



JASPER COUNTY COUNCIL
SPECIAL CALLED WORKSHOP
Jasper County Clementa C. Pinckney Government Bldg
358 3rd Avenue Ridgeland, SC 29936
Monday, July 14, 2025
Minutes

Officials Present: Chairman John Kemp, Vice Chairman Joey Rowell, Councilman Chris VanGeison, Councilman Joe Arzillo

Staff Present: County Administrator Andrew Fulghum, County Attorney David Tedder, Kimberly Burgess, James Iwanicki, Chief Russell Wells, and Videographer Jonathan Dunham.

Note: The meeting had to be moved to the Mary Ellis Gordon Building because the County Council Chambers and Building did not have electricity, a working elevator, or air conditioning. The meeting start time was delayed 15 minutes to allow people to arrive to the new location.

I. Call to Order and Compliance

The meeting was called to order by Chairman Kemp. The Clerk's Report of Compliance was read, confirming that notification of the meeting and agenda was posted at least 24 hours prior to the meeting on the county council building, a publicly accessible place on the county website, and provided to local news media and requested parties, in accordance with the South Carolina Code of Laws 1976, Section 30-4-80D, as amended.

The Pledge of Allegiance was performed, and an invocation was offered, asking for wisdom and guidance for decisions for the citizens of Jasper County.

II. Agenda Approval

A motion was made and seconded to approve the agenda, and the agenda was approved unanimously.

III. Workshop Topics: Roads

Mr. Tedder introduced the discussion on county roads, noting that the county road ordinance resulted from major revisions in 1998, 2002, and 2018-19. He noted that in addition to the County Road Ordinances the Attorney General's opinions lay out the constitutional basis for County and local governments to spend money on transportation projects like county roads. He mentioned that the primary rule is that public funds cannot be spent on private roads. This is a constitutional prohibition without exception, even during national emergencies or for public safety needs for ambulances/fire trucks. He noted that another Attorney General opinion provided how a County can accept a private road and make it a public road. In order to accept a private road, the county requires an irrevocable and clear dedication of the roadbed/right-of-way to the county, followed by a clear acceptance of the road by the county. He noted that this was a historical problem statewide. In 1998, under the old zoning ordinances, subdivisions were made where the road was supposed to be maintained by a private entity or there was an alleged dedication to the County. Lawsuits against

developers who were not maintaining the roads and had never set up a private property owners association, caused lawsuits to ensue. The County was held harmless because they were not public roads, under the definition of what a public road was. The County Council back then wanted to give certainty on things so the County Council created a road maintenance list in 1998, giving landowners until 2002 to provide deeds or evidence of county roads; otherwise, maintenance would stop. There were very few roads that were fixed under that system. Needless to say, over the next 20 years the Councils changed and there was mission creep again that led to sporadic maintenance of roads without a proper legal basis. Through a supplemental ordinance process, following lawsuits around 2015-16, it resulted in a master list created by Alliance Engineering who surveyed all roads in the County, noting county roads and other maintained roads that were not county roads. In an effort to provide additional information the following two roads were mentioned Rabbit Cleveland Road and DeLoss Point Road. It was noted that DeLoss Point Road was currently in litigation, but the County was not a party to the lawsuit. It was noted that the road has three portions, including a state-maintained paved section and two other sections. Our records show that sporadic maintenance has occurred on parts of DeLoss Point Road (from the end of the pavement end down to the railroad track), but staff confirmed the county has no right to maintain the east-west connector because there was never dedication to the County and nothing can be found in the minutes on this. For a private road to become a county road, 100% of the landowners must sign off, providing an irrevocable dedication of the right-of-way (requiring a survey), and the road must be brought up to county standards (e.g., proper width, surface structure, and drainage). Acceptance of roads and requirements were further discussed.

The discussion was held regarding using different colored road signs to visually differentiate between county, state, and private roads to better manage this system. Current sign colors were discussed and Mr. Iwanicki noted that they changed the Uniform Manual of Traffic of Control Devices to allow different colored signs about seven to eight years ago. The standard says that the local agency can determine the color, if that helps, but it has to be a countywide thing. It was suggested that green, blue or brown be used as the background color. In looking to give a rough estimate he noted that the two things would be just to change the color of the local road signs under Jasper County was approximately \$120,000; and the cost to replace signs on the private roads would be approximately \$100,000. The distinguishment of signs was further discussed to as to which signs belonged to the County, State or Private Roads in conjunction with a color system. Council requested that staff prepare information addressing the concerns and updating the ordinance to provide for sign colorization options.

IV. Workshop Topics: Records Retention

Kim Burgess presented the county's records retention ordinance, which is based on the South Carolina State Archives and History retention schedule. The State Archives she noted was in the process of updating their schedule, so the new schedule would not be until sometime in 2026. Council discussed issues and options such as offsite storage through an outside agency, archiving, retention, requirements, microfiche and scanning of documents. It was noted that the county was facing severe space constraints for hard copy documents

V. General Discussion and Strategic Planning

Council agreed on the need for future workshops to establish collective goals and strategic planning. It was noted that the Council maintains ad hoc committees, which can be formed by resolution, rather than standing committees, due to the compactness of the council. Council emphasized the need for deeper conversations and meetings with the school board members to collaborate with and address recent issues. As a part of their strategic planning, it was discussed that moving forward they need to work with the other elected officials and municipalities as part of their strategic plan. It was also noted that moving forward, policy writing is crucial for issues such as airport extension, budget process, and growth boundaries. The Chairman proposed initiating a proactive performance audit (a "health check") to identify system weak spots and structural issues, citing recent problems with the school board, Hampton, and Beaufort. Chairman Kemp and staff discussed this process, the need for an RFQ/RFP process to begin in September or October to avoid interfering with the current extensive annual financial audit and how this would work.

The discussion of the Agreed Upon Procedures (AUP) for the Airport for three areas of general spending, catering/catering receipts, and fuel purchases/sales were going to be audited. The Blue-Sky checking account of the Airport was also discussed. Council requested that the scope of the AUP be extended to cover multiple years, ideally from the start of the Blue-Sky checking account moving forward. Council requested that they be provide the Council with the materials requested for the AUP. Mr. Tedder noted that the Airport Commission currently serves in an advisory position to the administration, which then reports directly to the Council. It was noted that a resolution needed to be prepared to remove an Airport Commission member from Hardeeville who had missed at least three unexcused absences; and also, to replace the At-Large LCOG member. The request was made to ask the Administrator to present Council with a proposed RFP to provide a certain range of outlined audit services for consideration.

VI. Joint Services and IT Update

Chairman Kemp noted that a joint meeting was held on July 13th with Jasper, Ridgeland, and Hardeeville staff focusing on cooperation. The fire entities have 30 days to meet regarding consolidation. The managers of the three entities would be getting together regarding joint service proposal. The planning commissions were scheduled to meet together on August 6th. In regard to the IT outage, Mr. Tedder said he was told that a global Microsoft Outlook software problem occurred Thursday at 11:00. Efforts to restore email were wiped out Thursday night due to a massive electrical storm and power outage. He noted that IT staff continued working, and some emails were received by Sunday night/Monday morning.

For more information on this meeting please go to our YouTube Channel for the video go to https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCBmloqX05cKAsHm_ggXCJIA . There are also Closed Captions available for all of our County Council videos. Just click the "CC" button to follow along.

VII. Adjournment

A motion was made by Councilman VanGeison to adjourn and seconded by Councilman Rowell. The motion carried and the meeting was adjourned.

Respectfully submitted:



Wanda H. Giles
Clerk to Council



John A. Kemp
Chairman