



Regular Town Council Meeting
Tuesday June 17, 2025
War Memorial Building, Great Falls, SC

Councilmembers Present: Mayor Keevi Worthy, Mayor Pro Tempore Willie Gonzalez
Councilmember Tiffany Craig, Councilmember Steve McManus, Councilmember David Dutton.
A quorum was present.

Councilmembers Absent: Councilmember Monica Eagle

Staff Present: Joshua Glenn, City Manager; Chief Benenhaley, Police Department; Brian Grier,
Municipal Attorney

The public and media were duly notified of the date, time, and place of the meeting.

Mayor Keevi Worthy called the Regular Council meeting to order at 7:00 P.M., led the Pledge of Allegiance and Prayer.

Mayor Worthy made a motion to amend the agenda adding Elizabeth Howe, Danny Lawson, Paul Rice and moving Hometown Association with Glenda Coleman to public session. Adding funding for the hometown association and the first reading of the petition to change the government to a mayor-council system to new business and removing the government referendum adoption. Councilmember Craig 2nd. All in favor with no opposition.

ITEM 1 PUBLIC COMMENTS

1. Brian McGrath

Expressed concerns about council effectiveness, the need for a provisional budget, and the importance of codifying certain positions in the town's ordinances. Spoke on the lack of disconnect within the council and the need to move forward for the goodness of the town. The Town Administrator needs to assist the council, and the community needs to engage with the Town Administrator.

2. Rene McGrath

Highlighted that all council members need to file with the South Carolina Ethics Commission before any duties can be fulfilled and the Councilmember Gonzalez failed to file for nearly a year only filing on May 30, 2025. That he was in violation of state law. The issues raised as a matter of transparency and respect for legal obligations and questioned Mayor Pro Tempore Gonzalez as to why he waited 11 months before he filed. All challenged everyone to not be part of the problem but part of the solution.

3. Glinda Coleman

Hometown Association is working with FEMA on getting the trees removed from the north end of the rail bed trail and the Rocky Creek Trail and meeting with them every other week as the process goes on. Visitor's Center update: Harold Hayes, Chester County's Project Manager had a meeting concerning the project. He said that the contractor has remobilized, and fencing has been installed. Demolition has started. First floor abatement of the contaminant is complete and now the second-floor abatement and demolition has started. Duke Energy has begun work on the parking area and the area where the bridge to the state park will be built. They had a couple of problems that slowed them down a little, but they were able to work around those problems. They will have to close a portion of the rail bed trail at various times for safety reasons. Still estimating a completion date on those projects by fall 2026. The EPA grant for the northern part of the trail. Thomas Causey, with Stantec, said that he

hopes that United Infrastructure Group, who was awarded the on tract for the work, will be able to get to work by the end of July. The EPA funds will be used first and must be expended by the end of September then the SCDES subgrant will kick in to complete the work. The National Trails Day hike on June 7 was a great turnout with about a dozen people in attendance with people from the Charlotte and Columbia area. June 29 from 1-4pm there will be a living history event at the Nitrolee Access Area for the AG & Art Tour. A blacksmith, a weaver, an artisan selling jams and jellies and an artisan talking about coffee and what people in this area drank after tea became unpopular because of the Revolution. GFHTA will be selling hot dogs and cold drinks. There will be a living historian there talking about the history of the area and the citizen farmers becoming militia to fight the British. This event is cosponsored by Chester County 250 committee and the AG & Art committee.

4. Elizabeth Howe

Wants to thank the town for their support over the years and wants to add reassurance that the Hometown Association is here to work with the town on community and economic development and other economic development opportunities. The Great Falls Hometown Association has worked for 20 years laying the groundwork for nature-based tourism and outdoor recreation for the town and other economic developments for the town. The Hometown Association has been a key liaison between the town and Duke Energy since the Catawba Water Re-licensing process began in 2003. Glenda Coleman, the Executive Director of the Hometown Association, has been the only person in the county to be apart from the Re-licensing process from the start. Nature Based Tourism is a focus for the organization and with Mrs. Coleman's expertise and network we work with state agencies, public and private entities to promote Great Falls and to keep Nature-based tourism at the forefront. Mrs. Coleman continues to act as a liaison between state park officials and the town. With the park planning to open in 2027. The HTA works as a liaison between the Carolina Thread Trail, South Carolina Parks Recreation and Tourism as well as the Catawba Valley Land Trust and many other agencies and organizations. They work Closely with them to ensure that we take advantage of the opportunities as they are presented to us. Mrs. Coleman is skilled in writing grants over \$1.2 million for specific projects in recent memory and understands the initial nature-based tourism initiative and its evolution in South Carolina that allows us to keep our small town strong. Wants to assure the town that they will continue to do these things with the mission of revitalizing Great Falls.

5. Danny Lawson

Has attended three training sessions in person with Charles Barano. He took six eight-hour computer-based training courses and handed my certifications back to the town clerk that was asked for. Surprised to learn that Councilmember Gonzalez was accepting applications for new members and he didn't get at least an email or phone call about the new commission when there was a zoning board. Guess that they were not up to the qualifications that he was asking for.

6. Paul Rice

Reminded the council that they were elected by the people. They were elected to make decisions for the best of the town. Even if they are not the decisions that they like it is what the town wants. When unsure, create a poll to see what the people want. The council should never be a part of the personal attacks and jabs. That they do not need to focus on the past and worry about the future. Asking council as elected officials to come together and move forward.

ITEM 2 OLD BUSINESS

a. Adopting New Employee Handbook

Mayor Pro Tempore Gonzalez states that he gave a copy for review and recommendations for improvements to the employee handbook. States that he has

spoken with attorneys and the Municipal Association. He stated that this is a policy we need to adhere to, and it needs to be updated at least every five years. The last time that it was updated was in 2008 by an attorney in Chester County. Mayor Pro Tempore Gonzalez wants to get the handbook up to date with current standards and laws. Once it is accepted it will be presented to an attorney that specializes in that area of expertise.

b. 1st Reading of the 2025-2026 Budget

Town Administrator Glenn states that the first reading of the 2025-2026 budget projected a \$280,000 profit, potentially rising to the mid-\$300,000s. ARPA (American Rescue Plan Act) funds are included but can only be used for match grants. Expenditures are mainly offset by payroll and Waste Board maintenance. Some council members requested more detailed budget workshops and financial statements for transparency. Town administrator Glenn stated that he has a copy with Mayor Worthy and Councilmember Craig wanting a copy of the breakdown. July will start back the true ledger once budget is approved.

Motion

Mayor Pro Tempore Gonzalez made a motion to approve the budget; Councilmember Dutton seconded the motion.

Vote

Vote 3/2 Passed

ITEM 3 APPROVAL OF MINUTES

Documents: 3A1 Draft Minutes 4-29-2025 PDF All council members received last month's regular council meeting minutes.

ITEM 4 Report on Departments

A. Town Administrator's Report-Josh Glenn

A pre-conference meeting was held at Carolina Adventure World, where Tri-County Engineering, representatives from C.O.G., Fairfield Electric and Town Administration Glenn walked parts of the project to see progress in action, shortly after the Notice to Proceed was signed for Collection System Upgrades Project A (A-23-C083). As indicated by the Notice to Proceed, the work began on June 2, 2025, and will be completed within 360 days, which will be May 29, 2026. The Welcome Center renovation is back under way. Lead specialists have been brought in to remove the harmful contaminants so that all government guidelines are being followed. Mill Site #1 is in the final phases of grading with Hydro-Grass being sprayed in the next few days. The land must achieve 75% germination growth before being sold. Mill Site #2 manholes and piping have been installed. Paving of the roads will be coming in the next few weeks. Mill Site #3 piping and manholes have been delivered as well as the piping running out to Carolina Adventure World. Part of the projects have been staged down by the sandbar in the gravel parking lot. Wastewater Treatment Plant upgrades took place this week, with new clarifiers being installed. A meeting to discuss the Great Falls Rail Trail took place with the Town Administration, Glenda Coleman, and three Representatives from the C.O.G. The total project is expected to cost \$667,200.00 with \$238,623.00 coming from the EPA Cleanup Grant, \$360,000.00 coming from the SC DES BCRLF Subgrant. That leaves a match of \$68,577.00 to be contributed from the town. The Town Administrator asked that the council vote to use some of the A.R.P.A. funds as a means of matching. Councilmember Craig asked if there was enough money since they purchased Christmas decorations with the A.R.P.A. funds. There is \$144,000.00 with the audit close out. There is enough for that. Does not need to be voted on at this time. Town Council will be voting on five candidates to lead the Zoning Commission, along with three more candidates to sit on the Zoning Appeals Committee. This is the first big step in moving the town forward with re-zoning perspective properties for future development. A sincere thank you to the citizens who share these seats. Sometime back the council was asked to vote on selling the old equipment and unusable vehicles. Five of those items have been sold for a total of \$7535.00. Four additional items that have bids that fell below the minimum bid.

Asked council to approve the sale of those items, if approved this will give the town an additional \$2,200.00 for a grand total of \$9,735.00. Councilmember Craig asked if there was documentation on the sale of these items. There are copies of all documentation. The Recreation Department has one Ozone team headed to Allstars. The first game will be on Friday June 20, 2025, at 6:30pm in Rodman. Game two will be Saturday June 21, 2025, at 11am. The Football and Cheerleading Registration is now open until August 1, 2025, and soccer registration has been extended until July 1, 2025. Chester County recently replaced the roof on the concession stand at Dave Minors Park.

B. Police Department-Chief Benenhaley

Chief Benenhaley reported on departmental growth, Officer Certifications and training. Officer Ross became a certified drone operator, and Sergeant Woods completed supervision training. The Department handled 101 calls for service, 41 reports, 16 new cases, 76 traffic stops, and 55 civil disturbances in the pervious month. Efforts continue to improve case file management and vehicle maintenance. Two of the Dodge Durango have been in and out of the shop constantly. Hoping with the vehicles all up to date on their maintenance and regular maintenance and inspections being carried out, that there will not be any more issues. Starting to earn the trust and relationship back. Councilmember Craig thanked the department for what they did at the event this past Saturday, staying and keeping everyone safe.

C. Fire Department- Brandon Edwards

Chester County Fire Service in Great Falls has had 259 calls for service from January until May. January having 48 calls for service, February having 52 calls for service, march having 55 calls for service, April having 55 calls for service and may having 49 calls for service. They are proud to share that two of our personnel have recently obtained their National Registry Emergency Medical Technician (NREMT) certificate. This achievement enhances the department's ability to provide high-quality pre-hospital care and strengthens the overall emergency response capabilities. There will be an Open House at the station for the entire community on October 25 from 9am- 2pm, this will be an opportunity to see the work that has been put into the station. During the open house event, the Fire department will also have a few fire prevention demonstrations. As always, the station is open to the public to stop in and see the renovations and the new fire engine.

ITEM 5 NEW BUSINESS

A. 1st Reading of Petition to Chage form of Government

The council discussed and approved the first reading of an ordinance to hold a referendum on changing the town's form of government from council to mayor form, following a certified citizen petition as required by SC Code 5-5-20. Those in favor will check or cross mark in the box after the word yes. Those voting against will check or cross mark in the box after the word no. public notice of the referendum shall be effective upon final reading don, ordained, and counseled this June 17, 2025. Attorney Geir contacted colleges at the Municipal Association after he was informed that there were potentially two measures to change the form of government. The petition form that was submitted and certified by the Board of Election and was advised that if the council receives a valid petition the council must act to follow the referendum. The Statute is mandatory in tone shall be called by ordinance and provides no discretion on that alternative form, particularly if the two referenda are held simultaneously or in proximity. That may not violate the letter of law, but it would frustrate the statutory purpose of the 5-5-2-. Posing two separate forms of government question could create voter confusion, of a citizen-driven petition. For this reason, the federal legal and private court is to counsel a call referendum only on the force specified for the petition and allow that vote to proceed. If the council proposes a different form, it should do so only after the petition-driven process has run its course.

MOTION

Mayor Worthy made a motion to approve first reading of the petition to change the form of Government to Mayor-Council, seconded by councilmember Craig.

VOTE

4/1vote. Approved.

B. Adopt Ordinance for Change of Government

Ordinance to adopt the council manager form of government. The municipal council shall consist of a mayor and (four/six/eight) council members, elected in accordance with Chapter 15 of Title 5 in the South Carolina Code of Laws. The powers and duties of the council shall be to employ a town manager, establish administrative departments upon recommendation of the manager, adopt the municipal budget, authorize the issuance of bonds, enact ordinances not prohibited by law, and appoint committees, boards and commissions as advised by the manager. The council shall employ a town manager based solely on executive and administrative qualifications. The manager need not be a resident of the municipality or state at the time of employment and may reside outside the municipality while in the office only with the approval of the council. The terms of employment of the manager shall be at the pleasure of the council, and the manager shall be entitled to such compensation for services as the council may deem necessary.

Motion

Mayor Pro Tempore Gonzalez made a motion to accept an ordinance for Manager-Council form of government. Councilmember McManus Seconded the motion.

Vote

3/2 vote. Passed

C. Zoning Commission & Appeals Board

In order to guide and accomplish a coordinated and harmonious development of the town that will, in accordance with existing and future needs, best promote the public health, safety, morals, order, convenience, prosperity and the general welfare, as well as efficiency and economy in the process of development, the planning and zoning commission is created and established and the commission shall be organized, empowered and governed by the provisions of Article II.- Planning and zoning commission. The municipal council must inform each planning/zoning official and employee annually of the training requirements and provide access to approved education programs to obtain the required. Unless exempt, all members of the planning commission, boards of zoning appeals and architectural review board, as well as staff who directly or indirectly work with them, must complete the six hours of state-approved orientation training within six months before and no later than one year after the initial date of appointment/employment. Mayor Pro Tempore Gonzalez states that he has spoken to Mike Levister and got the requirements needed and that only one person has completed all the requirements.

Motion

Councilmember Dutton made a motion to table for further discussion, Councilmember Craig seconded.

Vote

Voting to table until next month's meeting was unanimous.

D. Vote to sell remaining Vehicles & Equipment

Motion Councilmember McManus made a motion to accept the sale of equipment and vehicles. Councilmember Dutton seconded the motion.

Vote 4/1 vote. Passed.

E. 1st reading of Golf Cart Ordinance

The first reading of a golf cart ordinance was discussed, focusing on safety, speed limits, and operational requirements. The ordinance was tabled for further review, particularly regarding nighttime operation and police input.

Motion

Councilmember McManus made a motion to accept ordinance.

Vote

Voting to table until next month's meeting was unanimous.

F. Consideration of Funding for Hometown Association

MOTION

Mayor Worthy made a motion to approve funding of \$17,000 for the Hometown Association.

Councilmember Craig seconded.

VOTE Approved unanimously

ITEM 6 MAYORS REPORT

Mayor Worthy wants to hold workshops on the 2nd Tuesday at 6pm starting in July.

Mayor Worthy challenges the council to be bonded by next month's meeting in July. Town Administrator Glenn stated that he can send out the company he used, and the town will be responsible for the bill.

ITEM 7 EXECUTIVE SESSION

Motion

Mayor Worthy motioned to go into executive session, seconded by Councilmember Dutton.

Vote

Approved unanimously

Mayor Worthy stated that there were no decisions made in the executive session.

Mayor Worthy made a motion to go back into public session. Councilmember Craig seconded the motion, and the motion passed unanimously.

Mayor Pro Tempore Gonzalez stated that he will send out corresponding emails to candidates for the Zoning Commission and Appeals Board.

ITEM 8 ADJOURNMENT

MOTION

There will be no further business, Mayor Keevy Worthy motioned to adjourn, seconded by Councilmember Dutton.

The meeting was adjourned at 8:42 P.M.