

**MINUTES
WESTMINSTER CITY COUNCIL
Planning Session Workshop
Tuesday, January 23, 2024**

The City Council of the City of Westminster met in a Planning Session Workshop on Tuesday January 23, 2024, at 1:00 pm at the Westminster Fire Department with Mayor Brian Ramey presiding. Those in attendance were:

Brian Ramey	Dale Glymph	Adam Dunn	Daby Snipes
Jimmy Powell	Ruth May	Audrey Reese	

City Administrator, Kevin Bronson
City Clerk, Rebecca Overton
Fire Chief, Michael Smith
Interim Police Chief, Caitlyn Pope
Members of the press

Notice of the meeting and the agenda was posted on the door at the Westminster Fire Department and at westminstersc.org twenty-four hours prior to the meeting and all persons, organizations and local media requesting notification and the agenda were notified by email.

Call to Order

Mayor Ramey called the meeting to order at 1:00 pm.

Invocation and Pledge of Allegiance

Mrs. Audrey Reese led the Council in the invocation and the pledge.

New Business

1. Planning Session

Mr. Bronson led the Council in a review of the previous year's financial reports. He presented a power point presentation which detailed an overview of all funds which included expenses, revenues, and transfers. He also reviewed some results from the 2023 Priority goals and discussed upcoming projects and grants. Attached to these minutes is the presentation.

Adjourn

Upon a motion by Mrs. Reese and seconded by Mrs. Snipes, the motion ***to adjourn the meeting at 4:00 pm*** passed unanimously.

(Minutes submitted by Rebecca Overton)

Mayor Brian Ramey

Date

January 23, 2024

January 23, 2024

Annual Planning Workshop

**Recapping 2023 and setting
the stage for 2024**

Westminster, South Carolina



Westminster
SOUTH CAROLINA

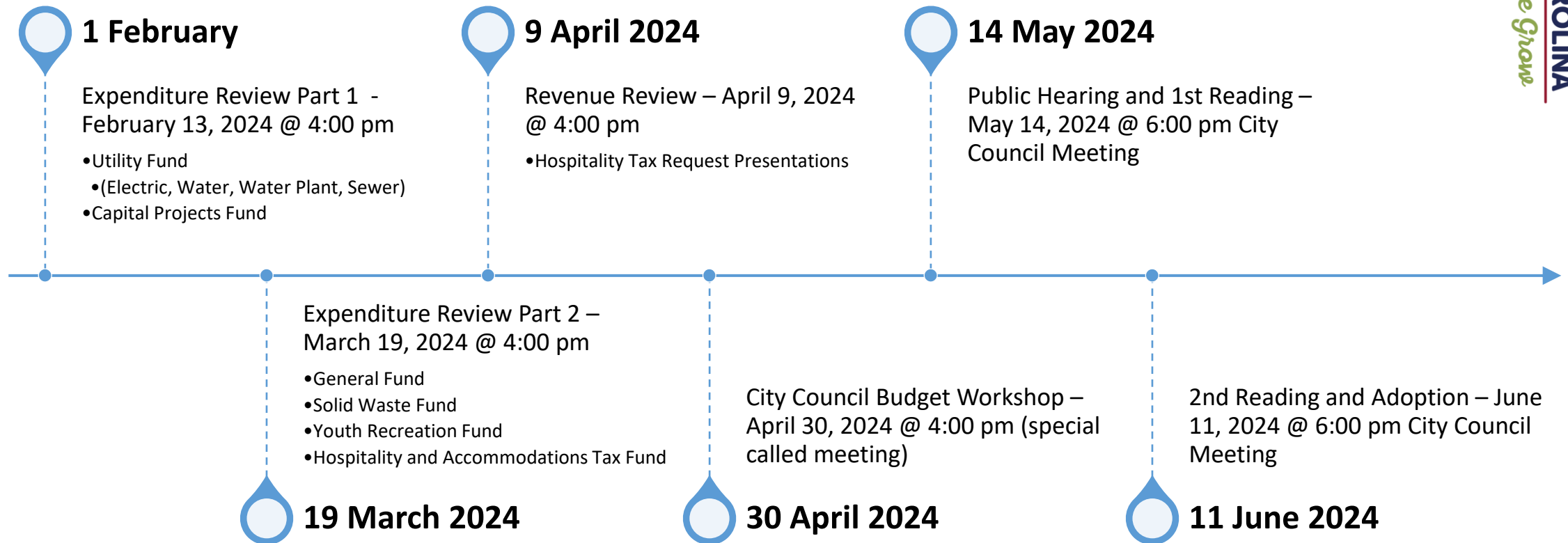
Together We Grow

Agenda for today

- 1) Recap of 2023 City Council priorities
- 2) Break (2:00 pm – give or take)
- 3) Recap of FY2024 financial information
- 4) Break (3:00 pm – give or take)
- 5) Laying the groundwork for 2024
- 6) 4:15 pm conclude



FY2024-25 Budget Schedule of events



Recap of 2023

On January 12, 2023 City Council set a list of priorities for 2023.

- These priorities were divided into 4 categories...

1. Must Do

2. Should Do

3. Could Do

4. Others

Recap of 2023 **Must Do**

1. Complete CIP (with estimates, timelines, and funding plan), pursue water improvement project, see SCIIP funding request through, implement sewer improvements with SCIIP if successful, and complete improvements to close out SCDHEC consent order.

(secured state/federal grants for capital improvement projects; USDA-RD water improvements underway; secured \$5 million in SCIIP funds; continue to work on consent order)

1. Close SCDHEC consent order by implementing sewer upgrades.

(secured SCIIP funds – all for sewer improvements, identified additional problematic areas in the sewer collection system, continue developing funding plans, staff continues to assess the system and make minor improvements)

1. Hall Road Recreation Project- recreation complex, rec trails grant, funding for ball fields, working on funding plan for gym, piece together plan and present to City Council.

(secured \$5 million in state funding, application made for LWCF funds for Picnic Pavilion and accompanying amenities (possible \$1 million))

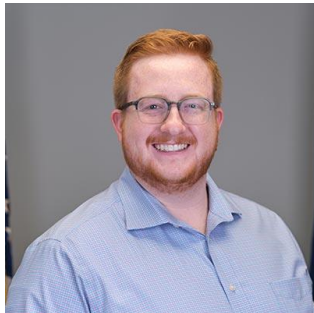
Recap of 2023 **Must Do**

2. Main Street revitalization (both back and front sides), additional and upgraded parking, develop strategy for addressing dilapidation, streetscape Grey Street parking/underpass. Implement Downtown Master Plan.

(completed downtown master plan, completed marketing study, used the master plan to secure \$750,000 in state CDBG funding for streetscape improvements and are in the process of securing ARC funds, implemented vacant building registry which includes downtown properties)

2. Add assistant to City Administrator, address fire this year and plan for police; evaluate sufficiency of staffing in police and fire, share info with council for consideration and next steps; evaluate and address competitive pay in all departments particularly address CDL pay.

(hired...



...increased police officer and firefighter pay to stay competitive with surrounding agencies, renegotiated fire service contract with Oconee County (secured additional funds, continue to monitor compensation trends for all positions)

Recap of 2023 Should Do

1. Old magistrate's office, develop plan for building, explore partnerships to renovate the building and utilize going forward.

(developed a partnership with the Oconee County Chamber of Commerce to locate in the front office and maintain office hours; ongoing discussions about funding office improvements; developed a plan to renovate the building and City Hall, the cost is about \$1.8 million, no action taken, needs further discussion and evaluation.)

2. Simpson Street fields, budget funding in FY 24 budget (scoreboard, dugouts, fencing, and bleachers).

(dedicated Yousef Mefleh Memorial Fields in May 2023, dugouts, fencing were installed, still need funding for scoreboards, sound system, bathrooms, concessions.)

3. Demo old fire bays on the back of City Hall

(demo completed in March 2023; the area was made into a small green space/park, partnered with Lazy Daisy's who sponsored Arbor Day tree planning of four Ginkgo trees, received a grant from the state which supplied 13 small trees planted on the City Hall campus.)

Recap of 2023 Could Do (1 of 2)

1. For the 27-acre city-owned tract on Chauga River, evaluate prospects for property; conceptualize project/uses whether possible.

(no action taken)

2. Step up code enforcement on HWY 123 corridor, especially vacant properties; may include a vacant building registration program.

(increased code enforcement, several properties clean/junk removed, Council adopted Vacant Building Registry in September 2023, there were 22 commercial properties and 72 residential properties identified as vacant; property owners have been notified and the registry system is underway)

3. Implement Anderson Park project as awarded from the Community Development Block Grant funds and develop a plan for programming at the park to generate activity and bring the community together.

(the project encountered a delay when no companies bid on the project in August 2023; a design consultant was hired, and the project will be re-bid by the end of January 2024)

Recap of 2023 Could Do (2 of 2)

3. Increase marketing and tourism promotion using multimedia messaging, commercials, etc.

(new features were added to the city's new website)

3. Riley Street property, develop redevelopment plan.

(a proposal to sell the property was not approved by the City Council, the site has been cleaned)

3. Inventory buildings (commercial), assess condition, and identify the highest and best use for each whether private or public.

(this work is included in the Vacant Building Registry)

Recap of 2023 Others...(slide 1 of 3)

1. Cost-benefit (and feasibility) analysis of serving growth out of the town with water and sewer.
- ✓✓✓ 2. Develop plan for recruiting large retail, particularly clothing stores, groceries, and incentivizing their investment in Westminster; present to council for consideration.
- ✓✓✓ 3. Council/staff evaluate street lighting throughout the town, identify potential opportunities for upgrades (additional lights, LED...) Have council approve and incorporate in FY 2024 budget.
- ✓ 4. Improve current communication efforts to the public; identify new methods (digital sign, newsletter, etc.).
- ✓ 5. More sidewalks, staff to identify priority areas in consultation with City Council, estimate cost, identify funding.
- ✓ 6. Explore concepts for fitness trail, feasibility and implement as part of the Hall Road Project.
7. Evaluate feasibility of splash pad downtown to serve as a draw and amenity - estimate cost, determine funding source.
8. CATBUS route out to Westminster, explore and inform City Council.
- ✓ 9. Upgrade police station to meet current and future needs of department. Come up with approaches, estimate cost.

Recap of 2023 Others...(slide 2 of 3)

10. Approach county and state agencies about concept of having regular office hours in Westminster by establishing a substation building, which would make the county and state more accessible to Westminster residents.

✓✓ 11. HWY 123 gateway, evaluate and conceptualize beautification improvements and sidewalks.

✓ 12. Housing for the displaced. As part of the discussion, engage state housing agency and participate in discussions and solutions; food for those in need/transition.

✓✓✓ 13. Improvement of city website.

✓ 14. Senior services-explore what City can do to make more readily and conveniently available to senior citizens of Westminster and surrounding area.

15. Old high school/LA building. Assess condition, possible uses, and related renovation and maintenance expenses (events, clinics, camps).

✓✓ 16. Speed limit signs, speed limit city wide unless otherwise specified and cross street signs; High School recognition signs for championships, west oak banners, and logo on water tanks (possible fundraising effort).

17. Mural, print a new one “Home of the West Oak Warriors.”

18. Artwork on railroad underpasses.

Recap of 2023 Others...(slide 3 of 3)

19. Develop a plan to recruit a business that will provide an outlet for teenagers or look at a public activity center for them or some alternative.

✓ 20. Public restrooms downtown-construct may also incorporate into the magistrate building renovation project.

✓✓ 21. Recreation department- redo parking barriers, additional parking at gym, tennis courts, redo re-evaluate and convert to pickle ball, landscape plan for Owens Stadium and Simpsonville Street fields.

✓✓ 22. Utility Department- 5 year plan for equipment and capital projects, ROW maintenance schedule plan, line truck and bucket truck, 2 ½ ton pickups and 1 ¼ ton, dump truck, pave area behind shop, walk behind sidewalks, dig trenches. Fence around community garden.

23. Recreation clinics for players, coaches and officials. Approach Clemson regarding it and high school coaches.

24. Explore other camp concepts, maybe one-day art, one-day baseball.

25. Community events continue with monthly offerings and step-up promotions and communication of event info, info about programs and tournaments.

✓✓✓ 26. Police Department- flock cameras- more of them; restore 2 frozen positions; sign on bonus for certified officers with 2 years of experience; 2 vehicle per year replacement schedule; Tasers (move from obsolete X25 and move to Tasers 7S); EZ street program.

✓✓✓ 27. Fire Department- 3 more firefighters; updated reporting software.

Let's take a break



RECAP Summary of Approved FY2024 Budget

General Fund Totals	\$ 2,914,572
Utility Totals	\$ 8,301,415
Solid Waste Totals	\$ 915,046
Fire Department 1% Totals	\$ 13,609
Youth Recreation Fund	\$ 579,319
Local Development Corp Totals	\$ 47,031
Capital Project Fund/State ARP Totals	\$ 14,530,684
County ARP Totals	\$ 682,324
Hospitality Fund Totals	\$ 484,314
State & Local Accom. Totals	\$ 8,300
All Funds Total	<u>\$ 28,476,614</u>



City-wide Summary RECAP (FY2023-2024)

The FY2024 Budget was a growth-oriented and reduced expenses to prepare for more future growth.

- Millage (tax) reduction – 3.5 mils
- Recreation Fees - increase (\$5/participant)
- Tap Fee increases
 - Water Tap Fee (outside city)
 - Sewer Tap Fee (outside City)
- Depot Rental fee increase
- Anderson Park fee increase
- Added a Anderson Park (as a department in GF) \$11,500

Personnel

- 5% COLA
- 3.7% health insurance increase

Rates

Water Rate – no increase
Electric Rate– no increase
Sewer Rate – no increase
Garbage Collection Fee - no increase

RECAP Debt Service

	Actual	Budget	Projection	Projection	Projection	Projection	Projection	Projection	Projection	Projection
	2023	2024	2025	2026	2027	2028	2029	2030	2031	2032
Solid Waste Capital Lease										
Garbage Truck ¹	\$30,677	\$0	\$0	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -
Knuckleboom Truck ²	\$29,704	\$0	\$0	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -
2023 garbage truck ³	\$ -	\$ 46,062.64	\$ 46,062.64	\$ 46,062.64	\$ 46,062.64	\$ 46,062.64	\$ 46,062.64	\$ 46,062.64	\$ 46,062.65	\$ -
Utility Obligations										
principal - revenue bonds	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -
interest - revenue bonds	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -
ConserFund ⁴	\$0	\$40,115	\$40,115	\$40,115	\$40,115	\$40,115	\$40,115	\$40,115	\$40,115	\$40,115
2022 Utility equipment lease ⁵	\$79,332	\$78,166	\$77,001	\$75,835	\$74,669	\$73,503	\$39,506	\$38,878	\$ -	\$ -
Electric line truck ⁶	\$ -	\$ 39,526.65	\$ 39,526.65	\$ 39,526.65	\$ 39,526.65	\$ 39,526.65	\$ 39,526.65	\$ 39,526.65	\$ 39,526.65	\$ -
General Fund Obligations										
Police/Fire vehicles ⁷	\$ -	\$ 50,659.22	\$ 50,659.22	\$ 50,659.22	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -
Fire SCBA's ⁸	\$27,960.85	\$ 27,960.85	\$ 27,960.85	\$ 27,960.85	\$ 27,960.85	\$ 27,960.85	\$ 27,960.85	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -
Combined Obligations										
2023 Vehicle/Equipment Lease ⁹			\$121,800.61	\$ 121,800.61	\$121,800.61	\$121,800.61	\$121,800.63			
TOTAL	\$167,674	\$282,491	\$281,325	\$ 280,159.20	\$228,334.22	\$227,168.45	\$ 193,170.69	\$164,582.53	\$125,704.22	\$40,114.92



RECAP Debt Service (FOOTNOTES)

Garbage Truck lease - \$284,460. 10 yr term @2.24%. May 2013-

¹ May2023

Knuckleboom Truck lease - \$145,000. 5 yr term @2.5%. January 2018-January

² 2023

Garbage truck note- \$310,000. 7 year term @ 4.01% January 2024-January

³ 2031

⁴ ConservFund Loan - \$369,947.23. 10 yr term @ 1.5%. June 2023-June 2032

2022 utility equipment lease - \$503,000. Various terms, max 8 yrs @ 1.64%. Three (3) pickup trucks, one (1) brush hog, one (1) bucket

⁵ truck.

Source: Westminster FY2020 Audit and FY2021 Audit (note5)

⁶ Electric line truck- \$272,500. 7 year term @3.43% August 2023-August 2030

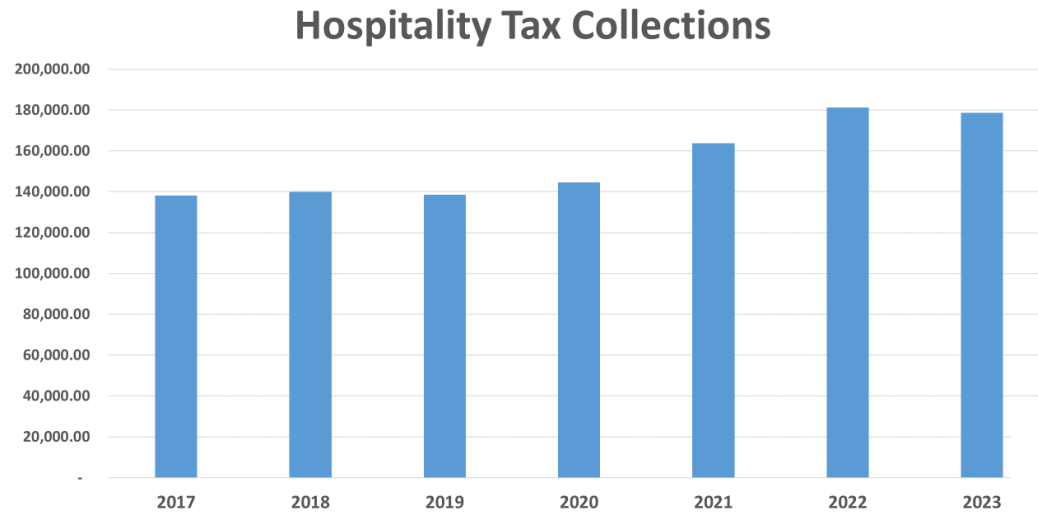
⁷ Police/Fire vehicles- \$142,500. 2 year term @3.29% August 2023-August 2025

⁸ SCBA's- \$174,406. 7 year term September 2022-September 2028

⁹ 2023 Vehicle/Equipment lease- \$535,000. 5 year term @4.48% - September 2024-September 2028-

(2) police vehicles @ \$90,000 total, (1) public works vehicle @ \$44,045, (1) water pickup @ \$46,000, (1) sewer pickup @ \$55,000, (1) leaf truck @ \$277,000

Hospitality tax, by the numbers



Hospitality tax, monthly collections

	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023
January	10,823.44	11,296.68	11,045.49	11,343.53	12,324.40	14,224.78	15,324.70
February	11,079.42	10,858.80	10,778.89	12,511.92	13,525.49	13,021.59	15,082.44
March	12,121.10	11,238.77	11,215.42	12,286.86	11,997.37	13,508.64	15,011.61
April	11,857.10	12,650.22	12,172.20	8,169.45	14,149.87	15,676.95	17,143.33
May	12,134.96	12,002.12	11,756.16	9,752.32	14,635.87	16,002.29	15,851.23
June	12,294.83	12,331.47	12,328.91	12,644.62	13,235.70	16,692.99	17,368.03
July	11,594.22	11,674.64	10,788.65	10,811.35	11,938.95	14,012.55	12,510.54
August	10,756.70	11,433.23	11,859.72	15,590.58	12,289.28	16,019.37	15,027.30
September	11,833.57	11,622.20	12,461.17	13,026.48	12,279.32	14,830.12	14,970.70
October	11,294.53	11,521.69	11,789.11	13,306.24	19,295.62	15,844.66	15,051.19
November	11,243.84	11,830.06	11,342.49	13,351.32	13,337.05	16,087.27	13,391.23
December	11,141.63	11,449.15	11,054.43	11,871.72	14,743.58	15,347.08	11,843.03
TOTAL	138,175.34	139,909.03	138,592.64	144,666.39	163,752.50	181,268.29	178,575.33

Htax		recurring	fund balance	
Revenues	\$ 431,221	\$ 165,100	\$ 266,121	
		other	gf transfer out	yr transfer out
Expenditures	\$ 431,221	\$ 257,000	\$ 62,600	\$ 111,621



Gateway to the Mountain Lakes Region

FY2021-2022

- Increase in projected revenue \$22,800
- Fund Balance appropriation of \$266,121
 - FY2020 fund balance \$593,297 (would leave a balance of \$327,176)
- Reduce transfer to GF from \$106,000 to \$62,600
 - Transfer is tied to eligible activities
- Transfer to Youth Recreation \$111,621
 - Transfer is tied to eligible activities

Htax – major expenses

- \$25,000 for grant matches
- \$40,000 for community grants (current requests are \$69,800)
- \$50,000 lighting for old practice field
- \$100,000 capital projects
 - Lights at pool field
 - Dug outs
 - Playground equipment
 - Anderson Park
 - Pool property
 - Owens Field



Gateway to the Mountain Lakes Region



FY2022-2023



Gateway to the Mountain Lakes Region

Hospitality Tax

Hospitality Fund Totals

Expenditures	
Contractual Services	\$ 323,060
Capital Outlay	\$ 102,000
Other (Grants)	\$ 40,000
Total	\$ 465,060

Revenues	
Food & Beverage Tax	\$ 165,000
Fund Balance	\$ 300,060
Total	\$ 465,060

Highlights

• Transfer to GF ⁽¹⁾	\$104,100	• Anderson Park Improvements	\$ 42,000
• Transfer to Youth Recreation ⁽¹⁾	\$157,310	• Hall Street Park – design	\$ 50,000
• Special Events Committee	\$ 15,000	• Train Depot refresh	\$ 10,000
• Christmas Decorations	\$ 25,000	• Local Agency Grants	\$ 40,000

⁽¹⁾ tied to eligible activities

FY2023-2024



Hospitality Tax

Hospitality Fund Totals

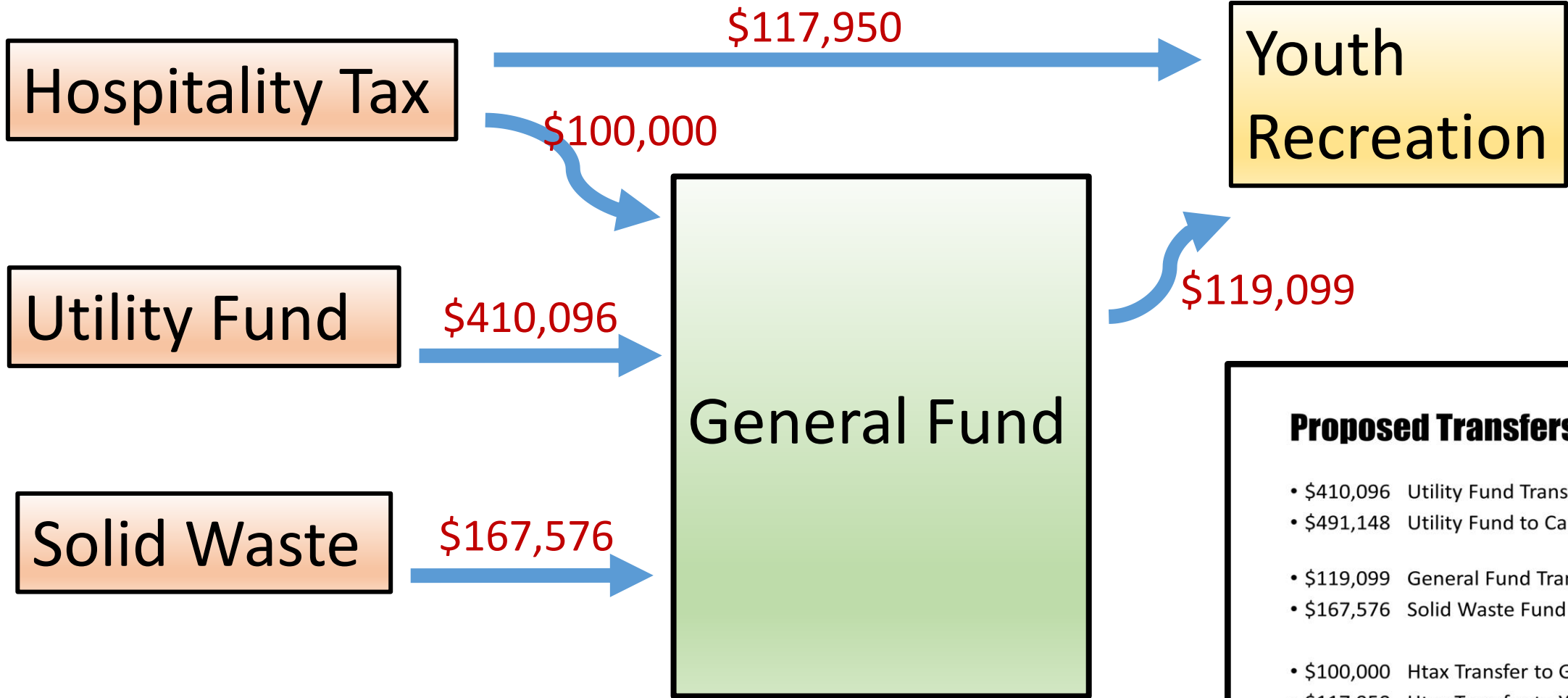
Expenditures	
Contractual Services	\$ 352,314
Capital Outlay	\$ 92,000
Other (Grants)	\$ 40,000
Total	\$ 484,314

Revenues	
Misc. & Other	\$ 484,314
Total	\$ 484,314

Highlights

• Income stream	\$200,000	• Transfer to GF ⁽¹⁾	\$100,000
• Fund balance appropriation	\$284,314	• Transfer to Youth Recreation ⁽¹⁾	\$117,950
		• Special Events Committee	\$ 8,000
		• Christmas Decorations	\$ 25,000
		• Downtown improvements	\$ 62,290
		• Simpson Road fields	\$ 37,000
		• Hall Road Recreation Complex	\$ 50,000
		• Local Agency Grants	\$ 40,000

Transfers (FY2023-2024 budget)



Proposed Transfers - Summary

- \$410,096 Utility Fund Transfer to General Fund (5.0% g
- \$491,148 Utility Fund to Capital Projects Fund (SCIIP m
- \$119,099 General Fund Transfer to Youth Recreation
- \$167,576 Solid Waste Fund Balance Transfer to Gene
- \$100,000 Htax Transfer to General Fund
- \$117,950 Htax Transfer to Youth Recreation

Let's take a break



Four things to think about

- State of the economy
- Anticipated construction activity
- Future capital needs
- Best interests of city residents



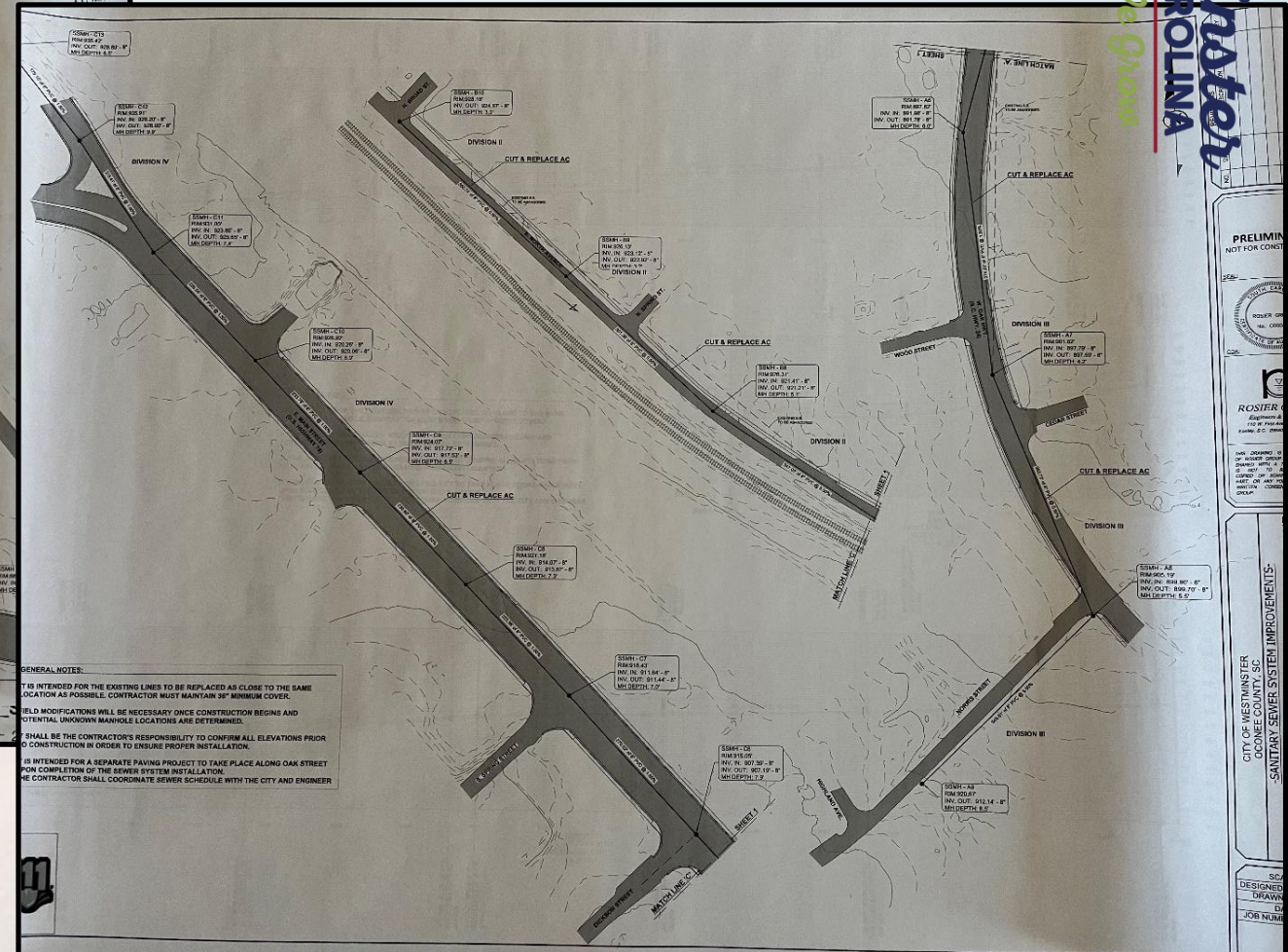
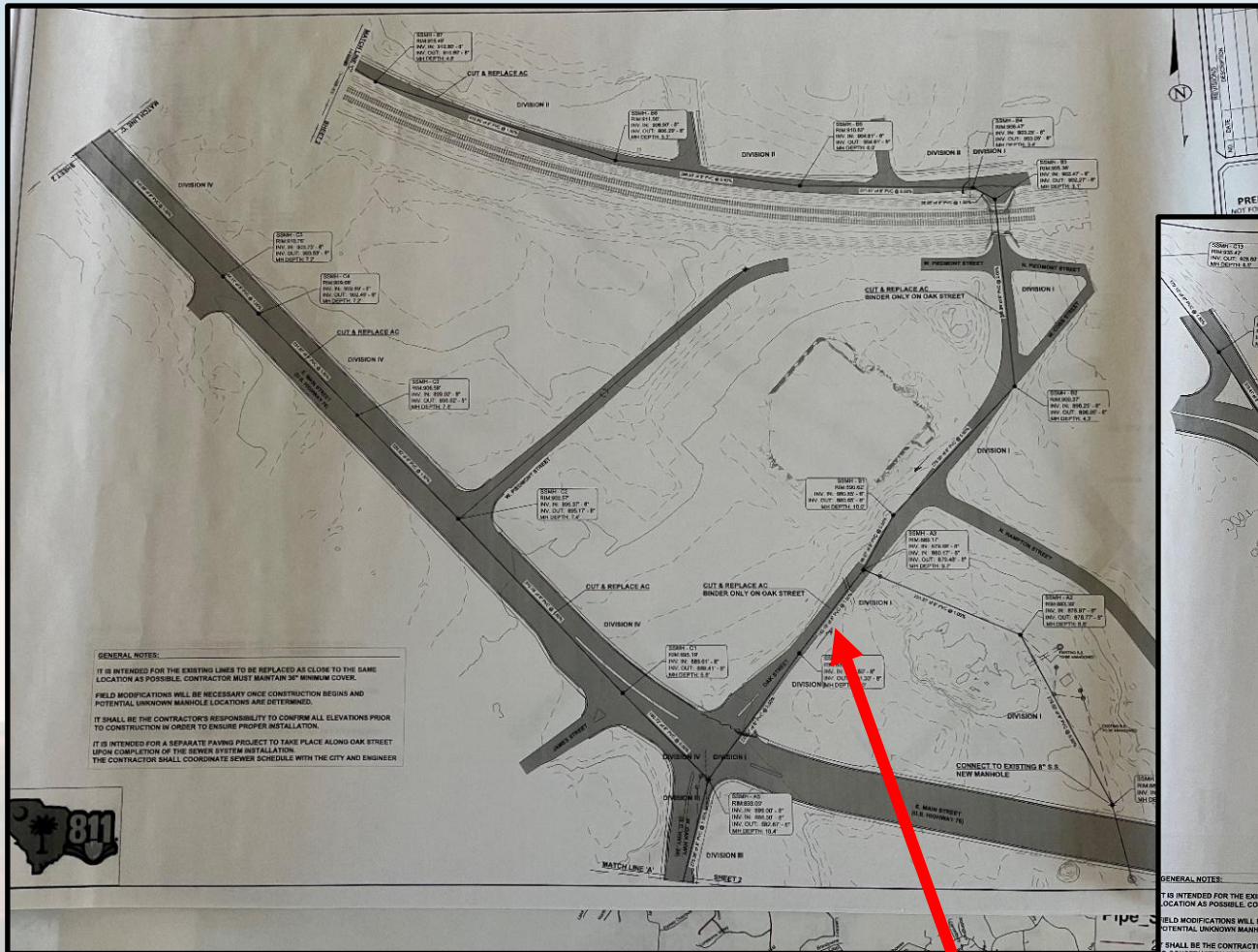
...laying the groundwork

...on the cusp

On the Horizon – Oak Street area sewer



Westminster
SOUTH CAROLINA
Together We Grow



On the Horizon

- Hire new Police Chief
- O&M agreement for electric
- Electric system reliability improvements
- Westminster Recreation Complex
- Downtown Improvements
- TreesUpstate – tree planting at Yousef Fields
- OJRSA sewer planning study – governance study
- OJRSA central basin study
- PMPA next steps
 - Litigation is settled
 - Construct new agreements
- Annexations
 - Grow the tax base
 - Grow the population
- Attract commercial investment
- Oak Street sewer basin
- Yousef Mefleh Memorial Fields
- Downtown water and sewer improvements
- Future Land Use Map
- New Zoning Ordinance
- Vacant Building Registry implementation
- Code enforcement (how quick do we move)

On the Horizon

Source of funds	Project	Grant	City Match	Total
Funded - In progress				
C-Funds	street repaving	\$ 760,000	\$ -	\$ 760,000
SC Energy Office	LED Lights in downtown	\$ 9,942	\$ 1,462	\$ 11,404
Oconee County Atax	wayfinding signage in downtown	\$ 6,500	\$ -	\$ 6,500
CDBG	Anderson Park	\$ 250,000	\$ 54,800	\$ 304,800
SC EMD	backup generators	\$ 257,634	\$ 28,626	\$ 286,260
SCIIP	sewer system improvements	\$ 3,929,180	\$ 982,295	\$ 4,911,475
USDA-RD	water system improvements	\$ 8,705,000	\$ -	\$ 8,705,000
SC Budget	Recreation Complex	\$ 5,000,000	\$ -	\$ 5,000,000
SCDPS	body-worn Camera	\$ 18,246	\$ -	\$ 18,246
SCDPS	hand-held radios	\$ 15,000	\$ -	\$ 15,000
Funded - planning				
CDBG	Main Street (Retreat to Lucky)	\$ 750,000	\$ 550,000	\$ 1,300,000
Federal earmark	water plant generator	\$ 1,429,000	\$ 285,800	\$ 1,714,800
Not funded (source identified)				
ARC	Grey Street improvements	\$ 298,331	\$ 298,331	\$ 596,662
RIA	Unity Tank improvements	\$ 428,274	\$ 224,230	\$ 652,504
LWCF	Pavillion for recreation complex	\$ 500,000	\$ 500,000	\$ 1,000,000
SC TAP	downtown streetscape	\$ 2,000,000	\$ 400,000	\$ 2,400,000
SC PARD	Hall Street parking safety rails	\$ 16,160	\$ 4,040	\$ 20,200
Federal earmark	City Hall rennovation	\$ 1,396,851	\$ 349,213	\$ 1,746,064
TOTAL		\$ 25,770,118	\$ 3,678,797	\$ 29,448,915.00

challenges

- Hospitality Tax limitations
 - Htax grants
 - Htax eligible projects – more needs than funds
- Setting aside grant matches in the upcoming budget(s)
- There are a lot of projects in the works – managing them well and not losing momentum
- Utility rate increases – there were none last year, expect some this year
- Competitive pay and benefits – retain and recruit employees (expected 11.7% PEBA increase)
- Special events
- Building permits and inspections
- Consent Order for sewer distribution system
- Building the tax base through economic development
- Differentiation (what our City offers)



...what to do?

- Riley Street property
- Recreation improvements
- City Hall campus improvements
 - Council Chamber project
 - Police Station renovations
 - Oconee Chamber/Visit Oconee
- Mimosa Street – sidewalk rehabilitation
- Anderson Park – additional elements
- Matching funds for grants
- \$\$\$ water/sewer projects?
- State budget?
- In-fill development
 - commercial
 - residential
- Oak Street area sewer project
- Maintenance on recreation facilities
- Fundraiser events
- How to market the city to prospective investors
- Continue with equipment replacements (utilities, police/fire, recreation)
- Increasing the tax base
 - Incentives
 - Recruitment
 - ...other?
- Restructure USDA loan
- Leverage debt as a tool – utility borrowing
- Jump start revitalization
- Market downtown
- Sidewalks
- Special events
- Pay increases for employees
- Expecting 11.7% PEBA increase (state)
- Water system software (SCADA)

It all comes down to...

#1 - What is the most important?

#2 - What do we fund, at what amount?



Thank you.



The End.

You may go home now 😊