MINUTES OF REGULAR MEETING
SALUDA COUNTY COUNCIL
MONDAY, OCTOBER 12, 2026, AT 6:00 P.M.
COUNCIL CHAMBERS, SALUDA COUNTY ADMINISTRATION BUILDING
400 WEST HIGHLAND STREET, SALUDA, SOUTH CAROLINA

A. CALL TO ORDER

Chairman Moore called the regular meeting of Saluda County Council to order at 6:00 P.M.

Present were:
Councilman J. Frank Daniel, Sr.
Vice-Chairman J. Carey Bedenbaugh
Chairman James L. Moore
Councilman Anderson

Also Present were:
Regina Turner, County Administrator
Heather L. Griffin, Clerk to Council
Ginny Bozeman, County Attorney

MOMENT OF SILENCE

Chairman Moore requested a moment of silence in memory of Mr. Jack Atkinson.

B. INVOCATION

Councilman Anderson delivered the invocation.

C. PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

The Pledge of Allegiance was recited.

PUBLIC INFORMATION

It is noted by the Clerk herein that, in compliance with the Freedom of Information Act, notice of the regular meeting was given to the local news media and properly posted, including on the County website. The following notice was placed at the beginning of the agenda**: Please note meetings are open to the public. Access to the video is available by going to the County's Facebook page (Saluda County, SC Government).**

D. APPROVAL OF AGENDA

On motion of Vice-Chairman Bedenbaugh and seconded by Councilman Daniel, the agenda was unanimously approved.

E. APPROVAL OF MINUTES

On motion Vice-Chairman Bedenbaugh seconded by Councilman Daniel, the minutes of the September 14, 2026 regular meeting and September 21, 2026 special called meeting were unanimously approved.

F. REPORTS OF COUNCIL MEMBERS

Councilman Daniel expressed condolences to the Atkinson family and announced the Ridge Spring Harvest Festival scheduled for October 29–31, 2026.

Vice-Chairman Bedenbaugh expressed condolences to the Atkinson family and reflected on Mr. Atkinson's dedication to Saluda County and his longstanding participation in Council meetings. He also expressed concern regarding the possibility of a data center locating in Saluda County.

Councilman Anderson expressed condolences to the Atkinson family and announced an antique tractor pull planned for the Richland Creek Road area following the Harvest Festival.

Chairman Moore expressed condolences regarding Mr. Atkinson, describing him as a mentor and friend. He thanked CPW and others for work completed on the County Administration Building parking lot following installation of a water line.

Chairman Moore encouraged citizens to vote in the November 3 election. He also discussed a recent regional economic development meeting and the factors companies consider when selecting locations for investment.

Chairman Moore addressed concerns regarding safeguards for Capital Project Sales Tax projects. He explained that State procurement requirements address competitive bidding, professional services selection, and contracting procedures. He discussed the potential cost of hiring an independent construction program manager and noted that County staff have experience overseeing major projects.

G. PUBLIC COMMENTS

Ms. Regina Sanders expressed condolences to the Atkinson family and addressed the proposed fee-in-lieu-of-tax agreement and inducement resolution for Project Big Show. She requested transparency to the extent permitted by law and asked Council to disclose the project's North American Industry Classification System (NAICS) code as soon as legally permissible, noting that the industry could be identified without disclosing the company's name.

Ms. Sharon C. Springs expressed condolences to the Atkinson family and raised concerns regarding the maintenance of Zoar Road. She described drainage problems, debris washing into her yard, overgrown vegetation, limited visibility around curves, and traffic safety concerns. She requested more frequent road maintenance and vegetation cutting and expressed a desire for the road to be paved.

H. OLD BUSINESS

1. Second Reading on ORDINANCE NO. 08-26 – "AN ORDINANCE ADOPTING AN UPDATED BUILDING PERMIT FEE SCHEDULE AND OTHER MATTERS RELATING THERTO."

Council considered second reading of Ordinance No. 08-26, an ordinance adopting an updated building permit fee schedule.

Josh Thomas of SafeBuilt explained that the proposed fee changes were intended to support the cost of operating the County's building department, including permit administration, inspections, plan review, and building official services.

Mr. Thomas reported that 57 permits were issued in September, representing approximately $1.8 million in project valuations and approximately $23,000 in County revenue. He explained that the proposed schedule separates standard electrical, plumbing, and mechanical permits from new construction fees and described how the changes would affect different permit categories.

Council discussed the cost of providing building inspection services, the County's prior experience operating its own building code program, and the importance of consistent code enforcement. Council members expressed appreciation for SafeBuilt's work while also raising concerns about increased costs for residents and contractors.

Following discussion, the motion to approve second reading of Ordinance No. 08-26 failed with Chairman Moore voting yes and Vice-Chairman Bedenbaugh, Councilman Anderson and Councilman Daniel voting no.

I. NEW BUSINESS

1. **First Reading on Ordinance No. 09-26 "An Ordinance Authorizing (1) The Execution And Delivery Of A Fee In Lieu Of Tax And Incentive Agreement By And Between Saluda County, South Carolina And A Company Identified For The Time Being As Project Big Show (The "Company") With Respect To The Establishment Of Certain Facilities In The County (The "Project"); (2) The Benefits Of A Multi-County Industrial Or Business Park To Be Made Available To The Company And The Project; (3) Certain Special Source Revenue Credits In Connection With The Project; And (4) Other Matters Relating Thereto.**

Council considered first reading of Ordinance No. 09-26, authorizing the execution and delivery of a fee-in-lieu-of-tax and incentive agreement between Saluda County and a company identified as Project Big Show.

Chairman Moore explained that the company had requested that its name remain confidential during ongoing negotiations. He stated that code names are commonly used in economic development recruitment and comply with State law. He clarified that the project was not a data center or solar farm.

Chairman Moore reported that the proposed project represented an anticipated investment of approximately $28.3 million and the creation of 200 new jobs.

There being no further discussion, the motion made by Councilman Anderson, seconded by Councilman Daniel to approve first reading of Ordinance No. 09-26 carried.

2. INDUCEMENT RESOLUTION – PROJECT BIG SHOW

Council considered an inducement resolution concerning a fee-in-lieu-of-tax and incentive agreement between Saluda County and Project Big Show, including the proposed establishment or expansion of facilities, participation in a multi-county industrial or business park, and special source revenue credits.

Chairman Moore summarized provisions of the resolution, including an anticipated investment of at least $28,395,166 and the creation of 200 new full-time jobs during the compliance period. The resolution included findings regarding the anticipated public benefits of the project and the purposes of the proposed incentives.

Following discussion, the motion made by Vice-Chairman Bedenbaugh, seconded by Councilman Daniel to approve the inducement resolution carried.

3. UPDATED FREEDOM OF INFORMATION POLICY

Council considered an updated Freedom of Information policy. Chairman Moore explained that the revision changes the procedure for receiving Freedom of Information requests, directing all requests to the Public Information Officer.

There being no further discussion, the motion made by Vice-Chairman Bedenbaugh, seconded by Councilman Daniel to approve the updated policy carried.

4. LIBRARY RENOVATION PROJECT – BID AWARD

Council considered awarding the bid for the library renovation project.

Purchasing Coordinator Penny Clary reported that the bids had been reviewed with Upper Savannah Council of Governments, which recommended W.E. Baker and Sons of Whitmire, South Carolina, as the lowest bidder. She noted that this was the third time the project had been advertised for bids and that the previous bids had exceeded the projected cost.

The recommended bid was $949,190. It was explained that approximately $750,000 would be funded through a Community Development Block Grant, with the balance paid from the County’s library reserve.

There being no further discussion, the motion made by Vice-Chairman Bedenbaugh, seconded by Councilman Daniel to award the library renovation project to W.E. Baker and Sons for $949,190 carried.

5. PUBLIC TRANSIT FEASIBILITY STUDY

Mr. Rick Green of Upper Savannah Council of Governments presented the completed public transit feasibility study for Saluda County. He explained that the study was completed through a grant at no cost or obligation to the County.

Mr. Green described potential options for public transportation, including establishing a County-operated system, partnering with an adjacent county, or considering a volunteer-driver program focused on transportation to medical appointments.

Council discussed the need for transportation services for County residents, the potential cost of operating a system, and whether the study could be used to approach an outside provider. Mr. Green confirmed that the study could serve as a first step toward exploring possible services.

The presentation was received as information. No action was taken.

6. CAPITAL CITY/LAKE MURRAY COUNTRY – TOURISM PRESENTATION

Ms. Vicki Davis, Executive Director of Capital City/Lake Murray Country, presented an overview of the organization's tourism marketing activities, accomplishments, and plans for the current fiscal year.

Ms. Davis discussed regional marketing, digital advertising, social media, public relations, visitor resources, events, and efforts to promote Saluda County's outdoor recreation, history, agriculture, local businesses, and community experiences. She also discussed preparations for Lake Murray's 100th anniversary in 2027.

Ms. Davis reported that short-term rental revenue in Saluda County increased from approximately $1.76 million in 2023 to $2.32 million in 2025. She discussed the importance of accurate reporting and collection of applicable accommodations taxes and offered to provide County staff with a contact at the South Carolina Department of Revenue.

Ms. Davis also discussed fishing tournaments, visitor marketing, the potential economic impact of tourism, and opportunities to promote Saluda County through regional campaigns and updated photography and video. Council discussed opportunities to attract visitors and support local businesses.

The presentation was received as information. No action was taken.

J. EXECUTIVE SESSION

A motion was made by Vice-Chairman Bedenbaugh and seconded by Councilman Anderson for Council to enter executive session pursuant to Sections 30-4-70(a)(1) and 30-4-70(a)(2) of the South Carolina Code of Laws, as amended, to discuss personnel matters in the Assessor's Office and contracts involving public buildings. The motion made by Vice-Chairman Bedenbaugh, seconded by Councilman Daniel carried.

Chairman Moore called Council back into open session and Councilman Anderson made a motion to correct the wording of the previous motion to award the Library Renovation Bid to W. E. Baker & Son in the amount of $949,190 to be funded by a CDBG Grant and the Library Reserve account. Vice-Chairman Bedenbaugh seconded the motion and it carried unanimously.

K. ADJOURNMENT

On motion of Vice-Chairman Bedenbaugh, it was approved to adjourn the meeting at 7:46 P.M.

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James L. Moore, Chairman

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Heather L. Griffin
Clerk to Council

Date Approved: _____