

**NEWBERRY COUNTY COUNCIL BUDGET WORK SESSION  
MINUTES  
March 25, 2026**

Newberry County Council met on Wednesday, March 25, 2026, at 5:04 p.m. in Council Chambers at the Courthouse Annex, 1309 College Street, Newberry, SC, for a regular scheduled Budget Work Session.

Notice of the meeting was duly advertised, as required by law.

**PRESENT:** Robert Shealy, Chairman  
Karl Sease, Vice-Chairman  
Leon Fulmer Jr., Council Member  
Todd Johnson, Council Member  
Travis Reeder, Council Member  
Johnny Mack Scurry, Council Member  
Stuart Smith, Council Member  
Ted Luckadoo, County Administrator  
Karen Brehmer, Deputy County Administrator  
Captain Ben Chapman, NCSO  
Debbie Cromer, Finance Director  
Rick Farmer, Economic Development Director  
Sheriff Lee Foster, NCSO  
Eric Nieto, IT Director  
Scott Sawyer, Special Projects Coordinator  
Andrew Wigger, Clerk to Council/PIO

**MEDIA:** Kelly Duncan, The Newberry Observer

1. Call to order: Robert Shealy, Chairman.

- Mr. Shealy called the meeting to order at 5:04 p.m.

2. Invocation and Pledge: Robert Shealy, Chairman.

- Mr. Shealy led the Invocation and Pledge of Allegiance.

### 3. Continuation of the Presentation and Discussion of 2026-27 Newberry County Budget.

- Following up on a statement from Mr. Johnson during the previous meeting, Mr. Luckadoo explained that “tipping fees” comes from the fact the truck had to tip its bed.
- Mr. Luckadoo reviewed the Public Safety budget, adding that they reviewed the numbers and everything was correct.
- Mr. Johnson asked about the price for physicals, \$125,000; Mr. Luckadoo said he does not think there was a lot of participation in the past, but it is working its way toward full participation and the cost has increased.
- Mr. Reeder asked that at one time, didn’t they talk about bringing in their own in-house fleet services. Mr. Luckadoo said that is something they will evaluate following this budget and moving into the next budget.
  - Mr. Shealy asked if we are under contract with Vector; Mr. Luckadoo said they are, but it is year-to-year.
  - Mr. Johnson the amount in there for Vector does not include the non-contracted where if the vehicle has so many miles, so old, they are getting billed for that, as well. Mr. Luckadoo added that when it is going out, Vector is putting a markup on that price and putting it back on us.
- Mr. Sease asked when we do the independent audit looking at fire services, will they look at EMS also. Mr. Luckadoo said he does not think it is proposed to look at EMS, it is proposed at a 10-year master plan for fire service, he said he can ask if they look at EMS and if that is a service they provide.
- Regarding Newberry County Airport, Mr. Luckadoo said their consultants reached out and provided an option that may save money for the county on the backend but would mean a higher contribution toward the airport the year that is outside of what was presented. They offered an option to go ahead not only with the engineering and design, already budgeted, but also the construction, the thought behind it is while there already is a contractor doing work, doing it all at one time, lowering the amount. The recommendation was to use contingency for the parking lot.
  - Mr. Johnson said if they take from contingency, that leaves only \$150,000 for next year. He said he is not against it, but he wants them to understand.
  - Mr. Johnson asked if they could do it as an alternate bid and then come back and return to it.

- Mr. Luckadoo presented the Capital Projects Fund for the proposed 2026-27 budget.
- Mr. Luckadoo presented the Debt Service Fund for the proposed 2026-27 budget.
- Mr. Sease asked regarding the bill going to the Governor's desk, would that decrease revenue from watercraft taxes. Mr. Luckadoo said they saw more of a decrease on the General Fund side.
- Mr. Luckadoo said on the worst-case scenario, it is possible a 3.5 mill increase to the debt service levy will be necessary to generate the requested revenue in the Debt Service Fund. However, it is possible the county auditor has put funds aside to reduce that increase.
- Mr. Johnson said we talked about the Debt Service being 3.5 mills, but what about the rest of the budget. Mr. Luckadoo said there was no increase on the other funds, just the 3.5 millage increase for the Debt Service fund, but that could decrease based on if the auditor has funds on hand.
- Mr. Fulmer said in the past, they tried to recoup some of the cost of EMS and fire calls by charging the insurance companies, specifically for interstate calls; Mr. Luckadoo said he is not aware of that discussion, but he can look into that. Mr. Johnson said Public Safety looked into that, he said there is an option on that but some misinformation that the county would start charging on volunteer rescue and there was a packed house over something that was not correct.
- Mr. Fulmer said the county needs to start a plan now for the capital replacement of equipment, whenever the county needs to replace equipment, they have to cherry-pick money in order to make it happen, is crazy. He said the county needs to work into their budget a plan for replacement for that piece of equipment, and if they don't start, they will never get to that point.
  - Mr. Luckadoo said fiscal year 2028-29 there will be major improvements with revenue that will help the county tremendously. He added he knows a Capital Improvement Plan has begun, and he will continue to make sure that it gets completed.
- Newberry County Council took a recess at 6:14 p.m. and returned at 6:23 p.m.
- Mr. Luckadoo said if there is a 3.5 mill increase, for a \$100,000 assessed home it would be a \$14 increase, \$200,000 it would be a \$28 increase, for \$300,000 it would be \$40 increase, and so on. This would be on 4% primary residence.


#### 4. Comments and/or Requests from Councilmembers.

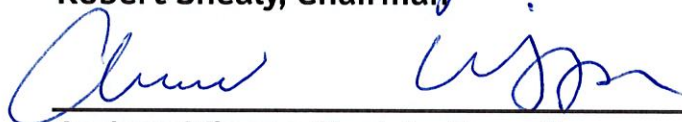
- There were no other comments other than wishing Mr. Scurry a happy birthday.

5. Adjournment.

- Mr. Smith made a motion to adjourn; Mr. Scurry provided the second and the motion carried 7-0.
- The Newberry County Council Budget Work Session adjourned at 6:26 p.m.

**NEWBERRY COUNTY COUNCIL**

  
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**Robert Shealy, Chairman**

  
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**Andrew Wigger, Clerk to Council**

Minutes Approved: 4-15-26