

**City Council Minutes**  
**March 4, 2025**

Orangeburg City Council held its regularly scheduled meeting on Tuesday, March 4, 2025, at 6:00 pm in Council Chambers, 933 Middleton Street with Mayor Michael C. Butler presiding.

**PRESENT:**

**Michael C. Butler, Mayor**  
**Annette Dees Grevious**  
**Jerry Hannah**  
**Dr. Kalu Kalu**  
**L. Zimmerman Keitt, Mayor Pro Tem**  
**Sandra P. Knotts**  
**Richard Stroman**

**ABSENT:**

**Sandra P. Knotts**

Mayor Butler stated, "We need to amend the agenda to add an Executive Session item to receive Legal Advice regarding grant appropriation."

A motion was made by Councilmember Kalu, seconded by Mayor Pro Tem Keitt to amend the agenda to add Executive Session item Receipt of Legal Advice regarding grant appropriation. The motion was unanimously approved.

A motion was made by Councilmember Stroman, seconded by Councilmember Kalu to approve February 18, 2025, minutes. The motion was unanimously approved.

Mayor Butler recognized Cooperation as the March Orangeburg County Community of Character Trait.

Ms. Shanika Aiken and the Youth Safe Advisory Council with The Safe Organization appeared before Council concerning updates.

Mr. Cecil Williams appeared before Council concerning the Civil Rights Museum. He stated, "The Civil Rights Museum being built at Railroad Corner is a joint effort of the City, Council, and the Museum. We will be the newest museum in America with approximately \$10 million in artifacts, documents, and images. We will be adding \$22 million to the City and County of Orangeburg in 2026-2027. This projection is based on a study five years ago that estimated 100,000 vehicles passed Interstate 26 Exit 145. Of those 100,000 vehicles passing daily, we are going to try to get 200,000 visitors per year. Sixty percent will be daytime visitors to the museum. Forty percent of the visitors will stay overnight, which is added revenue to our hotels and restaurants and other businesses in Orangeburg. We project that our annual overhead running of the museum will be approximately \$820,000. We are asking the City of Orangeburg to consider the museum as a line item for \$400,000 annually. We feel we will be able to raise much of the proceeds from the revenue streams sales of artifacts and souvenirs. We hope to remain a free museum and research shows 95% of people coming to the museum leave a donation. I have a formal request to distribute to each of you."

A motion was made by Mayor Pro Tem Keitt, seconded by Councilmember Stroman to appoint Ms. Georgene Hightower to the Election Commission for the 6-year term ending 03-31-2031. The motion was unanimously approved.

City Administrator Evering addressed Council concerning a resolution to utilize Hospitality Tax funds to pay for expenditures for repairs to the Chamber of Commerce Building for damage caused by flooding in November 2024. He stated, "As you recall in November of last year, we suffered a catastrophic flood particularly to the Edisto Memorial Gardens area and the Chamber of Commerce building sustained approximately \$400,000 in damage. Assistant City Administrator Theresa Williams has been working with the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) for reimbursement for those repairs. We are requesting that we utilize hospitality tax funds until we receive the reimbursement from FEMA and then we can reimburse the hospitality tax fund. This resolution would allow us to do that at approximately \$400,000."

Councilmember Kalu asked, "For clarification, you stated that insurance does not cover?"

City Administrator Evering stated, "No, there is a large deductible because the Chamber building is in a flood zone, so the insurance does not cover, and we must rely on FEMA. We are looking at approximately \$72,000 in water and electrical damage, \$25,000 for content removal and \$320,000 in general repairs to the building."

Mayor Butler stated, "The building is owned by the City, so it is our responsibility to repair it."

Councilmember Grevious asked, "Is there guarantee of funds or reimbursement from FEMA?"

City Administrator Evering stated, "No guarantee but I think we certainly would qualify. But the longer we leave the building, the more damage."

Councilmember Grevious asked, "For clarification, was the deductible high or was the claim denied?"

City Administrator Evering stated, "The deductible is \$600,000."

A motion was made by Councilmember Grevious, seconded by Mayor Pro Tem Keitt to approve a resolution to utilize Hospitality Tax funds to pay for expenditures for repairs to the Chamber of Commerce Building for damage caused by flooding in November 2024. The motion was unanimously approved.

City Administrator Evering addressed Council concerning first reading of an ordinance amending the City of Orangeburg Zoning Ordinance regarding tobacco retail establishments. He stated "The ordinance is related primarily to tobacco establishments more commonly known as vaping shops. The planning commission met on February 27, 2025, and passed a resolution that recommended approval. This ordinance would amend the zoning ordinance to restrict the density, the number of vaping shops within City limits."

Councilmember Kalu asked, "How far should a vaping company be from a church or school?"

City Attorney Kozlerek stated, "It is 2000 feet from another establishment of the same type. It is 1000 feet from a place of worship, educational facility, or any establishment whose principal source of gross revenue was in the distribution of alcoholic beverages."

Councilmember Grevious asked, "Does this require any future tobacco or vape establishment to come before the Planning Commission?"

City Attorney Kozlerek stated, "There are a couple of aspects to the Ordinance, the first one is zoning classifications in the City in which tobacco retail establishments would not be permitted at all. Those would be Residential A-1, A-2 and A-3, Office Institutional O-I and General Business B-1. In addition, they would not be permitted in Plan Development Districts, in Historical Conservation Districts or in Airport Compatibility District. They would be permitted in a Design Overlay District. This is an additional overlay which goes through a very extensive planning review process. The other places that it would be permitted with the restrictions would be Central Business District B-2, Neighborhood Business B-3, and Industrial District D-1. If the property is already zoned with an appropriate zone for that use, it does not typically require additional Planning Commission or City Council approval. If a tobacco retail establishment were to acquire property in B-2 for example and otherwise meet the requirements of distances and space of the facility versus acreage of the site, there would be no additional review. That is the idea behind making the tax amendment if it fits, it fits, then if it does not, it does not. As a reminder, this is going forward, there is nothing in this zoning ordinance that would hinder an existing business. The only time that would apply is if the text amendment were to be adopted and an existing tobacco retail establishment was to be more than 50% destroyed, it would then be a non-conforming use and, at that point, it could not be rebuilt. There is no intent of this zoning text amendment to take any existing establishment and try to shut it based on the change."

Councilmember Kalu asked, "If the vaping company decides to move from one location to another, how would that work?"

City Attorney Kozlarek stated, "It is not company by company. It is like any other zoning ordinance. The text of the zoning ordinance at that point would control. If the new location were properly zoned for that use and the distances were met, then the company could move. If it, however, closed the current establishment and it were no longer a conforming use on the existing site, it could not reopen in that location. It could be closed because the business closes it or could be closed because of catastrophic event that destroys a portion of the business. Those would become non-conforming uses, and they could not be reopened or rebuilt and rebuilt only 50% or more. That is true of any zoning change that the City makes which is basically South Carolina law."

Councilmember Hannah asked, "Have we reached out to the existing vape shops and let them know what is coming?"

City Attorney Kozlarek stated, "It is published in the notice in the newspaper. There is a public hearing at the Planning Commission level and then City Council has three readings of Ordinance and public hearing. I am not aware that the City for a text amendment sends out notices to any businesses and residents. If it were a map change, property must be posted.

A motion was made Mayor Pro Tem Keitt, seconded by Councilmember Grevious to approve first reading of an ordinance amending the City of Orangeburg Zoning Ordinance regarding tobacco retail establishments. The motion was unanimously approved.

A motion was made by Councilmember Stroman, seconded by Councilmember Kalu to go into Executive Session concerning Personnel Matters S.C. Code 30-4-70(a)(1) Mauldin and Jenkins CPAs & Advisors. The motion was unanimously approved.

Council did not return from Executive Session. There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned.

Respectfully submitted,

*Linda McDaniel*

Linda McDaniel  
City Clerk





RESOLUTION

TO UTILIZE HOSPITALITY TAX FUNDS TO PAY FOR EXPENDITURES FOR REPAIRS TO THE CHAMBER OF COMMERCE BUILDING FOR THE DAMAGES CAUSED BY FLOODING IN NOVEMBER 2024.

WHEREAS, the City of Orangeburg collects Hospitality Tax funds for tourism related expenditures in accordance with the South Carolina Code of Laws, Section 6-1-730; and

WHEREAS, the Chamber of Commerce Building is the designated Orangeburg County tourism welcome center; and

WHEREAS, during November 2024, severe weather caused catastrophic flooding of the North Fork Edisto River at the Gardens which flooded the Chamber of Commerce building and damaged City property; and

WHEREAS, the City of Orangeburg has contracted with a qualified vendor to repair the damage from the flooding at an estimated cost of approximately \$400,000.00.

NOW BE IT RESOLVED:

The City Council finds it appropriate to utilize up to \$400,000.00 of Hospitality Tax Funds to cover costs which were not budgeted for this emergency repair event.

ADOPTED BY the City Council on March 4, 2025.

Mayor

Michael C. Beale

Members of Council

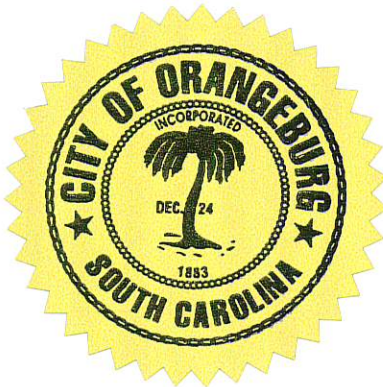
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Attest: Linda McDaniel  
City Clerk