



City Council

6:00 p.m., Tuesday, February 25, 2025

City Hall Council Chambers

1207 Palm Boulevard, Isle of Palms, SC

MINUTES

1. Call to Order

Present: Council members Bogosian, Streetman, Anderson, Ward, Hahn, Miars, Pierce (via Zoom), and Carroll, Mayor Pounds

Staff Present: Director Kerr, City Attorney McQuillin, various department heads

2. Citizens' Comments

Mayor Pat O'Neill of Sullivan's Island thanked the IOP Fire and Police departments for their recent assistance with a structure fire and help in locating a missing person. He said their assistance illustrates the importance of the mutual aid agreement between the two island. He thanked them for being a good partner.

Randy Bell's comments are attached to these minutes.

Tony Santiago spoke about the hiring process for the City Administrator. He told City Council what they should be looking for in candidates for City Administrator. He said he is concerned about paying "premium" for the City Administrator salary.

Al Clouse's comments are attached to these minutes.

Michele Boykin told City Council that she expects the process for hiring a City Administrator to be followed. She said Council members should be kind and treat each other with respect.

Laura Lovins's comments are attached to these minutes.

Suzi Wheeler's comments are attached to these minutes.

Christine Donovan's comments are attached to these minutes.

Catherine Molloy's comments are attached to these minutes.

Josh Hooser's comments are attached to these minutes.

Brian Duffy's comments are attached to these minutes.

Bev Miller's comments are attached to these minutes.

Curtis Helfrich expressed his thanks to Director Pitts and the Public Works team for all that they do to keep the island clean and free of debris. He spoke highly of Director Kerr and believes him to be a very capable candidate. He thanked City Council for their passion in taking care of the City. He encouraged them to collaborate and cooperate to find the best solution for the City.

3. Approval of previous meetings' minutes

- a. City Council Meeting – January 28, 2025
- b. Special City Council Meeting Workshop – February 11, 2025
- c. Special City Council Meeting – February 13, 2025

MOTION: Council Member Bogosian made a motion to approve, and Council Member Anderson seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

4. Old Business – Consideration of parking lot layout for the Intracoastal Waterway side of the marina parking lot

Council Member Miars reminded Council of the history of layouts for this parking lot. She said the new plan is based on square footage. She said, that while not perfect, the plan does provide the square footage the City needs along with seven dedicated, full-time trailer parking spaces, greenspace around the public dock, while maintaining necessary buffers.

Director Kerr added that “the City is gaining a little bit larger greenspace, seven dedicated full-time trailer spaces, about 15 new car spaces that are in what is currently used as the employee lot, and then it also accommodates the 15’ buffer along the southern edge of the property, which is a requirement of our City code.” He noted that the “shape and maneuverability of the trailer spaces has always been the design challenge.”

Director Kerr said he believes the restaurant is okay with this design and suggested the layout could be changed for this year and completed in a more permanent manner after the season and after the Water & Sewer Commission has completed their work in the area.

Council Member Anderson said this layout is not the vision she had for this area. She believes the City has not gained anything with this plan and that the plan does not reflect proper placement of the dumpsters. She will not support this plan. She offered some changes to the location of the ingress and egress.

Discussion ensued as to possible changes to be made to the plan to better accommodate the needs of the City. Mayor Pounds suggested this matter return to the Public Services & Facilities Committee for further discussion with the restaurant and Matt Kline. Director Kerr said a discussion with Council as a whole could be had at a future workshop.

5. New Business

a. Beach Update/report of \$25,000 emergency sandbag purchase

Director Kerr said the worst of the erosion is still concentrated in the Beachwood East area. He reported, “We made an emergency purchase of an additional 50 bags since your last allocation, and the City’s procurement ordinance requires that be reported.”

The USACE has begun delivering sand to Breach Inlet. The sandbags in that area need to be removed before the sand can be moved. He said, “We believe that we are very close to a point of transitioning from buying new bags and installing them in the Beachwood East area to actually moving the bags that are current at Breach Inlet properties and physically moving them down” to Beachwood East. He said the cost of moving the bags is a quarter of the cost of purchasing and filling new bags.

b. Approval of Financial Analyst job description

MOTION: Council Member Bogosian made a motion to approve, and Council Member Streetman seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

c. Consideration of Thomas & Hutton proposal for \$25,000 to include permit modification, construction administration, and surveying to create new drainage easements for upcoming flood mitigation work within the Wild Dunes golf course

MOTION: Council Member Streetman made a motion to approve, and Council member Miars seconded the motion.

Director Kerr said, “This is the work that you all have talked about and authorized to happen within the Wild Dunes Golf Course. Thomas & Hutton has had to modify the permit that was issued to the golf course to cover some of our work. I think they are well underway with that portion of the work, and it may already be submitted now. We also would like for them to handle construction administration work through the project with the contract as well as we have a need to create new drainage easements with the golf course. We want to be able to maintain whatever we install on the golf course going forward, and they have been agreeable to granting us drainage easements where we have improvements. So this is \$25,000 that would cover that work.”

Mayor Pounds added, “We are not paying for golf course improvements. We are paying for flood mitigation along the Waterway Boulevard path, which is a much bigger project than just what is happening on the golf course.”

Council Member Bogosian pointed out a discrepancy in the final numbers on the spreadsheet, noting they did not add up. Director Kerr said he would look into it and report back.

VOTE: A vote was taken with all in favor.

6. Boards and Commissions Report

- a. Board of Zoning Appeals – minutes attached
- b. Planning Commission – minutes attached
- c. Accommodations Tax Advisory Committee – no meeting in February
- d. Environmental Advisory Committee – minutes attached

7. Resolutions

a. Resolution 2025-03 – a resolution to authorize Front Beach Fest

MOTION: Council Member Ward made a motion to approve and waive the reading. Council Member Streetman seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

b. Resolution 2025-04 - a resolution to sponsor Lowvelo

MOTION: Council Member Miars made a motion to approve and waive the reading. Council Member Bogosian seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

8. Executive Session – to receive legal advice about parking ordinances, receive updates on all pending cases, and discuss employment matters- specifically the appointment and compensation

of the City Administrator. Upon returning to open session, Council may take action upon matters discussed in Executive Session.

MOTION: Mayor Pounds made a motion to go into Executive Session to receive legal advice protected by attorney client privilege regarding Smith vs. IOP (Case No. 2025-CP-10-00755), Ordinances 2025-01 and 2025-02, and PCI contract revisions. Council Member Hahn seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

City Council entered into Executive Session at 7:14pm.

City Council returned from Executive Session at 7:33pm. Mayor Pounds said no decisions were made.

9. Ordinances and Contract

a. Second Reading – Ordinance 2025-01

MOTION: Council Member Bogosian made a motion to approve, and Council Member Streetman seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

b. First Reading – Ordinance 2025-02

MOTION: Council Member Hahn made a motion to approve, and Council Member Streetman seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

c. Consideration of PCI agreement revision

MOTION: Council Member Bogosian made a motion to approve, and Council Member Carroll seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

10. Miscellaneous

11. Adjournment

Council Member Ward made a motion to adjourn, and Council Member Anderson seconded the motion. The meeting was adjourned at 7:34pm.

Respectfully submitted,

Nicole DeNeane
City Clerk

R. Bell citizen comments 02/25/2025

Executive session serves the purpose of maintaining confidentiality in such matters as personnel and legal advice. The agenda for February 13 in accordance with Section 30-40-70 : ***"To interview candidates for the City Administrator position. The committee may take action upon exiting the meeting."***

Discussions outside of the published agenda item **are not protected** and should be public.

Does this Council find it acceptable for any sitting mayor to act and behave as follows:

- a. holding a conversation with an interim city administrator to discuss an already "closed" application process
- b. discussing confidential candidate search information with a "disinterested/ready to retire" interim city administrator
- c. discovering sudden interest in the position and then claiming compensation was not discussed?
- d. Unilaterally scheduling a candidate interview without authority, and with complete disregard for Robert's Rules of Order. No record or vote of Council to add this candidate exist.
- e. Approaching a co-member of the Administration Committee with a proposal to **ONLY** interview the interim city administrator, and **NOT** interview any of the three (3) already scheduled external candidates This is a violation of FOIA quorum rules. Plus discussing this same proposal with additional Council Members.

How is this acceptable? City administration has "slow walked" relevant candidate information despite multiple FOIA requests. Does the public have a "right to know" candidate qualifications prior to a hijacked hiring process"? The city deserves the most qualified city administrator.

The council will likely move forward despite the embarrassment to our city.

Corroborating evidence of the many issues outlined and discussed will ultimately be public. Unfortunately, it will be too late.

Three (3) minutes is not ample time to enumerate the ethical, legal, and Code of Conduct violations reported and witnessed. Reports that a Council Member was threatened or felt threatened is more than disturbing. City employees watching a non-public executive session on an upstairs video is also disturbing. The city has an obligation by law to provide a workplace that is not hostile or threatening.

Competitive pay should be free from impropriety. Tomorrow at 11:00 we will witness a mayoral "head fake" to hold a "special session" of Council void of public comment. To be clear, the issue is not with our interim city administrator. He is an honorable person. The hiring process has been corrupted. The only remaining question is which Council Members have the integrity to end this behavior. It is both fiscally irresponsible and procedurally unethical.

No one's father would be proud of this behavior. Telling the truth is always easier to remember.


City Council 2/25/2025

My name is Al Clouse, and I live at 3 Grand Pavilion, Isle of Palms, SC, 29451 United States of America.

As Jimmy Ward once told me: "It needed to be said"..... which always resonated with me.

Let's get one thing clear.....none of us own this Island.....we are only stakeholders..... until we are not stakeholders. My stake hit the ground in 1988. No, I am not entitled; nor are any of you.

I am here tonight as the result of four (4) recent articles posted in the Island Eye News, regarding the most recent train wreck; a flawed attempt by city council to hire a City Administrator. The facts and details are disturbing.

I have yet to see any of the accomplices.....who drank the Kool-Aid..... helping orchestrate the train wreck..... run to anyone's defense.

Analytically, I compiled the following **Icons**:

Unconscionable..... Unacceptable..... Moral Compass..... Fiscally Irresponsible.....

Arbitrary and CapriciousUnforced errors.Disrespectful..... Code of Conduct....

Common Sense.....Cluster (R rated)..... Mental Abuse.....Transparency

Violence in the Work Place.....AccountabilityEmbarrassment

Anger ManagementSelf inflicted wounds.....Integrity.....

Based on my analysis and understanding, I respectfully request the following:

1. Immediately stand down/stay the process of hiring a City Administrator. Unless, you redress your actions; complying with the original published process and Code of Ethics.
2. Engage an independent forensic law firm to document all facts and events surrounding council's activities in an attempt to hire a City Administrator.
3. The post-mortem is to be posted on the lop.net website and the Island Eye News.....in it's entirety.

Expectations:

Constructively, stakeholders of this community believe it is in the best interest of the City..... the council..... and the stakeholders..... for certain council members..... to tender their resignations..... You know who you are.....We know who you are.. We, respectfully request you resign now.....before the court of public opinion rules /speaks in November.

The goal posts are not yours to move.....The coach has lost the locker room.

Comments of Laura Levin

I am here tonight to address the hiring process that is currently in progress to replace our former City Administrator. From a resident point of view, and per the city's own job description as a guide, here are the qualifications needed at this point:

1st – Broad and varied work experience. Longevity in one position is not a qualification for leadership. We need someone who has worked as a prior City Administrator, preferably with a degree in Public Administration. Prior relevant experience matters.

2nd – Strong leadership and ethical governance. The City Administrator must execute the policies set by the Council and make decisions based on professionalism, integrity, and transparency that fosters trust between local government and residents.

3rd – A city Administrator in a beach community faces unique challenges, including storm preparedness, tourism management, environmental sustainability, and fluctuation economies. It is imperative that a City Administrator not only have the necessary tools & training to handle these issues, but also have existing relationships with State elected officials and agencies that have been developed over several years so that he or she can hit the ground running.

4th – A long term commitment to the job – not just 3-4 years, or even less.

So now, as a resident, I ask, does the current internal candidate, who was added to the list after the application window closed on December 31, 2024, and after the city did due diligence and narrowed the field down from 70 applications to a final 3 over a period of several months – does this candidate fit the qualifications required for this City's most important administrative position? Sadly, I would say NO.

You are selecting an Administrator charged with executing ethical governance and following the city's policy's and procedures, and the internal candidate has violated all of that by being willing to be added to the hiring process after the hiring window closed.

So, how do we fix this? Get back to the process as it stood on December 31st – vote for one of the final 3 viable candidates. Do what is ethical.

Comments of Suzi Wheeler to City Council, 2/25/25:

The debacle of the Executive Session from February 13, is beyond disappointing. There appear to be so many issues, 3 minutes might not even scratch the surface, but here goes.

First, I would like to say that I am sorry that Douglas has gotten dragged into this muck and mire. I have respect for him and the job he has done for the City. I do believe that there are serious problems with the way his hat was put in the ring, none of which I believe are his fault.

From a financial point of view, it is hard to swallow that this position is worth such a prime salary of \$180,000. That would be an increase of approximately 48% over his current salary, approximately 27% over Desiree's salary, 41% more than the current Fire Chief and 48% more than the Police Chief.

When you contrast that with the City Administrator salaries for Charleston, North Charleston and Mt. Pleasant, all under \$110,000, that is a 62% increase over surrounding areas, when we have a small fraction of their full time populations.

Keep in mind that this Salary also affects the budget in the form of retirement costs. What would have been an annual retirement of \$60,000, now could reach \$90,000. That could mean an increase of over 3/4 of a million dollars over his lifetime. Not to mention that it sets a salary precedent for any future incoming City Administrators.

Now, for the Executive Session Shenanigans. Several details have emerged from that meeting, none of which are good. I have zero interest in knowing protected information from that session. I do feel we as citizens are entitled to the full truth about any threatening behavior, breach of ethics and violations of the Code of Conduct. I firmly believe that of that was on the agenda and is not protected under the cloak of Executive Session.

There is such a feeling of distrust with this entire situation that I believe it is incumbent upon every member of this Council to be fully transparent about what transpired during and after that Executive Session.

The questions I have are :

Were unpublished meetings held, where there was a quorum present, to discuss the City Administrator position?

Was there an abuse of authority in how Douglas's application was processed?

Did the Mayor use profanity against another member of Council?

Did Mr. Hahn exhibit threatening behavior and a profanity laced tirade against Ms. Miars and Mr. Bogosian?

Was anything done to stop such behavior and protect Ms. Miars?

Why was the meeting stream cut short before the meeting was adjourned and Ms. Miars' concerns addressed?

Were City staff members upstairs watching the video of "protected" Executive Session?

I would like to give you a wonderful perspective on Integrity, since that seems to be a term bandied about.

Honesty is truthfully answering a question, when asked.

Transparency is being open, honest and accountable without omissions and without being asked.

Integrity is having and exhibiting both.

Finally, to Ms. Miars, I am sorry you were put in a position where you felt threatened and unsafe. I believe you and shame on anyone who allowed that to happen!

Good evening, Council Members,

Thank you for the opportunity to speak tonight. As a 35-year full time resident, I have two important topics to address.

First, the selection of our next city administrator.

While I don't have a vote, I—like many engaged residents—care deeply about our city's future and its leadership.

Desiree was an exceptional city manager, known for her fairness, wisdom, and ability to collaborate with employees, residents, and elected officials. Her decade of service set a high standard.

As you choose her successor, I urge you to consider:

- How long is this candidate likely to remain in the position? Do they have a long-term career ahead of them, or are they nearing retirement?
- What financial impact will this decision have?
- What level of experience and education does this candidate have?
- Will their appointment unite and move us forward or could it contribute to further division and negative publicity?
- Were they identified through the city's professional search process, or were they added to the finalist pool through other means?
- Did they follow the well-publicized application procedure, demonstrating their ability to respect and adhere to clear processes? This is fundamental to the role.
- Most importantly, will they be truly independent, or beholden to certain elected officials?

Your decision will shape the future of our city. I urge you to act with integrity and in the best interests of all residents.

Second, a recent change in the city council packets.

For years, public comments have appeared on page three—right after the agenda. But last Friday, after initially being placed there, they were moved to the middle of the packet.

This may seem small, but it affects transparency. Public input matters, and its placement should reflect that. I can't help but wonder—was this an oversight or a deliberate shift?

I ask that public comments remain easy to find and prioritized in your materials and your consideration.

Thank you.

Christine Donovan. 31 26th Ave. Isle of Palms

Good Evening Council Members

Thank you for the opportunity to address you.

I am Catherine Malloy residing at 3613 Waterway Blvd for 25 years in addition to being a 4 year resident in the late 80's and attended more City Council meetings than I care to enumerate.

It gives me no pleasure to stand before you today and express my dismay about what transpired during the search process for the position of City Administrator for the Isle of Palms.

I am fully informed; reviewed the well publicized application filing process and the agendas, meeting videos and minutes of the Administration Committee of 1/10, 1/23, 1/24 that culminated in the selection of three well qualified candidates who followed proper procedures and timelines as stipulated. These three candidates were invited to be interviewed by city council.

This is where the whole thing goes awry.

It should not have happened and I would not be here today if proper procedures and process were honored.

To continue obtaining knowledge about the process, I then read all the opinion pieces and letters to the editor published in the Island Eye discussing the circumstances.

Looking at the facts it is obvious that a serious breach of trust occurred which I believe is not only a violation of ethics but is also fiscally irresponsible and calls out for accountability.

We citizens deserve transparent leadership and we need leaders who value a level playing field for all... Don't you love it when people use sports analogies? It's like an Olympic event where after the buzzer sounded the score is changed.

This search process was subverted by the inappropriate behavior of the mayor interfering with the process followed by the inappropriate behavior of a council member toward another council member causing that person to feel threatened by obscene gestures and language.

From where I stand the only appropriate action is for the mayor and the offensive council member to resign from City Council.

My name is Josh Hooser, and I live in Wild Dunes. Thank you again for the opportunity to address you, my elected representatives, at this city council meeting. I appreciate your time and your attention.

When I spoke to you at your last council workshop about hidden cameras in short-term rentals, I was thankful that I had a forum to talk to all 9 of you and the city staff at the same time.

These citizen comments are really important not just for residents but also for you as policymakers and for staff who implement the policies that affect the people who live here.

After my citizen comments, Councilmember Rusty Streetman added the hidden cameras subject to the next public safety committee meeting agenda on March 4 at 11am. I encourage you to watch the meeting and help as we try to respond to our Congressmember Nancy Mace's gripping testimony of finding over 10,000 images on a hidden camera in a short-term rental property in our community. I emailed all of you the transcript of her speech, which I see are part of the minutes in your packet tonight. If you have not had a chance to watch or read Congresswoman Mace's testimony, I encourage you to do so. We must come together and act. This is a moment for unity in a time that has seen so much discord. We can thrive when we are united.

If we want to unite and thrive, we all need to be more careful with how we interact with our neighbors. As elected representatives you have a heightened duty to not just interact with your neighbors but also to represent us. When you are on social media, in public or interacting with other councilmembers and city staff during meetings, our eyes are going to be watching you. You have more scrutiny because you have the awesome power to take official action on behalf of the city. Your job is to set policy for the city, but your purpose should be to leave the city in a better position than it was when you got on council.

I have listened to residents go at each other over the city administrator position, and I don't like to see my neighbors fighting like this. I have seen the "us versus them" battle resurface with a vengeance. I do not like that. We cannot live together in harmony if we are constantly tearing each other apart. It is up to you as the elected leaders of this city to set the tone, and if you go negative then the people who support you will go negative, too.

From my understanding, this conflict is not about our city staff, but about our form of government and the processes by which our government functions. This is about due process in our city. Our interim city administrator is not on the ballot, but our elected representatives are. If our interim city administrator has the votes to become the permanent city administrator, then I will support him. If he is successful then our city is successful.

But please know that I am a strong advocate for government transparency and for good process. No matter if you win or lose, you accept the outcome when the process has been fair. Unfortunately, when the process is tainted the results are questioned. This has been chaotic to say the least, and my final thoughts are we should learn from this and make sure we do better in the future.

Brian Duffy

3613 Waterway Blvd

Good Evening Council, Thank you for taking the time to listen.

I'm here tonight to talk about bullies. You see the first time in my life when I faced down a bully to protect others was in eighth grade, and I've never stopped facing down bullies since then. During high school the bullies were other students as well as teachers. Imagine that!

Of course during my business career there were plenty to be dealt with. I have always faced down bullies. The one thing that I learned about bullies is that they are so very fragile. They're like 3 year olds caught with their hand in the cookie jar. They can't take criticism. They are unwilling to apologize and say that they're sorry. I find it so sad that we have bullies on this council. The citizens of this island deserve better. Thank you.

Bev Miller
3 Fairway Village Lane

I am here tonight to talk about behavior and rules and doing the job that voters elected you to do.

We as residents are reminded how we need to conduct ourselves in this Chamber with this banner, always prominently displayed.

Have y'all seen it? My favorite saying is on a towel I own...I understand the concepts of cooking and cleaning, just not how they apply to me. Is that how you look at those words on the sign? Like they don't apply to you as public servants? I assure you, they do.

Civility. Defined as polite, reasonable, and respectful behavior. I see a Councilwoman leaving the dais at a streamed meeting because she felt threatened, visibly upset. I'm thinking whatever went down in Executive Session was not civil.

Respect. Defined as a positive way of treating someone. Showing respect means demonstrating a concern for people you interact with and treating them as equals. How is that going for this Council?

If I violate the actions on this banner, I likely will be muted and/or treated to a police escort to the parking lot. If a Councilmember violates it, the consequence is....not a gavel, not a sanction, nothing. It is time to revise the provisions of the Code of Conduct to make it mandatory and include disciplinary action for violations.

And the last point on the banner:

Solutions. Defined as the process of solving problems. In this case, the "problem" is a vacancy in the City Administrator position. The city has a set process for filling this vacancy. Yet it clearly is not being followed. Somebody went rogue, and the collateral damage from those actions, should it not be stopped, will be felt for years to come. Do your job, set aside the politics, read our code and procedures, and follow them.

All candidates had an equal opportunity to apply prior to the deadline of December 31. One candidate didn't seize that opportunity, for whatever reason. The events that transpired after that to bring him into the fold may or may not be illegal, but by golly they are clearly unethical. The logical, ethical, and legal solution to the "problem" is to respect the date of December 31, consider the 3 candidates selected by the Admin Committee, and hire the one who is best committed and qualified for the job.

Moving forward, it is time to enact an Ethics Ordinance. Surely you all recognize the need. It should be an ordinance that

- 1) establishes guidelines for ethical standards of conduct for all officials by identifying those actions that are incompatible with the interest of the city, and
- 2) outlines the procedures to ensure the alleged charge is valid, and
- 3) serves as a basis for disciplining those who violate its terms.

Bottom line: The political games and disrespect to each other and to residents do not belong here. Stop the nonsense.