

City of Pickens
Regular Meeting
March 9, 2026
6:00 P.M.

The Mayor and City Council convened at Pickens City Hall, 219 Pendleton Street, Pickens, S.C. for a Regular Meeting. Agendas were posted and sent to media on March 6, 2026.

Council Members in Attendance:

Mayor, Isaiah Scipio
Mayor Pro-Tem, Allie Winter
Council Member Danny Adams
Council Member Jonathan Baker
Council Member Cameron Rivers
Council Member Floyd Rogers
Council Member Ray Wilson

Staff:

Administrator, Tim O'Briant
Chief of Police, Randal Beach
Fire Chief, Chris Elrod
Recreation Director, Jonathon Morris

(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.)

WELCOME AND CALL TO ORDER:

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

COMMENTS FROM MAYOR SCIPIO:

Mayor Scipio stated he would always like to express gratitude to the Citizens and Staff for all things that make Pickens special.

APPROVAL OF USE OF FEMA FUNDS AS REQUESTED BY THE CITY OF PICKENS FIRE DEPARTMENT:

Fire Chief Elrod came before Council and requested that he be approved to buy a 1990 service truck from Clemmons North Carolina. The truck is at auction and Clemmons has accepted a price of \$25000.00. The truck has 33,541 miles.

The council discussed the plan to purchase the service truck, with questions raised about the value and future of the current truck. Chief Elrod confirmed it would eventually be auctioned, though equipment must first be transferred, a process expected to take several months—during which the old truck will remain as a backup. The administrator explained that the \$25,000 purchase would come from roughly \$150,000 in surplus FEMA reimbursement, which FEMA has confirmed in writing is an allowable use. Additional department requests were referenced in a previous agenda

packet, and the urgency of the vote was noted because the truck is currently up for auction and could be bought by someone else.

>>Motion was made by Council Member Allie Winter, seconded by Council Member Jonathan Baker, and unanimously passed to purchase the Service fire truck for \$25,000 from the City of Clemmons N.C.

COMMENTS FROM CITIZENS:

Grace Newman – Ms. Newman a senior at Pickens High School, spoke about her internship with the Pickens Police Department, praising their community involvement and integrity. She highlighted the success of the gingerbread videos and the department’s efforts to promote children’s reading, noting how much positive attention these projects brought to the city. She also pointed out that the department is recognized nationally as a model for community engagement.

Barry Crawford – Mr. Crawford urged the council not to change parking on Court Street, explaining that he invested heavily in a building for an Airbnb based on earlier assurances that he would have two designated parking spots. He emphasized that both his property and the neighboring law firm had requested only four spots total and warned that making the street one-way or enforcing two-hour parking would hurt residents and businesses. He argued that the city should prioritize its own business owners rather than accommodating the county courthouse, especially with new courthouse parking coming soon. He asked the council to slow down, reconsider, and avoid permanently surrendering control of the street.

Alex Saitta – Mr. Saitta, Chairman of the Pickens County Council updated the Mayor and City Council regarding many County projects that involve the City of Pickens.

- The county contributed \$25,000 to renovate the senior center’s cafeteria, adding new floors, ceilings, fans, and kitchen updates. Mr. Saitta praised the city and seniors for fully renovating the building since it was transferred to the city in 2012.
- The county helped fund half of the \$60,000 for new playground equipment at Jaycee Park and complimented the park’s improvements.
- The county is willing to provide matching funds for future park upgrades, including a dog run at Jaycee Park and repairs at Bruce Field.
- Three county departments are being moved to the Garvin Street building, shifting (31) employees and visitors away from the courthouse to reduce congestion.
- The county purchased and plans to demolish two nearby buildings to create 30 additional parking spaces, bringing the total to 180 off-street spaces.
- The new Pickens EMS station will remain inside the city, with two possible locations under consideration.
- The new 32,000-square-foot 911 call center will open in June, consolidating all county emergency dispatching into one modern facility.
- The city and Chamber have applied for state accommodations tax (A-tax) funding, with decisions expected March.
- SCDOT has begun repaving Highway 178 and will repave Highway 183, with the 183 projects fast-tracked to be completed by August.

ADMINISTRATOR’S REPORT:

Administrator Tim O’Briant reported on the following items to the Mayor, Council, and Public.

Financial Update & Spending Freeze

- Discretionary spending freeze was implemented in October due to cash-flow timing concerns, not lack of funds. The City audits were behind schedule, causing the state to withhold \$800,000–\$1 million until completion. Auditors are now on-site; the audit is expected to be completed by end of March, which will release the withheld funds. Tax revenues have arrived as expected. The operating account is now healthy and stable. Mr. O’Briant stated the recommendation is to lift the discretionary spending freeze for the final quarter of the fiscal year.

Downtown Parking Project

- Former bank drive-thru on Main Street has been fully demolished. The Site will be repaved and restriped to function as a proper parking area. This Project includes installation of a high-capacity fast EV charger — the first in the county outside Greenville.
- Expected benefits include attracting EV drivers who may shop, dine, and visit local businesses while charging.

During Council questions, Council Members Baker and Winter asked for clarification regarding the budgeted amount for the whole parking lot project. Mr. O’Briant stated \$100K was budgeted. The charger is a \$60K expense and the City is getting it for \$30K. But the entire budget is \$100k. Ms. Winter inquired about how many parking spots are planned for the parking area. Mr. O’Briant stated some of the spaces are being discussed and reworked. He will provide that answer. Mr. Baker also wants to analyze the return on the charging station. Ms. Winter also wants the crosswalks to be fully operational. (at the Vault and Courthouse) Mr. O’Briant stated the (2) hour parking will be installed all downtown. And maps will be done. There will also be loading and unloading zones.

APPROVAL OF MEETING MINUTES:

>>Motion was made by Council Member Ray Wilson, seconded by Council Member Allie Winter, and unanimously passed to approve the following minutes.

February 9, 2026 – Regular Meeting

February 23, 2026- Council Work Session

March 4, 2026 - Special Called Meeting

APPROVAL OF PROCLAMATION TO RECOGNIZING APRIL AS SEXUAL ASSAULT AND CHILD ABUSE PREVENTION MONTH IN PARTNERSHIP WITH PICKENS COUNTY ADVOCACY CENTER AND THE PARENTING PLACE:

Mayor Scipio read the proclamation.

>>Motion was made by Council Member Allie Winter, seconded by Council Member Danny Adams, and unanimously approved to proclaim April as child abuse and sexual assault prevention month.

Josh Holder with Pickens County Advocacy informed the Mayor, City Council, and the public there will be a prevention awareness walk on Thursday April 2, 2026.

APPROVAL OF POLICY FOR BOARDS AND COMMISSIONS APPOINTED BY CITY COUNCIL:

Council Member Allie Winter moved to adopt the policy for Boards and Commissions as amended to remove the word “without” in Section B (Removal of Board Members) Ms. Winter’s motion stated board members should be removed for cause. Mr. Wilson seconded the motion as

amended. Mr. Rivers did inquire if the attorney thought it was prudent for this clause to be worded this way. It was the overall goal of council to realize these are volunteers and they can be removed from servicing if Council chooses. Motion carried will all members voted in favor as amended.

COMMENTS FROM COUNCIL MEMBERS:

Ms. Winters stated she believes a draft of the 10-year comprehensive plan is ready for a council work session.

Councilmember Baker stated that no decisions should be made until all relevant information is provided regarding parking and request a formal written submission from the county outlining its specific needs—such as parking or security concerns—so the council can evaluate them properly. Mr. Baker also encouraged business owners in the affected area to provide input. While many initially believed current parking was sufficient, they reconsidered after being reminded that multiple new businesses are preparing to open nearby, which will significantly increase parking demand. Mr. Baker noted several upcoming developments, including new businesses in the former behavioral health buildings and the potential return of Garren’s Café.

Mr. Baker also cautioned against relying on Legacy Square as a permanent parking solution, emphasizing that its availability could change at any time and should not be assumed.

Mr. Baker concluded by reiterating the need for feedback from all stakeholders before moving forward.

ADJOURNMENT:

Hearing no further business, Mayor Scipio called for the motion to adjourn. Motion was made by Council Member Danny Adams, seconded by Council Member Allie Winter, and unanimously passed. Pickens City Council stood adjourned at 7:04 p.m.

Respectfully Submitted:


Donna Owen, City Clerk

Approved:


Mayor, Isiah Scipio