



JASPER COUNTY COUNCIL COUNCIL MEETING

Jasper County Clementa C. Pinckney Government Building
358 Third Ave., Ridgeland, SC. 29936
Monday, April 6, 2026
Minutes

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

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

4:00 PM: Budget Workshop

Jeanine Bostick – Elections and Voter Registration

Ms Jeanine Bostick was not able to attend this meeting.

Sheriff Chris Malphrus – Sheriff's Office, Detention Center, SRO Department, and Animal Shelter

The Jasper County Council convened a workshop to review FY 2026–2027 budget requests, operational priorities, equipment acquisitions, and long-term facility planning for the Jasper County Detention Center and Sheriff's Office. Representatives from the Sheriff's Office and Mobile Communication America presented requests and proposals to Council.

Facility & Capital Infrastructure Planning included the following:

- Current Site & Drainage Improvements
- On-Site Expansion Quote from a study by Moseley Architects was discussed.
- Standalone Facility Concept was discussed for consideration
- The need for a Secondary Emergency Generator due to the existing generator having insufficient power was discussed.
- Council recommended completing further engineering considerations prior to committing to major Capital Improvement Projects (CIP) or purchasing a generator for a location that might eventually be replaced.

Detention Center Operational & Maintenance Budget Requests included the following:

- **Facility Floor Maintenance:** Requested a one-time budget increase for deep cleaning and floor maintenance.
- **Kitchen Upgrades:** Requested funds to replace an obsolete tilting skillet and brazing pan that requires frequent, costly repairs.

- **Staff Handheld Radios:** Requested to purchase 5 handheld radios to ensure detention staff inside the facility can communicate directly with county dispatch and external law enforcement during emergencies.
- **Travel & Training:** Requested additional funds for officer training. Detention officers are required to complete 40 hours of annual training, compared to 20 hours required for standard law enforcement deputies.
- **Officer Uniforms:** Requested additional funds due to a budget shortfall and discussed the cost of complete outfitting for a detention officer.

Law Enforcement Fleet Management & Enterprise Lease Program information:

Vehicle Lease Request: Requested 5 additional leased vehicles to replace high-mileage secondary vehicles for administration, investigators, and transport officers. The Sheriff's Office also discussed their lease program concerns.

Safety & Security Technology Equipment information and requests:

Taser Replacements: Requested funds for 20 new tasers to replace outdated, unsupported units.

Body-Worn Cameras: Requested funds for 40 body cameras (covering 10 officers per shift across 4 shifts). The system features synchronized activation across all cameras on scene and complies with Axon's individual officer licensing requirements.

Transport Vehicles & Cameras: Requested funds for 3 in-car cameras covering driver and prisoner compartments, plus additional funds for additional transport vehicle leases.

Motorola Security & Access Control Presentation:

The Presenters were Anthony Taylor and Brian Cleland of Mobile Communication America (Motorola representative) presented a facility security package.

They provided a Financial Breakdown for the:

- Access Control System Replacement
- Motorola Avigilon AI-Enabled Security Camera System

They discussed the systems capabilities & its installation:

Councilman Ceccarelli inquired about grant funding availability. Presenters noted grant opportunities exist for body/in-car cameras, but in-building camera grants are limited.

Council requested that the Sheriff submit a prioritized list (ranking items from 1 to 5) distinguishing essential "must-haves" from items that can be deferred.

As a follow-up Council agreed to look for a time to schedule a dedicated standalone workshop down the road on this matter.

Adjournment of the Workshop:

The workshop was adjourned to allow Council to proceed directly into its scheduled 5:00 PM regular meeting.

5:00 PM: Council Executive Session

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

04.06.2026 - Minutes

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.

2. Pledge of Allegiance and Invocation:

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

3. Approval of the Agenda:

Motion to approve: Councilman VanGeison

Second: Councilman Ceccarelli

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.

Motion to approve: Councilman Kemp

Second: Councilman VanGeison

Vote: Unanimous

The motion passed.

CONSENT AGENDA ITEMS:

A) Approval of the Amended Minutes of 10.06.2026 and Minutes 10.20.2026

B) Eric Larson - Consideration of the 3rd Reading of Ordinance #O-2026-14 to authorize Jasper County to convey, through a donation, real estate owned by Jasper County located at 2547 Argent Blvd., Hardeeville to Beaufort Jasper Housing Trust, Inc.
(1st Reading 02.02.2026; Public Hearing and 2nd Reading 03.16.2026)

C) Eric Larson – Consideration of the 3rd Reading of Ordinance #O-2026-13 establishing the Jasper County Greenbelt Program as mandated in the 2024 Referendum on Transportation Sales and Use Tax within Jasper County. (1st reading Feb. 17, 2026; Public Hearing and 2nd Reading 03.16.2026)

This is the end of the Consent Agenda Items.

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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) Ridgeland Claude-Dean Airport

(2) Litigation Update

(3) Shared Services Agreements

(3) Discussion regarding the development of security personnel or devices.

(1) Security Update by the Sheriff

Chairman Rowell stated for the record, that he would be recusing himself and would not be participating in the executive session item listed on the Agenda as "Shared Services Agreements". He stated that Vice Chairman Arzillo would be handling that item during / in the executive session.

Motion to go into executive session: Councilman Kemp

Second: Councilman VanGeison

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:

When Council returned to come out of executive session, Chairman Rowell noted that Councilman VanGeison had recused himself from the executive session item listed on the Agenda listed as "Ridgeland Claude-Dean Airport".

Motion to approve: Councilman Ceccarelli

Second: Councilman Kemp

Vote: Unanimous

The motion passed.

• Return to Open Session:

Motion to approve: Councilman Kemp

Second: Councilman Arzillo

Vote: Unanimous

The motion passed.

➤ **5.1. Council Action to be taken on items as discussed in Executive Session:**

There was no action to be taken at this time from the items on Executive Session.

Chairman Rowell did note that the item on the Executive Session of the Agenda listed as “Shared Services Agreement” would be addressed under Item # 9I of the agenda. He also noted that he would be recusing himself from Item # 9I and Vice Chairman Arzillo would be handling that item on the agenda.

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

6. PRESENTATIONS:

A) Kim Statler, Executive Director of Polaris Tech Charter School and Dr. Karen Wicks, CEO of Royal Live Oaks Academy – Presentation on behalf of Royal Live Oaks Charter School and Polaris Tech Charter School to discuss the roles of Charter Schools within Jasper County and potential avenues for support.

Presentation on Charter Schools in Jasper County was delivered by Kim Statler (Executive Director, Polaris Tech Charter School) and Dr. Karen Wicks (CEO, Royal Live Oaks Academy), accompanied by school board members and Superintendent Cameron Renan.

Economic & Community Information:

- Polaris Tech Charter School: 64 employees, discussed their operating payroll, and their capital investments.
- Royal Live Oaks Academy: 85 employees, discussed their operating payroll, and their capital investment.
- This has created a combined impact of over 150 regional jobs.

Operational & Financial Challenges:

- Presenters cited significant academic gaps among incoming students, necessitating dedicated summer boot camps and specialized support staff (MTSS Director, Title III Director, Special Ed Director, RTI Coordinator, interventionists, tutors, paraprofessionals).
- Wage Competition: Neighboring Beaufort County increased starting teacher salaries from the \$50,000 state average to \$62,000, placing local charter schools at a hiring disadvantage.

- **Facilities Funding Disparity:** Charter schools receive \$11,645 in state per-pupil allocation compared to local public school district averages of approximately \$22,000; charter schools receive zero dedicated facility funding and must pay debt service from operating funds.

Legislative Update:

- **House Bill 5182 (HF 5182):** Introduced by Representative Hager and the local delegation to clarify county authority to fund charter schools.
- Representative Hager reported that the Governor vetoed the bill under the premise that counties already possess explicit Home Rule and budget authority to fund charter schools directly.

Presenters confirmed both institutions operate strictly as non-profit schools. Council members discussed scheduling joint work sessions with the City of Hardeeville, Town of Ridgeland, and charter school leadership prior to FY2027 budget deliberations. For more information on this presentation, please visit our YouTube Channel for the video at https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCBmloqX05cKAsHm_ggXCJIA.

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.

Carolyn Smith discussed her concerns for the Jasper County Hunger Free Zone and the Coosawhatchie Community Center. She also mentioned the pantry they had there and the items they lost.

Thelma Austin discussed her concerns about the loss of the Coosawhatchie Community Center.

Keith Bryant discussed his concerns for the Jasper County Hunger Free Zone at the Coosawhatchie Community Center.

Lafayette Weber discussed being a victim of land grabbing in Jasper County and his thoughts of the unfairness of it.

8. RESOLUTIONS

A) Kimberly Burgess - Consideration of Resolution #R-2026-14, a Resolution of Jasper County, South Carolina County Council Resolution approving the State Accommodations Tax Advisory Committee Members.

Ms. Burgess was present to discuss the consideration of Resolution #R-2026-14, a Resolution of Jasper County, South Carolina County Council Resolution approving the State Accommodations Tax Advisory Committee Members. After some discussion Council noted that they needed additional information.

Motion to table until they had further information: Councilman Kemp

Second: Councilman VanGeison

Vote: Unanimous

The motion passed.

B) Eric Larson – Consideration of Resolution #R-2026-18, a Resolution of Jasper County, South Carolina Proclaiming the month of April 2026 as Fair Housing Month.

Mr. Larson was present to discuss the consideration of Resolution #R-2026-18, a Resolution of Jasper County, South Carolina Proclaiming the month of April 2026 as Fair Housing Month.

Motion to approve: Councilman Ceccarelli

Second: Councilman Kemp

Vote: Unanimous

The motion passed.

C) Kimberly Burgess - Consideration of Resolution #R-2026-19, a Resolution Authorizing the Jasper County Council to Adopt an Assessment and Appeals Policy for the Administration of the County's Business License Program; And Other Matters Relating Thereto.

Ms. Burgess was present to discuss the consideration of Resolution #R-2026-19, a Resolution Authorizing the Jasper County Council to Adopt an Assessment and Appeals Policy for the Administration of the County's Business License Program.

Motion to approve: Councilman Arzillo

Second: Councilman Ceccarelli

Vote: Unanimous

The motion passed.

9. PUBLIC HEARINGS, ORDINANCES, AND ACTION ITEMS

A) Eric Larson – Consideration of the 1st Reading of an Ordinance establishing the Lease Agreement with the Jasper County Chamber of Commerce and the Jasper County Historical Society for the use of the Perry House, located at 403 Russell Street in Ridgeland. (1st Reading of this item was tabled at the 03.16.2026 Meeting)

Mr. Larson was present to discuss the consideration of the 1st Reading of an Ordinance establishing the Lease Agreement with the Jasper County Chamber of Commerce and the Jasper County Historical Society for the use of the Perry House, located at 403 Russell Street in Ridgeland. After some discussion Council noted that they needed additional information.

Motion to table: Councilman Kemp

Second: Councilman Arzillo

Vote: Unanimous

The motion passed.

B) Eric Larson – Consideration of the 1st Reading of an Ordinance establishing the Property Management Agreement with the Jasper County Chamber of Commerce to Manage the Jasper County Farmer’s Market located at 9935 Jacob Smart Boulevard, Highway 17 South, in the City of Ridgeland. (1st Reading of this item was tabled at the 03.16.2026 Meeting)

Mr. Larson was present to discuss the consideration of the 1st Reading of an Ordinance establishing the Property Management Agreement with the Jasper County Chamber of Commerce to Manage the Jasper County Farmer’s Market located at 9935 Jacob Smart Boulevard, Highway 17 South, in the City of Ridgeland. After some discussion Council noted that they needed additional information.

Motion to table: Councilman Kemp

Second: Councilman VanGeison

Vote: Unanimous

The motion passed.

C) Eric Larson - Consideration of the 1st Reading an Ordinance of Jasper County Council to Authorize a Settlement Agreement with Jasper County Radio Control Chapter No. 5096 of the Academy of Model Aeronautics, Inc.

Mr. Larson was present to discuss the consideration of the 1st Reading of an Ordinance of Jasper County Council to Authorize a Settlement Agreement with Jasper County Radio Control Chapter No. 5096 of the Academy of Model Aeronautics, Inc.

Motion to approve: Councilman Ceccarelli

Second: Councilman Kemp

Vote: Unanimous

The motion passed.

D) Jim Iwanicki – Consideration of approval of professional services contract associated with RFQ #2025 -14 for 2025 CTC Paving and 2025/2026 Parking Lot Repair with J Bragg Consulting, Inc for actual cost not to exceed \$100,000.

Mr. Iwanicki was present to discuss the consideration of approval of professional services contract associated with RFQ #2025 -14 for 2025 CTC Paving and 2025/2026 Parking Lot Repair with J Bragg Consulting, Inc for actual cost not to exceed \$100,000.

Motion to approve: Councilman Ceccarelli

Second: Councilman Arzillo

Vote: Unanimous

The motion passed.

E) Kim Burgess and Jim Iwanicki– Presentation, Consideration and Approval of RFP #2026-11 Design Build Services for Various Boat Landing Improvements.

Ms. Burgess and Mr. Iwanicki were present to discuss the consideration and approval of RFP #2026-11 Design Build Services for various boat landing improvements. Mr. Iwanicki provided the following information as listed in his staff report.

Bids were received on March 10, 2026, at 1:00pm for the Design Build Services for Various Boat Landing Improvements.

This project included improvements at Beck’s Ferry Landing, Turnbridge Landing, and Knowles Island Pier. The project also included concept designs for B & C Landing, Bolan Hall Landing, Cooks Landing, Corner Lake Landing, Dawson’s Landing, and Tuten’s Landing.

There were two bidders that submitted proposals. Two RFPs were received. The RFPs were scored by a committee consisting of Eric Larson, Director of Development Services, Corey Bivens, Director of Parks and Recreation, and Jim Iwanicki Engineering Services Director. Scoring was based on the following:

Category:	Points (Max)
A. Key Personnel Points	25
B. Experience and Unique Qualifications	25
C. Projects and Past Performance	25
D. Costs	25
	Total 100

Based on the scoring criteria the scoring committee has determined Nix Construction Company is the most responsive RFP. A legislative earmark/grant in the amount of \$750,000.00 from the SC Department of Parks, Recreation, and Tourism has been awarded and the funds have been received which will provide the majority of the funding for the project.

Since Nix’s proposal exceeded the amount of the grant. Staff developed two options to address the shortfall.

Option 1 - Eliminate the construction portion of the Turnbridge Landing, which is a savings of \$448,300 bringing the total of the contract to \$590,004. This would also allow \$159,996 for the resurfacing of Beck’s Ferry parking lot which was not part of this RFP. Mr. Larson contacted Nix Construction, and they agreed to the reduction in scope.

Option 2 – This project is eligible to use Local A/H Tax funding. During the 10.30.2025, Capital Improvement Plan and Budget Workshop, Council identified \$800,000 Local A/H Tax funding to be used for pathways and bridges at Sargent Jasper Park. To accomplish all the proposed work at the boat landings an additional \$438,304 is required (\$288,304 for work identified in this RFP and an additional \$150,000 for the Beck’s Ferry parking lot resurfacing). Staff requested that the \$438,304 be moved from the pathways and bridges project to the boat ramp project. The pathways and bridge project would be moved to FY2027.

The staff recommendation was to award RFP #2026-11 Design Build Services for Various Boat Landing Improvements to Nix Construction Company, Inc. as the most responsive proposer in the amount of \$1,038,304 and authorize the County Administrator to sign the contract. In addition, budget \$438,304 in Local

A/H Tax funding for boat landing improvements and move Sargent Jasper Park Pathways and Bridges projects to FY2027.

Motion to approve: Councilman Kemp

Second: Councilman Arzillo

Vote: Unanimous

The motion passed.

F) Kim Burgess and Jim Iwanicki and Kim Burgess – Presentation, Consideration and Approval of IVTB #2026-5 rebid – SJP Walkway, Pavilion, Gazebo Refurb.

Ms. Burgess and Mr. Iwanicki were present to discuss the consideration and approval of IVTB #2026-5 rebid – SJP Walkway, Pavilion, Gazebo Refurb.

Bids were received on March 18, 2026, at 1:00pm for the Sargent Jasper Park Walkway, Pavilion, Gazebo Refurb for IVTB #2026-5. Seven companies attended the mandatory pre-bid meeting held on February 11, 2026, at 1:00pm. This project was to replace the wood decking around the Park Office Building and adding a small section of new decking on the north side of the building.

Two bids were received: CBS Builders, LLC, Hardeeville, S.C. – Bid amt. \$108,743.07 and Nix Construction Company, Inc. Ridgeland, S.C. – Bid amt. \$143,620.10 The staff recommendation was that CBS Builders, LLC was an acceptable bidder and the low bidder, therefore staff recommended awarding Award IVTB #2026-5 Rebid – SJP Walkway, Pavilion, Gazebo Refurb Bid to CBS Builders, LLC in the amount of \$108,743.07

Motion to approve: Councilman Kemp

Second: Councilman Ceccarelli

Vote: Unanimous

The motion passed.

G) Jim Iwanicki - Architectural Professional Services Change Order for the Coosawhatchie Fire Station.

Mr. Iwanicki was present to review and discuss the Architectural Professional Services Change Order for the Coosawhatchie Fire Station. A contract was signed with McMillan Pazdan Smith LLC (MPS) for professional architectural services for the new Coosawhatchie Fire Station in September of 2024 in the amount of \$727,333.00.

MPS started the project and provided programming services based on locating the station at the site of the Old Coosawhatchie School. After these services were provided it was determined that a different property should be used for the fire station and the building footprint should be reduced to stay within budgetary constraints. The services have been on hold for a little over a year as these issues were worked out. The change order is a result of having to duplicate some work previously completed and some minor adjustments for 2026 labor costs. The existing contract defines that these circumstances are conditions that justify additional compensation for the architect.

The parties negotiated the change order to have an additional cost of \$58,510.00, bringing the new contract cost to \$785,843.00, an increase of just over 8%. The staff recommendation was that Council approve the change order for McMillan Pazdan Smith LLC for professional architectural services for the new Coosawhatchie Fire Station in the amount of \$58,510.00 and authorize the County Administrator to sign the contract amendment.

Motion to approve contingent upon the deed: Councilman Kemp

Second: Councilman Ceccarelli

Vote: Unanimous

The motion passed.

H) Jim Iwanicki - 112 Weathersbee Building Renovation Upfit for Assessors Office and Authorization to Engage MBKahn to Prepare a Guaranteed Maximum Price Proposal for the Upfit.

Mr. Iwanicki was present to review and discuss the 112 Weathersbee Building Renovation Upfit for Assessors Office and Authorization to Engage MB Kahn to Prepare a Guaranteed Maximum Price Proposal for the Upfit.

The location of 112 Weathersbee was the temporary home the Pratt Memorial Library. The library project was completed and at the October 30, 2025, Capital Improvement Plan and Budget Workshop the Council consensus was to upfit 112 Weathersbee for the Assessor. During that meeting, \$200,000.00 in GO Bond Series funding was identified to accomplish the upfit. The staff recommendation is that Council approve renovating 112 Weathersbee Building and upfitting it for the Assessor Office with an overall budget of \$500,000.00. In addition, authorize staff to engage MB Kahn to prepare a Guaranteed Maximum Price Proposal for the upfit project for Council approval.

Motion to approve: Councilman Ceccarelli

Second: Councilman Kemp

Vote: Unanimous

The motion passed.

I) Chief Russell Wells – Consideration of the 1st Reading of an Ordinance Amending Chapter 9 of the Code of Ordinances of Jasper County Regarding Fire Protection Districts to Create the Jasper County Rural Fire Protection District; Eliminating all Existing Fire Protection Districts; Authorizing the Novation of all Outstanding Bonds and Other Debt Obligations to the New District; Requesting and Accepting Dedication of County-Funded Fire Capital Equipment and Facilities; Authorizing a Fire Service Contract Between the New District and The City Of Hardeeville; Authorizing the Lease of Certain County Real Property; Authorizing the Conveyance of Certain Personal Property; and Other Matters Relating Thereto.

Chairman Rowell recused himself from this item and the meeting was turned over to Vice Chairman Arzillo for the duration of this agenda item. Chief Wells was present to review and discuss the consideration of the 1st Reading of an Ordinance amending Chapter 9 of the Code of Ordinances of Jasper County regarding Fire Protection Districts to create the Jasper County Rural Fire Protection District; Eliminating all existing Fire Protection Districts; Authorizing the novation of all outstanding bonds and other debt obligations to the New District; Requesting and accepting dedication of county-funded fire capital equipment and facilities;

Authorizing a Fire Service Contract between the New District and the City Of Hardeeville; authorizing the lease of certain county real property; Authorizing the conveyance of certain personal property.

Motion to approve: Councilman Kemp

Second: Councilman Ceccarelli

Vote: 4 yes votes; 1 recusal from Chairman Rowell

The motion passed.

The meeting was turned back over to the Chairman.

10. Councilmember Comments and Discussion – Councilmember Comments were given but there were no comments that required action.

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.

Closed captions are also available for all of our County Council videos. Just click the "CC" button to follow along.

11. Adjournment:

Motion to approve: Councilman Kemp

Second: Councilman Arzillo

Vote: Unanimous

The motion passed.

The motion passed and the meeting was adjourned.



Wanda Giles, Clerk to Council



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