



**Town of Sullivan's Island, South Carolina
Town Council Meeting Minutes
Tuesday, August 18, 2026, 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
Melanie Burkhold, Councilmember
Ned Higgins, Councilmember
Carl Hubbard, Councilmember
Jody Latham, Councilmember
Laura Schroeder, Councilmember

Staff members present were Charles Drayton, Rebecca Fanning, Assistant Fire Chief Amanda Hawver, Town Administrator Joe Henderson, Police Chief Glenn Meadows, Fire Chief Anthony Stith, Bridget Welch, Andy Williams, and Max Wurthmann.

I. 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 eight (8) 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 or prayer.

II. Presentation:

A. Special Event Permit – Charleston Pro Bono / Art on the Beach (Alissa Lietzow)

Cyril Langston from Charleston Pro Bono reviewed this year's application for Art on the Beach, an annual event to benefit Charleston Pro Bono Legal Services, a non-profit that provides free civil legal services to hundreds of low-income families and individuals in our community. Art on the Beach is a self-guided tour of homes on the Island that features curated art as well as food from catering chefs. This year will be the 27th year and will be on Sunday, November 8 from 11:00 a.m.-2:00 p.m. There will also be a free community market, which they've had the past five years. Tickets will go on sale for Sullivan's Island residents Friday, August 21, 2026 from 10:00 a.m.-12:00 p.m. There is a limit of 400 tickets and golf-cart shuttles will be provided from Sunrise Presbyterian Church. She then took questions from Council.

Public Comment:

- Ralph Byers, resident – stated his driveway has been finished and discussed the variances that have been applied for at the “Brownell Lots” on top of bunkers. He feels the homes proposed would be a detriment to neighboring properties.
- Barabara Spell, resident – discussed Old Town Hall and the 2012 Creech and Associates report on the building, cited flooding, structural issues and mold that were described in the report. She would like to spend money on infrastructure and not the Old Town Hall.
- Hannah Dodson, resident – requested Council approve her permit that was submitted to put in erosion control for her property, which she said is falling into the marsh.

III. Council Action Items:

A. Approval of Minutes:

- July 21, 2026, Regular Council meeting minutes

Motion was made by Councilmember Schroeder, seconded by Councilmember Burkhold, to approve the July 21, 2026 Regular Council Meeting Minutes, passed 6-0, with Councilmember Hubbard abstaining.

B. Consideration of Old Town Hall MOU (LUNR recommendation) (C. Drayton)

Director of Planning and Zoning Charles Drayton gave background on the American College of Building Arts and the research they are proposing. They would study the building and produce an architectural description, a history, and a condition assessment of the property at no cost to the Town. He took questions from Council. Town Administrator Joe Henderson said the Town would cover everything with the Town attorneys to ensure the school has the proper paperwork and insurance needed when having an activity on Town property.

Mayor O’Neil asked that highest and best uses in the MOU be replaced with potential uses of the building, and Councilmember Burkhold asked that a conflict-of-interest disclosure form be included and requested that any grant applications using the work product from the school be brought to the Town Council first.

C. Resolution approving the Building and Zoning fees schedule (C. Drayton)

Motion was made by Councilmember Schroeder, seconded by Councilmember Burkhold, that in this resolution if approved, that we’re reflective of the reason why we’ve increased these fees, that it’s reflective of the time it takes for the staff to review, and also the fact these fees have not changed in the last seven years, passed unanimously.

Mr. Drayton stated the last time fees had been changed was 2019. In addition to some fees being updated, some fees are being added to applications that previously did not have one. He reviewed all of the proposed changes and took questions from Council. These are available to view in the Council packet online. Some of the increases are to match surrounding municipalities, while some are to better reflect the amount of staff time required per application. It was requested to add the explanations to the fee chart.

- D. Recommend Ordinance Changes of Section 21-13 fill on lots, send to Planning Commission (C. Drayton)

Mr. Drayton stated there have been Board of Zoning Appeals (BZA) applications in the past year requesting to add more than a foot of fill on properties, all located on the marsh side of the Island, due to flooding concerns. The current ordinance only allows for a foot of fill, which does not align with the Resilience Plan recommendations. He is requesting Council recommend the Planning Commission review the current ordinance for potential changes. He took questions from Council. Comments were made about making sure to include stormwater considerations.

Motion was made by Mayor Pro-Tem Novak, seconded by Councilmember Latham, to recommend sending (the staff recommendation) to Planning Commission to review potential ordinance changes of section 21-13, regarding fill on lots, passed unanimously.

- E. First Reading, by Title Only, Ordinance 2026-05, An Ordinance to Amend the Town of Sullivan's Island Code of Ordinances by adding Section 132. 33 regarding the regulation of recreational fishing from shore

Director of Resilience and Natural Resource Management Rebecca Fanning reviewed the timeline and motivation for the recent ordinance discussions regarding recreational fishing. Our proposed ordinance language was similar to the one passed by Isle of Palms last fall, but there were some concerns brought up from the South Carolina Department of Natural Resources (SC DNR). Blaik Keppler from SCDNR was present at the meeting and stated the authority to regulate fishing activity rests with the State and is authorized to the Department of Natural Resources, citing the State Constitution. She said section A of our proposed ordinance is in conflict with State statute but section B is not. Police Chief Glenn Meadows feels section B is far too broad and would like it to specify with various examples. Ms. Keppler took questions from Council and they decided to table the reading until further notice. Mayor O'Neil jokingly summarized the status of the proposed ordinance: "Sharks 1, Council 0."

IV. Reports and Communication:

- A. Mayor's Report: Major General Mike Regner, Island resident, has been inducted into the Hall of Honor.
- Reminder to avoid scams. Town Administrator Joe Henderson stated the Town will be implementing a dual-factor authentication system to sign into emails to help prevent future issues. Chief Meadows stated the department, in conjunction with LENS, will host a presentation on how to recognize fraud and scams. It will be held on Thursday, September 3 from 6:00-7:30 p.m. at Sunrise Presbyterian Church and is free to the public.
 - Betty Lancer, Island resident, turned 102 on August 16.
- B. May Correspondence:
- Sue Prenner, resident – email expressing appreciation to the Fire Department
 - Susan Middaugh, resident – Letter regarding Town Hall meetings

C. Administrator's Report: Joe Henderson reviewed capital projects:

- a. The pump house rehabilitation at Station 18 and Atlantic Ave is complete.
- b. The SCIIP grant work at Stations 28 and 31 will be tested over the next two weeks for functionality and to ensure there is no conflict with utility points.
- c. The outfall improvement project at Station 9 ½ and Osceola is complete.

Personnel anniversaries:

- Lisa Lawson, 3 years – Police Department
- Micheal Mitchum, 2 years – Police Department
- Chief Glenn Meadows, 5 years – Police Department
- Gary Erickson, 10 year – Police Department
- Assistant Chief Amanda Hawver, 23 years – Fire Department

New hire:

- Joe Garavelli, 7/28/2026 – Stormwater Department

Special Events:

- Coffee with a Councilmember: Friday, August 21, 2026 from 8:00-9:00 a.m.

D. Attorney's Report: nothing to report

E. Boards and Commissions Report:

- Planning Commission – nothing to report
- Board of Zoning Appeals – nothing to report
- Design Review Board – nothing to report
- Tree Commission – nothing to report

V. Committee Reports – Discussion Items:

- A. Finance Committee –Comptroller Jason Blanton provided the budget report for July and reviewed current finances. Chair Latham stated she is working on more information and potentially doing quarterly finance reviews at Council Workshops.
- B. Public Facilities Committee – The next meeting will be Friday, September 3 at 10:00 a.m. The agenda is available online.
- C. Land Use and Natural Resources Committee – Information about erosion control structures will be presented at the September 6, 2026 Council Workshop.
- D. Administration Committee – Meetings will be on every second Wednesday of the month at 9:15 a.m. If there are no agenda items, the meeting will be cancelled. The next meeting will be discussing community engagement and there will be presentations from the Building, Zoning, and Natural Resource Departments.
- E. Water & Sewer Committee –The next meeting will be Thursday, August 27, 2026 at 9:15 a.m. and there will be a presentation on the Cost Recovery Policy by Raftelis. The Town will host a Lowcountry District Water Environment Association meeting on Wednesday, September 9, 2026 at the Water & Sewer plant.

F. Public Safety Committee –

- Police Chief Meadows provided an overview of the FLOCK camera system that was installed recently. This information and a list of FAQs are available in the Council packet online.
- Chair O’Neil stated they received 12 proposals for an independent audit of the Fire Department and was narrowed down by the Committee. The remaining proposals will be presented at Executive Session tonight for Council to make a decision.
- Chief Meadows also reviewed ticket and traffic activity at Station 22 and Pettigrew from the past weekend. He stated there have been no incidents at the Palmetto Log Fort and there has been one coyote sighting.

G. Recreation Committee – Chair Burkhold reviewed the agenda items and stated the next meeting will be on Friday, September 17, 2026 at 10:00 a.m.

VI. Executive Session

Motion was made by Councilmember Schroeder, seconded by Councilmember Burkhold, to go into Executive Session at 7:41 p.m., passed unanimously.

Items Discussed:

1. **Personnel** – Council to consider personnel matter (Attorney J.H. Wood)
2. **Personnel** – Boards and Commission seats: Review of applications submitted for seats on the various Boards and Commissions
3. **Contractual** – Discussion regarding selection of consultants for outside review of Fire Department procedures
4. **Legal** – Update and legal advice on potential settlement regarding Todd Aaron and Jessica Aaron, High Tide Productions, LLC, and Mark Reinhardt Trust vs. TOSI 2026-CP-10-01903 (Attorney J. Linton)
5. **Legal** – Legal advice concerning landscape wall applications for 1462 Thompson Avenue and 1502 Thompson Avenue

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

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

Motion was made by Councilmember Schroeder, seconded by Councilmember Higgins, to come out of Executive Session at 8:53 p.m., passed unanimously.

Motion was made by Mayor Pro-Tem Novak, seconded by Councilmember Higgins, to appoint the following applicants to the Planning Commission: Gallia Coles, Hannah Dodson, Gary Visser, and Angie Polk to the three-year terms that are vacant and expire in 2029, passed 6-1, with Councilmember Burkhold opposing.

Councilmember Burkhold stated she is opposed to the appointment of Gary Visser, citing a need for a clearer balance between resiliency goals and property rights.

Motion was made by Mayor Pro-Tem Novak, seconded by Councilmember Latham, to appoint Hayley Santos to the three-year term for the Tree Commission, expiring in 2029 and to readvertise the one-year term of Mark Miller's unexpired term expiring in 2027, passed unanimously.

Motion was made by Councilmember Schroeder, seconded by Councilmember Burkhold, to move forward with contractual discussions with a company called Missions CIT for Fire Department procedure audit review, passed unanimously.

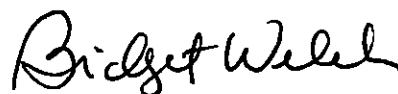
Motion was made by Mayor Pro-Tem Novak, seconded by Councilmember Latham, to adopt the settlement agreement that has been negotiated in the pending matter of Todd Aaron and Jessica Aaron, High Tide Productions, LLC, and Mark Reinhardt Trust vs. TOSI 2026-CP-10-01903, passed unanimously.

Attorney John Linton provided background on the case, which involves an appeal to the Board of Zoning Appeals and six lots on the 2200 block of Atlantic Avenue, that are state grant properties that go to the low water mark. The substance of the agreement is that this is an opportunity for a re-zoning. The proposed re-zoning is that the location of the RC-1 line would be essentially changed to a line fifty feet landward of what is currently now the primary dune. A professional surveyor has provided an exhibit of that line and that would establish the new RS/RC new zoning line boundary if it were adopted by ordinance. The second zoning revision would be to establish a new overlay district for the six state-owned lots for the district to have specific cutting restrictions on the seaward side, the RC-1 area. These recommendations would go first to the Planning Commission and then adopted by Council with three readings if approved. If the settlement is finalized this way, the property owners are confirming by easement that everyone, including the public, has a right to use the beach.

VIII. Adjournment

Motion was made by Councilmember Latham, seconded by Councilmember Burkhold, to adjourn the meeting at 9:02 p.m., passed unanimously.

Respectfully submitted,



Bridget Welch