

BLYTHEWOOD TOWN COUNCIL MEETING

THE MANOR

100 ALVINA HAGOOD CIRCLE
BLYTHEWOOD, SC 29016
MONDAY, APRIL 28, 2025
6:00 PM

MINUTES

Members Present

Mayor Sloan Griffin
Councilwoman E. Page
Councilwoman A. Fripp
Councilman Donald Brock
Councilman R. McKenrick

Staff Present

Ed Driggers, Interim Town Admin
Pete Balthazor, Town Attorney
Sharon Durst, Town Clerk

Members Absent

None

Staff Absent

None

I. CALL TO ORDER

A. ROLL CALL

Mayor Griffin called the meeting to order at 6:00 pm. Five Council members were present, constituting a quorum.

B. NOTIFICATION AND POSTING OF THE MEETING AGENDA

The Town Clerk confirmed the agenda was properly posted and the media notified.

C. PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

Councilwoman Fripp led the Pledge of Allegiance

D. INVOCATION

The evening's invocation was led by Councilwoman Fripp

E. APPROVAL OF MINUTES (TC Regular Feb.24, Mar.24, Apr. 28 & Mar.3, Mar.5 and Apr. 01 Special Called Meeting)

Councilman Brock made a Motion to defer approving the minutes to the May 28,2025 meeting. Councilwoman Page seconded the Motion. **All in favor; 5-0.**

F. INTERIM TOWN ADMINISTRATOR REPORT

Mr. Driggers provided an update on his transition from initial onboarding into a more analytical phase of his role, focusing on assessing internal operations and procedures. He noted that his approach is not to criticize existing practices but to offer a fresh perspective by asking staff questions about current methods and workflows. He has engaged with regional working committees, where he now represents the Town, and reported that these meetings are progressing well. Mr. Driggers mentioned that he has also started meeting with town boards and commissions, including attending the most recent Board of Architectural Review meeting and preparing to attend the upcoming Planning Commission session. He views these introductions as a way to put a face to the name, build relationships, and position himself as a support resource. He stated appreciation for the service of volunteer board members on behalf of the mayor and council, acknowledging the

value of their time and expertise. Mr. Driggers stated that he plans to evaluate the Town's meeting and agenda structure, as well as internal staff roles and responsibilities, to ensure clarity, accountability, and better coordination. His goal is to improve the behind-the-scenes processes that support council operations—ensuring that staff are aligned, responsibilities are clearly defined, and council members receive all necessary information in advance of meetings. He noted his commitment to doing his part well so that the administrative workflow is smooth and effective for those who follow.

G. FY2024/2025 MONTHLY BUDGET REPORT

In discussion there were some concerns raised about discrepancies in the FY 2024/2025 monthly budget report. Councilman Brock pointed out a figure on page two showing a projected income of \$13.3 million, which seemed unusually high and likely inaccurate. It was noted that if the number were correct, the Town would be underperforming. Additional concerns were raised regarding page six, where total expenses were listed as \$11.8 million, another figure that did not appear accurate to the council. It stated that there were likely formatting issues affecting the report. Mayor Griffin noted that the necessary corrections would be made, and that Mr. Driggers would provide revised figures the following morning for further review.

II. BOARDS AND COMMITTEE UPDATES

A. Doko Meadows Park Foundation- Councilwoman Page

No meeting.

B. Central Midlands Council of Governments- Mayor Griffin

Nothing to report.

C. Richland County Transportation Penny Advisory Committee (TPAC) – Councilman McKenrick:

Councilman McKenrick stated that residents may have noticed signs posted on both sides of the interstate near Food Lion, indicating upcoming lane changes related to TPAC projects. These lane shifts are part of the Transportation Penny program and are happening alongside ongoing SC Department of Transportation (SCOT) construction in the same area. He noted that a report on the project would be shared later in the meeting. Councilman McKenrick also mentioned the recent temporary closure of Highway 21 for SCDOT work, which took place over spring break and went as smoothly as could be expected. He added that the upcoming lane changes will remain in place for an extended period as paving work continues on the other half of Blythewood Road, particularly on the side opposite the three-lane section. He noted that he wanted everyone to be informed about the long-term nature of the traffic adjustments.

III. PRESENTATIONS

A. Brooks Bickley- SCDOT will present updates on I-77 Exit 26 new interchange and connecting roads.

Mr. Bickley had a family emergency and rescheduled to attend the May TC meeting to present updates.

IV. NEW BUSINESS

ACTION ITEMS

A. Discussion and Approval of Mutual Aid Agreement between Richland County Sheriff's Department and the Town of Blythewood

- B. Discussion and Approval of Ordinance 2025.002 – An Ordinance Setting Referendum on The Question of a Change In the Form of Government. (Sponsoring Member: Councilman Rich McKenrick)

Former Mayor Keith Bailey opposed the proposed change in government structure, questioning why officials who were re-elected under the current system now wanted to change it. He felt the issue stemmed more from personality conflicts than from actual governance concerns and saw no need for restructuring.

A new resident, Mr. Jerry, urged the council and public to do more research before making any decisions. He noted that while he was undecided, he raised concerns about the cost of a special election and suggested that, despite claims to the contrary, the issue appeared political.

Mr. Ed Sanchez supported exploring a new form of government, noting the Town's growth and the need for more transparent and accountable leadership. He mentioned a citizen-focused, collaborative approach and viewed the council-manager model as better suited to Blythewood's future.

Another resident spoke in support of the change, stating the new structure would promote shared responsibility and reduce the risk of centralized control, making governance more representative.

Ms. Trish Hovis questioned whether the council-manager form would improve accountability, particularly regarding budget oversight. She criticized the limited time council had to review materials and called for better preparation and transparency.

Ms. Bobbi Young noted the lack of preparedness, suggesting that council members should proactively seek answers like residents do. She stated that there were a few things she did not understand, and she reached out for answers.

Councilman Brock made a Motion to approve Ordinance 2025.002. The Motion was seconded by Councilwoman Fripp. **A roll call vote was taken; Councilwoman Page – Yes, Councilman Brock – Yes, Councilwoman Fripp – Yes, Councilman McKenrick – Yes, Mayor Griffin– No. Motion passed; 4-1.**

- C. Discussion and Approval of Ordinance 2025.003 – An Ordinance Establishing a Curfew for Minors in the Town of Blythewood.
- D. Discussion and Approval of a Resolution In Support of Amending South Carolina Law to Allow Scout Motors to Sell Vehicles Directly to Customers.

Councilman Brock made a Motion to defer Action Items A, C and D indefinitely. The Motion was seconded by Councilman McKenrick **All in favor; 5-0.**

In discussion, it was clarified that postponing indefinitely would result in the items being placed on a future agenda, potentially during the upcoming budget workshop or the next regular meeting.

V. OLD BUSINESS

SECOND READING

- A. Discussion and Approval of Ordinance 2025.001 – An Ordinance Hearing Adopting Text and Map Amendments to the Land Development Ordinance (LDO) For All Parcels and Property Located Within the Town of Blythewood Corporate Limits.

In discussion Ordinance 2025.001 was revisited. The ordinance which concerns the adoption of text and map amendments to the Land Development Ordinance (LDO) for all parcels within the Town of Blythewood. Mr. Balthazar, the Town attorney, reminded council that the ordinance

received first reading two months earlier but was deferred at the previous meeting to allow more time for council and the public to review significant changes that had been introduced after the first reading. He noted the importance of careful review, especially given the size and impact of the LDO, which would completely replace the Town's current zoning ordinance.

It was noted that both the draft ordinance and proposed zoning map are available on the Town's website for public comment. It was pointed out that there are still issues with the zoning map and that additional time is needed to ensure the ordinance is accurate and legally sound. In discussion it was also recommended we plan for an appropriate implementation timeline to allow for staff training and administrative readiness. It was advised that rushing could lead to complications.

It was requested that the council postpone the second reading indefinitely until these issues are resolved.

Councilman McKenrick made a Motion to defer adopting Ordinance 2025.001 indefinitely. The Motion was seconded by Councilman Brock. All in favor; 5-0

VI. OPEN CITIZENS COMMENTS

Cindy Merritt a Town citizen raised concerns about ongoing delays regarding the juvenile curfew ordinance, questioning why there continued to be deferred action despite recent incidents involving youth violence. She expressed frustration that council had not yet acted and urged them to prioritize the safety of children and families, especially after a previous meeting involving Sheriff Leon Lott and his deputies. She stated the urgency of addressing safety issues in Town parks and gatherings.

Mr. Balthazar clarified that the proposed juvenile curfew ordinance was still being researched and drafted. He acknowledged that several municipalities in South Carolina have such ordinances, though each is different and may face legal or constitutional challenges. He noted the importance of doing the necessary legal "homework" to ensure the ordinance is enforceable and appropriate.

In discussion Council Member McKenrick asked for immediate discussion on security at Town events, particularly in light of recent violence at a "Movies in the Park" event. He stated the public deserves clear direction about safety at upcoming events and made a motion to postpone all Movies in the Park events, including the Juneteenth celebration and Rockin' Red, White, and Blue, until security concerns were addressed. Other members expressed concern about taking final action on an item not listed on the meeting agenda.

Mr. Balthazar advised that a final vote on an unscheduled item would require an amendment to the agenda with a two-thirds vote and justification for emergency action. Several council members and the mayor agreed that while immediate action was not procedurally possible, the issue warranted dedicated discussion. It was decided to move the public safety conversation — including the curfew ordinance, Movies in the Park, and related law enforcement issues — to a special called meeting.

Mayor Griffin made the Motion to have a special public safety meeting for May 19 at 6:00 p.m., to include representatives from the Richland County Sheriff's Department. It was noted that this meeting will focus on public input, safety planning, the draft curfew ordinance, and the future of scheduled Town events.

It was also determined that, an item will be added to the April 30 budget workshop agenda to allow discussion and potential action related to postponing events like Movies in the Park.

Council members stated that while these safety concerns are urgent, the Town must ensure legal compliance and thoughtful community involvement before making final decisions.

VII. EXECUTIVE SESSION – Pursuit to SC Code Section 30-4-70

- A. Receipt of legal advice concerning pending claim- Richland County v. S.C Department of Transportation and Town of Blythewood (for abandonment and closure of Locklier Road)
- B. Discussion of negotiations incident to proposed contractual arrangements- Interim Town Administrator

Councilman McKenrick made a Motion to enter into executive session at 7:13 pm with a five-minute recess. The Motion was seconded by Councilwoman Page. **All in favor; 5-0**

VIII. RECONVENE

Councilman Brock made a Motion to reconvene open session at 7:45 pm. The Motion was seconded by Councilman McKenrick. **All in favor; 5-0**

IX. ITEMS REQUIRING A VOTE FOLLOWING EXECUTIVE SESSION

There were none.

X. ADJOURNMENT

Councilman Brock made a Motion to adjourn at 7:46pm. The Motion was seconded by Councilwoman Page. **All in favor; 5-0**

Respectfully submitted,

Sharon Durst

Sharon Durst, Town Clerk