

**City Council Minutes**  
**March 19, 2024**

Orangeburg City Council held its regularly scheduled meeting on Tuesday, March 19, 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 March 5, 2024, City Council minutes. The motion was unanimously approved.

Mayor Butler recognized Lt. Jennifer A. Haig with twenty-five years, ten months, and fourteen days service to the City of Orangeburg with a retirement date of March 1, 2024.

Ms. Eleanor Dreher Boyd and staff appeared before Council concerning Midlands Fatherhood Coalition. The Midlands Fatherhood Coalition mission is to engage fathers in the positive support of their children and to enhance the support of fatherhood throughout the midlands. The vision is that children have brighter futures and for communities to be stronger and safer. Strengthening families through fatherhood engagement. Community safety, wellness and economic mobility includes school readiness improves, self esteem improves, mental health improves, economic stability improves, and community safety improves. The Midlands Fatherhood Coalition will open an Orangeburg office in Rural Health Family Resource Center this year.

Mr. Cecil Williams appeared before Council concerning the Cecil Williams South Carolina Civil Rights Museum. He stated, "The Civil Rights Movement was 1950-1970. About five years ago my wife, my sister and I started to pull together photos and items to start a Civil Rights Museum in the State of South Carolina. I am here tonight to share the good news that we did it and it is well visited by the local community and individuals traveling Interstate 26."

Mr. Henry Ideozu addressed Council concerning the soccer program and maintenance in the City of Orangeburg. He stated, "I am here to speak about advocacy for soccer in Orangeburg. Soccer is the biggest sport in the world. There is a soccer league in the fall here in Orangeburg. I am here to speak on behalf of the parents who feel disconnected in regards to City leaders. Soccer can be an internal generated revenue (IGA) for the City of Orangeburg. The parents feel that the leaders do not know or pay attention to the soccer program. There is a fantastic, beautiful facility that was built on the North Road for baseball that is underserved. Why not build a "one stop shop" as opposed to the silos we have today. Hillcrest, where soccer is played, is a silo. My children play in the all-star games in Beaufort which is a huge IGR benefit for that area. The City of Orangeburg can do this also. We feel disconnected also as there is no security during soccer season. Not one single law enforcement officer is present. There are "No Smoking" signs posted, but individuals are smoking there. We as parents would like all of this addressed. Access to the Chief of Police is close to none. If you call his office, they will query you and query you. If you live in the City of Orangeburg, you should have access to your Chief of Police. Orangeburg has become the City that people come here and do what they like and leave. Council, there is a disconnect here somewhere. Please come to the soccer fields and engage. You do not know what soccer can bring for the City of Orangeburg."

Mrs. Brenda Jamerson addressed Council concerning the Coalition for the Homeless. She stated, "In October 2023, Samaritan House Boardmember Jerry French and Samaritan House Executive Director appeared before Council concerning our concerns regarding a proposed City Ordinance on loitering. From this, an agreement was made that I would spearhead a coalition and bring back a report. The report was given to Council tonight and I will highlight some items. The Coalition was organized in November 2023. It functions as a collective of diverse entities comprising members from various sectors of the community united to advocate, plan, provide and assess homeless services, housing, and supportive services in the Tri-County area. We have met several times as a group and separately as committees. We have all met together to address the issues of

the homeless which included representatives from the Sherriff Department and Department of Public Safety. Our collective concerns and preliminary solutions and recommendations are included in the written document. In summary our report to the local city and county government is to join forces with us and allocate the resources required to implement comprehensive programs that address the root causes of homelessness and provide immediate relief to those in need. The Samaritan House is the only shelter and 95% of the time we are at maximum capacity. We have found that funding will be needed for a long-term impact. We have found that a loitering ordinance that will require a jail sentence is not the answer. We have found that continuing to kick the can down the road, shuffling the homeless from one corner of town to another or from the City to the County or vice versa will not solve the problem. Businesses understandably have concerns, and we invite them to join us at the table. We look forward to being invited to your tables to collectively work together on a solution.”

Mr. Henry Miller addressed Council concerning the Samaritan House. He stated, “I want to thank you for the funding for the new beds at the facility that allowed us to bring in an additional 15 residents. Now we can house 55 residents, 31 on the men’s side and 24 on the women’s side. Currently, we have 53 residents at the shelter with three being children. The Samarian House is in immediate need of replacement of IT equipment. We are asking for help with new computers for our facility.”

Clafin University Chief Williams addressed Council concerning the closing of Goff Avenue from Clark Street to Magnolia Street. He stated, “I stand before you to reaffirm our unwavering commitment to ensuring the safety of both our campus community and the broader neighborhood. We recognize the importance of managing the roadway in a manner that prioritizes safety while fostering respect and partnership for our neighbors. The University has always placed the safety and well-being of our students, faculty, and staff as well as visitors at the forefront of our priorities. We understand that the management of the roadways surrounding our campus directly impacts lives of not only our campus community members but also our neighbors. Therefore, we approach this responsibility with the utmost diligence and care. We understand that maintaining positive relationships with our neighbors is essential for fostering a harmonious and thriving community. As such, we pledge to conduct all road management activities with respect, transparency, and sensitivity to the needs of those living and working within the vicinity. Clafin University remains steadfast in its commitment to managing the roadway in a manner that ensures the safety of all.”

Clafin University Sophomore Arden Promise Joseph addressed Council. She stated, “I currently hold the position as Student Government Association Treasurer. We must be proactive rather than reactive. We cannot wait and continue to witness car break-ins, gunfire erupting dangerously close to our dormitories and unauthorized individuals entering our campus grounds due to unrestricted access provided by Goff Avenue being public. The gravity of the situation cannot be overstated as lives are at risk. I implore City Council to hear our desperate plea for assistance and take decisive action without delay. Thank you for the attention to this urgent matter.”

Councilmember Kalu asked, “Chief Williams, two weeks ago when you appeared before Council, I made a request or recommendation in terms of easement for the three property owners the Lawrences, Glovers and Murdaughs. First, I asked what plan you have for easement for these property owners. Second, I asked you to have a meeting with the property owners. And third I asked you to involve the district Council representative of the plan of that area to get more information and to ease the minds of the property owners around that area.”

Chief Williams stated, “My apologies, I did not realize we had a timeline between that meeting and this meeting to make that happen. Our intent as a University is to address these issues and make sure we are communicating with the community and with those individuals. You have mentioned a third property owner. Clafin purchased the Lawrence property so there are only two properties, the Glovers and the Murdaughs. We plan to keep them apprised of the plans of access or easement as you referred to it. We will make decisions on what is best for them and the University”

Councilmember Stroman asked, “Are you planning to have two access gates? Only law enforcement and people that have property there will be allowed through the gate?”

Chief Williams stated, “There is still discussions about this. We would want to have some type of closure at each end. We will have some type of access control and there will be provisions that

they will have access without being impeded. We want to have control of who can come through. There have been discussions about having the gate open for free access during periods of time. None of that has been solidified. We want to capture the opportunity to be able to control what comes through there especially at night."

Mayor Butler stated, "We hear shootings at universities all over the country and the world. We cannot take a chance with this. Parents want their children to be safe. I am fully in support of safety for the children."

Councilmember Knotts asked, "Chief Williams since your last appearance before Council, I have had numerous folks that live in that area inform me they were not contacted by Claflin University concerning the meetings. When Councilmember Kalu asked about this, did I understand correctly that you were unaware that you needed to start that part of the process?"

Chief Williams stated, "I responded to Councilmember Kalu that if there was an expectation of Claflin to have meetings during the last two weeks, I was unaware of that."

Councilmember Knotts asked, "There are numerous individuals that live in that area that have expressed, not just Mrs. Murdaugh, but others that have said that they have not heard anything from the University. Wouldn't you think, before we move forward with the third reading, that you would at least try to put that in place so that you could hear from the property owners? I understand the safety issues, but these are property owners, and you must hear from them. Also, will additional security be provided by Claflin as it relates to monitoring once the street has been closed?"

Claflin President Warmack stated, "There was a meeting several months ago to include South Carolina State University (SCSU), Claflin University and the neighbors. We sent out a memo and at that initial meeting SCSU, Claflin and former Councilmember Haire attended. There are only two properties that are impacted within that space which is the Murdaugh property that has been vacant for a significant time and the Glover property that has been vacant for a significant amount of time. If there are other neighbors you hope we involve in that conversation, we are open to that, but we need to know who they are. But they are not directly impacted by this as there are only two properties that are not owned by SCSU and Claflin."

Councilmember Knotts stated, "I understand but as a property owner, they may not understand when you talk about Clark Street and Goff Avenue if they will be impacted. It would be my request that you involve those people if they were willing to show up at the next scheduled meeting and voice their concerns. They too are concerned about the safety of the students as well as the safety of the community. I will make sure the individuals that reached out to me, contact your office."

Claflin President Warmack stated, "We will be investing a significant amount to security. As I stated in the first appearance before Council, safety is my number one concern. I live there and I have a 12-year-old daughter who lives there. I promised the parents at orientation that their babies are safe, that blood is not on my hands, it is here for the Council to make the decision. We have shared what we have shared."

Mr. William Green appeared before Council concerning the closing of Goff Avenue from Clark Street to Magnolia Street. He stated, "I am very concerned about the closing of Goff Avenue. The problem with Goff Avenue and the students at Claflin University is the lack of leadership. You cannot allow students to get in the middle of a public road, gyrating on top of cars, screaming out of windows, and using profanity. There were two hundred students in the middle of the road. I walk through there all the time and I want to be able to continue. I know several seniors that live on that street that I visit and check on them constantly. I have known the Murdaughs for years and I am library friends with their daughter. This home has been in their family for over 80 years. They should be allowed to have freedom to go in and off their property like they have been doing. It is not fair for tax paying citizens of the City of Orangeburg. I know there is an alternative motive by Claflin University for doing this and it is not fair to the citizens of Orangeburg. Students come and student go, families are here for a lifetime. Would any Councilmembers want your road to be closed off? If you want to have a Christmas party, birthday party, your friends and families cannot visit you? That is not fair, and I do not think any of you on Council would want to live in that kind of cage. It is like living in a prison. If you want to block a road off, have a party, fundraiser, or

parade, you have to complete a City of Orangeburg form and turn it in to the Department of Public Safety. So Claflin has been breaking the rules all these years to block the road off. It is a public street; it is an avenue. Why would you want to divert the traffic to Clark Street? Clark Street cannot hold the traffic like Goff Avenue can as it is wider. You need to think and be considerate of the tax paying citizens that vote you into office."

Councilmember Kalu asked, "Do we need to wait until something happens before we make a change?"

Mr. Green stated, "No, it is the leadership of Claflin. They need to crack down on students."

Mrs. Norma Murdaugh appeared before Council concerning the closing of Goff Avenue from Clark Street to Magnolia Street. She stated, "I am here to ask questions for clarification. Number one, what type of notice was given to me about the closing of Goff Avenue? Was it by certified mail or snail mail? If so, what proof do you have? I want the record to reflect that I am objecting because proper notice was not sent to me. Number two, I want to be clear, I object to the closing of Goff Avenue. But if you insist on doing this over my objection, I want the record to reflect that I want an easement to my property. There are less restrictive ways than to close Goff Avenue. 1) greater police presence, 2) close the street only when you typically have problems, and 3) Claflin President can advise his students not to come out during these troubled times. Let us be clear, you are establishing a precedent that anytime the president of a university or college feels it is unsafe for his students to come to a street, you need to close the streets down. That is a problem because if you do so, you are unjustly discriminating against us to accommodate the students. Let us be perfectly clear, the long-term goal is to take over the residents' property of Goff Avenue."

Reverend Murdaugh stated, "I am an alumnus of Claflin University. We have been in possession of the property on Goff Avenue for years. I have been on Goff Avenue recently and have made observations. I can tell you as much as you want to know about Goff Avenue in this area between Magnolia and Clark Streets. I want an easement from that property to wherever you end up. That is exactly what I am requesting."

Councilmember Kalu stated, "You are referencing to what I have said before. I do not want you to feel that the City or Claflin University wants to use up your property because that belongs to you. But I heard the word easement, and the school said it is going to provide easement to your property. I understand that you want an easement provided for your property and that should be part of the plan. So, if that is not provided, then there is no plan."

Mayor Butler stated, "You will never be kept away from your property. You will be able to go in and out when you get ready and your children, your relatives, and your friends."

Mrs. Murdaugh stated, "Let us be clear, Claflin University wants Goff Avenue. They care less about an easement."

Mayor Butler stated, "No, Mrs. Murdaugh, we are not going to let them do that. That is your property, and you are going to be able to go in and out of your property."

Mrs. Murdaugh stated, "And it will stay my property. May I make a clarification, President Warmack stated my property has been empty for several months. This is not true as my daughter lived there until February."

Mayor Butler stated, "You will be able to go in and out of your property as much as you want to. We only want to stop the individuals that are going there with guns"

Mrs. Murdaugh asked, "I have seen no evidence and neither have you that all the cars are from outside the City. How do you know Claflin students were not shooting?"

Mayor Butler stated, "I want you to leave here with this in mind, we are not after being mean to keep you out of your property. We can have a meeting and we can all be there with the people that have concerns. I would like to suggest putting Item #2 on hold until we have a meeting at Claflin."

A motion was made by Councilmember Kalu, seconded by Mayor Pro Tem Keitt to table the third 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 until a meeting could be held with the citizens of the Goff Street area, Claflin University and Council. The motion was unanimously approved.

A motion was made by Councilmember Stroman, seconded by Councilmember Grevious to go into Executive Session concerning Performance Evaluation – Municipal Judge 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



VOID

VOID

VOID

VOID





**RESOLUTION**

**WHEREAS,** Jennifer A. Haig faithfully served the City of Orangeburg for twenty-five years, ten months and fourteen days with a retirement date of March 1, 2024; and,

**WHEREAS,** she, through her long and faithful service, contributed greatly to the successful operation of the City of Orangeburg; and,

**WHEREAS,** the City Council, in recognition of the fine contribution rendered the City of Orangeburg, wants to inscribe on the records its appreciation.

**NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED** that the Mayor and Members of Council, in Council assembled, do officially recognize the faithful service rendered to the City of Orangeburg in the capacities in which she served the City, and we take pride in commending her for a job well done.

**BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED** that a copy of this Resolution, in appreciation for her devotion of duty to the City of Orangeburg, be placed in the minute book of the City and a copy furnished to Mrs. Haig in recognition of her services.

**PASSED BY** the City Council of the City of Orangeburg, State of South Carolina, this 19th day of March 2024.

*Michael C. Butler*  
**MAYOR**

*Richard F. Thomas*

*[Signature]*

*[Signature]*

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**MEMBERS OF COUNCIL**



**ATTEST:**  
*Rinda McDaniel*  
**CITY CLERK**