

**NEWBERRY COUNTY COUNCIL
MINUTES
May 21, 2025**

Newberry County Council met on Wednesday, May 21, 2025, 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 Jr., Council Member
Travis Reeder, Council Member
Johnny Mack Scurry, Council Member
Stuart Smith, Council Member
Jeff Shacker, County Administrator
Joanie Winters, County Attorney
Karen Brehmer, Deputy County Administrator
Captain Ben Chapman, NCSO
Debbie Cromer, Finance Director
Rick Farmer, Economic Development Director
Eric Nieto, I.T. Director
Josh Rowe, Public Works Director
Andrew Wigger, Clerk to Council/PIO

ABSENT: Todd Johnson, Council Member

Mr. Shealy called the meeting to order at 6:00 p.m.

Mr. Smith led the invocation and Pledge of Allegiance.

1. Adoption of Consent Agenda:

- a. Newberry County Council Public Safety and Courts Committee – April 28, 2025.
 - b. Newberry County Council Work Session – May 7, 2025.
 - c. Newberry County Council Meeting – May 7, 2025.
- Mr. Reeder made a motion to adopt the minutes as presented; Mr. Smith provided the second and the motion carried 6-0.

2. Additions, Deletions & Adoption of the Agenda.

- Mr. Fulmer made a motion to adopt the agenda as presented; Mr. Reeder provided the second and the motion carried 6-0.

3. Public Appearance:

- a. Newberry Soil and Water Conservation District – Ben Setzler.
 - Mr. Setzler said two weekends ago they partnered with the Newberry County Chamber of Commerce to host the Ag+Art Tour at nine farms, with 50 vendors at those locations. He said some sites saw as many as 550 visitors, and he's estimating at least 1,000 people came into the county.
 - The NSWCD, through grant funding, distributed books to Gallman Elementary, Reuben Elementary, Whitmire Community School, and Pomaria-Garmany. They also have plans over the summer to host two story times at the library and book distribution events.
 - Conservation Stewardship Week was recently celebrated in South Carolina, there was one statewide site visit and this year it was in Newberry County at the Belfast Plantation.
 - Multiple cleanup events have been hosted, working with various schools and organizations.
 - The NSWCD volunteered at the local Enoree Fishing Rodeo by donating supplies and helping local youth catch some fish.
 - The NSWCD was recently awarded a \$40,000 grant to promote NRCS programs for conservation.

- The NRCS, their federal partner, received 58 applications in 2024 and paid out \$1.46 million last year, affecting 3,375 acres here in Newberry County. All conservation and environmental projects.
- Camp Conservation will be the week of June 16, 2025, and 60 youths have signed up and there is a waiting list.
- The NSWCD also awarded four \$1,000 scholarships to students attending secondary schools from or in Newberry County, two from Mid-Carolina, one from Newberry High, and one going to Newberry College.
- Mr. Setzler said the majority of the funding the county gives his organization goes to their employee, Crista Lukowski, and all of the programs happen because of her. He thanked the council for their funding.
- Mr. Fulmer thanked Mr. Setzler for everything he and the NSWCD and all the staff do, adding they are a huge benefit to the county. He encourages anyone unfamiliar with NSWCD to reach out to them as they are a huge benefit to Newberry County.

4. Recognitions:

- | | | |
|-------------------|----------|----------------------|
| a. Rick Farmer | 10 years | Economic Development |
| b. Joseph Bickley | 15 years | Public Works |

- Mr. Shacker recognized the employees listed above for their service to Newberry County, highlighting their accomplishments and pivotal moments while working for Newberry County.

5. Resolution No. 03-2025. A Resolution Recognizing Ms. Vina Abrams for 24-years of service to Newberry County on the Board of Directors of the Central Midlands Council of Governments.

- Mr. Sease made a motion to accept the Resolution; Mr. Smith provided the second and the motion carried 6-0.

- Ms. Abrams said it has been her pleasure to serve on the Central Midlands Council of Governments, representing Newberry County, the best county in the state.
6. Resolution No. 04-2025. A Resolution Recognizing the Honorable Walton J. McLeod for 49-years of service to Newberry County on the Board of Directors of the Central Midlands Council of Governments.
- Mr. Smith made a motion to accept the Resolution; Mr. Reeder provided the second and the motion carried 6-0.
7. Resolution No. 05-2025. A Resolution Recognizing the Achievements of Isaías Meza.
- Mr. Scurry made a motion to accept the Resolution; Mr. Sease provided the second and the motion carried 6-0.
8. Ordinance No. 05-01-2025. An Ordinance authorizing the execution and delivery of a fee agreement by and between Newberry County, South Carolina and Newberry PV1, LLC providing for a payment of a fee in lieu of taxes, providing special source revenue credits, and addressing other matters related thereto.
- a. Public Hearing.
 - Mr. Shealy declared the public hearing open. With no one standing to speak, Mr. Shealy declared the public hearing closed.
 - b. Second Reading.
 - Mr. Shacker said this is an existing FILOT agreement that Newberry County entered into with a proposed solar farm on Island Ford Road, the substance of the agreement stays the same but this one change is to extend the commencement date and that

has an effect on the investment period so the project can move forward.

- Mr. Reeder made a motion to accept second reading; Mr. Scurry provided the second and the motion carried 6-0.

9. Ordinance No. 05-02-2025. An Ordinance to provide appropriations for the Fiscal Year beginning July 1, 2025, and ending June 30, 2026, for the Newberry County budget for County Ordinary purposes and for other County purposes for which the County may levy a tax and receive revenues; to provide for the levy of taxes on all taxable personal and real property in Newberry County for all county purposes, including sufficient tax to pay the principal and interest on outstanding indebtedness of Newberry County payable during said fiscal year; to provide for matters relating to Newberry County; and to provide for the expenditure of said taxes and other revenues received by the county during said fiscal year, and to provide for borrowing in anticipation of tax collections by the issuance of one or more tax anticipation notes, if necessary.

a. Public Hearing.

- Mr. Shealy declared the public hearing open.
- Mr. Tyler Johnson said he appreciates the hard work that has gone into the budget. He said he had two main points of concern with the budget. He said he liked the idea of giving pay raises but the county has had retention issues with the low salary positions and blanket percentage is not the answer to address those positions and they give an adverse effect of widening the pay gap of those higher paid employees from those lower paid employees. He said they need to find something to address the positions that they are losing so the county can have retention and not constantly be reposting job positions, as they move on to other counties for higher salaries. Mr. Johnson also addressed the use of fund balance to balance the budget. He said he knows they've talked about getting it back down because hopefully all of the departments don't do so, but he said starting off at the point of

using fund balance they need to always be adding to the fund balance, not using it. He said they know they have great deficiencies when it comes to fire services, rescue squads, keeping them furnished and those are huge price tag items. He said the only way they can do that is effectively budgeting, getting that worked into the budget on a regularly occurring schedule so they know it is coming up and they have to have it done. He thinks the best way is to always have a balanced budget and a use of fund balance to begin with, best case scenario they do come in, but they are already setting themselves up to use fund balance and that is never a good option.

- With no one else signed up to speak, Mr. Shealy declared the public hearing closed.

b. Second Reading.

- Mr. Shacker said there are 15 funds with a series of self-balancing revenues and expenditure accounts. There are four categories within the Newberry County budget: general fund, debt service fund, capital projects fund, special revenue funds (12).
- The proposed budget for next year, across all funds, totals \$94.8 million. That is a \$12.1 increase compared to the current fiscal year; this is largely attributed to the capital project fund where \$8.9 million of the increase is. That is a function of the ripening of the Capital Project Sales Tax projects.
- There is also a \$1.4 increase in the 12 special revenue funds, the bulk of which is in the Public Works grant fund where the road paving projects are budgeted – through the Newberry County Transportation Committee.
- The general fund is proposed to total \$39.9 million, a \$590,000 decrease from the current fiscal year. With the upcoming implementation of reassessment, council made it clear they did not want to increase taxes.
- Mr. Shacker said they do expect some modest increases in health and workers compensation insurance cost.

- The general fund includes capital expenditures of \$4.5 million, Mr. Shacker said they did the best they could to identify priorities but were unable to address all county needs.
- On the capital funding side, the sources of funding have changed, instead of the ARPA (American Rescue Plan Act) funds that have been closed out. The alternate sources of funding included a proposed lease purchase and a proposed GO bond that would fund these capital items.
- Mr. Sease made a motion to accept second reading; Mr. Fulmer provided the second and the motion carried 6-0.

10. Consideration and Approval of a Bid for Renovations to Classrooms and Breezeway of Old Pomaria School, Town of Pomaria, S.C. – A 2022 Capital Project Sales Tax Project (Bid Number 2025-3).

- Mr. Smith made a motion to accept the low bid from On-Site Builders of Joanna in the amount of \$256,827; Mr. Reeder provided the second and the motion carried 6-0.

11. Consideration and Approval of a Bid for Roadway Improvements to Mawson’s Way at the S.C. Highway 219 Industrial Park (Bid Number 2025-4).

- Mr. Smith made a motion to accept the low bid from Satterfield Construction Company, Inc. in the amount of \$2,258,2100; Mr. Reeder provided the second and the motion carried 6-0.

12. Consideration and Approval of a Bid for Renovations to Interior of Pope Building located at 1119 Harington Street, Newberry, S.C. (Bid Number 2025-5).

- Mr. Sease made a motion to accept the low bid from W.E. Baker & Sons. Inc in the amount of \$64,620 base, with the alternate of \$3,975; Mr. Smith provided the second and the motion carried 6-0.

13. Consideration and Approval of a Bid for Renovations to Whitmire City Gym, Town of Whitmire, S.C. – A 2022 Capital Project Sales Tax Project (Bid Number 2025-6).

- Mr. Reeder made a motion to accept the low bid from W.E. Baker & Sons, Inc. in the amount of \$609,049 (which includes seven alternates); Mr. Smith provided the second and the motion carried 6-0.

14. County Council may take action on matters discussed during the 5:00pm executive session.

- There was no executive session.

15. Appointments.

- There were no appointments.

16. Public Comments (three minutes).

- There were no public comments.

17. Comments/Requests from County Administrator.

- Mr. Shacker said they had a good bid day with Pomaria and Whitmire last week, as well as Mawson's Way. As an update for other CPST projects, Mr. Shacker said not only has the playground equipment in Prosperity been ordered but it has also been installed. That project is close to being bid, but there are a few finishing touches that need to be completed.
- In Little Mountain, there was a pre-bid with a good turnout of about 40 people for the renovations of Reunion Park. The bids are due back on June 11; the goal is to get that bid out and construction after the Little Mountain Reunion in August.

- When it comes to the Newberry County Detention Center project, Mr. Shacker said there were some underground petroleum issues (not on site), DES installs monitoring wells and monitor over time. What they have been waiting on is DES to inspect the wells, they have now been able to do so.

18. Comments/Requests from Council.

- Mr. Fulmer said he was glad they could recognize county employees for their years of service, and they appreciate their dedication to the county. He said during the last meeting, they had Ms. Alana West and Ms. Mallory Fulmer representing 4-H and he greatly appreciates them coming in and giving that update for the programs they have, which is a great benefit to the youth of Newberry County.
- Mr. Reeder congratulated the employees for their service recognitions and the individuals who received Resolutions during the meeting. He also congratulated all the Newberry County students about to graduate high school.
- Mr. Smith thanked all of the first responders as it has been a really bad last couple of days. He also mentioned Memorial Day and thanked all of the veterans that have made the ultimate sacrifice, he also thanked all of their families.
- Mr. Sease thanked county employees for giving their years of service, he thanked Ms. Abrams and Mr. McLeod for their service. He also thanked the first responders for locating the missing person recently. He also thanked staff for putting the budget together and giving a detailed background.
- Mr. Shealy said they have an outstanding county staff; outstanding county residents and people willing to serve and work for Newberry County. He also said their first responders are top notch.

19. Future meetings:

- a. Memorial Day Holiday – May 26 - Offices Closed.
- b. Newberry County Council Work Session – June 4 at 5 p.m.
- c. Newberry County Council – June 4 at 6 p.m.
- d. Newberry County Economic Development Committee – June 9 at 5 p.m.
- e. Newberry County Council Work Session – June 18 at 5 p.m.
- f. Newberry County Council – June 18 at 6 p.m.
- g. Newberry County Finance Committee – June 23 at 5 p.m.

20. Adjournment.

- Mr. Smith made a motion to adjourn; Mr. Scurry provided the second and the motion carried 6-0.
- Newberry County Council adjourned at 6:58 p.m.

NEWBERRY COUNTY COUNCIL



Robert "Nick" Shealy, Chairman



Andrew Wigger, Clerk to Council

Minutes Approved: 06-04-2025