

Pickens County Council Work Session

July 21, 2025

6:30 p.m.

County Council met in a work session, in the Main Conference Room of the County Administration Facility, with Councilman Alex Saitta presiding. Final agendas, bearing date, time, and location of meeting were emailed to members of council and local news media on July 17, 2025.

Council Members in Attendance:

Alex Saitta, Chairman

Chris Lollis, Vice Chairman

Dale Holloway, Vice Chairman Pro-Tem

Claiborne Linvill

Scott Lang

Chris Bowers

Staff in Attendance:

Ken Roper, County Administrator

Meagan Nations, Clerk to Council

Kim Wunder, Contract County Attorney

Ralph Guarino, Assistant Administrator

Allison Fowler, Assistant Administrator

Jessica Varney, Collaboration Manager

Samantha Greer, Human Resources Director

WELCOME AND CALL TO ORDER:

Chairman Alex Saitta called the work session of July 21, 2025, to order and welcomed those in attendance. Councilor Claiborne Linvill led the Invocation and Pledge of Allegiance.

COUNCIL GOALS

Chairman Saitta asked each member of Council, and the Administrator, to please state their top three goals for Pickens County.

The goals discussed by each member of Council included:

- Chairman Saitta:
 - ❖ Codes Ordinance re: trash, junk, abandoned vehicles, pools, etc.
 - ❖ Procurement Policy
 - ❖ UDSO (Driveways, RVs)
- Vice Chairman Lollis:
 - ❖ Bidding and Procurement Process
 - ❖ Litter
 - ❖ County Farm Rd. Property
- Councilman Holloway:
 - ❖ Develop simple method of price discovery
 - ❖ Culture shift in Council and Employees
 - ❖ On-call list for smaller construction projects
- Councilman Bowers:
 - ❖ Hwy 8 Corridor in Easley Overlay

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- ❖ County Farm Rd. Property
- ❖ Hinkle Building
- ❖ Emergency Services Facility Operations
- Councilor Linvill:
 - ❖ UDSO Impact Fees/Affordable Housing)
 - ❖ CAT Bus Route
 - ❖ Pickens County Resiliency Corps
- Councilman Lang:
 - ❖ PC PAC
 - ❖ Review of rules for Boards and Commissions
 - ❖ County Employee Handbook

REVIEW OF SOUTH CAROLINA OPIOID RECOVERY FUND APPLICATION

Jessica Varney, Collaboration Manager, presented an Opioid Recovery Fund Application to Council from the Legacy Home of Recovery in Pickens County, requesting \$209,077. She advised that the guaranteed political sub-fund window is now open, and the County's application will include two previously approved recovery homes for women, as well as a proposed new recovery home for men in Six Mile. She went into detail on the request.

- After some discussion, Chairman Alex Saitta made a motion to approve as presented. Motion was seconded by Councilman Bowers. The motion carried unanimously (6-0).

DISCUSSION ON PAID FAMILY LEAVE

Amity Buckner, Pickens County First Steps, gave a presentation to Council on Paid Family Leave.

Councilor Linvill presented a proposal to implement paid parental leave for Pickens County employees. She shared that the initiative stemmed from her focus on Childcare and Workforce support, which formed the Pickens County Childcare Workforce Task Force. She stated that experts identified paid parental leave as the most impactful policy a local government can implement. Councilor Linvill noted that state employees and public-school teachers in SC already received paid parental leave. She proposed that Pickens County adopt the state's paid parental leave policy, which is 6 weeks of paid leave for the primary caregiver, 2 weeks for the secondary/support parent and 2 weeks of family leave for foster care placement. Currently, Pickens County employees must use accrued sick and vacation time following childbirth or adoption and often rely on unpaid leave under FMLA once that is exhausted. She went into discussion on research from what other South Carolina counties do.

- Councilor Claiborne Linvill made a motion to adopt the state plan for paid parental leave for Pickens County. Motion was seconded by Chairman Alex Saitta. Discussion between Council and staff included, but was not limited to:
 - Short Term Disability
 - # of employees on FMLA leave last year (though not all for parental reasons)
 - Average cost per employee
 - Timing of proposal after budget
 - COLA and Step Increase for Employees for FY26 Budget
- Chairman Alex Saitta made a substitute motion to combine sick pay and vacation pay and call it PTO. Motion was seconded by Councilman Chris Bowers.

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- After more discussion, Chairman Saitta made a substitute motion to direct Administration/Human Resources to work on Employee Handbook and include new policy on PTO. Motion was seconded by Councilman Chris Lollis and carried unanimously (6-0).
- Councilor Claiborne Linvill made a motion to adopt the state plan for paid parental leave for Pickens County. The motion failed due to no second.

EXECUTIVE SESSION: S.C. Code of Laws, Section 30-4-70(a):

Chairman Alex Saitta called for a motion to convene into Executive Session as defined by S.C. Code of Laws, Section 30-4-70(a). Chairman Saitta further stated that each issue would be discussed as the Law provides.

Personnel: Section 30-4-70(a)(1)

- **County Attorney**
 - Motion was made by Chairman Alex Saitta and seconded by Councilman Chris Bowers. The motion was carried out unanimously (6-0).

ACTION AS NEEDED VIA EXECUTIVE SESSION ITEMS:

Chairman Alex Saitta called the Public Session back to Order and advised the following:

Personnel: Section 30-4-70(a)(1)

- **County Attorney** – No Action Taken

ADJOURN:

Hearing no further Council business, Councilor Claiborne Linvill made a motion to adjourn. The motion was seconded by Chairman Alex Saitta and carried unanimously (6-0). Pickens County Council stood adjourned at 8:24 p.m.

Respectively Submitted:

Approved:

Meagan Nations, Clerk to Council

Alex Saitta, Chairman of County Council