

City Council Minutes
October 6, 2026

Orangeburg City Council held its regularly scheduled meeting on Tuesday, October 6, 2026, at 6:00 pm in Council Chambers, 933 Middleton Street with Mayor Butler presiding.

PRESENT:

Michael C. Butler, Mayor
Annette Dees Grevious
Jerry Hannah
Jordan E. Hawkins
Dr. Kalu Kalu, Mayor Pro Tem
L. Zimmerman Keitt
Sandra P. Knotts

A motion was made by Mayor Pro Tem Kalu, seconded by Councilmember Knotts to approve September 15, 2026, City Council Minutes. The motion was unanimously approved.

Mayor Butler recognized Collaboration as the October Orangeburg County Community of Character trait.

Ms. Kayleigh Vaughn, Executive Director, Orangeburg County Fine Arts Center appeared before Council concerning Rooted: Orangeburg Art in Bloom exhibition. She stated, "Rooted Orangeburg Art in Bloom is a partnership between the City of Orangeburg and Orangeburg County Fine Arts Center of a communitywide exhibition that will take place in conjunction with the 2027 Festival of Roses. We are inviting artists to explore the people, places, stories, traditions, landscapes, culture and connections that make Orangeburg unique. Artwork may be interpreted very literally, or artists can take that theme such as home, family, heritage, belonging, community and growth and their own personal connection to Orangeburg. We are inviting both adults and youth artists to participate in the exhibition, and artists do not have to consider themselves professional artists to submit work. We want to hear from established artists, emerging artists, students, and people in our community who simply have something meaningful they want to express through art. Artists will submit photographs of their work through an online application open October 7th through January 31st. After submissions close, the artwork will go through a jury process, and our jurors will select the pieces that will become part of the final rooted exhibition. What makes the project especially exciting is that Rooted will not be limited to our gallery at the Fine Arts Center. Selected artwork will be displayed in other locations throughout Orangeburg leading up to the Festival of Roses. The Orangeburg Fine Arts Center will serve as the main exhibition location in March and April, and we are working to include additional community locations. The winners will be announced at the Festival of Roses. The goal is to make art visible, accessible, and create an exhibition that feels like it belongs to the entire community. This project is more than just displaying artwork. It is an opportunity to tell Orangeburg's story through the people who live here. The initiative is funded in part by the South Carolina Arts Commission which received support from the National Endowment of the Arts. I want to thank the City of Orangeburg for partnering with us for this project recognizing the arts and incorporating in one of Orangeburg's signature community celebrations, The Festival of Roses."

Mr. Rogers Ideozu, City of Orangeburg Accommodations Tax Advisory Committee Chairperson appeared before Council concerning A-Tax Accommodations. He stated, "At the last Council meeting, I shared with Council how the A-Tax Committee distributed the money received for the 2025/2026 Fiscal Year. We had \$100,229 for distribution and received ten applications totaling more than \$300,000. One applicant did not receive any funds as the application was deemed incomplete by the committee. I received inquiries from a Councilmember inquiring the reasons for the organization not receiving funds. I explained to him that the application was not complete. I have received correspondence from him asking additional questions. This A-Tax Committee is appointed by Council. I have no issues responding but wanted to bring it to Council to give the A-Tax Committee guidance as how you wish for us to proceed. The A-Tax Committee goes through guidelines submitted by the State Treasury Department. The City of Orangeburg has a standard online application that can be accessed by any applicant. In the three-page application received from the applicant was one page describing the money requested, topographical or aerial map of the fair ground, and a letter verifying registration with the secretary of state. The committee deemed that application was incomplete. Since I have been on this committee, we have not called

any applicant to say make this correction and resubmit. Also, that group had the opportunity to present as stated in the agenda and the announcement that was published by the City of Orangeburg advertising this fund. With that said, I think there is enough information to say that the application was incomplete."

Mayor Butler stated, "Council does not have the authority to do something individually. We do not have the authority to go behind what you all do when you have guidelines. When we use our influence to try to decide, we get into ethical situations. When a Councilmember comes to you, you come back to the Council. We appointed this Committee, you brought the recommendations to Council, we approved it and if something goes wrong, you come back to Council. You do not have to answer me or any individual on this Council. You answered the guidelines that are in those papers. We want all groups to receive these funds but there are guidelines. You stated at the last meeting that for groups to receive the funds, they had to be present to answer questions."

Chairperson Ideozu stated, "It would have been a great opportunity for that group to explain and provide detailed information."

Mayor Butler asked, "What do your rules say about reconsidering?"

Chairperson Ideozu stated, "We are not reconsidering because the application was incomplete. They can apply next year. The funds that are available will be distributed equally to the best of our ability."

Councilmember Keitt stated, "Individuals are not to be coming to you."

Councilmember Hawkins asked, "I am the Councilmember that sent the email. If we have a question for the Committee Chair Mr. Rogers, how do we present the question? I am not trying to ethically backdoor anything by any means and I take great offense to that. This was just to make sure it was done right. I think there are things we need to figure out with this and Title Six because they are not being done correctly and it will have us in a bind."

City Attorney Kozlarek stated, "The themes that I have heard are the communication between an individual Councilmember and the Committee or the Committee Chair. I would be cautious to lump all boards, commissions and committees into one group because for example the BZA would be treated very differently as a quasi-judicial body and having individual councilmember exert influence would be a different scenario than an individual advisory committee for example. Councilmember Hawkins asked about the guidelines. The mention of guidelines is the first time that I have heard that tonight. Whether those have been adopted properly by Council or by the Committee, I do not know. The law does require that the Committee and Council appear to be a joint requirement under state law that there be guidelines. If those have been approved and there is evidence of that then so be it. If they have not been formally adopted then that would need to happen before recommendations are made. Lastly, they are recommendations. Ultimately, it is Council's determination as to how those monies are expended. Whether Council thinks additional work needs to be done or thinks the recommendations are complete as they are and would like to make different allocations than what the Committee made, that remains a legislative function of Council. In many respects it is like the Planning Commission. Most items that are in front of the Planning Commission, for example, come to Council as recommendations, not as decisions, and Council ultimately has the determination. Now whether Council wants to consider an individual Councilmember's ability to communicate for example with the City Administrator, the City Attorney, or the Chairperson of an individual committee is a much more difficult question because as a practical matter, technically that means that anytime one of you wanted to speak to the Administrator, you could not actually do that because you had not acted as a body. As a practical matter, that seems unworkable that a Committee that you appoint, that individual Councilmembers do not have the ability to interact in any respect with individual members of that Committee or the City Attorney or the City Administrator. As opposed to every communication having to come officially from the body through some action. If Council wants it to look like that, I think more formal guidance would need to be in place. Otherwise, it seems unworkable."

Chairperson Ideozu asked, "My assumption was this Committee was appointed by Council, Was it wrong for me to bring this to Council's attention?"

City Attorney Kozlarek stated, "Council, as you know, I do not respond to private citizen requests. If Council would like to direct me to respond, I am happy to do that. I think we may be getting a little far field in a public session for what is starting to look like legal advice."

Chairperson Ideozu stated,, "I withdraw my question."

Mayor asked, "Council, do you want the City Attorney to respond to his question?"

A motion was made by Mayor Pro Tem Kalu, seconded by Councilmember Keitt for the City Attorney to answer Chairperson Ideozu's question for the need of clarification. The motion was approved 6-1. Councilmember Hawkins opposed.

City Attorney Kozlarek stated, "I am not aware of anything in state law or in the City Code that would either require or prohibit the Chair of a Committee from either addressing an individual Councilmember or addressing Council as a whole. If Council would like for it to be handled differently then I think there would need to be more formal guidance for how Council interacts with boards, commissions and advisory committees. As it is now, I am not aware of anything that would keep the Committee Chair from speaking to an individual Councilmember, require the Committee Chair to speak to an individual Councilmember, and flip that as same thing with respect to the entire Council."

Councilmember Hawkins stated, "I spoke with the City Administrator and City Attorney that we need to make sure we are following state law on all committees. This is money that taxpayers are paying into our system. We need to be careful about how we are spending it, making sure we are spending it the right way and that it is utilized the right way. There is a Supreme Court case in Myrtle Beach, South Carolina and it is very clear as to what is to be done and we need to follow it."

City Attorney Kozlarek stated, "I could not agree more with that. If there is a process that is not being followed then I do agree there could be jeopardy with respect to the allocation and expenditure of those funds if the process is not being followed correctly. I again want to be very cautious. I cannot comment without more information on the facts of this particular situation and certainly I would not comment in open session as to conclusions to whether that is happening but I do agree if it is not happening there are two cases that speak to this particular expenditure of these allocation of state funds and it does raise a significant question if the process is not qualified."

Mayor Butler stated, "Mr. Ideozu stated he has the process in his hand, and he said he did not deviate. He stated if you are not present to receive funds then your application is incomplete."

Councilmember Hawkins stated, "I think that is a totally different issue. I think the issue at hand is following Title Six He can have rules but if they are not adopted by Council, they are no good."

Mayor Butler stated, "They may be adopted, as this has been established a long time."

Councilmember Keitt stated, "Council needs to look at all boards and committees' rules and regulations. From what Mr. Ideozu has given us, it seems to me that he is correct with what he did."

Mayor Pro Tem Kalu stated, "Listening to all the discussion tonight and what the City Attorney said, I do not think we can stop any Councilmember from talking to a committee member. From my viewpoint, when a Councilmember requests documentation, every Councilmember needs to receive a copy of that documentation."

Chairperson Ideozu stated, "For the record, the Committee has no issues responding. If we respond, copies will be distributed to all Councilmembers and the City Administrator."

Mr. Riley Godwin, Grand American Board Member appeared before Council concerning A-Tax Accommodations. He stated, "I have been involved in the Grand American since 2004 and on the Board for the last nine years. The Grand American is always the first full weekend in January and is the largest field trial event in the Southeast. Last year hunters entered hounds from 27 out of the 50 states and Canada. I am here because I have a problem with the A-Tax Committee process. I think Mr. Ideozu is acting in good faith on what guidelines he has been given. The Grand

American is held at the fairgrounds which is privately owned and run by a board. For the past ten years, rent has been \$15,000. In 2025, we paid \$18,000 rent. When I completed the application, I included our non-profit status and wrote a summary of why we wanted the funds. Last year we flew a drone over the fairgrounds Saturday morning showing that it was packed. I included the nine board members' names. Nowhere on that form does it state a meeting will be held on a certain date, and you must attend if you want to present your case to the Committee for consideration of funding. Mr. Ideozu was correct when he stated no one from the Grand American was at the A-Tax Committee meeting because I did not know about it. I was not notified. I included in the application a letter stating that if you have any questions or concerns, feel free to call and my phone number. The email came about because I saw in the Times and Democrat an article about A-Tax stating that the Grand American was not considered for any A-Tax funding because our application was incomplete. I knew I had turned in everything, so I contacted Councilmember Hawkins. To this day, I have not received anything from the A-Tax Committee. I have never spoken before a Council before but called City Hall to request to present because Mayor Butler always comes to our meeting at the Chamber of Commerce before the Grand American and has always been supportive. We ask him to say grace. He always says how much he appreciates the Grand American being here. I knew if Council knew that we did not get any money, you would ask why. We bring more people to Orangeburg in one weekend than all those other events combined. We put more people in hotels and restaurants. We all know the economic impact. My complaint is that there is nothing on the application, and I was never notified of a meeting time and place that I needed to be present. We need your help. The 2026 rent for the Grand American went from \$18,000 to \$34,000. The Grand American has been here since 1965, and we want to keep it here. There are a lot of other places that would love for us to move this event there, but we want to keep it here in Orangeburg, but we must have your help. We secured the funding to pay the rent for this year, but it will come at a cost. We are non-profit and distribute all that money to all the satellite clubs throughout the state. Without those clubs, we cannot have the Grand American because when a guy comes down here from Indiana to go hunting, we must have land for him to go hunting. We hunt 300 dogs on Friday night and Saturday night. We must have local clubs that have people that are willing to take these hunters out to let them have the competition. We all love the great economic impact, but it is still a competition. Council, please try to find us some funds as we need your help. The A-Tax Committee makes a recommendation to Council, but it is Council's ultimate decision as to how that money is appropriated and how it is spent."

Mayor Butler stated, "You know that we appreciate you. You bring in people to stay at the hotels and eat at the restaurants. I am there every year. Did you see the date and time of the meeting on the advertisement for the A-Tax meeting?"

Mr. Godwin stated, "No sir."

Mayor Butler stated, "As a Council, we will take this under consideration."

Bishop Hayes T. Gainey, Jr. appeared before Council concerning correspondence regarding City Council.

City Administrator Evering addressed Council concerning second reading of an ordinance amending Chapter () of the City Code to add a new article regulating electric scooters, electric-assist bicycles, electric micromobility devices, party bicycles, and shared mobility devices; establishing definitions, operating rules, equipment and safety requirements, discount zones, parking and obstruction rules, rental and shared-fleet regulations and enforcements and penalties. He stated, "As Council may recall, this was on September 1st agenda. As an overview this would regulate electric scooters. Some of the highlights are the devices would be permitted on the roadway if the speed limit that is posted is 25 miles per hour or less. The individuals riding the devices must ride on the right side and obey all traffic controls. Bicycles, bikes, scooters are only allowed on the sidewalks and can only be operated at 8 miles per hour or less. They must yield to pedestrians and use an audible signal to pass. Micromobility devices and mopeds are never allowed on sidewalks. As some safety equipment requirements, the devices must have lights in the front and rear. No one under 16 may operate a scooter or micromobility device and if you are under 21, a helmet is required. No tampering with e-bike speed limiters or modifying the devices. Prohibited activities include rental shared or dockless fleets of scooters, e-bikes or micromobility devices are banned outright on the public way. Party bicycles, pedal pubs, and beer bikes are also prohibited. As far as enforcement is concerned, violations start with civil penalties, \$75 for first offense, \$110 second, \$250 third, and \$500 plus for continuous non-compliance. After the first

reading, you asked me to contact South Carolina State University and Claflin University for their feedback. We received feedback from Claflin University. We are yet to receive feedback from South Carolina State University. Some of the feedback received from Claflin University is a request that the fines be reduced from initial fines of \$75 to \$50 and any non-dangerous offense, the violator receives a warning especially during the initial implementation. They also asked for more information about the dismount zones. In the current version, sidewalks and pathways bordering both universities are highlighted as the initial dismount zones but they wanted to receive a map that could clearly show where those dismount zones are located. They wanted clarification on the requirement to educate students before enforcement. They also asked for an opportunity to meet with the City Administrator or designate to review the ordinance after a 24-month period to make sure that it was not adversely affecting the students. I just want to make sure that Council directs us as to whether you want to amend the Ordinance to include any of Claflin University's suggestions or if you just want to pass it as is."

Mayor Butler stated, "Council, do you want to pass as is? We need some feedback."

A motion was made by Councilmember Keitt, seconded by Councilmember Hannah to approve the proposed e-bikes and micromobility ordinance to include Claflin University recommendations. The vote was 3-0-4. Councilmembers Grevious, Knotts, Hawkins and Mayor Pro Tem Kalu abstained.

Mayor Butler stated, "The motion has died."

Councilmember Knotts stated, "Mr. Mayor let me indicate why I am abstaining. Even though it was in the packet to look at both our ordinance and what Claflin is proposing. I just did not feel it was enough time for me to absorb so I could check to see which balances out and which one would be beneficial to the person who is using these e-bikes. Another comment, I do not know if this young man was a student, he was traveling on Hwy 301, not on the sidewalk. There was a lot of traffic on 301, and everyone was focusing on him versus focusing on the traffic. I think we need to look to see how these ordinances coincide with each other or take away."

Councilmember Hannah stated, "As a citizen of Orangeburg, I think you deserve better. E-bikes are a good tool if used in a good manner. There are rules and regulations for everything that we do. This was brought to the City Council to protect the youth. 8,000 plus persons have been injured riding e-scooters or e-bikes in the last three to four years in the United States. We have had persons killed in the state of South Carolina riding e-bikes or e-scooters. It is all about putting something in place to safeguard our kids. They ride them at six and seven years old and you cannot stop them because you do not have anything in place. When this was proposed to City Council months ago, there were only three, maybe four cities in the state of South Carolina with any kind of regulation. Every day, you read about another city or county wanting to adopt electrical device laws. Some colleges have banned them totally. I am 100% for e-bikes and e-scooters, but I am also 1000% for protecting our kids with some rules or regulations."

City Administrator Evering addressed Council concerning first reading of an ordinance approving, confirming, and ratifying the implementation of the renaming of the Service Department, the combination of Departments, and the related reallocation of budgeted funds. He stated, "If you recall when you passed the Fiscal Year 2026-2027 Budget, you gave me authority to rename the Service Department to the Maintenance Department and start combining some of those services for the sake of efficiency. The department is set up and ready to go. We need to reallocate the funds to appropriately fund that department. It will not change the overall budget at all."

A motion was made by Councilmember Hawkins, seconded by Councilmember Keitt to approve first reading of an ordinance approving, confirming, and ratifying the implementation of the renaming of the Service Department as the Maintenance Department, the combination of Departments, and the related reallocation of budgeted funds. The motion was unanimously approved.

City Administrator Evering addressed Council concerning Local Option Sales Tax (LOST) Referendum – For Information Only. He stated, "On August 17, 2026, Orangeburg County Council voted to put the question on the November 3, 2026, ballot as to whether the County will pass the implementation of a one cent sales and use tax that will be in addition to the sales and use taxes that are already implemented in the County. The purpose of the tax is to reduce the property

tax burden on Orangeburg County residents. If approved or passed, it would have impact on the City residents as well. The additional one cent sales tax would be applied to groceries, unprepared food, ordinary retail purchases including clothing, hardware, and restaurants. If any items were bought elsewhere and first used or stored in the County, the tax would also apply. It would not be applicable to cars, trucks, boats, motorcycles, campers, and other titled property, prescription drugs and other standard sales and use tax exemptions, farm machinery, feed, seed, fertilizing, livestock, or materials delivered under a construction contract signed before the start date. Again, this is a sales tax that would be applied throughout the county and would be paid for by not just county citizens, but folks that are visiting and buying products in the county. The funds would be divided into two different funds. The first fund, 71% of the collections would go to a property tax credit fund. The county would receive 67% of those funds. The municipalities would receive 33%. By way of example if a home is appraised at \$150,000, anyone outside the City would get a credit of \$172 toward their property taxes. If you lived inside the City, you would receive a \$451 credit towards your property taxes. If you had a vehicle that was appraised at \$20,000 outside of the City, you would receive \$23 credit. If you live inside the City, it would be a \$37 credit. A small business appraised at \$500,000 located outside the City would receive a property tax credit of \$575 and located inside the City \$930. These are examples and will not be confirmed until the funds are collected. Again, 71% would go to this property tax credit fund of which 67% would go to the County, 33% to the municipalities. The remaining 29% would go to what is called a County Municipal Revenue Fund and that portion of the money can be used for municipal operations. Those funds can go toward any City operations. Again, this is just for information purposes to you and the public that this will be on the November 3rd General Election ballot."

Councilmember Grevious asked, "Does 29% automatically go to the City of Orangeburg or is it distributed amongst other municipalities in the County? If so, how is it distributed?"

City Administrator Evering stated, "It is distributed to the remaining 17 municipalities and is based on a population formula."

Councilmember Hawkins asked, "A home appraised for \$150,000 inside the City limits would receive a \$451 tax credit, which is substantial. Have we looked at how it would affect the City's next year budget?"

City Administrator Evering stated, "No, we have not done any analysis on it yet."

City Administrator Evering address Council concerning Update on New Election Laws for Municipal Elections – For Information Only. He stated, "The City of Orangeburg currently holds its municipal election in September. Act 213 was signed by the Governor on May 19th which changes statewide municipal elections. Municipal elections can only be held on the following dates. The first Tuesday after the first Monday in April or in November. The City of Orangeburg will no longer be permitted as of January 2027 to hold municipal elections in September. Council will need to decide in short order whether you want to hold your municipal elections in April or November. It is still nonpartisan. For folks elected in 2023, the term is extended to align with April 2027 or the November 2027 date whichever you all decide. We would need some guidance from you so we can get an ordinance for your consideration. If you do not decide 90 days from January 1st, then it automatically defaults to November."

Councilmember Hawkins asked, "Is November the regular general election?"

City Administrator Evering stated, "Yes."

Councilmember Hawkins asked, "What would it cost taxpayers to hold the election in April versus the November General Election?"

City Administrator Evering stated, "I will check with the County Voter Registration Office."

DPS Chief Charles Austin addressed Council concerning Crime Statistics Update – For Information Only. He stated, "This is a comparison of 2025 and 2026. I want to preface this by saying there is a plus or minus three variances here. We continue to report our numbers to SLED, and they make whatever adjustments are necessary and appropriate. It will be the end of the year before we have numbers that will represent the final data. Presently we are registering a negative 16% in terms of reported property crimes. We are registering negative 39% as it relates to violent

crime. We are still very concerned about guns that are used as a part of aggravated assaults. Twenty-six percent of the aggravated assaults that we have reported involve either using a gun or pointing and presenting a gun. We are still very much concerned about domestic violence. We note that approximately 34% of the aggravated assaults that were reported so far this year were acts of domestic violence that is compared to 19% last year. Overall, the data tells us that reported crime is down by about 27%. While I am proud of the reductions, we are still very much concerned about those areas that show increases. One crime is too many. I want to thank our staff that work diligently to make Orangeburg the safest possible City that it can be. I am proud of the complete staff at DPS to include our firefighters and our administrative staff. I also thank each of you for your support and encouragement during the past year. We look forward to continuing to give it our very best to make Orangeburg its very best.”

DPU Manager Harley addressed Council concerning a resolution recognizing October 5-9, 2026, as Customer Service Week.

A motion was made by Councilmember Grevious, seconded by Councilmember Knotts to go into Executive Session concerning Discussion of matters relating to the proposed location, expansion, or the provision of services encouraging the location or expansion of industries or other business in the area served by the public body. SC Code Sec. 30-4-70(a)(5) – Project Rose and Discussion of negotiations incident to proposed contractual arrangements and receipt of legal advice SC Code Sec. 30-4-70(a)(2) – Lease of Property – Railroad Corner. The motion was unanimously approved.

Council did not return to open session. There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned.

Respectfully submitted,

Linda McDaniel

Linda McDaniel
City Clerk



VOID

VOID

VOID



RESOLUTION
Recognizing October 5 – 9, 2026 as Customer Service Week

WHEREAS, the City of Orangeburg Department of Public Utilities provides utility services within the City of Orangeburg, South Carolina; and the greater Orangeburg area; and

WHEREAS, the mission of the Orangeburg Department of Public Utilities is to provide safe and reliable utility services at competitive prices, while delivering a positive return on investment; and

WHEREAS, providing excellent customer service is an essential component of successfully operating in accordance with the City of Orangeburg Department of Public Utilities' mission statement and an expectation of our customers; and

WHEREAS, throughout the organization our employees strive to deliver excellent customer service and are always willing to go the extra mile to serve our customers; and

WHEREAS, the City of Orangeburg Department of Public Utilities will encourage employees to take initiative and continue to provide new and more efficient ways of providing excellent customer service.

NOW THEREFORE, Be It Resolved that the Mayor and Members of Council in Council assembled, do officially recognize the week of October 5 – 9, 2026, as **"Customer Service Week"** to honor the City of Orangeburg and its staff for the continued commitment to providing excellent customer service.

PASSED BY the City Council of the City of Orangeburg, State of South Carolina, this 6th day of October 2026.

Mayor



Members of Council















ATTEST:



City Clerk