City of Pickens
Regular Meeting
May 11, 2026
6:00 p.m.

The Mayor and City Council convened at Pickens City Hall, 219 Pendleton Street, Pickens, S.C. for a Regular Called Meeting. Agendas were posted and sent to media on May 8 , 2026.

Council Members in Attendance:
Mayor, Isaiah Scipio
Allie Winter, Mayor Pro-Tem
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
Trey Adams, Public Works Director
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 Scipio called the special called meeting to order and welcomed those in attendance. Mayor Scipio further gave the invocation followed by the Pledge of Allegiance.

COMMENTS MAYOR SCIPIO:

Mayor Scipio stated he is giving the floor to Council Member Ray Wilson for the "Stamp Out Hunger" competition.

Council Member Ray Wilson presented the final results of the first Great American Great Pickens Food Fight, a friendly competition between the Pickens County Council and the Pickens City Council to support the Gleaning House Food Bank. He thanked all participants and recognized the director of the Gleaning House for officially verifying the donation totals.

The results were:

- Pickens County Council: 142 pounds of food
- Pickens City Council: 760 pounds of food

Council Member Wilson announced the Pickens City Council as the champion and the trophy was presented to the mayor, who will keep it until next year's event.

Mr. Wilson concluded by presenting an additional $2,250 donation from the National Association of Letter Carriers' Stamp Out Hunger food drive, collected by community members in support of the program.

Mayor and Council thanked Council Member Ray Wilson for his dedication to this important community project.

COMMENTS FROM CITIZENS:

Leigh Weathers McCordle- Ms. McCordle introduced herself and stated she has been following the City and many of the issues. Ms. McCordle stated she has traveled and has a background in management with a specialty in human resources and was glad to see City Council combining the role of Clerk/HR. Ms. McCordle commented that she was also encouraged that Council had the Audit report and allowed the public to know more about the expenditures and revenues of the City. She also had some thoughts about the role of the finance director reporting to the Mayor in light of the recent audit reporting, as the Administrator has a large responsibility. Ms. McCordle mostly commented on the City Lake property being for sale and requested that property owners be involved prior to the lake being sold.

Geneva Robinson- Ms. Robinson expressed concerns about several issues in her neighborhood, beginning with the condition of South Church Street, where sewer work was completed months ago but the road was never properly repaired, leaving debris, an uneven cut across the street, and remnants of caution tape that make the area look neglected and potentially damaging to vehicles. She also asked for clarification about the future of the former boy's home, noting community rumors that it may become a homeless shelter—something residents do not want based on past problems when the boys home operated. Finally, she raised concerns about the property at 519 West Lee Street, describing excessive clutter, a boat in the yard, a car jacked up in the front, and a porch so crowded it may block entry, and she requested that the city enforce cleanup as it has done in other cases.

Pam Winters – Ms. Winter told the Mayor and Council that she has repeatedly asked how she was identified as the recipient of an email involved in a SLED investigation but has never received an answer. She presented dates from official SLED records showing her name was linked to the case as early as December 18—well before the city's public statements claimed it was first mentioned. She argued that these documented dates contradict what city officials have told the public about referrals, interviews, and how her name surfaced. Ms. Winters also raised concern that an email she sent to council on March 4 later appeared on an anonymous social media page outside the FOIA process. She formally requested a written explanation identifying what record was used to name her, who provided that information to SLED, and how the city reconciles statements with the official timeline.

>>Mayor Scipio stated to Ms. Winter that Council cannot give her that information, and the police chief and administrator should be able to provide information.

Tom Wendell-representing the Fourth Degree Knights of Columbus, requested approximately $3,500 in funding to replace the deteriorating flagpole at Sunrise Cemetery, where 73 veterans—from the Civil War through the Global War on Terror—are buried. He explained that the current pole's external halyard is frayed and the site lacks proper lighting required for displaying the U.S. flag at night under Title 4. Previous attempts to use small solar lights failed due to damage from foot traffic and maintenance equipment. The proposal includes installing a 35-foot fiberglass pole with an internal, lockable halyard, a reinforced concrete base, and a durable down-facing solar LED light. The Knights of Columbus offered to provide volunteer labor and materials in coordination with Public Works, aiming to complete the project before the nation's 250th anniversary on July 4, 2026, to ensure the cemetery honors veterans with an appropriate and long-lasting display.

ADMINISTRATOR'S REPORT:

Site Visit & Updates

- A visit to Lee Street and South Church Street is planned for the next morning to gather updates for Miss Geneva Robinson.

Budget Audit & Upcoming Work Session

- Following the recent audit report and subsequent budget adjustments, a budget update and work session is scheduled for May 26.

- The session is moved one day later due to the Memorial Day holiday.
- Significant work will occur between now and the session to prepare revised budget materials.

Downtown Parking Changes

- Beginning the education phase for the new 2-hour parking limit downtown.
- This phase will last for an extended period, focusing on informing the public before enforcement begins.
- New signage will be installed within the next couple of weeks.

Public Works Utility Shed Replacement

- Council received advance notice (no action required yet) regarding bids for rebuilding the utility/public works shed destroyed during Hurricane Helen.
- 17 bidders participated.
- Insurance will cover approximately $300,000+ of the cost.
- The recommended bid is $298,000 from Diamond Construction Group, based on schedule and experience.
- A full packet—including the proposed contract—will be presented at the May 26 work session.

SECOND AND FINAL READING OF ORDINANCE NO. 2026-03, AN ORDINANCE IMPOSING A TEMPORARY MORATORIUM ON THE ACCEPTANCE AND APPROVAL OF APPLICATIONS FOR VAPE AND TOBACCO RETAIL BUSINESSES WITHIN THE CITY OF PICKENS FOR A PERIOD OF (6) SIX MONTHS IN ORDER TO ALLOW TIME FOR REVIEW AND POSSIBLE AMENDMENT OF THE CITY'S ZONING ORDINANCES:

>>Council Member Allie Winter moved that this constitute a second and final reading of Ordinance No. 2026-03, motion was seconded by Council Member Floyd Rogers and unanimously passed.

FIRST READING OF ORDINANCE NO. 2026-04, AN ORDINANCE AMENDING THE CODE OF ORDINANCE OF THE CITY OF PICKENS, SOUTH CAROLINA, TO CLARIFY THE DAY-TO-DAY SUPERVISION OF DEPARTMENT HEADS BY THE CITY ADMINISTRATOR; TO AMEND THE APPOINTMENT PROCESS FOR THE FINANCE DIRECTOR; AND TO RESERVE THE APPOINTMENT OF THE CITY ATTORNEY, CITY CLERK, AND MUNICIPAL JUDGE EXCLUSIVELY TO CITY COUNCIL:

Council Member Floyd Rogers read the proposed ordinance as sent by the City Attorney.

Proposed amendments to Division 2 – City Administrator and Finance Director, within Article 3 (Officers and Employees) of Chapter 2 (Administration).

- *Strikethrough = language to be deleted*
- *Underline = language to be added*
- *No markings = unchanged*
- *Asterisks = skipped but unchanged sections*

AN ORDINANCE TO AMEND DIVISION 2 (CITY ADMINISTRATOR AND FINANCE DIRECTOR) OF ARTICLE III (OFFICERS AND EMPLOYEES) OF CHAPTER 2 (ADMINISTRATION) OF THE CITY OF PICKENS CODE OF ORDINANCES TO AMEND THE APPOINTMENT PROCESS FOR THE FINANCE DIRECTOR, TO AMEND THE DUTIES OF THE CITY ADMINISTRATOR, AND OTHER MATTERS RELATED THERETO

***WHEREAS**, City Council reviews its ordinances from time to time to make any necessary amendments and/or improvements; and,*

***WHEREAS**, City Council finds and determines that for the purposes of promoting efficient municipal operations, that the Finance Department of the City shall fall under the purview and direction of the City Administrator; and,*

***WHEREAS**, City Council further finds that the power and duties of the City Administrator shall be amended to (1) identify each Department Head by Department; (2) reflect that each Department Head shall be appointed with consent of City Council and (3) to provide the Administrator with direct supervisory authority over the Department Heads.*

***WHEREAS**, City Council finds and determines that the amendments contained herein are in the best interests of the citizens and residents of the City of Pickens.*

***NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT ORDAINED** by the Mayor and Council of the City of Pickens as follows:*

***Section 1. Amendment.** Amend Division 2 (City Administrator and Finance Director) of Article III (Officers and Employees) of Chapter 2 (Administration) (language that is ~~struck through~~ is language proposed to be deleted, underlined language is language proposed to be added, language is not ~~struck through~~ or underlined is not to be changed, and *** represents sections of the Ordinance that have been skipped and remain unchanged):*

DIVISION 2. CITY ADMINISTRATOR AND FINANCE DIRECTOR

Sec. 2-126. Powers and duties generally.

The city administrator shall be responsible to the city council for the proper administration of the policies and affairs of the city and to that end shall have the power and authority and be required to:

(1) Direct, supervise and coordinate administrative activities and operations.

(2) Appoint department heads ~~after consultation~~ with consent by the city council. The department heads of the City are for the following departments: Finance, Public Works, Police, Fire, and Parks and Recreation.

(3) Appoint other city employees with the approval of department heads.

(4) Suspend or dismiss department heads ~~after consultation~~ with consent by the city council.

(5) Suspend or dismiss other city employees after consultation with heads of departments or council committees.

(6) Prepare a proposed annual operating budget and submit the proposed budget to the city council for review and consideration.

(7) Have the responsibility for the administration of the annual operating budget after adoption.

(8) Prepare and annually update a five-year capital improvements program and budget.

(9) Be primarily responsible for the overall administration of the city's personnel policies and procedures under the policy direction of the city council. However, the head of each department shall be responsible for ensuring that personnel policies and procedures are carried out day-by-day in his department.

a. Except as provided elsewhere in this Code, the city administrator shall have the responsibility for the administration of the personnel program including interpretation of the various provisions of the personnel policies and procedures. Decisions regarding the employment of individuals with the city organization shall be based on the policies defined in the personnel policies and procedures manual. The salary of each position within the city organization shall be determined by the position classification system. The salary of all employees at the time of employment, as well as increases which result from promotions or decreases which result from discipline or other adverse actions, shall be approved by the city administrator.

b. The city council may, as necessary, require changes, amendments or additions to the policies and procedures and direct the administrator to implement such changes.

(10) Monitor the financial condition of the city and estimate present and future financial needs.

(11) Prepare a quarterly analysis on the financial position of the city.

(12) Prepare a quarterly analysis on personnel and administrative activities, with the approval of the departmental council committees.

(13) Combine or consolidate job positions within departments as necessary or prudent to maximize manpower utilization and efficiency.

(14) Recommend and administer policies governing purchasing procedures and inventory control.

(15) Authorize the purchase of services, materials, supplies, and equipment which do not require the taking of formal bids; provided, however, that such items are appropriated in the annual operating budget or capital improvements budget.

(16) Authorize shifts in departmental budget line items; provided that overall departmental budget appropriations do not change.

(17) Authorize shifts in departmental budgets; provided that overall budget appropriations do not change without the approval of the city council.

(18) *Investigate complaints concerning administrative matters and personnel performance with heads of departments, departmental council committees, or the mayor.*

(19) *Prepare and submit to the city council at the end of each fiscal year a complete annual report on the finances and administrative activities of the city.*

(20) *With the approval of the city council and as he deems advisable, delegate to other administrative officers subject to his direction and supervision the authority to exercise specified duties and responsibilities as may be considered appropriate.*

(21) *Provide the city council with information, guidance, and leadership in matters of policy determination.*

(22) *Actively investigate the opportunities and position of the city in relation to federal grants, state and county shared services and money and prepare the necessary papers, etc., upon approval of the city council.*

(23) *Shall supervise, direct, coordinate and oversee the Department Heads. Department Heads shall report directly to the City Administrator regarding operational matters, personnel administration, budgeting, policy implementation, and municipal operations, subject to the policy direction and authority of City Council.*

(24) *Shall relate to and communicate with the mayor and with the city council as a whole on any and all problems, situations and conditions which arise concerning any department or activity of the city, which in the opinion of the city administrator is of significance. Except for the purpose of inquiry, the members of city council shall communicate directly with the city administrator in any and all matters concerning any department or activity of the city. No member of the city council shall give orders to any subordinate of the city administrator.*

~~***Subdivision 1. Finance Director***~~

~~***Sec. 2-129. Appointment; term.***~~

~~*The city council shall appoint an officer to be known as the finance director, who shall hold office at the pleasure of the council.*~~

~~*(Ord. No. 2011-11, 8-1-11)*~~

~~***Sec. 2-130. Bond.***~~

~~*Before entering upon the duties of his or her office, the finance director shall enter into a bond in such sum as may be required and with such surety company as shall be approved by the council, for the faithful performance of his or her duties.*~~

~~*(Ord. No. 2011-11, 8-1-11)*~~

~~*Sec. 2-131. Duties generally.*~~

~~*The finance director shall:*~~

~~*(1) Deposit funds in a bank designated by the council.*~~

~~*(2) Give notice to all members of the council of special meetings.*~~

~~*(3) Perform such other duties as may be required by the council.*~~

~~*(Ord. No. 2011-11, 8-1-11)*~~

Secs. 2-132—2-140. Reserved.

Section 2: Severability. *Severability is intended throughout and within the provisions of this Ordinance. If any section, subsection, sentence, clause, phrase, or portion of this Ordinance is held to be invalid or unconstitutional by a court of competent jurisdiction, then that decision shall not affect the validity of the remaining portions of this Ordinanceq*

Section 3: Repealer. *All ordinances or parts of ordinances inconsistent with this ordinance are hereby repealed to the extent of such inconsistency.*

Section 3*: This Ordinance shall be effective upon second and final reading.*

During discussion Council discussed the proposed organizational change that would place the Finance Director under the City Administrator. One council member expressed concern that this change would reduce independent financial oversight, especially given current financial challenges. They debated that keeping the Finance Director reporting directly to Council provides important checks and balances and has helped identify questionable spending in the past.

Other councilmembers responded that the Finance Director would still be able to bring concerns to Council through emails or public presentations, and that transparency would remain. Some noted that all department heads can address Council publicly and that serious financial misconduct would be addressed appropriately. Other Concerns were expressed as follows:

- Council only received the updated document at the meeting.
- They want to compare the current ordinance with the proposed changes.
- They feel it's a lot to absorb before voting.
- There was much discussion about the wording of "consent" of Council prior to hiring or dismissing department heads.

The Mayor did clarify that this is a first reading and changes can be made prior to second reading.

>>Motion was made by Council Member Floyd Rogers, seconded by Council Member Ray Wilson. Council Member Cameron Rivers and Council Member Jonathan Baker opposed. Council Member Danny Adams abstained. Motion carried with (4) votes in favor.

FIRST READING OF ORDINANCE NO. 2026-05, AN ORDINANCE PURSUANT TO SECTION 5-3 150 (3) OF TH CODE OF LAWS OF SOUTH CAROLINA 1976, AS AMENDED, TO ANNEX PROPERTY TO THE CITY OF PICKENS, SOUTH CAROLINA:

Mr. Greg Minton with the Spinx project came before Council to answer questions regarding the proposed site. The Spinx Company is proposing a development on a 14-acre site in Pickens, with the gas station located near AutoZone and the Stockade. They plan to preserve the historic 1936 jailhouse and will need major grading due to steep terrain, including moving about 50,000 cubic yards of dirt. The project represents a $9.5 million investment and is expected to bring jobs and tax revenue. Access would come from Gentry Street and John Street, with DOT-approved improvements. Spinx has no immediate plans for the rest of the acreage. The company emphasizes transparency and collaboration with city.

During Council discussion the Stockade building was discussed for preservation and also perhaps being gifted to the City of Pickens. These are things Spinx is open to discussing. Council ask questions about how the Spinx company utilizes extra land purchased. Mr. Minton stated the company has had extra land in the past and has sold it for compatible uses. Mr. Minton stated for this project the station would utilize approximately 3 to 3.5 acres. Once the annexation takes place, the Spinx company will submit plans and have a completion date of 2027. Mr. Baker inquired about special land uses for being within the city limits. The Mayor clarified there was none that he was aware.
>>Council Member Ray Wilson moved to approve first reading of Ordinance No. 2026-05. Motion was seconded by Council Member Floyd Rogers and unanimously passed that this constitutes first reading of Ordinance No. 2026-05.

AUTHORIZATION TO POST FOR SALE CITY LAKE PROPERTY AND DALTON PROPERTY AND OBTAIN APPRAISALS AND OTHER MATTERS AS IT RELATES TO THE SALE OF CITY OWNED PROPERTY:

Mayor Scipio and Council agreed to discuss the issue of City Lake Property with the property owners before placing property up for sale.

Council did discuss the Dalton Property. Council Member Jonathan Baker stated he thought this issue had already been voted on. Mayor Scipio stated that it was stopped due to waiting on the Comprehensive Plan.
>>Council Member Danny Adams moved to authorize the City Administrator to move forward with selling the Dalton property. Motion was seconded by Council Member Floyd Rogers. Mr. Baker amended the motion to state "highest and best" not restricted to any parties. Danny Adams seconded the amendment. The motion and amendment passed unanimously .

APPOINTMENT OF ASSISTANT MUNICIPAL JUDGE:

Judge Davis requested the Council appoint Dr. Laurie G. Hillstock as the assistant Judge. Council Member Jonathan Baker inquired about Dr. Hillstock not having any Court background. Dr. Hillstock stated that is not a requirement for this position, however, she stated she has extensive experience with planning and conflict resolution. Judge Davis also stated she will have to pass the test for municipal court administration.
>>Motion was made by Council Member Ray Wilson to appoint Dr. Hillstock as assistant Judge. Motion was seconded by Council Member Allie Winter.
Mr. Baker inquired whether the job was posted. Ms. Davis did not know if the position was posted. Mr. Baker stated he thought all public positions should be posted for fairness and transparency.
>>Council approved the motion 6-1 with Mr. Baker voting in opposition.

COMMENTS FROM COUNCIL MEMBERS:

Council Member Allie Winter – Ms. Winter congratulated Council Member Ray Wilson for his efforts with the Stamp Out Hunger food drive. The presentation was uplifting and it was fun to be in the competition with Pickens County. Ms. Winter also thanked the citizens for attending the meeting and being interested in Pickens.

Council Member Ray Wilson – Mr. Wilson also wanted to thank Mountain View Funeral Home for donating tents for donations during the Azalea Festival. Also, many businesses helped with the food drive.

Council Member Jonathan Baker- Mr. Baker also thanked Mr. Wilson for the great success in the food drive competition with Pickens County. This is a win for the community.
Mr. Baker wanted to publicly state he will not enter into discussions or be voting regarding City Lake Property because he personally owns property in that area. Mr. Baker emphasized the importance of

allowing ample time for public comment and community input when decisions affect land use or adjoining properties and should not be negatively impacted by decisions made without sufficient notice. Addressing the newly appointed judge, Mr. Baker noted that the judge's résumé was very impressive. He clarified that his concerns were not personal but centered on ensuring that all community members have a fair opportunity to apply for such positions.

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 Jonathan Baker, and unanimously passed. Pickens City Council stood adjourned at 7:48 p.m.

Respectfully Submitted:

Donna Owen, City Clerk

Approved:

Mayor, Isaiah Scipio