

**MINUTES OF REGULAR MEETING
SALUDA COUNTY COUNCIL
MONDAY, SEPTEMBER 14, 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.

Councilman Jack Atkinson

Vice-Chairman J. Carey Bedenbaugh

Chairman James L. Moore

Absent was: Councilman Justin Anderson

Also Present were:

Regina Turner, County Administrator

Heather L. Griffin, Clerk to Council

B. INVOCATION

Councilman J. Frank Daniel gave the invocation.

C. PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

The Pledge of Allegiance was led by Chairman Moore.

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, to include 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, seconded by Councilman Atkinson, the agenda was unanimously approved as written.

E. APPROVAL OF MINUTES

On motion of Vice-Chairman Bedenbaugh, seconded by Councilman Atkinson, the minutes of the August 10, 2026 meeting were unanimously approved as written.

F. REPORTS AND COMMENTS OF COUNTY COUNCIL MEMBERS

Councilman Atkinson expressed appreciation for the recent rainfall and reported that things were going well.

Vice-Chairman Bedenbaugh welcomed those in attendance and reminded citizens that the final Capital Project Sales Tax community information meeting would be held on September 21, 2026, at 6:00 P.M. in the Council Chambers. He also announced the Saluda Lions Club Golf Tournament to be held September 23, 2026, at 1:00 P.M. at Persimmon Hill. Vice-Chairman Bedenbaugh thanked the County's boards and commissions, staff, County employees, and fellow Council members for their work and service to Saluda County.

Councilman Daniel welcomed those in attendance and encouraged citizens to attend County Council meetings to stay informed about County business. He commented on the successful peach crop and expressed optimism regarding the upcoming pecan crop.

Chairman Moore reported on the Capital Project Sales Tax community information meetings held throughout the County and commended the Capital Project Sales Tax Committee for its work. Chairman Moore also referenced information from Capital City/Lake Murray Country indicating that short-term rentals in Saluda County generated approximately \$2.3 million in revenue for citizens during the previous year.

Chairman Moore also provided an update regarding concerns previously raised concerning property near the Higgins area. He reported that, based on his visit to the area, the road in question appeared to be Abney Nursery Road, which is a State-maintained road and was in poor condition.

G. PUBLIC COMMENTS

Ms. Gayle Meyer addressed Council regarding citizen participation and communication with County government. Ms. Meyer discussed efforts over the past several years to improve the public comment process and increase transparency and responsiveness. She expressed appreciation for positive changes she believes have occurred, including the ability of citizens to address Council without providing ten days' notice. She also discussed concerns previously raised regarding citizen communication with Council, use of SCORF funds, and the disposal of County-owned property. Ms. Meyer expressed appreciation for recent discussion by Council regarding citizens' concerns and encouraged continued transparency, responsiveness, and discussion of matters before Council.

Mr. Jerry Meyer addressed Council in support of the concerns raised by his wife. He stated that he does not regularly attend Council meetings but supports her efforts to encourage greater

responsiveness and transparency. Mr. Meyer expressed appreciation for Council members who have recently asked questions and engaged in discussion concerning matters before Council. He encouraged Council to continue asking questions, seeking answers, discussing issues, and explaining decisions to the public.

H. PUBLIC HEARINGS

1. Ordinance No. 07-26 — Saluda County Airport T-Hanger Lease Rates

A public hearing was held on Ordinance No. 07-26, an ordinance authorizing the lease of T-hangers owned by Saluda County and located at the Saluda County Airport, authorizing an increase in T-hanger lease rates, and other matters relating thereto.

No one signed up to speak.

2. Ordinance No. 08-26 — Building Permit Fee Schedule

A public hearing was held on Ordinance No. 08-26, an ordinance adopting an updated building permit fee schedule and other matters related thereto.

Mr. Ricky Bailey addressed Council and urged caution regarding the proposed increases in building permit fees. Mr. Bailey requested that the County consider protections for taxpayers, including consideration of the County's existing support of the building inspection service, performance and inspection turnaround requirements, a tiered fee structure that would minimize impacts on homeowners and small businesses, and whether the County should evaluate bringing the service back in-house if costs become excessive.

I. OLD BUSINESS

1. Third Reading — Ordinance No. 07-26

A motion was made by Vice-Chairman Bedenbaugh and seconded by Councilman Daniel to approve third reading of Ordinance No. 07-26, an ordinance authorizing the lease of T-hangers owned by Saluda County and located at the Saluda County Airport, authorizing an increase in T-hanger lease rates, and other matters relating thereto.

There being no further discussion, the motion was unanimously approved.

2. Second Reading — Ordinance No. 08-26

A motion was requested to approve second reading of Ordinance No. 08-26, an ordinance adopting an updated building permit fee schedule and other matters relating thereto.

No motion was made. The matter therefore failed for lack of a motion.

J. NEW BUSINESS

1. County Operating Millage — Fiscal Year 2026-2027

A motion was made by Vice-Chairman Bedenbaugh and seconded by Councilman Daniel to set the County operating millage for fiscal year 2026-2027 at **151.2 mills**, with the following millage remaining or being established as stated:

- Economic Development – 6.0 mills
- Public Safety – 12.0 mills
- Piedmont Technical College – 3.6 mills
- Public Building Maintenance – 4.8 mills
- Fire Board – 5.0 mills

During discussion, it was noted that the County bond millage is set by the Treasurer at 5.52 mills and that the value of one mill is \$86,338.

There being no further discussion, the motion was unanimously approved.

2. Saluda School District One Operating Millage — Fiscal Year 2026-2027

A motion was made by Vice-Chairman Bedenbaugh and seconded by Councilman Daniel to set the Saluda School District One operating millage for fiscal year 2026-2027 at **175.45 mills**.

During discussion, it was noted that Saluda School District One bond millage is set by the Treasurer and is estimated to total 53.12 mills. The value of one school mill was stated as \$68,683.

There being no further discussion, the motion was unanimously approved.

3. Saluda County EMS — Request for Additional Part-Time Paramedic Positions and Quick Response Vehicle

Jacob Starnes, EMS Director, appeared before Council to discuss a proposal to establish five part-time paramedic positions to staff a Quick Response Vehicle (QRV) in the Mason-Good Hope area.

Mr. Starnes reported that Saluda County EMS had experienced numerous periods when no ambulance was available in the County. He reported that during July there were 31 instances totaling approximately 38 hours when the County had no ambulance available, and during August there were 21 instances totaling approximately 30.5 hours. He reported that September had experienced six such instances totaling approximately 6.5 hours at the time of the meeting.

Mr. Starnes explained that the QRV would provide emergency medical care while an ambulance was unavailable and would be capable of providing medications, starting IVs, managing cardiac arrests, and providing ventilator support, but would not be capable of transporting patients.

Council discussed the proposed staffing, the use of five part-time paramedics, estimated personnel costs, the availability of an existing County vehicle, possible use of facilities in the Mason community, and how the QRV would respond when ambulances were committed elsewhere in the County.

Mr. Starnes stated that the proposed QRV would initially be stationed in the Mason-Good Hope area to improve coverage in that portion of the County.

Council noted that the proposed positions and related expenditures were not included in the current fiscal year budget. No action was taken. The information was received for consideration.

4. Consideration to Establish a Buy-Sell-Lease Policy for County Property

Council discussed the possibility of establishing a policy for the sale, purchase, or lease of County property.

The County Administrator explained that the County currently follows applicable State regulations regarding the disposal of County property, but those regulations do not require the County to establish a fair market value before disposing of property.

Council discussed the importance of determining the fair market value of County property before a sale and the possible use of an appraisal or other method to establish value. Council also discussed property previously sold by the County and the need to establish a process for future property transactions, particularly in anticipation of potential sales involving County property at the Commerce Park and other County-owned properties.

No vote was taken. Council agreed to continue considering the matter and determine an appropriate process or policy for future discussion.

5. Resolution Recognizing September 2026 as National Preparedness Month

A motion was made by Vice-Chairman Bedenbaugh and seconded by Councilman Daniels to approve a resolution recognizing September 2026 as National Preparedness Month in Saluda County, South Carolina.

Chairman Moore read the resolution, which recognizes the importance of emergency preparedness and encourages residents, households, businesses, schools, houses of worship, and community organizations to maintain emergency plans, supplies, communications, evacuation information, and reliable sources of emergency alerts.

Josh Morton, Emergency Management, addressed Council regarding the resolution. Mr. Morton discussed the importance of preparedness, particularly in light of the impacts of Hurricane Helene on Saluda County. He encouraged citizens to maintain sufficient supplies and resources to care for themselves and their families during the first several days of an emergency.

There being no further discussion, the motion was unanimously approved.

6. Resolution Appointing Regina Turner as Alternate Director to Three Rivers Solid Waste Authority

A motion was made by Vice-Chairman Bedenbaugh and seconded by Councilman Daniel to approve a resolution appointing Regina Turner, Administrator of Saluda County, to serve as the alternate director representing Saluda County on the Board of Directors of the Three Rivers Solid Waste Authority.

The resolution removes Sandra Padgett as Saluda County's alternate director and appoints Regina Turner as the alternate director.

There being no further discussion, the motion was unanimously approved.

K. EXECUTIVE SESSION

There was no Executive Session.

L. ADJOURNMENT

There being no further business, a motion was made by Vice-Chairman Bedenbaugh to adjourn the meeting. There being no further discussion, the motion was unanimously approved.

The meeting was adjourned at 6:51 P.M.

Heather L. Griffin
Clerk to Council

James L. Moore, Chairman

Date Approved: October 12, 2026