



**SPECIAL CITY COUNCIL MEETING
5:00pm, Tuesday, March 10, 2026
City Hall Council Chambers
1207 Palm Boulevard, Isle of Palms, SC**

MINUTES

1. Call to Order

Present: Council members Streetman, Miller, Bogosian, Ward, Carroll, Pierce, Miars, Cohen, and Mayor Pounds

Staff Present: Administrator Kerr, Deputy Administrator Kuester, various department heads

2. Citizens' Comments -- none

Dr. Gary Nestler, 22nd Avenue, spoke about the wage and compensation in relation to the Public Safety departments. He said the high turnover rate is very expensive for the City. He asked the Council to consider 31-38% increases in wages and to establish a Public Safety Advocacy Committee made up of residents with knowledge of Public Safety.

Ms. Patsy Hindman, Barnacle Row, spoke in favor of higher wages for the Public Safety personnel. She believes the proposed increases are too low and suggested the pay rate begin at \$25/hour. She would like a Public Safety department filled with well-trained and experienced personnel.

Ms. Carolyn Anderson, Oyster Row, also spoke in favor of higher wages for first responders. She distributed data related to turnover to Council members. She noted that many first responders travel far distances to work on the Isle of Palms. She supports Council Member Ward's suggestion of pay rates above the 70th percentile. She said safety is more important than sand.

Ms. Tracey Marks, speaking on behalf of the Building Department clerks, asked City Council to consider fair compensation for all employees. She would like to see a balanced approach to pay increases across all City government departments.

3. Special Presentations – Wage & Compensation Study – Allie Crumpler, Evergreen

Allie Crumpler of Evergreen Solutions presented a compensation study conducted for the City as of November 2025, aimed at improving recruitment and retention by ensuring pay equity. The analysis revealed that while the City's pay plan design is consistent, employee compensation lags behind the market. Approximately 75% of employees are paid below their pay range midpoint.

On average, pay ranges for general/administrative staff are 9% below the market median, while Public Safety is 4-6% below. The City's pay ranges are also narrower than its peer communities, leading to a loss of competitive ground from minimum to maximum salary levels.

Evergreen Solutions recommended implementing updated pay plans for all employee groups, with a total estimated cost of approximately \$638,000. For Public Safety, a "step-to-step" placement was recommended, and for General/Administrative staff, a "current range placement." An alternative "discounted" option capping raises at 15% would lower the cost to \$556,000.

Council members Pierce, Bogosian, and Cohen expressed concern about the study's methodology, particularly for senior positions, as they believe it compares Isle of Palms to much larger municipalities like Charleston without proper weighting, creating "apples, oranges, and bananas" comparisons. Evergreen agreed to have the data re-run with differential weighting.

Council members Ward and Streetman would like to see pay scales in the 80th and 90th percentiles.

It was noted that a COLA had not been applied since the last wage & compensation study, which contributed to City salaries falling behind market.

Council members spoke in favor of incorporating the education and certification incentives proposed by Chief Cornett and Chief Oliverius.

Chief Cornett said the current 25-step program is fine for him, but newer officers need 28 steps. He believes the additional educational and certification incentives will help with recruiting. Chief Oliverius agreed more steps are needed as many qualified employees "age out" and can't go higher in steps. He agreed that a step program is helpful for employees to see their pay progression but would like to see an increase in the percentage of each step.

Council Member Pierce would like to look at the turnover data for each department at the next Administration Committee meeting. The Administration Committee will also look at the newly weighted data for General/Administrative positions.

Council Member Cohen would like to see a CPI-adjustment added to all pay scales going forward. Council Member Bogosian agreed, adding going "forward on the whole compensation that our ranges change annually based on whatever the COLA is. And COLA should be tied some index, not us arbitrarily picking what we think cost of living is."

4. Dashboard of City Operations and Short-Term Rental Report

Administrator Kerr said the City is still looking to fill the Human Resources Director position as well as 2 police officers, 1 Communications Specialist, and 3 paramedic vacancies.

He explained the change to the short-term rental data as prepared by Director Hamilton and Council Member Miller.

5. Departmental Reports

6. Financial Review

Financial Statements and project worksheets

Director Hamilton presented the financial report through February, forecasting increased General Fund revenues from property taxes and permits but decreased hospitality tax performance. She shared the circumstances driving the forecast for each fund. The City has deferred several capital projects, including the hiring of a beach resilience officer and dredging at the marina, to manage expenses. A reconciliation sheet for cash and fund balances was provided, and it was noted that 92% of the city's \$54 million in cash is restricted. A placeholder for employee pay plan adjustments of \$638,000 (approx. \$880,000 fully loaded) is in the current budget draft.

Expense increases were noted for vehicle maintenance and utilities. Director Hamilton said the budget includes an anticipated 13% increase in energy costs from Dominion Energy.

Director Hamilton explained a revised cash needs sheet: "We tried to list out all the capital expenses that were budgeted for this year, Kind of show where we are year to date and then show where we are projected to land with those expenses. and then at the top of the page, these are where the fund balances are projecting to land for the next four years."

7. Procurement

Administrator Kerr said the budgeted expenditure for the 1100 Toter cans will be voted on at the March 24 meeting. He noted that the rot and termite infestation in City Hall is being treated and is within budget for repairs to the building.

8. Capital Projects Update

Administrator Kerr reported that Bastian Group has started work at 21st Avenue and will work the project in sections. Their schedule plans for an early July completion. They do not expect any road closures. He notified City Council they have become aware of a conflict with the flood barrier wall with a force main at 36th Avenue and a change order will come before them at their March 24 meeting.

Staff will discuss the future of the Phase 4 drainage project at tomorrow's budget meeting.

Council Member Miller asked if the new Waterway Boulevard path will permit golf carts. Chief Cornett said golf carts may not be on the path unless City Council designates it as a golf cart path.

Administrator Kerr said there are two options for the marina dredging project: The City can wait for the marina neighbors to be ready for their portion of the project and share in mobilization costs, or they can complete their portion of the project on their own. The Public Services & Facilities Committee recommends the City move forward with their portion of the project as the savings is not that great if they wait for the neighbors to be ready.

Staff continues to work on securing the easements needed for the beach renourishment project.

Administrator Kerr said of the muddy areas on the beach: “The Army Corps is working with us. Their contractor on a change order to do that work. There was an amount. It sounds like the amount is beyond their scope that was in their existing contract, so they are having some contractual discussions about that now. We were out, the staff was out, and Robert was out this morning. There are two very dense pockets of muddy material. We think that those dense pockets are breaking up and contributing more to the rollers that are that are spread out down there. So we do think that it would be prudent for the City to initiate just a quick project” to clean up the muddy areas.

USACE and Ahtna will clean up the clay rollers. Administrator Kerr said that the area will be cleaned ahead of the renourishment project starting.

9. Old Business

A. Discussion on marina parking lot lease amendments

Administrator Kerr said the Public Services & Facilities Committee recommends allowing the restaurant tenants to upgrade the marina parking lot in exchange for relief on rent overages for 2026 and 2027. The proposed plan includes some minor work in the City’s greenspace area. The parking lot improvements remain in the FY27 budget until further discussion.

Council Member Ward expressed concerns about bartering arrangements.

B. Discussion on borrowing vs. direct expenditure for beach renourishment

More discussion about these options will happen at Wednesday’s budget workshop.

C. Update on beach renourishment easements

Administrator Kerr said the easement agreements will be mailed to property owners next week. They are being contacted via email and regular mail. There will be a workshop for property owners regarding the easements on April 2 at the Recreation Center.

D. Update on escrow agreement with WDCA

WDCA returned the final draft of the escrow agreement with some comments. The attorney is working on it and more will be forthcoming.

10. New Business

A. Discussion of education and certification incentives

Administrator Kerr referenced proposed education and certification incentives for Public Safety staff compiled by Chief Cornett and Chief Oliverius. Chief Cornett said the cap is standard practice. He explained to City Council how the incentives will be applied for both officers and administrative staff.

B. Discussion on City Attorney letter of engagement

Administrator Kerr reported to Council that the City Attorney's hourly rate is increasing from \$295/hour to \$325/hour.

C. Discussion on Beach Resilience Officer position

Administrator Kerr said the Administration Committee recommends the City pause on this position for the time being. This position, along with two additional police officers, remain in the proposed FY27 budget until further discussion by full Council.

11. Legislative Report

Mayor Pounds said the House started budget conversations today.

12. Adjournment

Council Member Ward made a motion to adjourn the meeting, and Council Member Streetman seconded the motion. The meeting was adjourned at 7:39pm.

Respectfully submitted,

Nicole DeNeane
City Clerk