

**NEWBERRY COUNTY COUNCIL
MINUTES
May 20, 2026**

Newberry County Council met on Wednesday, May 20, 2026, at 6:00 p.m. in Council Chambers at the Courthouse Annex, 1309 College Street, Newberry, SC, for a regular scheduled meeting.

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

PRESENT: Robert Shealy, Chairman
Karl Sease, Vice-Chairman
Leon Fulmer, Council Member
Todd Johnson, Council Member
Travis Reeder, Council Member
Johnny Mack Scurry, Council Member
Stuart Smith, Council Member
Ted Luckadoo, County Administrator
Joanie Winters, County Attorney
Karen Brehemer, Deputy County Administrator
Major Ben Chapman, NCSO
Debbie Cromer, Finance Director
Donna Lominack, Auditor
Melinda Long, Deputy Auditor
Eric Nieto, IT Director
Josh Rowe, Public Works Director
Karen Lindler Smith, Treasurer
Katie Werts, Planning and Zoning Director
Andrew Wigger, Clerk to Council/PIO

MEDIA: Tanner Gilmartin, WIS

1. Call to order: Robert Shealy, Chairman.
 - Mr. Shealy called the meeting to order at 6:00 p.m.
2. Invocation and Pledge of Allegiance: Todd Johnson, Council Member.

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

3. Adoption of Minutes:

- a. Newberry County Council Work Session Minutes – May 6, 2026.
- b. Newberry County Council Minutes – May 6, 2026.

- Mr. Scurry made a motion to accept the minutes as presented; Mr. Reeder provided the second and the motion carried 7-0.

4. Approval of Agenda.

- Mr. Shealy said that the applicant regarding matter 10C has requested to postpone until August. He said with the removal from the agenda, there will be no discussion on this agenda item by council or public comments.
- Mr. Johnson made a motion to accept the agenda as amended (removing item 10C); Mr. Reeder provided the second and the motion carried 7-0.

5. Special Appearance:

- a. Newberry Soil and Water Conservation District - Ben Setzler and Daniel Nicholson.

- Mr. Setzler announced that the NSWCD earned the South Carolina District of the Year in 2025, the second time in six years they have done so.
- The District will be administering a Disaster Recovery Block Grant for Hurricane Helen damage from the Department of Agriculture; this will be \$38 million in federal aid. While it is not known how much will come to Newberry County, Mr. Setzler feels that due to the level of damage, he believes it will be millions coming to the county.
- The annual Camp Conservation will take place on June 25th at Hidden Lake at Gully Washer Splash Park with roughly 60 campers.
- Five \$1,000 scholarships were awarded to students from Newberry County attending secondary schools or are studying natural resource related fields.
- For Keep Newberry County Beautiful, they have given litter lessons to over 300 students at elementary schools across the county. Thanks to grant funding, they were able to give each student a book related to the environment.

- KNCB has also received a \$5,000 grant to install Liberty Gardens at four local elementary schools to celebrate the 250th anniversary of the USA. They also received \$3,500 from Duke Energy and Palmetto Pride to celebrate the 250th and those funds will be used to landscape and refurbish the signs to the Town of Whitmire, the American Legion Auxiliary will take part in the project. They also received \$7,000 in grant funding to hire litter crews.
- KNCB will also be hosting their second annual messiest yard mini grant with a \$2,500 sponsorship from the Joanna Foundation.
- Mr. Reeder said that he appreciates everything that they do and how they give back to the community. Mr. Shealy echoed that and added that they do a lot for the community.

6. Administrator's Report:

- a. Employee Recognitions: Katie Werts (5 years, Building and Zoning), Jessica Osborne (5 years, NCSO), Edward Knowles (5 years, NCSO), Michael Stribble (25 years, NCSO), Shannon Murphy (30 years, Auditor's Office).
- Mr. Luckadoo, Major Chapman, and Ms. Lominack recognized the above employees for their service to Newberry County, highlighting their accomplishments and pivotal moments while working for Newberry County.

b. Project Updates.

- Mr. Luckadoo said they had the bid opening for the CPST number one project, the Newberry County Public Safety Complex, the goal would be to bring this to council at the June 17th meeting. There will also be a bid opening for the airport taxiway rehabilitation project, with the hope the awarding of that project on June 17th, as well.
- The Newberry County Museum roof project, the Pomaria Community Center project, and the Whitmire Gym project are now all complete.
- The County is out for bid for the Newberry Amphitheater project; bids will open on June 18th.

7. Chairman's Comments.

- Mr. Shealy said he appreciated everyone coming out to the Newberry Opera House for the Data Center Information Session, he said they heard good information and it was a good crowd.
- He said they had a good crowd during this meeting, and it is always great to have people involved in county business.

8. Public Comments Regarding Items on the Agenda (three minutes).

- Prior to the Public Comments, Mr. Shealy said they will only hear comments from items on the agenda, and that the data center nor Koon Trestle Road items are on the agenda and therefore they will not take Public Comments on those items. However, he said there will be time for Public Comments when those items are on the agenda.
- Mr. Shealy also asked for anyone in opposition of the data center and the rezoning on Koon Trestle Road to raise their hands. He said Council appreciates their interest and concerns and there will be time to voice those concerns when the items are listed on the agenda properly.
- Mr. Shealy went through the list of those signed up, with those indicating if their item was on the agenda or not prior to speaking.
- Mr. Tyler Johnson said he has been attending meetings for about three years and recently, it was decided to change to public comments on agenda items. Over that three-year period, they have heard public comments ranging on anything that a concerned resident brought forward. He said Council has repeatedly commented how they appreciate people showing up and being involved, but by silencing them when they do show up is not approval of them.
- Ms. Rhonda Johnson thanked Council's willingness to run when they did, their campaigning and commitment to attend these meetings and listening to constituents. She said there came a time when they decided to run for office, she said she has lived in the county for 47 years and has known most of them for many years. She said for the most part, residents of Newberry County have trusted them to be their voice, to do what is best for those living in Newberry County, not a developer, corporation, business, single individual, or themselves. She said that she, and many in the county, have lost that trust. She said when items are presented, handed down or given through any source, that they do their due diligence.
- Ms. Jamie Hall said regarding item 10A, the rezoning of the property close to the high school, she said she thinks council should go there about 7:30 a.m. on

a school morning and watch the young drivers go through there before they think a gas station is a good idea right there.

- Ms. Becky Boland asked if one person asks for something to be struck from the agenda, are the 90 people here to assume it will be moved to the date requested, or something forthcoming so they know when to show back up. Ms. Winters said they do not answer questions during residents' comments; it is for them to comment. In regard to 10A, said she hopes the Joint Planning Commission's vote is considered, but the intersection is already heavily congested during school drop offs, with many already struggling to get their safely. She added there are two gas stations already nearby, a power line easement that is problematic, creates opportunity for unnecessary loitering.
- Ms. Sophie Egleston wanted to know if there was anything related to Project Altair within the proposed budget, which is on the agenda. Mr. Shealy said there is nothing in the budget about it, Ms. Egleston asked if there was any money allocated to it, to which Council answered in the negative.
- Mr. Eric Alford said he has heard a lot of things since he moved to the community, he said he thinks a lot of people are confused about the facts and the figures, but he said on any decision that has to be made, if they could each make a five minute video of how they made their decision, that would make things easier.
- Mr. Patrick Meetze spoke on item 10E, he said most of Council were not on Council back in 2007, the ordinance that was passed, have standards for the roads to be accepted and paved.

9. Old Business:

- a. Third Reading – Ordinance 04-01-2026, Providing Appropriations for the Fiscal Year 26/27 Budget.
 - Mr. Luckadoo said the land development fees were added into the fee schedule, as was the penalty for building fees.
 - Mr. Reeder made a motion to accept the third reading; Mr. Johnson provided the second.
 - Mr. Johnson abstained from any section related to WTH Technology.
 - The motion carried 7-0.

10. New Business:

- a. First Reading – Ordinance 05-01-2026. Rezoning property at 7372 US Hwy 76, Prosperity, consisting of two acres from IND-Industrial to GC-General Commercial. (TMS No. 577-18).
 - Ms. Werts said the applicant is asking to rezone for a potential convenience store/gas station. The Future Land Use Map identifies this property to be within the development area; the rezoning does comply with that rezoning. Joint Planning Commission voted 7-3 to deny the rezoning.
 - Ms. Winters recommended remanding this back to Joint Planning Commission to get legal advice.
 - Mr. Smith made a motion to remand the Ordinance back to the Joint Planning Commission for legal advice; Mr. Scurry provided the second and the motion carried 7-0.

- b. First Reading – Ordinance 05-02-2026. Rezoning property at the corner of Wise Street and Wilson Road, consisting of one acre from GC-General Commercial to R2-Rural. (TMS No. 399-56).
 - Ms. Werts said the property owner has made the rezoning request for potential residential use. The Future Land Use Map shows this area as transitional, and this rezoning does fit that definition. Joint Planning Commission unanimously voted to approve.
 - Mr. Sease made a motion to accept first reading; Mr. Reeder provided the second and the motion carried 7-0.

- c. ~~First Reading – Ordinance 05-03-2026. Rezoning property on Koon Trestle Road, consisting of 36.07 acres from R2-Rural to GC-General Commercial. (TMS No. 635-1).~~

- d. First Reading – Ordinance 05-04-2026. Rezoning property at 5576 SC Hwy 121-34, Newberry, consisting of 10 acres from R2-Rural to RS-Single Family Residential. (TMS No. 295-39).
 - Ms. Werts said the property owner submitted the request to rezone for higher density residential development. He originally stated 20 lots, but after doing the math it was determined the parcel could not handle that. The Future Land Use Map identifies this parcel as rural development and the rezoning does fit

within that definition. The Joint Planning Commission voted 5-4 to approve the rezoning.

- Mr. Scurry made a motion to accept first reading; Mr. Johnson provided the second and the motion carried 5-2 with Mr. Reeder and Mr. Sease voting against.
- e. First Reading – Ordinance 05-05-2026. Acceptance of Goggans Court and Fawn Court into the Newberry County Roads System.
- Mr. Scurry made a motion to accept first reading; Mr. Reeder provided the second and the motion carried 7-0.

11. Possible Actions by Council following the 5 p.m. Work Session.

- There was no action taken.

12. Appointments:

- Mr. Scurry made a motion to appoint Ms. Julie-Ann Richardson to serve on the Disabilities and Special Needs Board; Mr. Johnson provided the second and the motion carried 7-0

13. Adjournment.

- Mr. Johnson made a motion to adjourn; Mr. Reeder provided the second and the motion carried 7-0.
- Newberry County Council adjourned at 6:46 p.m.
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NEWBERRY COUNTY COUNCIL



Robert Shealy, Chairman



Andrew Wigger, Clerk to Council

Minutes Approved: June 3, 2026