



JASPER COUNTY COUNCIL
COUNCIL MEETING
City of Hardeeville Council Chambers
205 Main Street, Hardeeville, SC 29927
Monday, March 2, 2026
MINUTES

Officials Present: Chairman Joey Rowell, Vice Chairman Joseph Arzillo, Councilman John Kemp, Councilman Chris VanGeison and Councilman Gene Ceccarelli

Staff Present: County Administrator Andrew Fulghum, Interim County Attorney Lawrence Flynn, Clerk to Council Wanda Giles, Kimberly Burgess, Eric Larson, Jim Iwanicki, Chief Russell Wells, and Videographer Jonathan Dunham.

1. Call to Order of the Jasper County Council Meeting by Chairman Rowell

Chairman Rowell called the meeting to order. The Report of Compliance with the Freedom of Information Act was read for the records as follows: *In accordance with South Carolina Code of Laws, 1976, Section 30-4-80(d), as amended, notification of the meeting and the meeting agenda were posted at least 24 hours prior to the meeting on the County Council Building at a publicly accessible place, on the county website, and a copy of the agenda was provided to the local news media and all person's or organizations requesting notification.*

In accordance with the Freedom of Information Act the electronic and print media were notified. During periods of review, discussion and/or presentations minutes are typically condensed and paraphrased. The recorded version is available online at: https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCBmloqX05cKAsHm_ggXCJIA. Closed captions are also available for all of our County Council videos.

The Pledge to the Flag was led by the Chairman and the Invocation was given by Chairman Rowell.

3. Approval of the Agenda:

Chairman Rowell noted that they would be adding Item # 6D, Presentation from the Jasper County Auditor.

Motion to approve with this change: Councilman VanGeison

Second: Councilman Arzillo

Vote: Unanimous

The motion passed.

4. Approval of the Consent Agenda:

Approval of the Consent Agenda passes all Consent Agenda Items. Consent Agenda Items are not considered separately unless a Councilmember requests it. In the event of such a request, the item is placed at the end of the Public Hearings, Ordinances, and Action Items.

03.02.2026 Minutes

Motion to approve: Councilman Ceccarelli
Second: Councilman VanGeison
Vote: Unanimous
The motion passed.

CONSENT AGENDA ITEMS:

A) Approval of the Minutes of 09.15.2025 and 09.27.2025

B) Lisa Wagner – Consideration of the 3rd Reading of Ordinance #O-2026-07 of an ordinance of Jasper County Council to amend the Official Zoning Map of Jasper County so as to transfer three (3) properties located along Grays Highway, 1) bearing Jasper County Tax Map Number 062-20-01-002 consisting of 0.60 acres from the Residential Zone to the Industrial Development Zone; and 2) bearing Jasper County Tax Map Number 062-20-01-006 consisting of 1.20 acres from the Residential Zone to the Industrial Development Zone; and 3) bearing Jasper County Tax Map Number 062-21-01-002 consisting of 2.74 acres from the Residential Zone to the Industrial Development Zone on the Jasper County Official Zoning Map. (Property owned by Jasper County) (1st reading 02.02.2026; Public hearing and 2nd Reading 02.17.2026)
This is the end of the Consent Agenda Items.

5. Executive Session SECTION 30-4-70.

(a) A public body may hold a meeting closed to the public for one or more of the following reasons:

(2) Discussion of negotiations incident to proposed contract arrangements and proposed purchase or sale of property, the receipt of legal advice, where the legal advice related to pending, threatened, or potential claim or other matters covered by the attorney-client privilege, settlement of legal claims, or the position of the public agency in other adversary situations involving the assertion against the agency of a claim –

(1) Radio Controlled Flying Club claim

(2) Procurement of Engineering Services through a Work Authorization to Holt Consulting Company LLC. for Ridgeland Claude Dean Airport.

Motion to go into executive session: Councilman VanGeison
Second: Councilman Arzillo
Vote: Unanimous
The motion passed.

Any Executive Session Matter on Which Discussion Has Not Been Completed May Have Discussion Suspended for the Purpose of Beginning the Open Session at Its Scheduled Time, And Council May Return to Executive Session Discussion After the Conclusion of The Open Session Agenda Items.

Note: Please Be Advised, There May Be Votes Based on Items from the Executive Session.

6:00 PM: Regular Session

- **Come out of Executive Session:**

Motion to approve: Councilman VanGeison

Second: Councilman Ceccarelli

Vote: Unanimous

The motion passed.

- **Return to Open Session:**

Motion to approve: Councilman Kemp

Second: Councilman VanGeison

Vote: Unanimous

The motion passed.

- **5.1. Council Action to be taken on items as discussed in Executive Session** – There was no action coming out of Executive Session.

Note: Council may act on any item appearing on the agenda, including items discussed in executive session.

6. PRESENTATIONS:

A) Stacy McAfee, Board Chair and Carolyn Kassel, Board Vice Chair – Presentation on the Riverton Charitable Fund.

Stacy McAfee (Chair) and Carolyn Council (Vice Chair) detailed the fund's work since 2022, focusing on food insecurity, community support, and education. In 2025, they granted nearly \$43,000 to eight nonprofits.

B) Jim Iwanicki – Verbal update on the Coosawhatchie Community Center.

Jim Iwanicki provided a verbal update, noting that architectural proposals were opened on February 18th. He noted that the recommendations for a firm were expected by the March 16th meeting.

C) Heather Rath – Presentation on the Opioid Education Campaign and the stats with New Life Center.

Heather Rath presented the 2025 data showing 45 opioid overdoses and 12 fatalities in the county. She outlined the ongoing "Break the Silence" media campaign and introduced community ambassadors.

D) Megan Horton – Presentation from the Jasper County Auditor's Office

Auditor Megan Horton addressed letters sent to taxpayers regarding **back taxes for 2022–2024**. She apologized for the wording of the letters and explained that the effort was intended to clean up the tax system due to communication gaps between the county and the DMV.

7. CITIZEN COMMENTS:

Open Floor to the Public per Ordinance Number #08-17. Any citizen of the County may sign to speak in person at the Council Meeting (before the Council Meeting's 6:00 PM start time on the Sign-In Sheet on the Podium), to address the Council on matters pertaining to County Services and Operations. Presentations will be limited to three (3) minutes per person, and total public input will be limited to 30 MINUTES.

Frank Collins expressed frustration over property and sales taxes in Jasper County, noting that they were significantly higher than in neighboring Charleston and Beaufort Counties.

8. RESOLUTIONS

A) Wanda Giles – Consideration of Resolution #R-2026-12, a Resolution of Jasper County, South Carolina County Council for the Appointment Mr. Morgan Denny to the Planning Commission.

Ms. Giles noted that one seat on the Jasper County Planning Commission is currently vacant. She said this would fill the unexpired term of Mr. Lee Gramling for Seat #07-PC. She noted that Mr. Gramling's term ended on 12.31.2028. Staff recommended that Council approve the appointment of Mr. Morgan Denny as the newest member to the Planning Commission. The request was for Mr. Denny to serve out the unexpired term left by Mr. Lee Gramling for Seat # 07-PC for the term of 02.02.2026 through the remaining term end date of 12.31.2028. She also noted that normally this is a 4-year term; however, the appointee, Mr. Denny, would only be fulfilling the unexpired term of Lee Gramling at this time. Once Mr. Denny's term ended, she mentioned that he could ask for re-appointment to the Planning Commission from the Council for this seat. Councilman Ceccarelli thanked all candidates who came forward and participated in this appointment request. He also noted that, after much consideration, he and Councilman VanGeison both strongly recommended Mr. Morgan Denny for this seat. Chairman Rowell welcomed Mr. Denny aboard. Mr. Denny was present to provide some information on his background for this position.

Motion to approve the appointment of Mr. Morgan Denny: Councilman VanGeison

Second: Councilman Ceccarelli

Vote: Unanimous

The motion passed.

9. PUBLIC HEARINGS, ORDINANCES, AND ACTION ITEMS

A) Kimberly Burgess – Consideration of the Operation Patriots FOV request for additional local accommodations and hospitality tax funding for fiscal year 2026.

Ms. Burgess was present to address the consideration of the Operation Patriots FOV request for additional local accommodation and hospitality tax funding for fiscal year 2026. Representatives J.R. Brown and Vicky Day were present to discuss their request for the \$30,000 in additional local accommodation and hospitality tax funds to market their fifth annual "Concert for the Heroes" featuring Lee Bryce.

Motion to approve: Councilman Kemp

Second: Councilman VanGeison

Vote: Unanimous

B) Kimberly Burgess and Chief Wells – Consideration of the Bid for the Septic System Replacement for Station 25.

Ms. Burgess and Chief Wells were present to address this request. Ms. Burgess noted that Jasper County advertised for the replacement of the septic system at Fire Station #25, 2721 Levy Road, Hardeeville, SC. The bids were due Wednesday, February 18, 2026, at 3:00 PM. She noted that one bid was received on time. Staff recommended that the Council reject the bid submitted by Lowcountry Septic System, Charleston, SC., for replacement of Fire Station #25 septic system in order to review and potentially revise the scope of work. She noted that this was a rebid and the first time no bids were received.

Motion to approve to rebid under the guidance of staff: Councilman Ceccarelli

Second: Councilman Kemp

Vote: Unanimous

The motion passed.

C) Eric Larson – Consideration of Approval of the 2026 CDBG Needs Assessment Priorities and submittal to the LCOG.

Mr. Larson was available to address this request for the consideration of approval of the 2026 CDBG Needs Assessment Priorities and the submittal of this to the LCOG. He noted that the projects were ranked from #1 to #11. Four departments were represented and participated in the ranking of the 2026 CDBG Needs Assessment. These departments were from the Roads/Streets Department, Parks / Recreation Department, Emergency Services Department and Community Development Department.

Motion to adopt the ranking as provided by staff: Councilman VanGeison

Second: Councilman Kemp

Vote: Unanimous

The motion passed.

D) Eric Larson – Consideration of Approval of an Entrance Sign at Old House Park and the Thomas Heyward Tomb site on Lowcountry Drive sponsored by the SC250 Committee.

Mr. Larson was present to review and discuss the entrance sign at Old House Park and the Thomas Heyward Tomb site on Lowcountry Drive, sponsored by the SC250 Committee. He noted that the agenda e-packet included a drawing of the sign.

Motion to approve the sign with a faceplate with the Jasper County emblem on it:

Councilman Arzillo

Second: Councilman Ceccarelli

Vote: Unanimous

The motion passed.

E) Lisa Wagner – Consideration of 1st Reading of an ordinance of Jasper County Council to amend the Official Zoning Map of Jasper County so as to transfer a property located along Elaine Farm Road, bearing Jasper County Tax Map Number 040-00-02-150 consisting of 8.0 acres from the Rural Preservation Zone to the Residential Zone.

Ms. Wagner was present to review and address this request. She noted that this is a zoning map amendment request to designate the property as Residential. The subject property consists of 8.0 acres and is located along Elaine Farm Rd. The property is currently zoned as Rural Preservation. The applicant requests rezoning to Residential to allow subdivision into 4 individual parcels under the minor subdivision regulations. The minimum lot width is 200' in the Rural Preservation Zoning District, whereas the minimum lot width is 100' in the Residential Zoning District. The current parcel is 457' wide along Elaine Farm Road and 781' wide along Mendez Farm Road. The Rural Preservation Zoning District will only allow 3 parcels, whereas the Residential Zoning District will allow 4 parcels to be created.

Ms. Wagner noted that according to the 2018 Jasper County Comprehensive Plan, the Future Land Use Map identifies this area as "Rural Transition," which is an area located in southern Jasper County. These areas will likely be under pressure to develop within the foreseeable future. The characteristics of these developments should be both small-scale commercial and office development, diverse types of housing, and mixed use/small-scale multi-family uses that maintain the area's scale and character.

The adjacent parcels are zoned Residential and Rural Preservation. Adjacent land uses are residential. The subject property is accessed by both Elaine Farm Rd and Mendez Farm Road. She noted that the Planning Commission recommends approving the request to designate the property as Residential.

Motion to approve with the contingency of the lot lines being placed by the second reading: Councilman Arzillo
Second: Councilman VanGeison

Vote: 3 yes votes from Chairman Rowell, Councilman VanGeison and Councilman Arzillo; 1 abstaining vote from Councilman Kemp and 1 no vote from Councilman Ceccarelli
The motion passed.

F) Lisa Wagner – Consideration of 1st Reading of an ordinance of Jasper County Council to amend the Official Zoning Map of Jasper County so as to transfer a property located along Kato Bay Road, bearing Jasper County Tax Map Number 044-00-02-001, consisting of 11.2 acres from the Residential Zone to the Industrial Development Zone.

Ms. Wagner was present to review and address this request. She noted that this was a zoning map amendment request to have a property designated as Industrial Development. The subject property consists of 11.2 acres and is located along Kato Bay Rd. The property is currently zoned Residential and is undeveloped. The applicant would like to re-zone the property in order to sell to Bella Mulch who would like to utilize the property for materials processing, recycling, and a logistics facility. Bella Mulch currently has a location south of the subject parcel that is within the jurisdiction of Hardeeville and is looking to relocate into unincorporated Jasper County. The primary function of the property would be the recycling and reuse of clean wood, debris, and vegetative materials.

Ms. Wagner noted that, according to the 2018 Jasper County Comprehensive Plan, the Future Land Use Map identifies this area as "Resource Conservation," which provides critical habitat for plants and wildlife. These areas should be primarily used for conservation and recreation; any development should be low-impact.

The adjacent parcels are zoned Industrial Development and Rural Preservation. Adjacent land uses are wooded and undeveloped. The subject property is accessed by Kato Bay Rd, a two-lane, state-maintained road classified as a major thoroughfare. She noted that the Planning Commission recommended approval of the request to designate the property as Industrial Development.

Motion to approve: Councilman VanGeison

Second: Councilman Ceccarelli

Vote: Unanimous

The motion passed.

G) Lisa Wagner – Consideration of 1st Reading of an ordinance of Jasper County Council to amend the Official Zoning Map of Jasper County so as to transfer a property located along Tarboro Road, bearing Jasper County Tax Map Number 047-00-01-012 consisting of 43.78 acres from the Residential Zone and Rural Preservation Zone to the Rural Preservation Zone on the Jasper County Official Zoning Map.

Ms. Wagner was present to review and address this request. She noted that this was a zoning map amendment request to have a parcel designated as Rural Preservation. The subject property consists of 43.78 acres and is located along Tarboro Road. The parcel is currently split zoned Residential and Rural Preservation. At some point and time, the portion of the property that is currently designated as Residential was an individual parcel that was combined with the larger parcel. The owner would like to have the entire parcel designated as Rural Preservation.

Ms. Wagner noted that according to the according to the 2018 Jasper County Comprehensive Plan, the Future Land Use Map identifies this area as "Rural Conservation," which are areas that seek to protect and promote the character of Jasper County that largely exists today outside of the municipalities. Most development, especially commercial development, should be guided to the hamlets.

The adjacent parcels are zoned both Residential and Rural Preservation. Adjacent land uses are primarily residential with a few parcels being used for agriculture. The subject parcel is accessed by Tarboro Road, which is a two-lane state-maintained road classified as a local road. She noted that the Planning Commission recommended approval of the request to designate the subject parcel as Rural Preservation.

Motion to approve downzoning from Residential to Rural Preservation for tax map # 047-00-01-012:

Councilman Kemp

Second: Councilman VanGeison

Vote: Unanimous

The motion passed.

10. Administrator's Report - Mr. Fulghum reviewed the information from his report that was provided in the agenda e-packet. There were no Action Items requiring a vote from the Council in the Administrator's Report.

11. Councilmember Comments and Discussion - Councilmember Comments were given but there were no comments that required action.

12. Adjournment:

Motion to approve: Councilman

Second: Councilman

Vote: Unanimous

The motion passed and the meeting was adjourned.

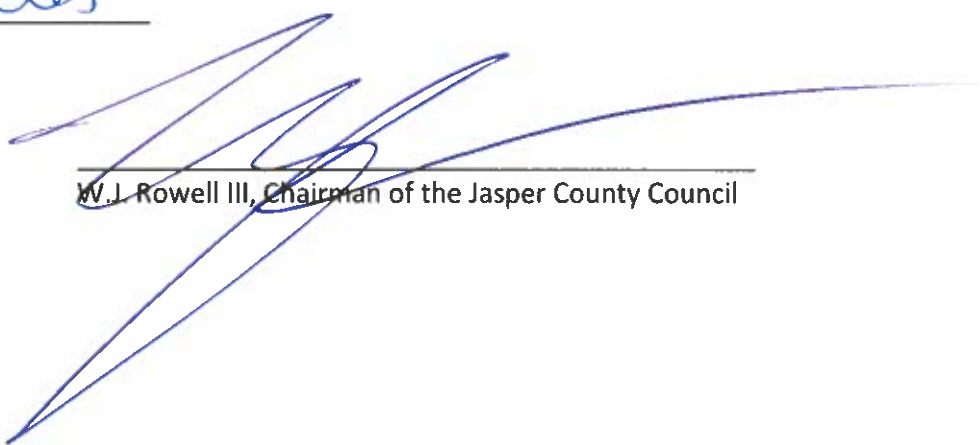
For more information on this meeting please go to our YouTube Channel for the video. During meetings and / or workshops periods of review, discussion, presentation, comments, and other sections the minutes are typically condensed and paraphrased. The recorded version is available online at our YouTube Channel video at https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCBmloqX05cKAsHm_ggXCJIA.

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Respectfully submitted:



Wanda Giles, Clerk to Council



W.J. Rowell III, Chairman of the Jasper County Council