Water rates effective October 1, 2025, and (5) adopt amended Wastewater rates effective October 1, 2025. He stated, "On Fiscal Year 2025-2026, we have made no changes to the rate plan. It is as it has been for the last two readings. The budget does include a 2% COLA that excludes the DPU Manager and only covers DPU employees. We do however include in that as we have done for the last nine years, a merit program. We only budget partial of that so that only is covering a half of a year that is 2% so instead of \$300,000, it will be \$150,000. We have always done it that way to make sure that we can manage the cost as we go through the year. I will go through the other amendments that we have made to the numbers. Again, this is reflected in your packet in the spreadsheet. For next year's budget 2025-2026, the net effect of all the changes again is an increase after transfer of \$640,000 again to the good. The net effect is that it goes positive not negative. Some of those changes or amendments is that we are adjusting an increase in interest income to \$1 million. Total projected cost of sales increased by \$1.5 million due to the upward revision of our purchase of power. The operating income increases \$1.5 million. Again, that is related to our purchase power cost. Again, that is numbers being more clearly reflected at the end of the year, it does not impact on our ability to operate. It will be a net impact \$640,000 to the positive."

Councilmember Kalu stated, "On the concept of cost of living and merit increases, Council needs to revisit these two items of cost of living and merit increase to establish specific procedures for giving employee increases."

DPU Manager Harley stated, "Dr. Kalu is recommending after we get through this budget, we bring back to Council a plan. As you all know, I have advocated over the years to just do one pot of merit money. That way we can manage it and reward employees for good work based on performance. This is something we can bring back to Council going into the next budget."

Councilmember Grevious asked, "You stated there will be a decrease in the projected cash flow for the upcoming fiscal year, correct?"

DPU Manager Harley stated, "The current operating cash flow decreases by \$3.2 million. Non-capital financing, cash flow did not change. Financing and capital-related cash flow decreased by \$16.2 million. Investing cash flow did not change the net effect. The net effect is a decrease in projected cash flow of \$20 million. It is basically on how we are going to use the cash. For example, if we have projects on the board that are \$25 million, we know that we are not going to spend that entire amount this year, we have revised those numbers down so that we will not tie up that money unnecessarily. For budget purposes, we revise that number back down so that we can be more reflective of what we think we are going to spend."

Councilmember Grevious asked, "Does that effect the proposed rate increase?"

DPU Manager Harley stated, "No, because the projects will get done. We must order long lead items, and we may not pay for those things right now, but we must order them. When we order them, I must know I have the money to pay for them."

Councilmember Grevious asked, "For clarification, is a rate increase absolutely needed for this fiscal year?"

DPU Manager Harley stated, "Yes."

A motion was made by Mayor Pro Tem Keitt, seconded by Councilmember Kalu to amend the budget ordinance for the operation of the Department of Public Utilities of the City of Orangeburg for the Fiscal Year October 1, 2025, through September 30, 2026, as stated by DPU Manager Harley. The motion was unanimously approved.

A motion was made by Mayor Pro Tem Keitt, seconded by Councilmember Hannah to approve third reading to adopt a budget for the operation of the Department of Public Utilities of the City of Orangeburg for the Fiscal Year October 1 2025, through September 30, 2026, as amended by DPU Manager Harley (2) adopt amended Electric rates effective October 1, 2025, (3) adopt

amended natural Gas rates effective October 1, 2025, (4) adopt amended Water rates effective October 1, 2025, and (5) adopt amended Wastewater rates effective October 1, 2025. The motion was unanimously approved.

DPU Manager Harley addressed Council concerning a resolution authorizing and approving the acceptance of certain loan assistance monies from the South Carolina Water Quality Revolving Fund Authority; authorizing the Mayor to execute the Certain Loan Assistance Agreement. He stated, "This is a principal forgiveness loan. The loan will not accrue any interest. It will be for \$500,000 and we will not have to pay it back if we do everything that the program requires. This will benefit us as we complete a PER to evaluate our water quality going forward."

A motion was made by Councilmember Kalu, seconded by Councilmember Hannah to authorize and approve a resolution to accept certain loan assistance monies from the South Carolina Water Quality Revolving Fund Authority, authorizing the Mayor to execute the Certain Loan Assistance Agreement. The motion was unanimously approved.

DPU Manager Harley announced the DPU Electric Division was awarded grant for upgrades through the Grid Resilience Grant Program. He stated, "Just a quick announcement. We will bring this back to you once we get all the grant documents for acceptance. DPU Electric Division was awarded a grid resiliency grant for \$689,000 from the federal government and we applied through Santee Cooper. This is for grid improvements to include poles, upgrades, sensors, and things on our poles to improve our system and be more resilient."

A motion was made by Mayor Pro Tem Keitt, seconded by Councilmember Stroman to enter into executive session concerning Discussion of negotiations incident to proposed contractual arrangements and/or receipt of legal advice S.C. Code Sec. 30-4-70(a)(2) a) Rowe Street Park, b) Livingston House Lease, c) Orangeburg Municipal Airport Hangars, d) Audit Bid, e) Duke Energy of South Carolina and Discussion of employment, appointment, compensation, promotion, demotion, discipline or release of an employee, a student or a person regulated by a public body, or the appointment of a person to a public body S.C. Code Sec. 30-4-70(a))1) – Municipal Court. The motion was unanimously approved.

A motion was made by Councilmember Stroman, seconded by Mayor Pro Tem Keitt to return to open session. The motion was unanimously approved.

DPU Manager Harley addressed Council concerning authorizing the DPU Manager to sign an Implementation Agreement with Duke Energy Carolinas, LLC. He stated, "We are requesting you authorize the DPU Manager to sign an implementation agreement with Duke Energy Carolina LLC. As we have discussed before, Duke Energy owns Duke Energy Carolinas and Duke Energy Progress. Those are two companies operating in South Carolina. They are looking to merge those two operations into one operating unit. We have been negotiating with Duke Energy, and we are requesting you to let us sign this agreement showing that we agree with what they are proposing. Mainly because it does not put the DPU and the citizens of Orangeburg at a disadvantage."

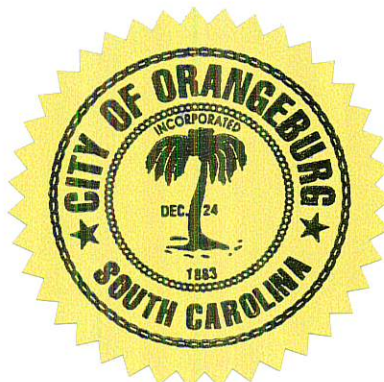
A motion was made by Mayor Pro Tem Keitt, seconded by Councilmember Grevious to authorize the DPU Manager to sign an Implementation Agreement with Duke Energy Carolinas, LLC. The motion was unanimously approved.

A motion was made by Councilmember Stroman, seconded by Councilmember Hannah to adjourn. The motion was unanimously approved.

Respectfully submitted,

Linda McDaniel

Linda McDaniel
City Clerk



VOID

VOID

VOID



A RESOLUTION AUTHORIZING AND APPROVING THE ACCEPTANCE OF CERTAIN LOAN ASSISTANCE MONIES FROM THE SOUTH CAROLINA WATER QUALITY REVOLVING FUND AUTHORITY; AUTHORIZING THE MAYOR TO EXECUTE THAT CERTAIN LOAN ASSISTANCE AGREEMENT BETWEEN THE CITY OF ORANGEBURG AND THE SOUTH CAROLINA WATER QUALITY REVOLVING FUND AUTHORITY; AND OTHER MATTERS RELATING THERETO.

WHEREAS, the City of Orangeburg (the "*Project Sponsor*") is a municipal corporation duly created and existing under the laws of the State of South Carolina;

WHEREAS, the Project Sponsor is authorized and empowered by the provisions of Title 48, Chapter 5 of the Code of Laws of South Carolina, 1976, as amended, to receive financial assistance from the South Carolina Water Quality Revolving Fund Authority (the "*Authority*");

WHEREAS, on November 15, 2021, the President signed Public Law No. 117-58, the Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act also known as the Bipartisan Infrastructure Law (the "*BIL*"), which provided appropriations to address emerging contaminants in drinking water with a focus on perfluoroalkyl and polyfluoroalkyl substances through the emerging contaminant capitalization grants under section 1452(t) of the Federal Act and under which this project is committed;

WHEREAS, funds provided under this section of the BIL requires the Fund to provide 100 percent additional subsidization (assistance which will not accrue interest and the principal of which will be forgiven) for drinking water projects that address emerging contaminants;

WHEREAS, the funds appropriated under the BIL are deposited into the South Carolina Drinking Water Revolving Loan Fund (the "*Fund*");

WHEREAS, the Project Sponsor previously applied to the South Carolina Department of Environmental Services ("*DES*") for certain loan assistance monies to be made available to the Project Sponsor by the Authority in the form of a subsidization;

WHEREAS, the Project Sponsor was selected by DES to receive the Loan Assistance contingent upon compliance by the Project Sponsor with all terms, conditions and requirements set forth in the Loan Assistance Agreement, the form of which is attached hereto as Exhibit A (the "*Loan Assistance Agreement*"); and

WHEREAS, based on approvals issued by DES, the proceeds of the Loan Assistance are to be used by the Project Sponsor for the Orangeburg Department of Public Utilities PFAS Treatment Evaluation and PER project described in Appendix A to the Loan Assistance Agreement (the "*Project*").

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED by the City Council of the City of Orangeburg (the "*Council*"), in a meeting duly assembled:

Section 1. Acceptance of the Loan Assistance; Acknowledgment of Terms of Loan Assistance Agreement.

The Loan Assistance, under the terms, conditions and requirements set forth in the Loan Assistance Agreement, is hereby accepted. The Project Sponsor acknowledges that the receipt of proceeds of the Loan Assistance pursuant to the Loan Assistance Agreement requires the Project

Sponsor to comply with all of the terms of the Loan Assistance Agreement, including requiring strict compliance with all state and federal mandates set forth therein by any contractors performing work on the Project who are subject to those mandates. The Project Sponsor further acknowledges that the forgiveness of the principal amount of the Loan Assistance by the Authority is conditional upon the Project Sponsor's complete and satisfactory compliance with the terms of the Loan Assistance Agreement, and that any failure to comply strictly with such terms could result in a requirement that the Project Sponsor repay to the Authority all or a portion of the Loan Assistance. The Project Sponsor has fully reviewed each and every term of the Loan Assistance Agreement.

Section 2. Approvals, Appropriations and Expenditures.

The Project Sponsor certifies that it has taken, or will take, all actions necessary under South Carolina law to approve, appropriate and expend the proceeds of the Loan Assistance.

Section 3. Authorization of the Loan Assistance Agreement.

The Loan Assistance Agreement is hereby approved, and the execution and delivery of the Loan Assistance Agreement on behalf of the Project Sponsor is hereby authorized and directed. The Loan Assistance Agreement shall be executed on behalf of the Project Sponsor by the Mayor and shall be attested to by the City Clerk.

Section 4. Miscellaneous.

This Resolution shall be a contract between the Project Sponsor and the Authority, and shall be enforceable as such against the Project Sponsor.

ADOPTED, this 2nd day of September 2025.



Mayor

Michael Bratt

Members of Council

Atty. Gen.

Richard F. Starnes

Ernest Keith

Charles Paul

Frank

Donald P. Lyette

Attest: Linda McDaniel
City Clerk