



**Town of Sullivan's Island, South Carolina
Town Council Meeting Minutes
Tuesday, December 16, 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

Melanie Burkhold, Councilmember
Laura Schroeder, Councilmember

Staff members present were Jason Blanton, Nehemiah Clarke, Judge Frank Cornely, Charles Drayton, Rebecca Fanning, Greg Gress, Assistant Fire Chief Amanda Hawver, Town Administrator Joe Henderson, Fire Chief Anthony Stith, Town Lawyer Anthony Stith, Jr., 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 fifty (50) 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. Oath of Office:

- Mayor – Patrick O'Neil
- Council Member – Justin Novak
- Council Member – Melanie Burkhold
- Council Member – Laura Schroeder

Judge Frank Cornely administered the Oath of Office to the re-elected and new Councilmembers for four-year terms, ending in 2029.

II. Resolutions:

- Resolution of Appreciation for Scott Millimet

The resolution was read aloud by Mayor O'Neil. Mr. Millimet thanked Council, staff, and residents.

Motion was made by Mayor Pro-Tem Novak, seconded by Councilmember Hubbard, to approve the resolution of appreciation for Scott Millimet, passed unanimously.

- Resolution of Appreciation for Gary Visser

Mr. Visser was unable to attend the meeting. Mayor O'Neil read the resolution aloud.

Motion was made by Mayor Pro-Tem Novak, seconded by Councilmember Latham, to approve the resolution of appreciation for Gary Visser, passed unanimously.

Councilmember Latham thanked Mr. Visser and Mr. Millimet for their service, specifically Mr. Millimet for his fiscal management of the Island, and Mr. Visser for his commitment to preserving the history and character of the Island. She also thanked Councilmember Higgins for his work on the Tot Lot, Councilmember Hubbard for cleaning up Old Town Hall and Battery Thompson, and Mayor Pro-Tem Novak for his water and sewer contributions, specifically regarding the contract negotiations with Charleston Water System. She also thanked Mayor O'Neil and Town Administrator Joe Henderson and mentioned the accomplishments of the Administrative Committee and the Council as a whole over the past few years.

III. Presentations:

- Dredging process and overview presentation (Ross Nelson)

Ross Nelson from Westervelt Ecological Services presented information about the possibility of dredging Cove Creek. He has worked closely with Toler's Cove and their dredging projects in the past and offered his expert opinion from his work over the past 25 years. He reviewed the process that is required to get a permit for dredging, as well as disposal of the dredged material. He stated the process typically takes anywhere from 18-24 months, and includes first doing a sediment testing study, and involves the Army Corps of Engineers, the SC Bureau of Coastal Management (BCM), the Department of Natural Resources, the Fish and Wildlife Service, potentially the State Historic Preservation Office, the National Marine Fishery Service, and the Environmental Protection Agency. There will also be a public comment portion at an Open House at some point during the planning process. Disposal of the dredge material is the biggest issue of a project and also involves multiple agencies and must adhere to many different regulations. The project also requires regular maintenance in the years following to maintain the depth. Mr. Nelson then took questions from Council and audience members.

IV. Format: Public Comments

- Barbara Spell, 1702 Atlantic Ave – commented on transparency and the concern of not being heard as a resident. She also requested the Town review the FOIA policies with lawyers to confirm they fully align with the states.

V. Council Action Items:

A. Approval of Minutes:

- November 18, 2025 Regular Council Meeting Minutes

Motion was made by Mayor Pro-Tem Novak, seconded by Councilmember Higgins, to approve the November 18, 2025 Regular Council Meeting Minutes, passed unanimously, with Councilmember Schroeder abstaining.

- B. Third Reading and Ratification, 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 Councilmember Latham, seconded by Councilmember Higgins, approve third reading and ratification, 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, with Councilmember Schroeder abstaining.

Mayor O’Neil stated it is a requirement of all municipalities to approve the changes to the business license ordinances every other year.

- C. Discussion and Assignment of Mayor Pro-Tempore

Motion was made by Mayor O’Neil, seconded by Councilmember Latham, to appoint Justin Novak to serve as Mayor Pro-Tem, passed unanimously, with Mayor Pro-Tem Novak abstaining.

- D. Discussion and Assignment of Council Committee Positions

Motion was made by Mayor Pro-Tem Novak, seconded by Councilmember Hubbard, to assign the Council Committees as follows; Administration Committee: Laura Schroeder (Chair), members Justin Novak, Jody Latham; Land Use and Natural Resources Committee: Ned Higgins (Chair), members Carl Hubbard, Pat O’Neil; Public Facilities Committee: Carl Hubbard (Chair), members Ned Higgins, Laura Schroeder; Public Safety Committee: Patrick O’Neil (Chair), members Carl Hubbard, Laura Schroeder; Recreation Committee: Melanie Burkhold (Chair), members Ned Higgins, Justin Novak; Water & Sewer Committee: Justin Novak (Chair), members Melanie Burkhold, Jody Latham; Finance Committee: Jody Latham (Chair), Pat O’Neil (Vice-Chair), members Ned Higgins, Carl Hubbard, Justin Novak, Melanie Burkhold, Laura Schroeder, passed unanimously.

- E. Consideration of the Civility Pledge for Council

Motion was made by Councilmember Schroeder, seconded by Councilmember Latham, to adopt the Civility Pledge of Council, passed unanimously.

Mayor O’Neil stated this pledge was introduced by the Municipal Association of South Carolina (MASC) a few years ago as a pledge of civility and how business is conducted during meetings. He then read the pledge. Mayor Pro-Tem Novak voiced his support and appreciation for the pledge.

I. Reports and Communication:

- A. Mayor’s Report: nothing to report

B. November Correspondence:

- Bill & Pam Rayburn, 1721 Atlantic Ave – Letter addressing questions regarding the Town’s budget and long-term plans
- Jon & Eike Gunderson, 3113 Marshall Blvd – Email with concerns regarding the Station 32 beach access being closed and frequent erosion
- Kimberly Brown, 2118 Pettigrew St – Email regarding exterior changes at Refuel gas station

C. Administrator’s Report:

Project Updates:

- SCIIP Stormwater Management: Jasper has been closed for the past two weeks and will be reopening this Friday, December 19, 2025. New asphalt has been put in over the areas where the pipes were installed.

Personnel anniversaries:

- Monty Anders, 3 years – Police Department
- Joe McMullen, 5 years – Police Department
- Curt Gibbons, 23 years – Fire Department

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 – Charles Drayton presented an application from a property owner that is asking to remove two shared trees with the Town, meaning the tree trunks are on both private property and land owned by the Town, making them public trees. The applicant has requested to remove a pecan and Chinese privet tree as part of their renovations to the old movie theater property. The trees are not large enough to go before the Tree Commission, but he asked Council if they have any questions about mitigation or opposition to staff approving the removals. The pecan tree will be replaced on private property. Chief Stith mentioned they also may have to move the historic sign that is currently there. Council did not have any objections.

VI. Committee Reports – Discussion Items:

- A. Finance Committee – Jason Blanton provided the report for dog tag sales in 2025, stating the Town sold about 3,000 tags, with 2,600 of them being to non-residents. He also provided some updates on the November budget.
- B. Public Facilities Committee – The next meeting is Thursday, December 18, 2025 at 10:00 a.m.
- C. Land Use and Natural Resources Committee – nothing to report
- D. Administration Committee – Residents are reminded to sign up for the Town newsletter.

- E. Water & Sewer Committee – The next meeting will be held on Thursday, January 22, 2026 at 9:15 a.m.
- F. Public Safety Committee –
 - Fire Chief Anthony stated the station lighting went well, although the fireworks were canceled due to weather. Mayor Pro-Tem Novak thanked Mr. Henderson and the Chiefs for adjusting to the weather, as well as successfully rolling over the contract for the fireworks.
 - Police Chief Glenn Meadows stated they collected 308 bikes for the fifth annual bike drive.
- G. Recreation Committee – Tot lot renovations will begin in January 2026.

Councilmember Schroeder asked how correspondence is responded to. Mayor O’Neil answered all correspondence is sent to all of Council and anyone is free to respond to it.

VII. Executive Session

Motion was made by Councilmember Higgins, seconded by Councilmember Hubbard, to go into Executive Session at 7:12 p.m., passed unanimously.

Items Discussed:

1. **Personnel:** Annual performance evaluation of Town Administrator

Motion was made by Mayor Pro-Tem Novak, seconded by Councilmember Higgins to return from Executive Session at 7:29 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 Councilmember Latham, seconded by Councilmember Hubbard, to accept the completion of the probationary period for Town Administrator Joe Henderson, noting that our opinion and the opinion of those we spoke to that he substantially exceeded expectations and that he continue on in the role and we look forward to seeing his further growth, passed unanimously.

IX. Adjournment

Motion was made by Councilmember Higgins, seconded by Councilmember Latham, to adjourn the meeting at 7:30 p.m., passed unanimously.

Respectfully submitted,



Bridget Welch