JASPER COUNTY COUNCIL
SPECIAL CALLED VIRTUAL MEETING

Jasper County Clementa C. Pinckney Government Bldg
358 3rd Avenue Ridgeland, SC 29936
Friday, December 12, 2025
Minutes

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

Staff Present: County Administrator Andrew Fulghum, Clerk to Council Wanda Giles, Lawrence Flynn Interim County Attorney, Chris Malphrus, Sheriff of Jasper County, Chris Johnson, and Videographer Jonathan Dunham.

1. Call to Order by Chairman Kemp

The meeting was called to order by Chairman Kemp and the Clerk read the Report of Compliance with the Freedom of Information Act as follows: *While the S.C. Freedom of Information Act does not strictly apply for Emergency Meetings or Special Meetings (§ 30-40-80(A)), for the public benefit and out an abundance of caution, County Council used its best efforts to inform the public via physical posting of the agenda as early as possible, publishing of the agenda on the County website, and the publishing of the agenda to all news media and persons 24 hours prior to this meeting 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 to the Flag and Invocation

The Pledge to the Flag was given and Vice Chairman Rowell gave the invocation.

3. Approval of Agenda

Chairman Kemp made the following statement, "In advance of approving the agenda, I would like to request a motion to add another item for consideration at executive session. In addition to the criminal investigation discussion under 30-4-70(A)(4) involving misappropriation of funds I would also like to discuss alleged threats made by the treasurer against the county staff. Due to circumstances about the staff's safety, I believe that this matter constitutes exigent circumstances for the amendment of the agenda as contemplated in section 30 dash 4 dash 80 of the South Carolina Freedom of Information act. A supermajority vote of council (four to five of council) is required to add this item to the agenda. Also consistent with the agenda, action may be taken on this matter coming out of executive session". Chairman Kemp then asked if he had a motion to approve. Councilman Ceccarelli made the motion to approve, and Councilman VanGeison seconded the motion. The vote was unanimously approved. The motion passed.

Approval of the Agenda:
Chairman kemp asked for a motion to approve the agenda as amended. Vice Chairman Rowell made the motion to approve the agenda as amended. Councilman Arzillo seconded the motion. The motion was unanimously approved. The motion passed. The Executive Session discussion included the criminal investigation involving misappropriation of funds (as originally listed) and the alleged threats made by the treasurer against county staff.

4. Executive Session

County Council plans to enter executive session to discuss the following items:

(i) Receipt of legal advice on matters covered by the attorney-client privilege (SC Code Section 30-4-70(a)(2)): Discussion of Bonus Payments by County Treasurer

(ii) Investigative proceedings regarding allegations of criminal misconduct privilege (SC Code Section 30-4-70(a)(4)): Discussion of misappropriation of public funds

Councilman VanGeison made the motion to go into Executive Session. Vice Chairman Rowell seconded the motion. The motion to go into executive session was unanimously approved. The motion passed.

5. Return to Open Session

Motion to come out of Executive Session: Councilman VanGeison
Second: Vice Chairman Rowell
Vote: Unanimous
The motion passed.

Chairman Kemp asked Attorney Flynn to give a rundown on their Resolution. Interim County Attorney Mr. Lawrence Flynn provided an overview of an emergency resolution drafted as a result of the Executive Session discussions. The resolution addressed threats made against certain county staff members by the County Treasurer and the alleged misappropriation of public funds related to bonus monies. A resolution was produced. The resolution was entitled "An Emergency Resolution to Institute Immediate Safety Measures for Public Facilities, Personnel, and Resources". He noted that it was requested that Council take action to implement that resolution immediately.

6. Council Action to be taken on items as discussed in Executive Session *Council may act on any item appearing on the agenda, including items discussed in executive session.

The Chairman said he would like to have motion to pass **Resolution 2025-73**, "an emergency resolution to institute immediate safety measures for public facilities, personnel and resources and other matters related thereto.

Motion to go forward with Resolution # 2025-73: Councilman Ceccaraelli.
Second: Councilman Arzillo
Vote: Unanimous
The motion passed.

7. Adjourn

A motion to adjourn was made by Councilman VanGeison and was seconded by Vice Chairman Rowell. The vote was unanimous. The meeting was then 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.

Respectfully submitted:

Wanda H. Giles
Clerk to Council

W.J. Rowell III
Chairman