

City of Pickens
Regular Meeting
June 22, 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 June 18, 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:

Tim O'Briant, Administrator
Randal Beach, Chief of Police
Christian Kelleburger, Codes Enforcement
Jonathon Morris, Recreation Director
Chris Elrod, Fire Chief
Jeff Guilbault, Zoning Administrator

(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 council meeting to order and welcomed those in attendance. City Administrator Tim O'Briant further gave the invocation followed by the Pledge of Allegiance.

COMMENTS MAYOR SCIPIO:

Mayor Scipio thanked everyone for being here tonight as we do the business of the city. He stated we are about to look at our budget to pass for first reading.

COMMENTS FROM CITIZENS:

Jeff Derrick- Mr. Derrick said he did not feel knowledgeable enough to comment on the budget. He shared concerns about the lack of transparency regarding the 120 W. Main Street item on the agenda. He also said he does not like that Citizens Comments are held before Council discusses the agenda, explaining that he would rather know what actions Council has taken before speaking. He suggested moving Citizens Comments to the end of the agenda. He also asked that more information be made available on the City of Pickens website.

Randall DeRossett – Mr. DeRossett thanked the Police Chief and the department for their service, saying they put their lives on the line to keep the city safe and deserve higher pay. He also shared concerns about stray cats and dogs, the condition of properties on Railroad Street and Jones Street, and noise issues that occur on some nights.

ADMINISTRATOR’S REPORT:

- The city will host its Independence Day 250th Celebration on July 3, beginning at 11:00 a.m. and continuing through the evening, with the event concluding with a fireworks show.
- Construction of the new fuel station at the Public Works facility is underway and the project is being funded through FEMA assistance related to Hurricane Helene
- Reconstruction of the vehicle storage on Railroad Street is also underway and is being funded through FEMA.
- The city has been awarded a \$183,934 grant from the SC Department of Public Safety. The funding will provide equipment for the Fire Department and fully fund the new School Resource Officer position at Gateway to Innovation
- Review of City of Pickens Flash Report as of May 31, 2026 (FY 2025-2026 Summary)

APPROVAL OF MEETING MINUTES:

- May 27, 2026 – Regular Work Session
- June 3, 2026 – Special-Called Work Session

>>>Motion was made by Councilmember Allie Winter and seconded by Councilmember Floyd Rogers. The motion carried unanimously.

RESOLUTION NO. 2026-R3 APPROVING MEMORANDUM OF UNDERSTANDING BETWEEN THE CITY OF PICKENS AND THE PICKENS COUNTY CHARTER OF FREEDOM ORGANIZATION:

Administrator O’Briant presented a Resolution and Memorandum of Understanding for the Charters of Freedom project. He explained that Pickens was chosen as the county seat location for the display of the nation’s founding documents. He stated Senator Rex Rice is leading the effort, and the project, including a pedestrian plaza near the amphitheater, will be funded through private donations.

Attorney Daniel Hughes gave an overview on the updated language in the Resolution. These changes included clarifying the termination process and adding a standard non-appropriation clause to protect the city if future funding is not approved by Council. He recommends approval of the revised agreement.

Councilmember Allie Winter asked if anything currently at the amphitheater would be removed in place of this project. Administrator O’Briant stated no, this will just be added.

Councilmember Floyd Rogers asked if the location is the same as the place they toured. Administrator O’Briant stated yes, they are having a detailed survey completed and once they receive that report back, they’ll have the exact coordinates.

>>>Motion was made by Councilmember Floyd Rogers and seconded by Councilmember Ray Wilson to approve the Resolution. The motion carried unanimously.

RESOLUTION NO. 2026-R4 TO APPROVE THE PURCHASE OF PROPERTY LOCATED AT 120 WEST MAIN STREET, PICKENS, SC 29671 MAP NUMBER 4181-15-74-3154:

Administrator O'Briant gave an overview of the Resolution and the property. Closing will not occur until July 8th, 2026. He explained that the property has been part of the amphitheater frontage since its construction but has never been owned by the city. He stated acquiring the property will preserve the area for future public use and prevent incompatible development. This purchase will provide additional space for events, future restroom facilities, tents and improved access. Mr. O'Briant noted that Council had previous discussions during a budget work session, and the property owner accepted the city's offer. He stated under SC law, the purchase of property is approved by resolution and requires only one reading.

>>>Councilmember Floyd Rogers made a motion to adopt Resolution 2026-R4. Motion was seconded by Councilmember Allie Winter. Discussion included:

- This will not take place until after the July 1 budget.
- Question from Councilmember Rivers on plans for property. Administrator O'Briant stated there are no plans, that Council's directive was to negotiate the purchase and from there, Council can make whatever plans they wish.

>>>Seeing no other discussion, the motion carried (5-2), with Councilmember Danny Adams and Councilmember Jonathan Baker opposed.

Councilmember Jonathan Baker stated he would like this statement for the record. He thinks the purchase of the property is great for the city, but he does not agree on the terms.

FIRST READING OF ORDINANCE NO. 2026-01, AN ORDINANCE PROVIDING FOR THE FISCAL YEAR 2026/2027 BUDGET FOR THE CITY OF PICKENS:

Administrator O'Briant presented the proposed Fiscal Year 2026–2027 budget, stating that it reflects Council's goals and priorities developed over several months. The proposed budget includes total revenues of \$12,276,581, expenditures of \$11,018,212, and a projected surplus of approximately \$1.26 million. The budget also includes nearly \$3 million in capital improvement projects funded through reserves. Highlights of the proposed budget include a 3% cost-of-living adjustment for City employees, improvements at the amphitheater and recreation complex, utility infrastructure upgrades, including the Margaret Street waterline replacement and new AMI water meters, and continued funding for the SCADA system to improve efficiency within the City's utility operations.

>>>Councilmember Allie Winter made a motion to approve this Ordinance. Motion was seconded by Councilmember Floyd Rogers. Discussion included:

- The City Administrator confirmed the millage rate will remain at **86.3 mills**, with no increases to taxes, utility rates, fire fees, recreation fees, or other City fees.
- Staff noted a minor correction to the Utility Fund expenditures in the budget ordinance.

- Council discussed the proposed budget, including capital improvement projects, available reserves, and the use of Hospitality Tax funds for tourism-related projects.
- Council members asked questions about the public hearing budget totals, fund transfers, and projected revenues. The City Administrator explained the differences between operating expenses and capital projects funded through reserves.
- The City Administrator reported that the City's audit is expected to be completed in late July or early August after year-end financial information is provided to the auditors.

>>>Seeing no other discussion, the motion carried (5-2), with Councilmember Cameron Rivers and Councilmember Jonathan Baker opposed.

FIRST READING OF ORDINANCE NO. 2026-06 TO ADOPT A PLANNED DEVELOPMENT DISTRICT ZONING DOCUMENT FOR THE SPINX DEVELOPMENT SITE LOCATED AT 2914, 2916, 2918, 2920 AND 2932 GENTRY MEMORIAL HIGHWAY:

Jeff Guilbault, Zoning Administrator, went into discussion on the Planned Development District document. He explained that the PDD establishes development standards for the property, which is proposed to be divided into three tracts. Track A is designated for the Spinx convenience store and fuel station, Track B is where the Stockade building is located, and Track C is the remainder of the site. The document also addresses signage, including relocation of an existing billboard to accommodate site layout, without increasing the total number of billboards. The Planning Commission recommended approval with conditions, including additional clarification regarding the future of the Stockade building and a preference for Track C to remain open space. Staff recommended approval as presented, noting the project could proceed under current county zoning but the PDD provides clearer site-specific regulations.

Discussion included:

- Councilmember Allie Winter asked a question regarding preservation of the old Stockade Building. The developer stated the building will be preserved in its current condition and expressed willingness to continue discussions with the City regarding its future use.
- Councilmember Allie Winter asked if Track A buildings will be demolished behind the Stockade. Mr. Guilbault stated yes.
- Mr. O'Briant stated there are discussions of the city partnering with Spinx on the old stockade building, but it will not be a question for this budget. Spinx is open to discussion with the city – will preserve.
- Discussion on the Attorney adding language to preserve. The Attorney stated we can negotiate to preserve the building.

>>>Councilmember Floyd Rogers made a motion to constitute first reading of this Ordinance 2026-06. Motion was seconded by Councilmember Ray Wilson. Discussion included:

- Councilmember Jonathan Baker stated he is confused on why Spinx is giving the city property. It was clarified that the Developer was not giving property to the city, but there could be future communication regarding a possible partnership and agreement to preserve the Stockade Building.

- Councilmember Jonathan Baker asked if it was a possibility to do the PDD all at once after the property is purchased. The Attorney explained that developers typically require certainty regarding annexation and rezoning before purchasing property, and similarly, property owners face risk if rezoning occurs without a guaranteed purchase. He stated these processes generally move concurrently to protect both parties and the City.
- The Spinx Developer gave an overview of the plans. The developer said they intended to move forward with fully developing the property as proposed and that it is a firm plan, not a speculative one. They explained that if the PDD is approved, the annexation would follow, and they would move straight into permitting with construction expected to begin by the end of the year. They also stressed that they have the financial backing to complete the project.
- Councilmember Jonathan Baker responded to the Developer stating he understood the intent but was focused on keeping things fair and consistent across similar cases.

The motion carried (6-1), with Councilmember Jonathan Baker opposed.

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

>>>Councilmember Danny Adams made a motion to postpone this Ordinance to June 30th. Motion was seconded by Councilmember Ray Wilson. Motion carried unanimously.

CONVENE INTO EXECUTIVE SESSION:

Motion to enter in executive session for the following items:

1. FOR THE PURPOSE CONTRACTUAL METTERS; SECTION 30-4-70(A)(2): CONTRACT TO OUTSOURCE CITY FINANCE SERVICES
2. DISCUSS EMPLOYMENT, APPOINTMENT, COMPENSATION, OR 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 AS ALLOWED BY S.C. 30-4-70 (A) (1): PERSONNEL MATTER

>>Councilmember Floyd Rogers moved to convene into executive session for the stated purposes. Motion was seconded by Councilmember Ray Wilson. Motion carried unanimously.

RECONVENE INTO PUBLIC SESSION:

Motion was made by Councilmember Floyd Rogers to reconvene into Public Session, seconded by Councilmember Ray Wilson and unanimously passed.

ACTION AS IT RELATES TO EXECUTIVE SESSION:

1. FOR THE PURPOSE CONTRACTUAL MATTERS; SECTION 30-4-70(A)(2): CONTRACT TO OUTSOURCE CITY FINANCE SERVICES:
 - a. Councilmember Allie Winter made a motion to honor the 90-day agreement with Cherry Bekaert and re-evaluate after 90 days. Motion was seconded by Councilmember Floyd Rogers. Motion carried unanimously.

2. DISCUSS EMPLOYMENT, APPOINTMENT, COMPENSATION, OR 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 AS ALLOWED BY S.C. 30-4-70 (A) (1): PERSONNEL MATTER
 - a. Councilmember Jonathan Baker made a motion to terminate the City Administrators employment, effective immediately, consistent with applicable law and the terms of the employment agreement. Motion was seconded by Councilmember Cameron Rivers. The motion failed (2-5), with Mayor Scipio, Councilmember Allie Winter, Councilmember Danny Adams, Councilmember Floyd Rogers, and Councilmember Ray Wilson opposed.

COMMENTS FROM COUNCIL MEMBERS:

Councilmember Jonathan Baker: *"I would like to enter this document into the record. If anybody would like to read it. I guess I could just read it over. This is an email I received, including approximately 20 other members, not limited to council, but most anybody that had a city email, including outside of city emails. They were also sent this from our City Administrator, Tim O'Briant, in reference to me. It is addressed to the Mayor and Council. I am compelled to formally address and document an incident involving Councilman Baker that occurred in the lobby of City Hall on June 2nd, 2026, as described in written employee statements submitted by staff members Rebecca and Margie. The conduct described is deeply troubling, wholly inappropriate for an elected official, and unacceptable within a professional municipal workplace. According to the statements provided, Councilman Baker entered city hall regarding payment of an additional zoning compliant fee associated with a permit application. During this interaction, he allegedly directed repeated profanity and abusive remarks toward city staff and openly demeaned city personnel and operations while in the public lobby of City Hall. Staff reported multiple uses of vulgar language, disparaging remarks about employees and city functions, and aggressive behavior directed towards personnel attempting to assist him professionally and courteously. He should be ashamed, particularly concerning our allegations that Councilman Baker mocked or demeaned employees performing their official duties, repeatedly used profanity in the public lobby, and made a reference to being a pissed-off customer. Staff further reported feeling intimidated, disrespected, and shocked by both his tone and demeanor. No city employee should be subjected to this hostility, intimidation, profanity or verbal abuse while carrying out their assigned duties. The employees involved were performing routine administrative functions and did not deserve the treatment allegedly directed toward them. Conduct of this nature damages morale, undermines public confidence in city government and creates an unacceptable workplace environment. As City Administrator, I have a responsibility under City Code to ensure the orderly administration of city operations and to protect city employees from inappropriate conduct within the workplace. While elected officials may certainly express disagreement or frustration regarding city policies or procedures, there is a clear distinction between legitimate criticism and behavior that crosses into intimidation, vulgarity or public disrespect towards staff. I am therefore formally requesting that the city council review this matter and consider appropriate corrective action, including reaffirming expectations regarding professional conduct by elected officials when interacting with city employees and the public. The city cannot credibly demand professionalism, civility, and*

accountability from its staff while tolerating behavior from elected officials that would result in disciplinary action for an employee. The employee statements are attached to this memorandum and should be reviewed carefully by each of council. This matter is serious and cannot simply be dismissed as frustration. Employees must know that city leadership will support them when they are subject to abusive or degrading conduct while performing their duties.” Mr. Baker noted that there was a video of this situation and the video does not reflect anything close to this situation. There was no aggression towards anybody at the front counter and I even sought clarification to verify. That is all I have to say at this point in time. If anybody else would like to make a comment, feel free.

Councilmember Allie Winter- Councilmember Allie Winter stated she has a lot that she would like to say, but she will respect the fact that we just discussed this in Executive Session, and we shouldn't be repeating things that were said in Executive Session. She stated she is disappointed the employees that wrote these words are now going to be questioned because that was just brought to public light. She stated that is a shame for them, and this is disgraceful that this continues to happen. She stated there is going to come a time where the rest of us are going to be tired of dealing with this. We need to move on with the business of the city, and we need to grow up.

Councilmember Floyd Rogers- Councilmember Floyd Rogers asked if we could end the meeting. Mayor Scipio stated he must respect every council member.

Councilmember Jonathan Baker- Councilmember Baker stated he appreciates Councilmember Winter's concerns about other employees, but the truth is the facts. He stated he did not say that, and he did not do that. He stated he understands there might be concerns about others, but he is only here to present the truth. He stated he has the video from the front lobby that says otherwise of this whole statement.

Mayor Scipio asked Administrator O'Briant if there was anything he would like to say.

Administrator Tim O'Briant – Mr. O'Briant stated in this case, Councilman Baker is correct. He stated he did not watch the video and took the word of a couple of employees that turned out to be hyperbole. He stated had an employee say some of the things about another employee, that could have led into disciplinary action. He stated as he told Councilmember Baker, he acted in anger and acted hastily before he even watched the video. He took the word of his people who were upset and he should have been more considerate and slower in his approach. He stated he is going to write Council a redaction or a restatement of exactly what occurred and he apologizes for acting in haste.

Councilmember Baker stated he appreciates it and truly hopes his words are true. He stated he hopes to move forward and support any positive action. He appreciates Mr. O'Briant recognizing the situation and he hopes this doesn't happen again because it has become a burden on the city and he hopes everyone can get along and we can do something positive as a whole.

ADJOURNMENT:

Hearing no further business, Mayor Scipio called for the motion to adjourn. Motion was made by Councilmember Allie Winter, seconded by Councilmember Floyd Rogers, and unanimously passed. Pickens City Council stood adjourned at 10:16 p.m.

Respectfully Submitted:

Approved:

Meagan Nations
City Clerk/Human Resources Director

Mayor, Isaiah Scipio