



Richland County Council
Special Called Meeting
MINUTES
May 22, 2025 – 6:00 PM
Council Chambers
2020 Hampton Street, Columbia, SC 29204

COUNCIL MEMBERS PRESENT: Jesica Mackey, Chair; Derrek Pugh, Tyra Little, Paul Livingston, Allison Terracio (arrived at 6:05 PM), Don Weaver, Gretchen Barron, Tish Dozier-Alleyne, Cheryl English, and Chakisse Newton

NOT PRESENT: Jason Branham

OTHERS PRESENT: Kyle Holsclaw, Michelle Onley, Ashiya Myers, Lori Thomas, Anette Kirylo, Aric Jensen, Angela Weathersby, Stacey Hamm, Kenny Bowen, Wayne Thornley, Jackie Hancock, Aric Jensen, Leonardo Brown, Patrick Wright, Brian Fitzgerald, Oscar Rosales, and Brittany Hammond

1. **CALL TO ORDER** – Chairwoman Jesica Mackey called the meeting to order at approximately 6:00 PM.
2. **ADOPTION OF AGENDA** – Ms. Barron moved to adopt the agenda as published, seconded by Ms. Alleyne.

In Favor: Pugh, Little, Livingston, Weaver, Barron, Alleyne, Mackey, English, and Newton

Not Present: Branham and Terracio

The vote in favor was unanimous.

3. **FISCAL YEAR 2025-2026 BUDGET PUBLIC HEARING**

- a. **An Ordinance authorizing the levying of ad valorem property taxes which, together with the prior year's carryover and other State levies and any additional amount appropriated by the Richland County Council prior to July 1, 2025, will provide sufficient revenues for the operations of Richland County Government during the period from July 1, 2025, through June 30, 2026. So as to raise revenue, make appropriations and amend the General Fund, Millage Agencies, Special Revenue Funds, Enterprise Funds, and Debt Service Funds Budget for Richland County, South Carolina for Fiscal Year beginning July 1, 2025 and ending June 30, 2025**
- b. **An Ordinance authorizing the levying of Ad Valorem property taxes which together with the prior year's carryover and other State Levies and any additional amount appropriated by the Richland County Council prior to July 1, 2025 will provide sufficient revenues for the operations of Richland County Government during the period from July 1, 2025 through June 30, 2026**

Mr. Pugh moved to suspend the rules to allow all citizens who signed up to speak to give their remarks, seconded by Ms. Barron.

In Favor: Pugh, Little, Livingston, Weaver, Barron, Alleyne, Mackey, English, and Newton

Not Present: Branham and Terracio

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The vote in favor was unanimous.

Chair Mackey opened the Public hearing:

1. Sandra Jackson, 265 King Charles Road, Columbia, SC 29209 – spoke in favor of supporting Midlands Technical College
2. Clara Wallace, 1208 Bush River Road, Apt. J6, Columbia, SC 29201 – spoke in favor of supporting Midlands Technical College
3. Brandy Lilly, 3509 Lake Avenue, Apt. 1102, Columbia, SC 29206 – spoke in favor of supporting Midlands Technical College
4. Shanda Rivers, 232 Deer Ridge Drive, Hopkins, SC 29061 – spoke in favor of supporting Columbia Classical Ballet
5. Raj Aluri, 1827 Greene Street, Columbia, SC 29201 – spoke in favor of supporting the Columbia International Festival
6. Veldene Holas, 9 Upton Court, Columbia, SC 29209 – spoke in favor of supporting the Columbia International Festival
7. Meredith Edwards, 208 Amelia Oaks Way, Columbia, SC 29201 – spoke in favor of supporting the Columbia International Festival
8. Ryan Dupree, 413 Sesqui Trail, Columbia, SC 29223 – spoke in favor of supporting the Columbia International Festival
9. Barry Knighton, 428 Cami Forest Lane, Columbia, SC 29209 – spoke in favor of supporting the Columbia International Festival
10. Michael Krigline, 3187 Sierra Drive, West Columbia, SC 29170 – spoke in favor of supporting the Columbia International Festival
11. Morgan Lumpkin, 700 Woodrow Street, Columbia, SC 29205 – spoke in favor of supporting the Columbia Classical Ballet
12. Andrew Boozer, 2817 Millwood Avenue, Columbia, SC 29205 – spoke in favor of supporting Senior Resources
13. Anna Brannin, 6325 Pinefield Road, Columbia, SC 29206 – spoke in favor of supporting Richland Public Library
14. Ashley Griffin, 311 Poplar Street, Lexington, SC 29073 – spoke in favor of supporting the Richland Public Library
15. George Rice, 3720 Greenbriar Drive, Columbia, SC 29206 – spoke in favor of supporting the Richland Public Library
16. Anna Herron, 21 Oak Lake Court, Blythewood, SC 29016 – Opposition to Budget
17. Javar Juarez, 1120 Briargate Circle, Columbia, SC 29210 – Opposition to Budget
18. Della Watkins, 1515 Main Street, Columbia, SC 29201 – spoke in favor of supporting the Columbia Museum of Art
19. Maggie Brown, 3313 Makeway Drive, Columbia, SC 29201 – Request for Budget Documents
20. Ethan Mathis, 6530 Davidson Street, Unit B4, Columbia, SC 29205 – Opposition to Budget
21. Dawit Alemu, 744 Fountain Lake Road, Columbia, SC 29209 – spoke in favor of supporting the Columbia International Festival
22. Loi Lee, 500 Lance Drive, Columbia, SC 29212 – spoke in favor of supporting the Columbia International Festival
23. Patrick Nhigula, 137 Caedmons Creeks Drive, Irmo, SC 29063 – spoke in favor of supporting the Columbia International Festival
24. Jodi Moseley, 1008 Wotan Road, Columbia, SC 29229 – spoke in favor of supporting Columbia Classical Ballet
25. Gavin Brown, 6 Foxfield Lane, Blythewood, SC 29016 - spoke in favor of supporting Transitions
26. Lee Lumpkin, 21 Heathwood Circle, Columbia, SC 29205 – spoke in favor of supporting Columbia Classical Ballet
27. Jeanette McBride, Clerk of Court, 2415 Pinehurst Road, Columbia, SC 29204 – spoke in favor of supporting the Clerks of Court Budget
28. William Starrett, 1031 Laurens Street, Columbia, SC 29201 – spoke in favor of supporting the South Carolina Ballet
29. Kalin Tchonev, 3213 Foxhall Road, Columbia, SC 29204 – spoke in favor of supporting Varna International Music Academy
30. Zoe Owen, 38 Ironwood Way, Columbia, SC 29209 – Opposition to the Budget

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The County Administrator, Leonardo Brown, read into the record written comments received online from the following individuals:

31. Del Arrendale, 1197 Coogler Crossing Drive, Blythewood, SC 29016 – Richland Public Library
32. Joe Bates, Jr., 923 Koon Road, Irmo, SC 29063 – Opposition to the Budget
33. Stephen Gilchrist, 121 North Ridge Road, Columbia, SC 29223 – Richland County School Districts

No one else signed up to speak, and Chair Mackey closed the public hearing at this time.

4. **ADJOURNMENT** – Ms. Barron moved to adjourn the meeting, seconded by Mr. Pugh.

In Favor: Pugh, Little, Livingston, Terracio, Weaver, Barron, Walker, Mackey, English, and Newton

Not Present: Branham

The vote in favor was unanimous.

The meeting adjourned at approximately 7:14 PM.

Michelle Onley

From: Budget Public Hearing
Sent: Tuesday, May 27, 2025 2:52 PM
To: Michelle Onley
Subject: FW: Budget meeting

Follow Up Flag: Follow up
Flag Status: Flagged

From: Del Arrendale
Sent: Thursday, May 22, 2025 11:34 AM
To: Budget Public Hearing <budgetpublichearing@richlandcountysc.gov>
Subject: Re: Budget meeting

CAUTION: This email originated from outside of the organization. Do not click links or open attachments unless you recognize the sender and know the content is safe.

Here you go.

Can you confirm that under this bill, that if passed, the library could host transgender or queer ideology readings and performances at Library events... whether or not the library would allow minors to check out books related to transgender ideology. In my opinion, there should be no books or literature of this kind available to minors.

If parents want to check out books of this nature and teach this to their children, I have no objection as we do live in America and freedom of thought and speech are to be tolerated.

Our children must be protected and not be subject to public funds used to promote these ideologies... at all, just as I oppose the library promoting religious or any other ideology not related to their core mission. The government and its agencies must remain apolitical.

I may be quoted. I wish I could attend in person.

1197 Coogler Crossing Drive
Blythewood, SC 29016

Best regards,
Del Arrendale

Michelle Onley

From: Budget Public Hearing
Sent: Tuesday, May 27, 2025 2:54 PM
To: Michelle Onley
Subject: FW: Library Budget: 20% or less favor this

Follow Up Flag: Follow up
Flag Status: Flagged

From: Joe Mac Bates, Jr.
Sent: Tuesday, May 20, 2025 11:15 AM
To: Budget Public Hearing <budgetpublichearing@richlandcountysc.gov>
Subject: Library Budget: 20% or less favor this

CAUTION: This email originated from outside of the organization. Do not click links or open attachments unless you recognize the sender and know the content is safe.

Dear Richland County Council:

**1. We do not need to SPEND MORE MONEY, please.
Stop this spend, spend nonsense. Reduce the budget.**

I have no extra money. I don't know any body else that wants Richland County to have more MONEY either.

2. Additionally, 80% of American Citizens disapprove of anything remotely associated with Diversity, Equality, Inclusion. That whole falsely created ideology is simply in it self fueling RACIST THINKING. Nothing good comes out of it.

**3. I have always been and still am a firm believer in encouraging all people to strive to become the best person God created them to be. We are all special in HIS eyes!
Seeking & Following His Word incredibly Leads us to a Good
Life, fulfilled.**

4. If an adult wants to go against their "created being," so be it. Do not participate in influencing young minds against themselves as they are so created perfectly in His own Image!

**5. Public Libraries are to respond to The Public That Pays For Them.
I is "one of them." I here by state that I object to this Bureaucratic Expansion.**

**No 7 more positions!
No (20%) Budget Increases!**

Sincerely,

**Joe Mac Bates, Jr.
923 Koon Rd, Irmo, SC 29063
803-920-8053**

PS: I am an 80+ year resident of this county

Below is a Forwarded message from another educated RICHLAND COUNTY FRIND.

Richland Library Funds DEI initiatives," Let's Talk Race, " and "Queer Queries Events"

Richland County budget hearing 6pm THIS Thursday, 2020 Hampton St! Budget up 20% to \$1.5B, adds 7 new government jobs.

Library seeks max increase, funds “Let’s Talk Race” & “Queer Queries” events, pushing agendas on taxpayer dime.
STOP THIS!

Can’t attend? Email comments to budgetpublichearing@richlandcountysc.gov by 5pm TONIGHT.

More details here: “<https://www.richlandcountysc.gov/Home/Events/ArtMID/721/ArticleID/3199/Public-Hearing-Richland-Countys-FY-2026-Budget>”

Joe Mac Bates, Jr.

pHix, Vegas Nerve System, Cellular Apoptosis Pathways Health, SC Real Estate Broker, Irmo, SC
803-920-8053

www.GetBackMyHealth.Com www.ApoptosisPathways.com Educational Docs Only. No tracking.

At www.pubmed.gov

as of 1/1/25 find over 584,443 Third Party Research Docs on APOPTOSIS.

Real Food ONLY! Significant to your health? You bet it is!

Michelle Onley

From: Budget Public Hearing
Sent: Tuesday, May 27, 2025 2:53 PM
To: Michelle Onley
Subject: FW: Request to speak on Richland County budget

Follow Up Flag: Follow up
Flag Status: Flagged

From: stephen gilchrist
Sent: Thursday, May 22, 2025 1:47 PM
To: Budget Public Hearing <budgetpublichearing@richlandcountysc.gov>
Cc: JESICA MACKEY <MACKEY.JESICA@richlandcountysc.gov>; DERREK PUGH <PUGH.DERREK@richlandcountysc.gov>; LEONARDO BROWN <BROWN.LEONARDO@richlandcountysc.gov>
Subject: Re: Request to speak on Richland County budget

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Great! Thank you so much for accepting my comments and request. I will also forward to the members of Council and the County Administrator.

First, my position on the budget priorities this year is based on the fact that the nation's credit rating has recently been downgraded which could have a profound impact on state and local governments ability to borrow money.

While Richland County has imposed taxes through infrastructure investments such as the penny tax, it's important to note that the county itself has not increased overall taxes in nearly ten years. In contrast, agencies such as school districts have consistently raised their tax rates by requesting millage increases. During an assessment year, I believe it is more prudent for the county to prioritize its operational and economic development goals—such as supporting SCOUT MOTORS and other economic development priorities—by evaluating the necessity of a general tax increase, while maintaining a strict stance against increasing millage rates for other taxing entities including school districts.

Secondly, it is essential to emphasize that if the county intends to permit school districts to increase taxes through higher millage rates, you must equally demand transparency and accountability regarding their strategies for ensuring a safe learning environment for students. County Council should exercise due diligence and ensure that taxpayer funds are allocated effectively and with thisbin mind. It is unacceptable that, despite financial support from you, students continue to face bullying, harassment, and in extreme cases, violence, due to insufficient protections and measures implemented by the school districts. I encourage you to ask these questions to school districts on behalf of our children and ALL TAXPAYERS BEFORE allocating any money!! Not committing to this practice can result in a dereliction of duty and potentially violate the rights of our children in our County Schools.

Council or their designees are welcomed to read my statements publicly as they are meant for the public record.

Please advise.

Stephen Gilchrist

Address: [121 North Ridge Rd](#)

Occupation. Taxpayer