

City of Pickens
Work Session
Monday August 25, 2025
5:00 P.M.

The Mayor and City Council convened at City Hall 219 Pendleton Street, Pickens S.C. for a Work Session. Agendas were posted and sent to media on August 21, 2025.

Council Members in Attendance:

Mayor, Isaiah Scipio
Mayor Pro-Tem Cameron Rivers
Council Member, Floyd Rogers
Council Member, John McManus
Council Member, Ray Wilson
Council Member Allie Winter

Staff:

Administrator Tim O'Briant
Attorney, Daniel Hughes
Finance Director, Mandy Hess
Chief of Police, Randal Beach
Fire Chief, Chris Elrod
Trey Adams, Public Works Director
Jonathan Morris, Recreation Director

(The minutes are a synopsis of the meeting, and they are not a verbatim discussion. Full viewing and recording of the meeting is available on the City of Pickens Web-page and Facebook. Also, the full agenda packet with all departmental reports are available in the City Clerk's office and on-line).

WELCOME AND CALL TO ORDER:

Mayor Scipio called the meeting to order and welcomed those in attendance. Mayor Scipio further gave the Invocation followed by the Pledge of Allegiance.

COMMENTS FROM MAYOR SCIPIO:

Mayor Scipio stated no comments at this time due to the length of the agenda.

ADMINISTRATOR'S REPORT:

Tim O'Briant informed the Mayor, Council, and the Public of the following items.

- Mr. O'Briant stated for the record that the Mayor and City Council have been told numerous times that there is a petition of 1400 signatures opposing annexation. To date the City officials have not been presented with a copy of said petition.
- There was a sewer line repair on Main Street that will have a positive effect on the building where the El Agave restaurant is located. They have had a lot of trouble with bathrooms, and this repair should be significant for the entire building. Mr. O'Briant thanked Public Works as this was an emergency repair.
- The new Codes Enforcement officials are having a positive response as they have already been discussing code violations with residents and business owners.

- The water meter replacements are moving forward and there have been errors with billing and usage readings. The staff, meter vendors, and IT vendors are all working together to resolve these issues. If citizens need assistance in reviewing bills, please allow staff to explain this process.

FINANCE DIRECTORS REPORT:

Ms. Hess stated her reports are in the packet and she would answer any questions. Ms. Hess pointed out the following items.

- Year-end is almost complete and shows less than 1% of actual budget; this is exceptionally good for year-end to be this close to the allocated budget.
- The CDs at TD Bank and Pickens Saving will mature. The TD Bank will mature in October, and Council will need to give direction if they want to place those funds in the Local Government Investment Pool (LGIP). The CD from Pickens Savings will be deposited into the general fund to reimburse the purchase of the Dalton property.
- Staff will need Council direction on the request to sponsor the Blue Flame Booster Club.

Council held much discussion and obtaining clarification as it relates to FEMA reimbursement, Blue Flame Booster Club support, SCIP grants, the CD's that will be maturing, LGIP reinvestment, court reinvestment, deposits, accounts that appear to be new, and the current percentages used in the newly allocated budget. Ms. Hess, Tim O'Briant and Chief Elrod clarified many items that were in the discussion. It was also proposed that Council can make time with Ms. Hess to further discuss any concerns.

Ms. Hess further explained in regard to funding items like the Booster Club, Council allocated \$14K for these types of sponsorships.

>>It was the consensus of Council to allow Ms. Hess to give the Blue Flame Boosters \$1,000.00.

>>It was also the consensus of Council to entertain a quarterly special work session just to go through items of budget concerns.

FURTHER DISCUSSION REGARDING ORDINANCE NO. 2025-07, TO AMEND CHAPTER 18 ARTICLE IV, TO ADD SECTION 414 CONCERNING PLANNED DEVELOPMENT DISTRICT OF THE OFFICIAL ZONING ORDINANCE:

This ordinance was given a First Reading on 8/11/2025 and is now back before Council for further discussion.

Attorney Daniel Hughes stated he had added the changes the City Planner and Council had requested. Mr. Hughes went over each section of the Ordinance as provided in the agenda packet. Mr. Hughes pointed out this revision will generate much control and discretion to Council. Mr. Hughes emphasized items such as the approval procedure where there is a pre-application meeting at the direction of the Planning Director. This will give Council a clear vision of what the Planned Development (PD) is going to look like and what the developer's intentions are for the property.

Council began discussion as it relates to minimum acreage size for residential, industrial, and commercial, placing a minimum (5) acres in the PD, zoning/variances as it falls under a PD versus regular zoning, and/or requesting variances.

>>Council determined that development under zoning will need to be a separate discussion, and this meeting will continue discussing development as it pertains to the Planning Development portion.

Council continued discussing the acreage for industrial being high and making residential more. Council Member Allie Winter suggested changing residential to a (5) acre minimum and making industrial less.

>>Council did determine that staff will look at other communities about the (5) acre minimum.

Council Member John McManus mentioned the fact that if a person were looking at a (2) acre parcel they could not develop under a PD. Jennifer Vissage stated the development would happen under regular zoning or request a variance. Mr. Hughes reminded Council the structure of a PD is about the size of the area because a PD is about open space, amenities, and a variety of structures.

Mayor Scipio stated it is clear Council wants to control growth. Therefore, make it mandatory that everything (5) acres or over must meet the requirements of the PD.

Council Member John McManus asked for clarification, does every development (5) acres or over have to have a PD. It was clarified that a person would have to choose to apply for the PD and they could develop under their current zoning. Mr. McManus stated that a person could do more without the PD, and who will enforce. Mr. McManus also brought up an example of (2) parcels that join, and they are developing together, not in phases, and not under a PD.

Mr. Hughes clarified the PD is the tool to assist where the typical zoning is not appropriate.

Mr. O'Briant stated many of these issues can be dealt with as the Comprehensive Plan is moving forward. The Comprehensive Plan will dictate many of these concerns.

Council Member Allie Winter also requested that on section 414.6.14 (B) percentage of gross land area. Ms. Winter stated she would like to propose the residential be changed to 15%.

FURTHER DISCUSSION AND CONSIDERATION OF SECOND READING OF ORDINANCE NO. 2025-08, TO AMEND CHAPTER 16 ARTICLE IV. METHODS FOR CONTROLLING THE INTRODUCTION OF POLLUTANTS INTO THE MUNICIPAL STORM SEWER SYSTEM BY PROHIBITING ILLICIT CONNECTIONS AND DISCHARGES; AND TO AMEND ARTICLE V. STORMWATER MANAGEMENT UTILITY:

Mr. O'Briant stated this is a mandatory amendment to the Stormwater Ordinance and as stated during First Reading on 8/11/25 the State of South Carolina mandates municipalities regarding management of stormwater. Mr. O'Briant stated this ordinance is being recommended this evening for Second and Final Reading as the State currently has the City of Pickens under a Notice of Deficiency. The Department of Environmental Services has extended the deadline for this Ordinance until August 30, 2025. Mr. O'Briant stated this is the Ordinance the State requires and is similar to other municipalities who have a MS4 permit.

>>Motion was made by Council Member John McManus that this constitute a second reading of Ordinance No. 2025-08. Motion was seconded by Council Member Allie Winter.

Council Member Floyd Rogers asked about the Administrator enforcing this Ordinance, or should Council be more involved. Mr. O'Briant stated he believes he and staff should be the first stop when citizens need to file a complaint. Mr. O'Briant also stated the engineering will be contracted out.

Council Member Allie Winter asked about the Fee structure. Mr. O'Briant stated he believed once the ordinance is in place, a fee analysis will be part of next year's budget.

>>Mayor Scipio called for the vote. The motion on the floor passed with a unanimous vote. This constitutes a second and final reading of Ordinance No. 2025-08

**FURTHER DISCUSSION REGARDING THE PLANNING COMMISSIONS DENIAL
RECOMMENDATION FOR THE REZONING OF 206 GRIFFIN STREET:**

Mayor Scipio stated this was discussed on 8/11/2025. Council requested this item be brought back up for further discussion. The question for Council is does Council want to accept the recommendation of the Planning Commission which was to deny the rezoning from residential R12 to Central Business District. Or does Council want to override the Planning Commission and allow the rezoning. Mayor Scipio opened the floor for discussion.

During discussion, Council Member Floyd Rogers requested the property be rezoned and he stated several points: The property sits on the edge of the CBD, the property in the past has been a restaurant, ice cream parlor and a bed/breakfast, the property has been zoned CBD in the past and went back to R12, the proposed restaurant is a well known respected restaurant and would add to the vitality of this area.

Council Member Allie Winter stated that once a parcel is zoned commercial, that business can become something less desirable than the proposed restaurant, and can have hours that will not be suitable in an area zoned R12. Therefore, she proposed upholding the Planning Commission's opinion to deny the rezoning.

Ms. Vissage stated the Planning Commission denied this due to the restaurant plans are secondary to the core business of short-term rentals. The Commission does not recommend a restaurant in this area.

Council Member John McManus pointed out there are many businesses that can be in a Central Business District and this property was probably built and operated during a time when there was no zoning or clear lines between residential and commercial. Therefore, in his opinion the argument to rezone this property because of what it was in the past is not relevant at the present.

Council Member Cameron Rivers inquired if the Planning Commission was considering only the boundaries of 206 Griffin. Ms. Vissage stated that was the only property requested.

Mr. McManus inquired if the property at 200 Griffin Street could build a driveway and have access coming out on Queens Court. Jennifer Vissage stated yes, with an easement.

Mayor Scipio requested that Jonathan Baker, owner of the property being discussed, address Council on his plans for 206 Griffin Street. Mr. Baker stated that he would first state that he would not be putting a driveway in at 200 Griffin Street. He plans to put a pool in and place buffers between the two properties. He will use the colonial house (206 Griffin) as an Air B&B. Mr. Baker stated he did not want to put in a bar or other late-night establishment. Mr. Baker also stated in 2020 Moo's Creamery and Café did business in this location and was approved. Therefore, he stated he is not changing the use.

Mayor Scipio inquired about parking and stormwater. Mr. Baker stated he was not completely sure how he is going to utilize the driveway. He would like a courtyard in that area and less pavement. Mr. Baker stated he is working on a lease with another property for parking.

Council Member John McManus asked about conceptual plans for the property. Mr. Baker stated he had an idea of what he would like to do but he did not elaborate about the property as a whole and spoke more about the courtyard and driveway. Mr. McManus asked if he planned to keep the property and Mr. Baker stated that it was his intention, but things change. Mr. McManus stated his point is when zoning gets changed, that zoning carries forward to other potential owners.

>>Mayor Scipio thanked Mr. Baker and stated at the next Council meeting; Council will take this issue up for a vote.

DISCUSSION OF ORDINANCE NO. 2025-06 AMENDING THE BUSINESS LICENSE ORDINANCE OF THE CITY OF PICKENS TO UPDATE THE CLASS SCHEDULE AS REQUIRED BY ACT 176 OF 2020:

Tim O'Briant stated this is a simple ordinance that the State requires each municipality to update every odd year. This is to update the business licensing class schedule. Mayor Scipio stated if there are no questions this will have first reading at the next meeting.

DISCUSSION OF AN ORDINANCE TO AMEND TEMPORARY SIGNS:

Ms. Vissage stated that the Planning Commission would like to change the language to allow on premises General Business District to allow an annual fee for one banner or one feathering banner. This allows businesses that advertise specials to utilize their signs for more than 30 days. The other change was the signs in front of McDonalds are for City special events and can only be in place for 30 days and limited to (3) signs.

During Council discussion, attorney Hughes stated he will address political signs with Ms. Vissage. Political signs may not be treated differently than any temporary signs. Council was concerned about sign clutter and concerned that signs could be up year-round. It was established there is a general penalty in the zoning ordinance, and it is enforceable. This will come back for first reading at the next meeting.

Recess: Council Member Allie Winter moved for a (5) minute recess, motion was seconded by Council Member John McManus and unanimously passed. Council recessed at 7:06 p.m.

Reconvene: Council Member John McManus moved to reconvene from recess. Council Member Allie Winter seconded the motion. Council was back in public session at 7:14 p.m.

DISCUSSION OF THE BAILY BILL ORDINANCE:

Ms. Vissage stated the Baily Bill is a tax incentive for rehabilitation of older structures. Ms. Vissage stated this Ordinance can be constructed in many ways. The buildings have to be 50 years old, and a property owner can invest a minimum of 20% of the fair market value of the property back into the property and have the assessed value frozen for a said number of years at the pre-rehabilitation value. This ordinance allows (10) years, but the number of years can be determined by City Council. Mr. O'Briant stated this applies to City, County, and School taxes. This ordinance can be used for commercial and residential purposes.

Council discussed that the City would be in charge of deeming a property historical and keeping a local historical registry. Attorney Hughes stated that City Council has broad discretion in deciding if a property is historical. Also, every application must be approved by City Council. Council Member John McManus clarified that the ordinance should state both 50 years old and determined to be historical.

Staff will collaborate with the Attorney to bring back this ordinance for consideration.

DISCUSSION REGARDING STREETLIGHTS:

Chief Elrod came before Council to give an update regarding the City's streetlights. Chief Elrod stated the Administrator asked the fire department to observe the streetlights that were out. Chief Elrod provided that the City of Pickens has (466) streetlights of those there were (45) lights reported out, (7) lights were still on the map but were no longer in place, and (9) lights were found to be on a double billing from both Duke Energy and Blue Ridge Electric. Chief Elrod reported that all the lights are now working and the (6) of the (7) lights that were missing have been re-installed,

and the billing is resolved. Duke Energy will credit the City of Pickens. Council and the public were also informed the website for Duke Energy and Blue Ridge is user friendly for reporting an outage.

Council Member Cameron Rivers asked about procedures for adding lights. Chief Elrod stated it is fairly simple to make those requests, and he will assist in recommendations.

Tim O'Briant informed Council this was a huge task and Chief Elrod, and his staff have done an excellent job. The Mayor and Council thanked Chief Elrod for this report.

DISCUSSION REGARDING TRAFFIC ON MAIN STREET AND PARKING:

Chief Beach came before Council to discuss the Speed Calming devices that have been purchased to be placed at the end of West Main and on Jewel Street at the Middle School. Chief Beach apologized to Council that it has taken longer to have these devices in place. He believes he has now identified the correct personnel at Duke Energy to assist him, and he stated the electrical schematics are now in the hands of an electrician who is collaborating with Duke Energy in order to complete this task. Chief Beach apologized and reiterated he did not realize the complexity of these devices. Tim O'Briant thanked Chief Beach for his diligence in this task.

Mr. O'Briant stated in the agenda packet is the requested information regarding automated parking and traffic ticketing devices. The City of Clemson uses this system. This system uses pictures and generates photos in order to know if a vehicle has been in the same spot longer than the allotted time, at that point a computer generates a ticket. The vendor receives \$4.00 per ticket, and this City has the remaining revenue. Chief Beach also stated this is imagining technology and does not keep a run people's license plates. Chief Beach stated he recommended this program.

DISCUSSION REGARDING THE COMMERCIAL TRASH TRUCK:

Council received options in the event the current commercial truck may be down. Council received information on truck rentals, and other options. Mr. O'Briant stated as of this date the City Commercial truck is running well, and he is not recommending any action on this vehicle at this time.

DISCUSSION REGARDING UPDATING SUPERVISORY AND CONTROL DATA ACQUISITION (SCADA):

Mr. O'Briant reminded Council that they requested some more information to expand the current SCADA system that would provide more security throughout the entire system. Mr. Adams, Public Works Director, described the areas that would benefit from this purchase with focus on the lift stations. Mr. Adams stated covering (6) lift stations would cost approximately \$70K. This purchase would require a budget amendment.

Council stated they would like SCADA to be part of next year's budget process.

DISCUSSION REGARDING OFFER TO PURCHASE PROPERTY:

Council had before them an offer to purchase property from the City known as the "Dalton Property." The offer is from South Fork Properties. Council was reminded this property has the bisected sewer lines. The offer is for \$170K, the developer would like the City to hold the mortgage while the property is being developed. Attorney Hughes stated he would not recommend the City holding the mortgage. Council concurred with Mr. Hughes. Council Member John McManus stated he would like to study the options of correction of the sewer issue and create more value to the property. Council would like more information on the potential for this property and also include the Comprehensive Plan as the best use of this property. Council is not interested in the offer at this time.

SC RURAL WATER ASSOCIATION (VOTING DELEGATE)

This is a request for Trey Adams to serve as a voting delegate on the South Carolina Rural Water Association. There will need to be a resolution for this at the next meeting. This board does not make City Council decisions.

DISCUSSION REGARDING STANDING COMMITTEES:

Mayor Scipio asked the Council do they want to go back to standing committees, or do they want to keep the Committee of the Whole (COW).

During discussion, Council Member Cameron Rivers stated he feels like Council is now getting into a good rhythm of communication and getting used to the way business is conducted. Therefore, he would like to stay with COW.

Council Member Floyd Rogers stated he had heard from previous Council Members that standing committees tend to divide Council and he does not want that to happen. Attorney Hughes stated he has experienced both standing and COW work well. Mr. Rogers stated he would like more interaction between Council and Departments.

Council Member John McManus inquired about the extra meeting of committees and would information be presented to everyone.

Attorney Hughes stated all committees are open to the public and must post an agenda and have minutes for those meetings. Attorney Hughes also stated there is nothing to keep Council Members from communicating with department heads and City employees. However, if there are concerns, Council Members should report those to the Administrator. Further stated was the fact that Council Members should not engage in giving directives.

Council thanked Mayor Scipio for bringing this issue up and allowing Council to communicate. The code also provides there can be a special committee appointed at any time if there is a need.

Council concluded they will continue to meet as a Committee of the Whole at this time. Council may discuss this issue after the 2025 election.

COMMENTS FROM COUNCIL:

Council Member John McManus inquired about the Geograph Company and their plans. Mr. O'Briant stated they were going to utilize a certain amount of square footage for retail. Therefore, they are proceeding. This exception has been made for other business owners on Main Street. Mr. McManus also stated that Council has discussed reviewing the Central Business District and the zoning ordinance. Mr. O'Briant stated this will be studied during the update of the Comprehensive Plan. Council Member Cameron Rivers commented that he did not realize Geograph was moving forward.

Council Member John McManus inquired about the "Teen Canteen" located on Hagood Street. Mr. O'Briant updated Council that he is collaborating with the architect and construction company to prepare cost analysis back to Council. Mr. O'Briant stated he is working to obtain this cost in phases. Collaborating with the architect and general contractor is a budgeted expense. Council will determine next steps based on the cost analysis. Mr. Rivers stated there is the possibility that it is not feasible to revitalize this building. Mr. O'Briant stated this is part of the analysis.

Council Member Floyd Rogers inquired about the Wolf Creek Development Agreement. Mr. O'Briant stated that Attorney Hughes has reviewed the development agreement, and the developer is determining the cost calculations. Attorney Hughes stated that he has had discussions with the developer's attorney, and he has not seen any issues with the Development Agreement, and he should be able to have something for Council in the near future. Mr. Rogers asked about the issue

with water. Mr. Hughes stated he would not want to elaborate on this issue in public session. Mr. Rogers stated he thought it should be public and further stated this is Council Comments, and he wants to comment on the important parts of the Development Agreement. He also wants his constituents to know what is going on as it relates to this issue.

Mayor Scipio stated this is a legal issue and the attorneys are negotiating certain items of the agreement. Mr. Rogers debated that he wants to know, so that he can always be transparent to the citizens.


>>Council Member John McManus moved to adjourn. Council Member Ray Wilson requested to make a comment before the adjournment.

Mr. Wilson inquired about the Urban Housing meeting last week and asked for any updates. Mr. O'Briant stated he would get some information out to Council but unfortunately during the meeting he was on the phone with an emergency personnel issue.

ADJOURNMENT:

Hearing no further business, Mayor Scipio called for the motion to adjourn. Motion was made by Council Member Floyd Rogers, seconded by Council Member Allie Winter, and unanimously passed. Pickens City Council stood adjourned at 9:02 p.m.

Respectfully Submitted:



Donna F. Owen, City Clerk

Approved:



Mayor Isaiah Scipio