

Council Members

District 1: Stuart Graham
District 2: Charlene McGriff
District 3: Billy Mosteller, Vice Chair
District 4: Jose Luis
District 5: Steve Harper
District 6: Bryant Neal, Secretary
District 7: Brian Carnes, Chair

**Interim County Administrator**

Steve Willis

County Attorney

Ginny L. Merck-Dupont

Clerk to Council

Sherrie Simpson

**May 21, 2026
6:00 PM**

LANCASTER COUNTY COUNCIL

COUNTY COUNCIL CHAMBERS, COUNTY ADMINISTRATION
BUILDING, 101 NORTH MAIN STREET, LANCASTER, SC 29720

MINUTES

Council Members Present: Brian Carnes, Steve Harper, Jose Luis, Billy Mosteller, Charlene McGriff, Bryant Neal, Stuart Graham

Staff Members/Others Present: Steve Willis, Interim County Administrator; Lauren Hill, Deputy Clerk to Council; Stephany Snowden, Deputy County Administrator; Sabrena Harris, Chief Financial Officer; Jamie Privuznak, Budget Director; Jeff Catoe, Public Works Director; Clay Catoe, Emergency Medical Services Director; Brian Fulk, Economic Development Director; Karla Deese, Coroner; the press; various elected officials; various Department Heads; various employees; and citizens.

A quorum of Lancaster County Council was present for the meeting. The following press were notified of the meeting by e-mail in accordance with the Freedom of Information Act: *The Lancaster News*, *Kershaw News Era*, *The Rock Hill Herald*, Cable News 2, Channel 9 and the local government channel. The agenda was posted in the lobby of the County Administration Building and also on the County website the required length of time. The PowerPoint presentation utilized during the meeting is attached to the written minutes in the Clerk to Council's office.

[IGNORE_INDENT]

Call to Order Special Meeting - Chair Brian Carnes

Chair Brian Carnes called the County Council Special Meeting to order at approximately 6:00 p.m.

Welcome and Recognition - Chair Brian Carnes

Chair Brian Carnes welcomed everyone to the meeting.

Pledge of Allegiance and Invocation - Council Member Billy Mosteller

Council Member Billy Mosteller led the Pledge of Allegiance to the American Flag and delivered the Invocation.

Approval of the Agenda

Charlene McGriff moved to approve the agenda. Seconded by Bryant Neal. There was no

discussion from Council. The motion to approve the agenda Passed by unanimous vote of 7-0.

Citizens Comments

The following citizens signed up for and spoke during the Citizen Comments: None.

The following citizens submitted electronic, written comments for Citizen Comments: None.

Discussion and Action Items

a. Discussion of Administrator's Recommended Budget - *Steve Willis / Sabrena Harris / Jamie Privuznak*

Steve Willis started the discussion with opening comments where he stated that the budget was very public safety oriented, and he indicated that Council had listed public safety as their top priority in their strategic plan. He noted that, of the forty-eight. five (48.5) newly requested positions, thirty-six (36) were for public safety. He also noted that the two largest requests for non-personnel items, artificial turf for the Walnut Creek soccer fields and Sheriff's replacement patrol vehicles, were split between funding sources. He explained that finance staff had tried to minimize the impact to citizens; however, he explained that population growth and inflation have impacted the County's budget. He asked for guidance from Council regarding what they may want to cut from the budget if they want to have a zero millage increase.

Jamie Privuznak provided updated information on the budget related to new positions, other major requests, recommendations for external agencies, fund balance recommendations, possible increases for minimum pay rates and existing personnel, and next steps via the County Council PowerPoint. This May 21 Special Meeting Presentation - Discussion of Administrator's FY2027 Recommended Budget PowerPoint presentation, along with accompanying exhibits, was included in the agenda packet.

Council and staff discussed moving some positions to a half year rather than a full year, the possibility of using fund balance reserves for the solicitor's project, how staff determined the estimated unassigned fund balance, possible discounts on buying fire trucks, the Christmas supplement for employees, removing the building for Development Services from the Fund Balance Appropriations List and from the Capital Improvement Plan, whether to fund the 12 position Radio Console Replacement in this year's budget or next year's budget and the possible risks involved in waiting to fund the item, the total costs for the Arrowwood drainage project that affects approximately eight (8) property owners and possible grant funding for the project, the office expansion and renovation of the Animal Shelter for the Animal Control officers, what is included in the transportation plan and that the funds would be used for a consultant to do a study, possibly funding a six (6) million dollar fire station at Pleasant Valley and Edgewater and near the Haven, establishing a base cost or standardized plans for a fire station, whether the County could bond fire stations, the number of volunteers in fire services, using professional paid staff for fire services versus volunteers, the possibility of using EMS and Fire combination stations, and funding the sheriff's replacement vehicles from two (2) different sources.

Steve Harper stated, for the record, that when the budget comes out this year, it will show a big increase, and we need to let the public know that the budget will go down next year because a safe fund balance for a County organization is 28 to 32 percent and this budget is 40 percent, which keeps us in a safe range. He noted that the Council is using leftover funds that belong to

the citizens of the County, and Council is using those funds rather than borrowing money or having a tax increase, and that they are addressing one-time needs.

Council and staff discussed how to plan ahead for fire services, the possibility of increasing the hourly wage for both part-time and full-time employees, what compression issues may occur when the hourly wage is raised, the value of keeping current employees and their institutional knowledge, and whether constituents are earning more than the County's minimum wage. Jamie Privuznak reviewed revenue projections. Council and staff discussed the collection of ad valorem taxes and the need to be realistic regarding income projections. Jamie Privuznak reviewed possible scenarios of millage increases based on revenues and expenditures and budget recommendations. Steve Harper and Billy Mosteller explained that they could not support a millage increase for this budget year. Council and staff discussed possible funding for a special election due to redistricting, if it passes, and that there is no third party contractor for Voter Registration included in the upcoming budget. Council and staff discussed whether there was a need for a cybersecurity manager, how Artificial Intelligence (AI) may play into the future of County financing, that the ERP specialist had already been hired using temporary dollars but that the County needed it funded full-time in the upcoming budget, the removal of the approximately seventy-two thousand five hundred (\$72,500) dollars worth of project funding for the Olde English District, and a lengthy discussion regarding future plans for the Airport and whether the Airport is losing money each year. Stephany Snowden stated that most general aviation airports do not make money, that fuel sales for the Airport have increased, and that there are more jets coming into the Airport. Council and staff discussed hangars for the Airport. Stuart Graham stated that he could not support more funding for the Airport until he sees another overall strategy for the Airport. Jose Luis suggested that the two (2) million dollars for an Economic Development speculation building be tabled until the new County Administrator begins work and can evaluate the need for such an item. Council and staff also discussed whether mini-buses for the Parks and Recreation Department should be funded. Lastly, Council and staff discussed the six (6) percent cost of living raise for the Sheriff Department's career ladder and the two (2) percent cost of living raise for all other employees and whether those percentages should be changed. They also discussed possible changes in salaries for all Public Safety and for the Chief Magistrate. Coroner Karla Deese provided an overview of a new pathology/autopsy program at the Coroner's office that could possibly bring in revenues to the County.

Based on the above discussions, Council requested to have more information on the following: (1) how much money would be saved by budgeting positions for a half year rather than a full year; (2) how many constituents earn under the County's minimum wage, by looking at census data or economic development data; and (3) the total costs for the Airport, including fuel sales, hangar leases, and an audit for taxes for airplanes.

Adjournment

Steve Harper moved to adjourn the Special meeting. Seconded by Bryant Neal. There being no further business to discuss, the Special meeting of County Council adjourned at approximately 7:59 p.m.

Respectfully Submitted:

Approved by Council on June 8, 2026.

Sherrie Simpson

Sherrie Simpson
Clerk to Council

Bryant Neal

Bryant Neal, Secretary