

MINUTES
WESTMINSTER CITY COUNCIL
Regular Scheduled Meeting
Tuesday, June 17, 2025

The City Council of the City of Westminster met in a regularly scheduled meeting on Tuesday, June 17, 2025, at 6:00 pm at the Westminster Fire Department with Mayor Brian Ramey presiding. Those in attendance were:

Brian Ramey
 Jimmy Powell

Audrey Reese
 Dale Glymph

Daby Snipes
 Adam Dunn

Ruth May

City Administrator, Kevin Bronson
 Assistant City Administrator, Reagan Osbon
 City Clerk, Kiley Carter
 City Attorney, Keith Denny
 Police Chief, Fred Miller
 Utility Director, Scott Parris
 Fire Chief, Michael Smith
 Members of the public and press

Notice of the meeting and the agenda was posted on a window at the 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 6:00 pm.

Certification of Quorum

Kiley Carter certified a quorum.

Invocation and Pledge of Allegiance

Mrs. Audrey Reese led the Council in the invocation and the Pledge of All

Public Comments

Faith Guynn spoke on the annexation consideration at 129 Dewey Street. She spoke on how this was her grandfather's home that she purchased. She stated that it was her grandfather's wish that this property not be annexed in.

Comments from the Mayor and Council

- a. Mrs. Snipes thanked everyone that works for the City.
- b. Mr. Glymph acknowledged the kids in the town that made it to travel ball all-stars.
- c. Mrs. Reese asked everyone to please shop at small businesses within the town to support the all-star teams.
- d. Mayor Ramey told Ms. Guynn that there would be a discussion about annexing her property in. He explained the planning commission process with annexations and then the city council process.
- e. Mayor Ramey wants everyone within city limits to be able to shoot their guns. He would like to consider re-visiting the ordinance since we are annexing in to grow the town. Mr. Bronson stated that this would be an amendment to the current zoning ordinance.
- f. Mayor Ramey asked about Herb raising money for travel ball. Mr. Bronson explained how that process works to pay for all stars. The city does pay for some while Herb takes donations. Mr. Bronson explained how we had a lot of teams make it this time, which is usually not the case. Mr. Bronson said that he will put the final figures for this in the admin report. It is \$5,000 per team for the entire weekend. Mr. Glymph asked about selling old football helmets from the Recreation Department to contribute to the all-star teams. Mr. Bronson explained that Herb is hesitant to do this since someone could use it in the active sport when they should not.

Public Hearing

Upon a motion from Mrs. Reese and seconded by Mrs. Snipes, the public hearing FOR ORDINANCE 2025-06-17-01 AN ORDINANCE MAKING APPROPRIATIONS FOR CERTAIN EXPENSES, CAPITAL IMPROVEMENTS AND INDEBTEDNESS OF THE CITY OF WESTMINSTER, SOUTH CAROLINA FOR THE YEAR BEGINNING JULY 1, 2025 AND ENDING JUNE 30, 2026 was opened.

There were no comments.

Upon a motion by Mrs. Reese and seconded by Mrs. Snipes, the public hearing FOR ORDINANCE 2025-06-17-01 AN ORDINANCE MAKING APPROPRIATIONS FOR CERTAIN EXPENSES, CAPITAL IMPROVEMENTS AND INDEBTEDNESS OF THE CITY OF WESTMINSTER, SOUTH CAROLINA FOR THE YEAR BEGINNING JULY 1, 2025 AND ENDING JUNE 30, 2026 was closed.

Routine Business

1. Comments from Utility Director

- a. Mr. Parris informed the Council that the SCIP project is moving right long. Tugaloo is making good progress even though the rain had slowed them down.
- b. Mr. Parris informed the Council that the Heirloom Farms water system has been tested and is ready to go. The tie in is complete and they are ready to market lots. Coopers Mill phase 2 water and sewer has started and the contractors have been moving along working in the mud.
- c. Mr. Parris informed the council with discussions of Anderson Park being rejuvenated.
- d. Mr. Parris talked about the bridge finally being open on Hwy 76. The city's water line has been taken off of the old bridge and the old bridge is just waiting to be taken down.
- e. Mr. Parris informed the council that there will be other projects to discuss once the bond is closed for funding.

2. Comments from the City Administrator

- a. Mr. Bronson turned it over to Chief Miller to talk about his new vehicles. Chief Miller explained that he has acquired 4 new vehicles. He explained how these were much needed and thanked city council. There are 3 Durango's currently on the road. There is a charger currently getting upfitted. All but 3 police vehicles are marked. Chief Miller explained the new cruise lights and how he would rather be proactive than have to be reactive. Chief Miller also talked about having 24 hour coverage a couple nights a week. He explained that David Harrison is retiring as of July third and how he has 23 applications for the job, five of these are certified. Interviews will begin next week and he feels like every thing is moving in the right direction. Chief Miller talked about the MASC audit that was conducted

within the police department. We received a 100% score for being in compliance policy wise. Mr. Glymph thanked Chief Miller for his great work. Mr. Bronson also thanked city council for the new cars and spoke about how this helped greatly with recruitment of new officers.

- b. Mr. Bronson provided Council with an update on the SCIP grant. With this grant, we have to have our process approved by the state. The state did not like our process from Troy Rosier. Troy negotiated with the lower bidder (L&W) that council recommended. The state would like Troy to negotiate with both bidders since bids came in over budget. Troy is now walking through this and we may have to have a called meeting in July to discuss.
- c. Mr. Bronson spoke on the main contract that involves the city with PMPA. This contract expires at the end of 2028. It is now time to negotiate a new one. Mr. Bronson explained how this process works. In the future, Mr. Bronson would have city council meet to see if they want to stay with PMPA and the Catawba agreement. Mr. Denny spoke about his experiences with this.
- d. Mr. Bronson turned it over to Chief Smith to speak about purchasing chainsaws, PPE, and other equipment with the DUKE grant. Mayor Ramey asked Chief Smith if this equipment was coming from a local supplier. Chief Smith explained that it was mostly for Lowe's and Home Depot online.
- e. Mr. Bronson explained how Chief Miller and Chief Smith asked for additional positions in the budget that he did not include. There are 2 grants that have opened up to fill positions that were previously asked for in the budget. Mr. Bronson explained that there is a process to these grants, but that before it is started, he wanted to bring it to council and get approval. Once these are submitted, we are in and Mr. Bronson does not want to have to turn these down for future needs. We have until the second week of July for final submission.

Chief Miller has asked for one position (training officer) for \$124,000. This includes pay plus benefits and some equipment. The City's match for this would be \$41,355 over 3 years (\$13,785/year). The grant would cover 2/3 of the cost over 3 years. We must retain the officer for a year after the grant period is over. Mr. Bronson believes that we can do this.

Chief Smith has asked for 6 firefighters. This is awarded in mid-August. The total amount for these 6 firefighters is \$878,565. This includes salary and benefits for 3 years. The city's match for this grant is \$118,725 in years one and two with \$308,685 in year 3. Mr. Bronson states that this is a little problematic for the city. The final note from the grant writer was to strongly consider dropping the request from 6 to 3 firefighters so the match numbers would be cut in half. The city's match would then amount to \$60,000 in years one and two with \$154,000 in year 3.

Mr. Bronson believes that we can absolutely do the COPS grant. With the fire grant, that is a lot of money, but more firefighters are needed in the trucks for safety reasons. Mr. Bronson explained this to council. Mr. Bronson's suggestion is that he go to Oconee County to see if they are willing to pick up the extra money for the fire grant since they, in essence, would be gaining from this too. If they say no, we should pass. If they say yes, then it is good. Mr. Bronson reiterated that once we submit these grants, he really does not want to decline them since this would be bad if these were needed again in the future. There was some discussion about matching and it was confirmed that we pay that as we go, not all at once upfront. Mayor Ramey is not sure that we can meet these matches looking at the budget. He does not want to have to keep raising rates to support this. Mayor Ramey suggested that maybe we would have more money coming in from the new Horton Rec fields. Mr. Bronson stated that he has no way to project what will happen with Horton fields revenue. These grants need to be submitted by the end of July. Mr. Bronson explained that it is late in the game to be going to the county for money since they are ready to balance their budget and pass it just as we are. Mr. Glymph asked Chief Miller what the advantage was to getting an extra officer. Chief Miller explained more prevention to drug overdoses and drug rehab which leads to safer streets. There was some discussion between Mr. Glymph and Chief Smith about the number of calls the Fire department is currently running.

Mr. Bronson confirmed with council that he will talk with the county about the fire grant, he will come back and let council know the results and confirm if they would like to go ahead with it or not. City Council agreed to not do the COPS grant at this time.

- f. Mr. Bronson stated that we have solicited bids for Horton Field. There were 9 bids that were all in the upstate (not oconee county) except for one from Alabama. There will be a mandatory pre-bid meeting on 6/27/2025 and bids are then due on 7/15/2025. There could possibly be a special called meeting for this in July.
- g. Mr. Bronson explained the OJRSA ad hock committee and how they are trying to reconstitute the sewer authority. There is a special called meeting on 7/15/2025 at 4 pm at TCTC that all city councils are invited to. The details for this will all be included in the City Admin report on Friday. There is a time frame of 18-24 months to get all of this completed (RIA has approved already).
- h. Mr. Osbon updated city council on the upcoming City's Juneteenth celebration. There were over 90 attendees at the first event we had last year. This year will be at St. Matthews Baptist church. All spots are filled. Mr. Osbon has reserved spots for everyone on city council if they would like to come. Josh Johnson is the speaker this year. Donations have covered the entire cost of the event from Blue Ridge Bank, BASF, Oconee County Chamber, and St. Matthews Church.

3. Approval of May 13, 2025 Regular City Council Meeting Minutes

Upon a motion by Mr. Dunn and seconded by Mr. Glymph, the *motion to approve the Consent Agenda* passed unanimously.

Member	Motion	Vote
Ramey		Yes
Glymph	Second	Yes
Powell		Yes
Reese		Yes
May		Yes
Dunn	Motion	Yes
Snipes		Yes

Old Business

4. **Second Reading of ORDINANCE NO. 2025-06-17-01; BUDGET ORDINANCE, AN ORDINANCE MAKING APPROPRIATIONS FOR CERTAIN EXPENSES, CAPITAL IMPROVEMENTS AND INDEBTEDNESS OF THE CITY OF WESTMINSTER, SOUTH CAROLINA FOR THE YEAR BEGINNING JULY 1, 2025 AND ENDING JUNE 30, 2026**

Summary of the FY2025-2026 Annual Operating Budget for all funds is:

General Fund	\$	2,660,320
Utility Totals	\$	9,007,050
Solid Waste	\$	684,000
Fire Department 1%	\$	88,626
Youth Recreation Fund	\$	619,500
Local Development Corp	\$	85,823
Capital Project Fund	\$	11,863,331
Hospitality Fund	\$	402,000
State & Local Accom Tax	\$	9,000
<u>All Funds Total</u>	\$	<u>24,419,650</u>

- a. There was some discussion about the total numbers. Mr. Bronson explained some major things included within this budget: one millage tax reduction, 5% OJRSA increase, PEBA increase on employer's side, 3% COLAS

Upon a motion by Mrs. Snipes and seconded by Mrs. Reese, the **motion to approve the Second Reading of ORDINANCE NO. 2025-06-17-01; BUDGET ORDINANCE, AN ORDINANCE MAKING APPROPRIATIONS FOR CERTAIN EXPENSES, CAPITAL IMPROVEMENTS AND**

INDEBTEDNESS OF THE CITY OF WESTMINSTER, SOUTH CAROLINA FOR THE YEAR BEGINNING JULY 1, 2025 AND ENDING JUNE 30, 2026 passed unanimously.

Member	Motion	Vote
Ramey		Yes
Glymph		Yes
Powell		Yes
Reese	Second	Yes
May		Yes
Dunn		Yes
Snipes	Motion	Yes

5. **Second Reading of ORDINANCE NO. 2025-06-17-02; AN ORDINANCE APPROVING THE EXECUTION AND DELIVERY OF A POLE ATTACHMENT LICENSE AGREEMENT BY AND BETWEEN THE CITY OF WESTMINSTER, SOUTH CAROLINA AND NORTHLAND CABLE TELEVISION, INC. AND OTHER MATTERS RELATED THERETO.**

Westminster has approximately four (4) Pole Attachment Agreements with telecommunication providers.

Charter Communications	\$21.00 per attachment
AT&T	\$21.00 per attachment
Blue Ridge Electric	\$21.00 per attachment
Northland Cable	\$ 4.50 per attachment (existing)

Upon a motion by Mrs. Reese and seconded by Mr. Glymph, the **motion to approve second Reading of ORDINANCE NO. 2025-06-17-02; AN ORDINANCE APPROVING THE EXECUTION AND DELIVERY OF A POLE ATTACHMENT LICENSE AGREEMENT BY AND BETWEEN THE CITY OF WESTMINSTER, SOUTH CAROLINA AND NORTHLAND CABLE TELEVISION, INC. AND OTHER MATTERS RELATED THERETO** passed unanimously.

Member	Motion	Vote
Ramey		Yes
Glymph	Second	Yes
Powell		Yes
Reese	Motion	Yes
May		Yes
Dunn		Yes
Snipes		Yes

6. **Second Reading of SEVENTH SUPPLEMENTAL ORDINANCE NO. 2025-06-17-03; A SEVENTH SUPPLEMENTAL ORDINANCE PROVIDING FOR THE ISSUANCE AND SALE OF A CITY OF WESTMINSTER, SOUTH CAROLINA, COMBINED UTILITY SYSTEM REVENUE BOND, SERIES 2025, IN THE PRINCIPAL AMOUNT OF NOT EXCEEDING \$5,100,000; AUTHORIZING TO THE MAYOR OR CITY ADMINISTRATOR TO DETERMINE CERTAIN MATTERS WITH RESPECT TO THE BOND; PRESCRIBING THE FORM AND DETAILS OF SUCH BOND; AND OTHER MATTERS RELATING THERETO.**

- a. Mr. Bronson explained that there are minor changes in the language only for the bank. This will not affect anything on our end. This is a 15 year maturity.

Upon a motion by Mrs. Reese and seconded by Mrs. Snipes, the **motion to approve Second Reading of SEVENTH SUPPLEMENTAL ORDINANCE NO. 2025-06-17-03; A SEVENTH SUPPLEMENTAL ORDINANCE PROVIDING FOR THE ISSUANCE AND SALE OF A CITY OF WESTMINSTER, SOUTH CAROLINA, COMBINED UTILITY SYSTEM REVENUE BOND, SERIES 2025, IN THE PRINCIPAL AMOUNT OF NOT EXCEEDING \$5,100,000; AUTHORIZING TO THE MAYOR OR CITY ADMINISTRATOR TO DETERMINE CERTAIN MATTERS WITH RESPECT TO THE BOND; PRESCRIBING THE FORM AND DETAILS OF SUCH BOND; AND OTHER MATTERS RELATING THERETO** passed unanimously.

Member	Motion	Vote
Ramey		Yes
Glymph		Yes
Powell		Yes
Reese	Motion	Yes
May		Yes
Dunn		Yes
Snipes	Second	Yes

New Business

7. **Consideration of First Reading of Ordinance 08-12-2025-01: AN ORDINANCE ANNEXING PROPERTY UNDER 100% ANNEXATION METHOD AND ASSIGNING ZONING CLASSIFICATION; AND OTHER MATTERS RELATED THERETO.**

129 Dewey Street (TMS # 567-01-02-009)

- a. Mr. Osbon explained that the city received an annexation covenant that has been to the planning commission. The planning commission has recommended annexation into the city limits of Westminster. He mentioned that the owner was here to speak tonight about this.

- b. After Ms. Guynn was through speaking on the annexation matter, Mr. Dunn asked her why she did not want this annexed. It is the fact that she was forced into it and did not really have a choice. She voiced that her grandfather was also against the idea and it was his property that she purchased.
- c. Mayor Ramey explained the purpose and benefits of being annexed into the City: cheaper recreation rates for sign ups, trash service, etc.....
- d. Ms. Guynn then responded to Mayor Ramey as saying that she is single and she does not care about any of that stuff.
- e. Mayor Ramey then spoke to Mr. Osbon about previous planning commission meeting issues with renters putting utilities in their name or inheritance triggering the annexation of a property. Mayor Ramey went into discussion about having the ordinance amended to exempt these instances. Mayor Ramey asked Mr. Bronson his opinion on this to which Mr. Bronson stated that if you take these instances out of the current ordinance that you may as well just do away with the ordinance because that is the bulk of what we get. Mr. Bronson feels like this would greatly diminish what the city is trying to accomplish through annexations.
- f. There was discussion between the council and Mr. Bronson on the current covenant and how it is worded/written. All of the issues Walhalla is having with their annexations was also brought up. Mr. Bronson stated that he does not know if Walhalla's issues are with how the actual ordinance itself is written/worded.
- g. Mr. Bronson spoke about how the property, not necessarily the owner of the property, receives the benefit. Mrs. Reese and Mayor Ramey discussed how there is not much push back on this due to the council listening and understanding the people this has affected.
- h. There was discussion about how annexation affects farms. Mrs. Ruth May asked if the customer was put on our sewer system once they were annexed in. Kevin explained that if the customer is on a septic tank already that it would stay that way.

Upon a motion by Mrs. Snipes and seconded by Mrs. Reese, the **motion to approve First Reading of Ordinance 08-12-2025-01: AN ORDINANCE ANNEXING PROPERTY UNDER 100% ANNEXATION METHOD AND ASSIGNING ZONING CLASSIFICATION; AND OTHER MATTERS RELATED THERETO for 129 Dewet Street (TMS # 567-01-02-009)** passed unanimously.

Member	Motion	Vote
Ramey		Yes
Glymph		Yes
Powell		Yes
Reese	Second	Yes
May		Yes
Dunn		Yes
Snipes	Motion	Yes

8. Consideration of First Reading Ordinance 08-12-2025-02: AN ORDINANCE ANNEXING PROPERTY UNDER 100% ANNEXATION METHOD AND ASSIGNING ZONING CLASSIFICATION; AND OTHER MATTERS RELATED THERETO.

615 King Street (TMS # 249-00-02-006)

- a. Mr. Osbon explained that the planning commission does recommend annexation. This property has several mobile home units and that we have not heard from the owner. There was discussion on how this was contiguous to be annexed in.

Upon a motion by Mrs. Reese and seconded by Mr. Glymph the **motion to approve First Reading Ordinance 08-12-2025-02: AN ORDINANCE ANNEXING PROPERTY UNDER 100% ANNEXATION METHOD AND ASSIGNING ZONING CLASSIFICATION; AND OTHER MATTERS RELATED THERETO** for 615 King Street (TMS # 249-00-02-006) passed unanimously.

Member	Motion	Vote
Ramey		Yes
Glymph	Second	Yes
Powell		Yes
Reese	Motion	Yes
May		Yes
Dunn		Yes
Snipes		Yes

9. Consideration of a Right-of-Way Easement between the City of Westminster and the South Carolina Department of Transportation

- a. Mr. Bronson explained that the purpose of this is for himself to be able to approve the easement as presented with any amendments made by the attorney on the city's behalf. This way it does not have to go back before council every time amendments are made.

Upon a motion by Mrs. Snipes and seconded by Mr. Dunn the **motion to approve the Consideration of a Right-of-Way Easement between the City of Westminster and the South Carolina Department of Transportation** passed unanimously.

Member	Motion	Vote
Ramey		Yes
Glymph		Yes
Powell		Yes
Reese		Yes
May		Yes
Dunn	Second	Yes
Snipes	Motion	Yes

10. Consideration to CANCEL the July 8, 2025 City Council Meeting

Upon a motion by Mrs. Reese and seconded by Mrs. Snipes the **motion to CANCEL the July 8, 2025 City Council Meeting** passed unanimously.

Member	Motion	Vote
Ramey		Yes
Glymph		Yes
Powell		Yes
Reese	Motion	Yes
May		Yes
Dunn		Yes
Snipes	Second	Yes


Executive Session

Upon a motion by Mr. Glymph and seconded by Mrs. Reese, *the motion to go into executive session with a 10-minute recess at 7:22 pm* passed unanimously.

Adjourn

Upon a motion by Mrs. Reese and seconded by Mrs. Snipes, *the motion to adjourn executive session and the meeting at 8:49 pm* passed unanimously. No action was taken.

(Minutes submitted by Kiley Carter)


8-12-25
 Mayor Brian Ramey Date