

Regular Pickens County Council Meeting
January 5, 2026
6:30 PM

County Council met in regular session, in the Auditorium of the County Administration Facility, with Chairman Alex Saitta presiding. Final agendas, bearing date, time, and location of meeting were emailed to members of council and local news media on December 31, 2025. The agenda was posted in the lobby of the County Administration Building and on the County website the required length of time.

Council Members in Attendance:

Alex Saitta, Chairman
Chris Lollis, Vice Chairman
Dale Holloway, Vice Chairman Pro-Tem
C. Claiborne Linvill
Scott Lang
Chris Bowers

Staff in Attendance:

Ken Roper, County Administrator
Meagan Nations, Clerk to Council
Destini Pratt, County Attorney

WELCOME AND CALL TO ORDER:

Chairman Alex Saitta called the January 5, 2026, meeting to order and welcomed everyone in attendance. Councilor Claiborne Linvill led the invocation, and U.S. Marine Veteran, Mr. Brian Page, led the Pledge of Allegiance.

PUBLIC FORUM:

Chairman Alex Saitta opened the Public Forum and requested the Clerk to call upon the citizens signed up to speak.

1. Ila Regan Murray: Ms. Murray addressed Council regarding Girl Scouts.
2. Reba Kruse: Ms. Kruse addressed Council regarding the Library Board.
3. Robert Moore: Mr. Moore addressed Council regarding the Moratorium.
4. Josh Medlin: Mr. Medlin addressed Council regarding taxes and Veteran Affairs.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES:

Chairman Alex Saitta called for a motion to approve the following amended minutes as presented:

- December 1, 2025 – Council Meeting
- December 15, 2025 – Council Work Session
- Motion was made by Chairman Alex Saitta and seconded by Councilman Chris Bowers to approve the minutes. Motion carried unanimously (6-0).

ADMINISTRATORS REPORT:

County Administrator Ken Roper gave updates to Council on the following items:

- A) Recycle Centers Update: Pickens Proud Initiative – creating a cleaner tomorrow for Pickens County

B) WSPA News 7 SCORF Community Paramedic – Mr. Lane Wood

A) Pickens County Emergency Medical Services (EMS) has launched a new Community Paramedic program aimed at supporting individuals recovering from substance and opioid use disorders.

C) Pickens in 60 – new initiative from Communications and Engagement Department

Council members also asked questions regarding:

- Recycling Center Traffic Flow Concerns
- Garvin Street Building
- New HVAC System installed at Easley Library
- Car Taxes Question – *in regard to a Public Forum Speaker*

COMMITTEE REPORTS: None

COUNCIL CORRESPONDENCE

Chairman Alex Saitta announced the following:

- The council will hold a Council Work Session on Tuesday, January 20, 2026, at 6:30 p.m. in the Main Conference Room of the Administration Building.
- The next Council meeting will be on Monday, February 2, 2026, at 6:30 p.m. in the Council Chambers of Administration Building.

Chairman Alex Saitta called for other council correspondence. Seeing no other correspondence, Chairman Alex Saitta announced moving to Motion Period and New Business.

MOTION PERIOD AND NEW BUSINESS:

Chairman Alex Saitta opened the floor for motion period and new business.

- **FORMATION OF THE ROADS AND BRIDGES AD HOC COMMITTEE**
 - Chairman Alex Saitta moved to establish a Roads and Bridges Ad Hoc Committee consisting of Councilman Bowers, Chairman Saitta, and Councilman Lollis. The committee will sunset in six months and will focus on evaluating resource needs, reviewing roads and bridges funding priorities, assessing the roads and bridges facility, and conducting an overall review of the Farm project. The motion was seconded by Councilman Bowers and passed unanimously (6–0).

Seeing no discussion, Chairman Saitta closed the floor.

ORDINANCES FOR FIRST READING AND/OR RESOLUTIONS:

- A) STREAMLINING BOARD AND COMMISSIONS: FIRST READING IN TITLE ONLY OF AN ORDINANCE TO COMBINE STORMWATER BOARD OF APPEALS AND ZONING BOARD OF APPEALS.
 - Chairman Alex Saitta made a motion to constitute first reading in title only. Motion was seconded by Councilman Chris Bowers. The motion carried unanimously (6-0).
 - Councilman Dale Holloway gave an update on the Sedgewood Special Tax District, noting that the County still collects funds for street lighting, but the governing board has not met for approximately eight years and contact information on file is no longer valid. Written correspondence has been sent to re-establish communication, and an update is expected at the next meeting. Administration will provide additional information on the status, use of funds, and possible alternatives.

ORDINANCES FOR SECOND READING AND/OR PUBLIC HEARING:

- A) SECOND READING OF AN ORDINANCE NO. 675 ADOPTING A SIX-MONTH-MORATORIUM ON THE ACCEPTANCE AND PROCESSING OF PERMIT APPLICATIONS FOR RV PARKS, CAMPGROUNDS, COMMERCIAL LODGING ESTABLISHMENTS, SOLAR FARMS, AND, WITHIN THE HIGHWAY 8 CORRIDOR, MAJOR SUBDIVISIONS CONSISTING OF THREE (3) OR MORE AND MULTI-FAMILY DWELLINGS (INCLUDING TOWNHOMES, CONDOMINIUMS, APARTMENTS, DUPLEXES, AND TRIPLEXES).
 - Chairman Alex Saitta made a motion to constitute second reading of this Ordinance. Motion was seconded by Councilman Chris Lollis and carried unanimously (6-0).
- B) SECOND READING OF AN ORDINANCE NO. 677 REGARDING AMENDMENTS TO ARTICLE V OF CHAPTER 2 OF THE PICKENS COUNTY CODE OF ORDINANCES, PROCUREMENT, AND OTHER RELATED ITEMS.
 - Chairman Alex Saitta made a motion to constitute second reading of this Ordinance as presented. Motion was seconded by Councilman Scott Lang.
 - Chairman Saitta went into discussion on eight different points that Council has agreed on.
 - Mr. Guarino proposed and we agreed on is construction projects greater than \$250,000, the administration can use IDCs on projects.
 - Mr. Guarino proposed and we agreed on construction projects greater than \$250,000, the administration can use a) design-build, b) design-bid-build or c) construction manager at risk
 - Mr. Guarino had a \$25 limit on gifts.
 - Council agreed on, construction projects greater than \$500,000 that council allocates the funding AND then must give final approval before construction starts.
 - With equipment purchases Council only approves the allocation of funding, but final approval by council is not needed for approval
 - When it comes to costs of construction projects greater than, the administration first must come up with ways to determine what the project should cost by doing in-house estimates. This way we will not fly blindly into situations because we cannot trust architect pricing or the bidding process for price discovery. This is something Councilor Holloway was most concerned about.
 - Concern whether there is anything in the language that will improve the open bidding process, so we get more bids and they are more competitive? Councilor Lollis had this as a concern.

- Department purposes and P card use – in section 8. Councilor Bowers was most concerned about this.
 - The motion carried unanimously (6-0).
- C) SECOND READING OF AN ORDINANCE NO. 676 TO ESTABLISH A PICKENS COUNTY RESILIENCE COMMISSION
 - Councilor Claiborne Linvill made a motion to constitute second reading of this Ordinance. Motion was seconded by Councilman Chris Bowers.
 - Council had extensive discussion on the proposed Pickens County Resilience Commission. The purpose of the commission was described at the December Council Work Session as coordinating data, planning, and expert input related to floodplain mapping, development impacts, disaster mitigation, and long-term resiliency planning, including preparation for the County's 2027 strategic plan.
 - Several council members expressed concern about creating an additional permanent board, citing oversight and administrative burdens, and suggested that the same work could be accomplished through a staff-led working group. Others supported a formal commission to improve coordination, data sharing, and grant eligibility.
 - After more discussion, the motion failed (1-5), with Councilor Claiborne Linvill in favor.
- D) SECOND READING OF AN ORDINANCE NO. 673 TO DEVELOP A JOINTLY OWNED AND OPERATED INDUSTRIAL/BUSINESS PARK IN CONJUNCTION WITH OCONEE COUNTY, SUCH INDUSTRIAL/BUSINESS PARK TO BE GEOGRAPHICALLY LOCATED IN OCONEE COUNTY AND ESTABLISHED PURSUANT TO SECTION 4- 1-170 OF THE CODE OF LAWS OF SOUTH CAROLINA, 1976, AS AMENDED; TO PROVIDE FOR A WRITTEN AGREEMENT WITH OCONEE COUNTY TO PROVIDE FOR THE EXPENSES OF THE PARK, THE PERCENTAGE OF REVENUE APPLICATION, AND THE DISTRIBUTION OF FEES IN LIEU OF AD VALOREM TAXATION; AND OTHER MATTERS RELATED THERETO (PROJECT BROADWAY).
 - Chairman Alex Saitta made a motion to constitute second reading of this Ordinance as presented. Motion was seconded by Councilman Chris Bowers and carried unanimously (6-0).

ORDINANCES FOR THIRD READING AND/OR PUBLIC HEARING:

None

OTHER AGENDA ITEMS:

- A) OVERVIEW ON ATAX AND RECREATION FUNDING: ASSISTANT ADMINISTRATOR ALLISON FOWLER
 - Mrs. Fowler gave Council a detailed presentation on an overview of Accommodations Tax Funding and Recreation Funding.
 - Accommodations Tax Funding:
 - a. Definition
 - b. Eligible Applicants for 30% Funding and 65% Funding
 - c. Budget Template they ask of applicants

- d. Funding totals that were available, and requested, in years 2023, 2024 and 2025
- e. Application Window information and how to apply
- f. Project Recommendations
- g. Grant Reporting
- Recreation Funding
 - a. Definition
 - b. Eligible Applicants
 - c. Eligible Expenses
 - d. Funding totals that were available, and requested, in years 2023, 2024 and 2025
 - e. Application Window information and how to apply

B) STAFFING FOR NEW DISPATCH/EMERGENCY SERVICES BUILDING

- The County Administrator presented Council with the first written operational plan for the Pickens County Emergency Readiness Center (ERC), a project authorized by Council in 2024 and currently under construction with a projected May 2026 opening.
- The ERC will provide modern, centralized space for Emergency Management, EMS, and E-911 operations. The ground floor will include emergency equipment storage, logistics and staging space, and EMS offices and training areas. The second floor will house a state-of-the-art, expandable 911 dispatch center and training and administrative space. The center is designed to support current municipal partners and allow for future expansion. The plan outlines the facility layout, staffing, organizational structure, training requirements, budget considerations, implementation timeline, and operational readiness, along with equipment inventories and draft interagency agreements. To move the plan from paper to operation, staff announced the formation of a Pickens County Emergency Readiness Center Stakeholder Working Group made up of county emergency services staff, Councilman Chris Bowers, retired law enforcement and fire officials, EMS representatives, radio system experts, and current and potential municipal partners. The group will review, test, and refine the plan prior to the facility opening.
- Council was asked to review the plan, submit questions, and provide direction. Chairman Saitta indicated that a dedicated meeting will be scheduled to further review portions of the plan.

CONSENT AGENDA

None

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.

Legal: Section 30-4-70 (a)(2)

- Receipt of Legal Advice concerning request for Abandonment of Sewer Easement
- Receipt of Legal Advice regarding Intergovernmental Agreement/Public Service Commission
- MRR Briefing

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

- Personnel Matter related to the Library Board
- Motion was made by Chairman Alex Saitta and seconded by Councilman Chris Lollis. The motion was carried out unanimously (6-0), to convene in executive session for the stated purposes after a ten-minute recess.

ACTION AS NEEDED VIA EXECUTIVE SESSION ITEMS:

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

Legal: Section 30-4-70 (a)(2)

- Receipt of Legal Advice concerning request for Abandonment of Sewer Easement – **Councilman Dale Holloway made a motion for Council to authorize, by Ordinance and following Public Hearing, the execution of a quitclaim deed releasing any County interested in the sewer easement at 2803 Earls Bridge Road, based on a finding that the easement no longer serves a public purpose. Motion was seconded by Councilman Chris Bowers and carried unanimously (6-0).**
- Receipt of Legal Advice regarding Intergovernmental Agreement/Public Service Commission – **No Action Taken by Council.**
- MRR Briefing – **No Action Taken by Council.**

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

- Personnel Matter related to the Library Board – **Councilman Chris Bowers made a motion to designate the County Attorney to notify Dr. Henry Wilson, District 5 seat on Library Board, in writing that he is removed for cause pursuant to Council Organizational Rules. Motion was seconded by Councilman Chris Lollis and carried (5-0-1), with Councilor Claiborne Linvill abstained.**

ADJOURN:

Hearing no further Council business, Chairman Alex Saitta made a motion to adjourn. The motion was seconded by Councilman Chris Bowers and carried unanimously (6-0). Pickens County Council stood adjourned at 9:14 p.m.