

City Council Minutes
March 5, 2024

Orangeburg City Council held its regularly scheduled meeting on Tuesday, March 5, 2024, at 6:00 PM with Mayor Michael C. Butler presiding.

PRESENT:

Michael C. Butler, Mayor

Annette D. Grevious

Jerry Hannah

Dr. Kalu Kalu

L. Zimmerman Keitt, Mayor Pro Tem

Sandra P. Knotts

Richard F. Stroman

A motion was made by Councilmember Stroman, seconded by Councilmember Kalu to approve the February 20, 2024, City Council minutes. The motion was unanimously approved.

Mayor Butler recognized "Optimistic" as the March 2024 Orangeburg County Community of Character trait.

Ms. Dianna Colvin, Associate Director, Business Development and Communications and Nurse Practitioner Yolonda Green, updated Council on the Clemson Rural Health Clinic located Orangeburg. Ms. Colvin stated, "We want to share information with you in recognition of our one-year anniversary as a Clemson Health Clinic in Orangeburg and March as National Nutrition Month. We work with rural counties to help improve their health by trying to reduce premature deaths, reduce preventable hospitalizations and improve overall quality of life by setting up Hub Clinics like we have in Orangeburg that includes a fleet of Mobile Health Units, Multidisciplinary Team, Remote Patient Monitoring Platform, Fixed Primary Care Clinic, Common Electronic Medical Record, and Produce Prescription Program. We want to integrate food and nutrition with primary care, conducting and facilitating research, investing in rural health workforce development, building strategic partnerships, providing evidence-based care, reducing social determinant barriers to health care and engaging patients as partners in their health care. Some community health benefits of the health clinic are same-day or next-day sick visits, health care management, telehealth appointments, remote patient monitoring, access to dietitian and health educators, mobile primary care, flu shots and immunizations, prescription refills and lab services."

Mr. Mark Garrick, 551 Livingston Terrace addressed Council. He stated, "On February 20, 2024, our home was broken into through the back door, and they rummaged through our house. We have video that they rode by the Saturday afternoon before, so they were watching us, what we were driving, and the cars in our driveway. The reason I am here tonight is that we have noticed, especially in the last year and a half, a lot of traffic in Livingston Terrace and cars parking in the cul-de-sac areas, and individuals walking to the creeks and ponds in our neighborhood to fish. Last summer, DPS was called three separate times because cars were parked in the cul-de-sacs and individuals were smoking marijuana. This past week, we called 911 twice because of parked cars. I am here tonight to ask if the City can put up no parking or no trespassing signs in our neighborhood and a security camera to deter some of the traffic coming into our neighborhood, parking, and fishing on private property. I spoke with Chief Austin this week and he assured me they were stepping up surveillance which has already happened, and we appreciate it. I also appreciate the City Administrator talking to me about my concerns."

DPS Chief Charles Austin stated, "We have been working with the Garricks over the past few days. Corporal Gilmore conducted crime prevention by environmental design study. We are accessing the landscape coming into the community from Broughton Street or Hillsboro Road, the cul de sacs inside the community and how we can utilize not only surveillance cameras but also cameras in place at many residents. We have discussed forming a neighborhood watch group and increasing patrol in the community."

Mayor Butler stated, "If it pleases the Council, Chief will continue his investigation and work with Mr. Garrick on this issue."

Councilmember Stroman stated, "I represent this district. If there is anyway the City can get a camera in this neighborhood, I would appreciate it and they would appreciate it also."

Mrs. Norma Murdaugh and Reverend Henry Murdaugh addressed Council concerning closing of Goff Avenue from Clark Street to Magnolia Street. She stated, "I am here to address statements printed in the February 24, 2024, edition of the Times and Democrat newspaper that were made by Claflin University representatives. I also want to inquire about the intentions of Claflin University and the City of Orangeburg regarding my property on Goff Avenue. Claflin Chief Melvin Williams showed security camera footage of the February 18th shooting incident on Goff Avenue. What year was the shooting? Also, since the shooting incident occurred what security measures has Claflin put in place? Chief Williams also stated he believed the individuals in the cars were not Claflin students. How did he come to that conclusion? Dr. Warmack stated that one of the property owners resisted the proposal when it was initially made and Claflin has not been able to contact them for several months. That is not true as I am the property owner. Dr. Warmack also said the property in question has been vacant 18 months, which is not true. When we met about closing Goff Avenue, I told Dr. Warmack my daughter lives in the apartment in the back on Goff Avenue. A few days after our initial meeting to close Goff Avenue where I stated my daughter lives in the apartment in the back, Chief Williams went to my daughter's apartment and questioned her about the event. It was stated, I was sent an invitation to attend a Claflin meeting which is not true. I never received a call, text message or certified letter. Dr. Warmack, Councilmember Keitt and Mayor Butler all have my phone number. Dr. Warmack stated that Claflin University goes through Goff Avenue. This is not true. You enter Claflin University on Magnolia Street through the guard. My question to the City of Orangeburg is how do you suggest I or my renters access my house if Claflin is permitted to block Goff Avenue? My home has been on Goff Avenue for over 80 years harmoniously with Claflin University."

Mayor Butler stated, "We are looking at safety for the students and residents. We do not want anyone, including your daughter and grandchildren, to be shot. You will be able to get to your house. You will be given a card. You will not be blocked from your house."

Reverend Murdaugh asked, "We were supposed to be invited to the meetings that were held. We have not received any information. Who is responsible for contacting people to attend the meetings?"

Mayor Butler stated, "We will ask the Claflin representative when he comes up."

Councilmember Hannah asked, "What do you want from the City of Orangeburg to make this work?"

Mrs. Murdaugh stated, "I want Goff Avenue not to be closed. What security measures has Claflin done to prevent the shootings?"

Councilmember Kalu asked, "What will be the negative impact if we close that section of Goff Avenue?"

Reverend Murdaugh stated, "Access to and from our property."

Councilmember Kalu stated, "You will not be restricted from your house. We are trying to be proactive to put restrictions around that area to restrict speeding and shootings."

Mrs. Murdaugh asked, "You can secure it now. Also, Dr. Warmack stated he is going further down Goff Avenue. Why will Claflin go further down Goff Avenue if you are worried about this section? There are a lot of families that live further down Goff Avenue."

Mayor Pro Tem Keitt stated, "By closing this section of Goff Avenue, only persons allowed in will be those with a card which will be like a gated community which will be much safer."

Claflin University Director of Public Safety, Chief Williams addressed Council concerning closing of Goff Avenue from Clark Street to Magnolia Street. He stated, "There will be easy access for those individuals who have property within the area we are requesting to close. We are currently looking at different options and have not decided what type of mechanism will be in place to allow access. As it stands now there are two properties, the one that belongs to the Murdaughs and the

Glover house which is currently vacant. We have a short video that shows what has taken place from August 2021 to January 2024. On your screen is a popup party in August 2021 where Claflin students are present, but not all are Claflin students. Next is September 2021 which was the first shooting. You see the individual shooting at the young man in the white shirt. He then runs behind the silver car and fires several rounds back at the young man in the direction of Claflin Hall and one of the rounds entered a student's room. Next is popup party in September 2022. The cars stop in the middle of the street, individuals get out and students are present. They dance and take over the road. Next is another popup party in November 2023. The white car stopped, and music was playing. I sped up the video so you can see what occurred over a 20-minute period. The number of individuals continued to grow. Claflin students are involved, but those are not all Claflin students. Then January 2024, a short clip of the car leaving where you will see the muzzle flash out the vehicle window. The next photos are of two windows in the science building that were hit by bullets. Our desire to close Goff Avenue to better secure the area is not based on a single incident but multiple incidents. We believe closing Goff Avenue between Clark Street and Magnolia Street would give us the ability to keep the vehicles out that do not need to be there. The entrance will not be hindered for residents, emergency services, trash pickup, etc. We want to make sure our community is safe, and our community neighbors are not inconvenienced. With Council's approval, we have a few students that would like to speak."

Claflin University Sophomore Promise Joseph stated, "I am a member of the Student Government Association entrusted with the responsibility to tackle daily challenges faced by students and advocate for their interest. I am requesting you urgently address the situation our local college campus is facing due to the unrestricted access provided by Goff Avenue being public. The repercussions of this situation have escalated to alarming levels with incidents of car break-ins, gun fire and unauthorized individuals entering our campus."

Claflin University Sophomore Miles Anthony Johnson stated, "The current state of Goff Avenue has become a magnet for criminal activities that are endangering the entire community, and our college campus has been compromised. The fear and insecurity among our students are palpable. We implore City Council to take immediate and decisive action to address this crisis. Measures such as an increased police presence, enhanced security measures and exploring options to restrict access to the street during certain hours. We know nothing is a 100% guarantee for safety, but we can add more safety measures."

Claflin University Junior Cheyenne Chambers stated, "The safety of our college campus and the surrounding community should be paramount, and we urge Council to prioritize this matter. We are ready to work together to find a solution that ensures the safety of the students, residents and stakeholders. Thank you for your attention in this pressing issue and we look forward to your swift and decisive action in addressing this."

Mayor Pro Tem Keitt stated, "Chief Williams, when meetings are called with residents, please make sure everyone is notified of the time and place."

City Administrator Evering addressed Council concerning second reading of an ordinance accepting a portion of Goff Avenue from Clark Street to Magnolia Street from the South Carolina Department of Transportation (SCDOT); closing Goff Avenue from Clark Street to Magnolia Street and transferring such road to Claflin University. He stated, "This ordinance is transferring the road to Claflin University. Any right of way or easements that are currently in place with public utilities or any utility provider will stay in place if you approve the transfer to Claflin. Also, there is a slight revision to the ordinance to formally accept the transfer of the road from South Carolina Department of Transportation (SCDOT) to the City of Orangeburg which was done via a letter in 2023."

Councilmember Grevious read the following statement. "Pursuant to the matter related to the closing of Goff Avenue from Clark Street to Magnolia Street and the transfer of said property to Claflin University, I, Councilwoman Annette Dees Grevious, wish to recuse myself from discussions, voting, etc. due to a potential conflict of interest based on my position as an elected official and being an employee of Claflin University. Therefore, I recuse myself from item #2 – Second Reading of an ordinance closing Goff Avenue from Clark Street to Magnolia Street; transferring such road to Claflin University as documented on the March 5, 2024, agenda for the Orangeburg City Council meeting as well as any subsequent discussions or votes pertaining to the matter."

A motion was made by Mayor Pro Tem Keitt, seconded by Councilmember Kalu to approve second reading of an ordinance accepting a portion of Goff Avenue from Clark Street to Magnolia Street from the South Carolina Department of Transportation (SCDOT); closing Goff Avenue from Clark Street to Magnolia Street, transferring such road to Claflin University. The motion was approved 6-0-1. Councilmember Grevious recused.

City Administrator Evering addressed Council concerning a resolution to appoint two persons to the 2024 Capital Projects Sales and use Tax Commission. He stated, "Orangeburg County is considering the fifth iteration of capital projects sales tax penny. There is a six-person commission that is to meet and produce a list of capital project items for consideration by the voters in the November referendum. The City of Orangeburg is statutorily required to appoint two members to that Commission. After the packet was distributed, a Councilmember called to change their nomination. Based on the tabulation, you have decided to appoint myself and Josh Nexsen from the Department of Public Utilities."

Councilmember Knotts asked, "Has Josh Nexsen been contacted and has he agreed to be on the Commission?"

City Administrator Evering stated, "Yes, we have contacted Josh."

A motion was made by Councilmember Kalu, seconded by Mayor Pro Tem Keitt to approve a resolution to appoint City Administrator Sidney Evering and Department of Public Utilities Administrative Director Josh Nexsen to the 2024 Capital Projects Sales and Use Tax Commission. The motion was unanimously approved.

City Administrator Evering addressed Council concerning Vape Shops Ordinance. He stated, "As some of you know, you have requested us to draft an ordinance to address vape shops and location within the City. City Attorney, Michael Kozlarek and I are looking for more guidance from Council."

City Attorney Kozlarek stated, "We need more information from Council. Is there a particular area of the City or adjoining uses of properties? For example, when you look at State regulations dealing with alcohol sales, places of worship and education are a particular concern. Are those the types of concerns Council is trying to address or is there another reason for the particular use? There are cities that have a Central Business District and for example they do not want a car wash or gas station on every corner as they have widened the sidewalks to increase walkable retail in this district. Understanding that helps start the process of trying to address it. Perhaps having individual conversations with either me or the City Administrator to obtain more information, then we can bring something for Council to review and then bring an ordinance for Council to consider."

Mayor Butler stated, "I agree Council needs to talk about it as there are citizens concerned about this issue."

Mayor Pro Tem Keitt stated, "I agree. We were concerned when the first vape shop was located near the colleges. Now they are popping up everywhere."

A motion was made by Mayor Pro Tem Keitt, seconded by Councilmember Kalu to approve a resolution recognizing Water Professionals Day. The motion was unanimously approved.

DPU Human Resources Director, Cheryl Lynch addressed Council concerning Grievance Committee appointments and changes. She stated, "There are several members whose terms expire at the end of March 2024. We recommend the appointments of Mrs. Brittany Sloan, Electric Division and Mr. Willie White, Water Division. Mr. Delvin Davis's current term expires March 2024, however because he transferred from an alternate member to an active member in 2023, we request he remain an active member to complete a full term through March 2027. We also recommend Mr. Michael Miller, Electric Division replace a resigned employee."

A motion was made by Councilmember Stroman, seconded by Mayor Pro Tem Keitt to appoint Mrs. Brittany Sloan, Mr. Willie White, Mr. Delvin Davis, and Mr. Michael Miller to the DPU Grievance Committee. The motion was unanimously approved.

DPU Manager Harley addressed Council concerning authorizing the DPU Manager to negotiate with the Town of Norway to waive up to \$17,777. He stated, "This item was discussed in Executive Session at the last meeting concerning fees related to the account of the Town of Norway of \$17,777. I ask you grant me authority to negotiate the waiver of those fees that are associated with the Town of Norway's account."

A motion was made by Councilmember Stroman, seconded by Councilmember Knotts authorizing the DPU Manager to negotiate with the Town of Norway to waive up to \$17,777 in fees. The motion was unanimously approved.

A motion was made by Councilmember Stroman, seconded by Councilmember Grevious to go into Executive Session concerning Performance Evaluation Discussion – City of Orangeburg Administrator S.C. Code Sec. 30-4-70(a)(1). The motion was unanimously approved.

Council did not return to open session. There being no further business the meeting was adjourned.

Respectfully submitted,



Linda McDaniel
City Clerk



V O I D

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A RESOLUTION TO APPOINT PERSONS TO THE 2024 CAPITAL PROJECTS SALES AND USE TAX COMMISSION; AND TO PROVIDE FOR RELATED MATTERS.

1. South Carolina Code Annotated section 4-10-300, *et seq.*, authorizes the imposition of a one percent sales and use tax, subject to a referendum, for the purpose of funding capital project needs inside Orangeburg County;

2. The Orangeburg County Council intends to create a commission to consider proposals for funding capital projects throughout the County, including in its municipalities and to formulate the referendum question; and

3. The City Council desires to appoint certain members to the commission.

BE IT RESOLVED by the City Council, as the governing body of the City of Orangeburg, South Carolina:

1. The City Council appoints the following members to the 2024 Capital Projects Sales and Use Tax Commission:

City of Orangeburg Representative: Sidney Evening, II (4-10-320(A)(2)(a)-(c))

City of Orangeburg Representative: Josh Nexsen (4-10-320(A)(2)(a)-(c))

2. The City of Orangeburg Representatives shall: (a) meet and appoint the final municipal appointee according to South Carolina Code Annotated section 4-10-320(A)(2)(d) and (b) present the name of the final municipal appointee to the Orangeburg County Council for inclusion in the commission's membership.

ADOPTED BY the City Council on March 5, 2024.

Mayor

Michael C. Butler

Members of Council

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Attest: Linda McDaniel
City Clerk



A RESOLUTION RECOGNIZING WATER PROFESSIONALS DAY

WHEREAS, the term “water professional” is often associated with those individuals who have chosen to work and serve in public water utilities, that is, those responsible for ensuring that potable drinking water is properly managed so that the water is clean, safe, and reliable for public consumption and so that it contributes in a positive manner to public health, economic growth, and community sustainability; and

WHEREAS, water professionals are part of a statewide comprehensive water management team of professionals who work in, and manage, public water systems (drinking water), public wastewater reclamation systems (sewer), and stormwater system operations for hundreds of communities across the State of South Carolina; and

WHEREAS, a water professional is often the unsung hero who has chosen to serve his or her community by ensuring that a community’s access to clean, safe, reliable drinking water goes unimpeded; and

WHEREAS, such a professional strives to make sure the local, regional, and state watersheds are protected from pollutants and runoff, and that the environment is accordingly protected; and

WHEREAS, economic growth and public health are supported by the work of water professionals and nothing functions without highly skilled, trained, and dedicated staff members working as water professionals in the best interests of their respective communities.

NOW THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, the City Council of the City of Orangeburg duly assembled and by this resolution, express the gratitude of the citizens of the City of Orangeburg for the committed labors of our water professionals who serve as guardians of our water, and declare Tuesday, March 5, 2024, as “Water Professionals Day.”

ADOPTED BY the City Council on March 5, 2024.

Mayor

Michael C. Butler

Members of Council

[Signature]
Sandra P. Scott
Richard T. Hunt

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Attest: Linda McDaniel
City Clerk