



**Town of Sullivan's Island, South Carolina
Town Council Meeting Minutes
Tuesday, November 18, 2025, 6:00 p.m.**

The regular meeting of the Town Council was held on the above date at approximately 6:00 p.m., all requirements of the Freedom of Information Act having been satisfied.

Present were: Patrick O'Neil, Mayor
Justin Novak, Mayor Pro-Tem
Ned Higgins, Councilmember
Carl Hubbard, Councilmember
Jody Latham, Councilmember
Scott Millimet, Councilmember
Gary Visser, Councilmember

Staff members present were Jason Blanton, Rebecca Fanning, Greg Gress, Assistant Fire Chief Amanda Hawver, Town Administrator Joe Henderson, Town Lawyer John Linton, Police Chief Glenn Meadows, Fire Chief Anthony Stith, Bridget Welch, and Max Wurthmann.

Mayor O'Neil called the meeting to order at 6:00 p.m. and stated the press and public had been notified in accordance with State Law. There were twenty (20) members of the public present and no (0) members of the media present. Mayor O'Neil led the Pledge of Allegiance followed by a moment of silence for prayer or reflection.

I. Presentations:

- Green, Finney & Cauley Financial Audit: Presenting the Town's financial statements for fiscal year ending June 30, 2025 (Emily Sobczak)

Emily Sobczak gave a brief background on the company, stating they focus specifically on local government audits. She then presented the Financial Audit results for the fiscal year ending June 30, 2025. The purpose of this audit is not to detect fraud or address the financial condition of the Town, but to issue a clean, unmodified opinion, meaning there is reasonable assurance that the financial statements are materially correct. Next, she went into more detail about the General Fund and other funds of the Town, as well as the firm's process and responsibilities. Her presentation is available online for public viewing. They are not able to issue an official final report for FY2025 because they are waiting on the compliance report from the federal government. She concluded with providing an unmodified opinion on the financial statements from GFC, stating the Town is in "excellent financial condition as of June 30, 2025." She then took questions from Council. As a final recommendation, she said the Town should continue to consider long-term Capital projects and how they will be funded over the next few years, rather than solely focusing on a yearly budget.

- 2026 Commercial District Special Events: Dunleavy's Pub requesting to hold their annual New Year's Plunge on 1-1-2026 (10am-5:30pm), and St. Patrick's Day event on Saturday, 3-14-2026 (10am-5:30pm)

Bill Dunleavy's special event applications were presented, with the same requests as last year's events. The Polar Bear Plunge on January 1, 2026 will take place from 10:00 a.m. to 5:30 p.m. and the St. Patrick's event will be on March 14, 2026, during the same time frame. The Polar Bear Plunge will benefit the Special Olympics, as it has in years past. Town Administrator Joe Henderson stated Town staff would like to form an official safety plan for these types of events, and suggested also closing the east bound lane of Station 22 and 22 ½, as well as Station 22 between Middle Street and I'On Avenue. They will also be using the new Meridian safety barriers. Police Chief Glenn Meadows supports these suggestions and also recommends stopping alcohol sales at 5:00 p.m. to allow time to remove the barriers before dark. Chief Meadows took questions from Council. Fire Chief Anthony Stith also supports the plan. Mr. Henderson provided more details about the plan and requested approval from Council.

II. Proclamation: Pancreatic Cancer Awareness

Mayor O'Neil stated the Pancreatic Cancer Group requested the Town's support for World Pancreatic Cancer Day.

Motion was made by Councilmember Millimet, seconded by Mayor Pro-Tem Novak, to approve the Proclamation for Pancreatic Cancer Awareness, passed unanimously.

III. Format: Public Comments

- Kurt Polk, 1652 Thompson Ave – has an issue with the Resilience Plan and how long it lasts and that is only a nature-based plan. He would like for Council to receive it and use it as a reference manual.
- Chauncey Clark, 2119 Pettigrew St – thanked Council for the Resiliency Plan and requested they consider adding a dune at Station 22, as it is a pathway for flooding.
- Bobby Cummings, 1450 Thompson Ave – requested that Council postpone the vote on the Resiliency Plan. He is concerned with the stringency of nature-based solutions and would like to see more ways for residents to protect their property.
- Hannah Dodson, 1462 Thompson Ave – concerned about erosion control at Cove Creek and feels the Resiliency Plan prohibits property owners from protecting against erosion.
- Laura Schroeder, 2014 Station 19 St – has concerns about accepting the Resilience Plan and supports accepting it and moving on.
- Neil Garfinkle, 1001 Middle St – has issues with adopting the Resilience Plan. Feels it has more rules than the state and that the Town should use the Plan only as a consultant document, rather than endorsing it.
- Michael Scruggs, 1233 St – supports the Resilience Plan and understands it provides flexible guidance and is not code. He also thanked Council for their time doing a thankless job.
- Brian Hellman, 2714 Atlantic Ave – concerned with the language in the Resilience Plan as he feels it calls for property owners in the middle of the Island to retain floodwater. He does not want Council to adopt the Plan.

IV. Council Action Items:

A. Approval of Minutes:

- October 21, 2025 Regular Council Meeting Minutes

Motion was made by Councilmember Higgins, seconded by Mayor Pro-Tem Novak, to approve the October 21, 2025 Regular Council Meeting Minutes, passed unanimously.

- October 24, 2025, Land Use and Natural Resource Committee Meeting Minutes (Committee Members Only)

Motion was made by Councilmember Hubbard, seconded by Councilmember Visser, to approve the October 24, 2025 Land Use and Natural Resource Committee Meeting Minutes, passed 3-0.

- B. Consideration of designation of Coastal Community Foundation as the required not-for-profit entity to receive donations from SCDOT and Dominion Energy SC for palmetto tree replacement

Motion was made by Councilmember Millimet, seconded by Councilmember Visser, to approve paying the Coastal Community Foundation by matching the contributions from Dominion Energy and SC DOT, passed unanimously.

Rebecca Fanning reviewed the project, stating to replace some of the 256 palmetto trees that were removed by Dominion Energy, they have agreed to help fund a project to replant new trees in various places around the Island. Their funds will be matched by SCDOT and the SI Tree Commission (funds from tree mitigation), and they must be paid to a not-for-profit entity in order to be used. Each group will be paying \$25,000, for a total of \$75,000, to Coastal Community Foundation to facilitate the project. The Town will be in control of tree placement.

- C. Second Reading, Ordinance 2025-06, An Ordinance to Amend the Business License Ordinance of Sullivan's Island to Update the Class Schedule as Required by Act 176 of 2020 (J. Blanton)

Motion was made by Mayor Pro-Tem Novak, seconded by Councilmember Latham, approve second reading, Ordinance 2025-06, an Ordinance the Business License Ordinance of Sullivan's Island to update the class schedule as required by Act 176 of 2020, passed unanimously.

Jason Blanton stated this changes the classifications of different businesses and it has to be approved every odd year. The codes are determined by the Municipal Association and is a mandatory action item for municipalities.

- D. Acceptance of the Resilience and Sea Level Rise Adaptation Plan document (R. Fanning)

Motion was made by Councilmember Hubbard, seconded by Councilmember Latham, to formally receive the final Resilience and Sea Level Rise Adaptation Plan dated November 18, 2025 prepared by Weston & Sampson, Elko Coastal Consulting Ince, and McCormick Taylor as completion of their contracted work, and that the report be entered into the record for reference. This motion does not adopt or endorse any recommendations contained in the report as policy, it simply acknowledges receipt and closes out the consultant's engagement on November 18, 2025, passed unanimously.

Councilmember Latham gave her support for the receipt of the Plan and reiterated that the intent was never to adopt and formalize every suggestion in the Plan. Council sought options from specialists to help understand the best ways to combat climate change for the Island as a whole. She understands people's concerns for protecting their personal property and asks in turn for understanding that Council and staff have to consider the Island as a whole when making decisions.

Councilmember Visser gave his support and likened it to the Town's Comprehensive Plan, in that it gives the community and Council license to have these discussions. Also, like the Comprehensive Plan, not everything in it will become a reality. Councilmember Millimet agreed with this sentiment and cited pocket parks as a suggestion from the Comprehensive Plan that was discarded because the public did not agree with them.

Mayor Pro-Tem Novak clarified that the motion is to receive the document, close out the contract, and reserve any future policy decisions for discussion at future Council meetings. Mayor O'Neil agreed with all of the above.

E. Consideration of 2026 Special Event Permits in the commercial district

Motion was made by Councilmember Latham, seconded by Councilmember Higgins to accept the 2026 Special Event Permits plan as presented, passed unanimously.

Mayor O'Neil stated his appreciation for having the opportunity to review the two at the same time.

V. Reports and Communication:

A. Mayor's Report: Thanked Council for the last four years of hard work and productivity.

B. November Correspondence:

- **Kiawah Conservancy** – Thank you letter to the Town for sponsorship to Beneath the Oaks
- **Julie States** – Email requesting additional trash bins at beach paths for pet waste to keep beaches clean
- **Tim & Melissa Kelly, 1456 Thompson Ave** – Requesting the Resiliency plan to look at the needs of residents on the marsh
- **Bobby Cummings, 1450 Thompson Ave** – Asking to postpone a vote for the Resiliency Plan
- **Kurt Polk, 1652 Thompson Ave** – Does not believe that the Resiliency Plan needs to be approved
- **Dunleavy's Pub** – Requesting the closure of Station 22.5 for January 1st and March 14th for annual Polar Bear Swim and St. Patrick's Day celebration
- **Hannah Dodson, 1462 Thompson Ave** – Thanks to Town Staff for update regarding Cove Creek dredging
- **Steven Kerr, 1424 Thompson Ave** – Thanks to Town Staff for update regarding Cove Creek dredging

C. Administrator's Report:

Project Updates:

- **Stormwater Management:** Seamon Whiteside provided an update to staff, which is also available on the Town website. The website will also soon feature an interactive map showing various stormwater projects around the Island. Construction will continue at Station 28 ½ and Gulf Stream Construction will also begin work at Station 31 this week. Traffic stops and detours are to be expected between Stations 27-32.

Maintenance construction at Station 19 will be halted for now due to the discovery of multiple failing pipes, which would create sinkholes if cleaning continued. Work will continue as planned at Stations 18 and 18 ½.

- **Budget:** Work on the FY2027 budget has begun. The first step will be getting equipment requests from Department Heads and then move onto working with the Finance Committee.

Personnel anniversaries:

- Frank Cornely, 2 years – Municipal Judge
- JD Mann, 2 years – Maintenance Department
- Sam Stith, 6 years – Maintenance Department
- Stephen Poole, 13 years – Fire Department
- Chris Wallace, 26 years – Police Department

Special Events:

- The Lovello Ride – Saturday, November 1, 2025.
- LENS Foundation Oyster and Pig Roast – November 15, 2025
- Christmas Tree Lighting – Friday, December 5, 2025

There have been two presentation requests for the December Town Council meeting. The first is from Eric Adams, Director of Charleston County Public Works, to present the Transportation Sales Tax Program. He will also be asking our input about how we can better benefit from the Greenbelt Program. The second is from Ross Nelson from Long [Leaf] Environmental Engineering, to present an overview of dredging activity, including its process and costs. He has spearheaded the Toler's Cove Dredging projects in the past few years.

Councilmember Latham stated resident Pat Votava has secured additional federal funding for the Stormwater management projects. Mr. Henderson explained this is a program from Senator Lindsey Graham's office where municipalities can request additional funds for local projects.

- D. Attorney's Report: Town Attorney John Linton – nothing to report
- E. Boards and Commissions Report:
 - a. Planning Commission – Nothing to Report
 - b. Board of Zoning Appeals – Nothing to Report
 - c. Design Review Board – Nothing to Report
 - d. Tree Commission – Nothing to Report

VI. Committee Reports – Discussion Items:

- A. Finance Committee – Chair Millimet stated they will begin looking at the FY2027 Budget at the next meeting.
- B. Public Facilities Committee – The next meeting is Thursday, November 20, 2025 at 10:00 a.m.
- C. Land Use and Natural Resources Committee – Rebecca Fanning stated we have been able to secure the correct bracing for the relocated Palmetto trees at Poe Park.
- D. Administration Committee – Nothing to Report
- E. Water & Sewer Committee – Manager Greg Gress stated there are no project updates but reminded residents to check with Mary Poole to verify their current contact information. The next meeting will be on Thursday, December 11, 2026 at 9:15 a.m.
- F. Public Safety Committee –
 - Fire Chief Anthony stated the Stith Park and Station lighting and fireworks will be on Friday, December 5, 2025, starting at 5:00 p.m.Police Chief Glenn Meadows reported five coyotes have been caught in traps. He also reported BSO Officer Farmer and Officer Hernandez attended pizza day at Veritas Classical School.
- G. Ad Hoc Committee for Noise Reduction -
- H. Recreation Committee – The Committee is waiting on engineering plans/suggestions for renovations at Stith Park. Tot Lot renovations are scheduled to start in January 2026.

VII. Executive Session

Motion was made by Councilmember Higgins, seconded by Councilmember Latham, to go into Executive Session at 7:43 p.m., passed unanimously.

Items Discussed:

1. **Legal Advice:** Legal advice regarding Applegate v. TOSI (Attorney B. Hair)
2. **Legal Advice:** Consideration of increasing payments for Sullivan's Island Public Defender referral cases (Attorney J. Linton)
3. **Personnel:** Discussion of personnel evaluations (J. Henderson)

Motion was made by Councilmember Higgins, seconded by Councilmember Latham to return from Executive Session at 8:53 p.m., passed unanimously.

There were no votes taken or motions made during Executive Session.

VIII. Upon Returning to Open Session, Council may take action on items discussed during Executive Session

Motion was made by Mayor Pro-Tem Novak, seconded by Councilmember Millimet, to approve Town employee merit increase program, as envisioned in accordance with §3.2 of the Town's employment handbook, approved back in 2023, to occur as the Town's budget permits, passed unanimously.

IX. Adjournment

Motion was made by Councilmember Latham, seconded by Councilmember Higgins, to adjourn the meeting at 8:55 p.m., passed unanimously.

Respectfully submitted,



Bridget Welch