

MINUTES
Regular Town Council Meeting
FY 2026/2027 Budget Public Hearing
June 23, 2026

Council Attendance: Mayor Robert Martin, Councilmembers: Mike Hawkins, Chad Hawkins, McKeva Kinard-Shelton and Terry Murphy.

Administrative Attendance: Karen Livingston, Town Administrator; Michelle Wise, Clerk Treasurer; Wesley Palmore, Police Chief and Jennifer Nichols, Town Attorney.

Mayor Robert Martin called the Regular meeting to order and asked Councilmember McKeva Kinard- Shelton to open with prayer. The Pledge of Allegiance was recited.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES:

Mayor Robert Martin presented the Minutes from May 19, 2026 Regular Council Meeting for approval.

A MOTION by Councilmember Chad Hawkins to approve the Minutes from May 19, 2026, Regular Council Meeting; seconded by Councilmember Terry Murphy and so approved unanimously.

OPEN PUBLIC HEARING ON 2026/2027 FY BUDGET:

Mayor Martin opened the public hearing and read through the 2026/2027 Budget as follows:

No tax increase.

General Fund balanced at \$927,550 (increase due to Standardized Business License Collection and Police Revenue -fully staffed Police Department).

Utility Fund Balanced at \$2,921,722 (increase due to offset Water and Sewer 5% increase pass along).

Total Operating Budget balanced at \$3,849,272.

Total Operating Budget percentage change- 5.33%.

Rate Changes:

Sanitation- roll cart residential and commercial increased from \$14.69 to \$18.00- second cart available at \$18.00 each additional cart.

Sewer rates- availability increased from \$19.08 to \$25.00 -rate remains at \$11.44 per 1,000 gallons.

Electric availability rate increased from \$11.28 to \$25.00- rates remain the same (NEC increased rate 3%).

Water-availability rate stays the same. Rates increased 5% per 1,000 gallons to \$4.42 per 1,000 gallons. (NCWSA increased 5%).

Pole Lights- residential lights will increase from \$8.76 to \$10.78.

Salary increases 2% across the board.

Basic Charge increase per household will be \$22.95 per household.

Grant Match (10K) FEMA Generators.

Police car (60K)

Zoning Ordinance update (15K) -Mrs. Livingston stated the County enforces our Zoning and we need to update because it has not been updated since 1999.

Installation of remaining water meters by our Utility Department -Mrs. Livingston stated will be installed by the end of the year.

ProPhenix Police and Court Software- (15K) – Mrs. Livingston stated LawTrak is no longer and ARMS is not workable for what we need. She stated Newberry County is going with ProPhenix and wants everyone in the County to go with them so we will all be on the same system. She stated the whole system cost is \$265,000 and for nine users for The Town of Prosperity it will cost us \$15,000 with our yearly maintenance fee of \$6,000. She stated we want to make sure our information will be protected before we enter into a contract with ProPhenix.

Mayor Martin asked the audience if there were any questions at this time.

Ethan McCullough asked about the service fee changes for the new year. Mrs. Livingston stated all service fees would be changing effective July 1, 2026.

Ms. Allyson Tesh asked about connection fees for water and sewer and also about the generators for Town Hall and Police Department. Mrs. Livingston stated we are wanting to get Generators for Town Hall, Police Department, Civic Center and our Utility Department. She stated the generator we have now for our Civic Center is a place for charging and to keep warm or cool, but we are not set up for food or overnight stay. Discussion followed.

OPEN SESSION:

Mr. Joe Hawk with National Home Builders asked about the first reading of Ordinance 2026-0616. Councilmember Chad Hawkins stated we are adding to the Agenda for first reading. Mrs. Livingston stated Mr. Hawk applied to rezone to R-7, but she stated it falls in our corridor so it will need to be rezoned to R-10 which will be stick built homes.

Ms. Engle Thompson introduced herself to Council as the House District 40 candidate and thanked the Town of Prosperity for inviting her to the meeting.

A MOTION by Councilmember Chad Hawkins to add 6E to the agenda for first reading of Ordinance 2026-0616; seconded by Councilmember Mike Hawkins, and so approved unanimously.

UPDATES/ANNOUNCEMENTS:

Prosperity Business Association:

Mrs. Gina Mays stated they are moving forward with the July 5th celebration “Cheers to 250 years”. She stated it will be a fun, family-friendly event from 3-6pm in the park and it will be a good opportunity for people to come out to our community. She stated the Gala will be on July 31st at the Gin on Hwy 391.

CTC Committee:

Councilmember Chad Hawkins stated he could not attend the meeting and has no report from Glenn Hamm II.

Capital Project Sales Tax Update:

Mr. West stated the project is on schedule. He stated the foundations were poured today for the light poles. He stated the Utility Department will meet with the Contractors tomorrow on taps and utilities for the project. He stated most of the roof is on at South Main and waiting on the metal any day now. Councilmember Chad Hawkins asked about the striping on the parking lot at the ballfield. Mr. West stated they were not paving yet until they could get the heavy equipment out of there. Mayor Martin stated we need to check on the striping for the parking lot because we need spaces marked.

NEW BUSINESS:

Police, Court, Software Update quote:

Mrs. Livingston stated we went over the police software during the public hearing on the budget.

Close Public Hearing:

Mayor Martin closed the public hearing at 7:41pm.

1st Reading of 2026/2027 FY Budget:

Councilmember Mike Hawkins stated we have to increase the income because we have to pay for increases from Newberry Electric and NCWSA. He hoped we could have come up with a per gallon or per kilowatt increase but we are going up 23 percent on the basic charge per household. He stated it was a much easier formula just to change the basic charge, but it is going to impact negatively with some people on a low fixed income. He

stated he wished we could have come up with another formula. He stated this is his seventeenth year and we have never gone up on property taxes and we could have went up on property taxes a little and not hurt folks much. He stated we need to notify our customers that it may be a mid-year adjustment because unless fuel goes down it may not be the last increase in the next twelve months. Discussion followed.

Councilmember Chad Hawkins stated we have not went up on the basic charge much in the last twenty years. He stated the cost for services are a lot higher for us to keep absorbing from years ago.

A MOTION by Councilmember Chad Hawkins to accept first reading of the 2026/2027 FY Budget; seconded by Councilmember McKea Kinard-Shelton, and so approved unanimously.

Set June 30, 2026 Special Called Meeting for Second Reading of the 2026/2027 FY Budget:

Mayor Martin reminded Council and the Citizens of the Special called meeting set for June 30th for the second reading of the 2026/2027 FY Budget at 7pm.

First Reading of Ordinance 2026 0616- An Ordinance Amending the Zoning Ordinance of The Town of Prosperity Adopted April 20, 1999, so as to Amend the Zoning Map Acting on a Request to Amend the Official Zoning Map Established, Codified in Chapter 153 of The Town of Prosperity Code of Ordinances, so as to Rezone one (1) Real Estate Parcel Totaling four and Ninety-Three Hundredths (4.93) Acres Designated as TMS Parcel No. 464-1-1-1 from CC-Core Commercial to R-7 General Residential:

Mrs. Livingston stated this is the property located at 222 Church Street and the owner has went before the Zoning Board to rezone this property from Core Commercial to R-7 General Residential. She stated it is in the corridor overlay so it will have a modification from R-7 to R-10 and the County recommends us to approve, deny or modify.

A MOTION by Councilmember Chad Hawkins to accept the first reading of Ordinance 2026 0616 An Ordinance Amending the Zoning Ordinance of The Town of Prosperity Adopted April 20, 1999, so as to Amend the Zoning Map Acting on a Request to Amend the Official Zoning Map Established, Codified in Chapter 153 of The Town of Prosperity Code of Ordinances, so as to Rezone one (1) Real Estate Parcel Totaling four and Ninety-Three Hundredths (4.93) Acres Designated as TMS Parcel No. 464-1-1-1 from CC-Core Commercial to R-7 General Residential with the modification to R-10 because it falls in the corridor; seconded by Councilmember Mike Hawkins, and so approved unanimously.

REPORT OF COMMITTEES:

Electrical, Public Works and Sanitation:

Councilmember Murphy stated our Utility Department has been clearing limbs at locations and clearing out trees on Cedar Drive for preventative maintenance to our power lines so that is the reason for some of our outages lately. He stated they are catching up on work orders and have had a few water leaks this month. He talked with our Utility Director and they are changing out water meters as they are having problems with the old meters. Mrs. Livingston stated we have about 140 meters online now but we had issues with the new meters not communicating with the tower but we are getting the cables installed that will fix this problem.

Public Safety:

Councilmember McKea Kinard-Shelton thanked the Police Department for answering calls so quickly and being visible in our town and other communities. She thanked Chief Palmore for representing the town so well. She stated Rescue and Operations Golf Tournament was a success.

Economic Development, Buildings and Properties:

Councilmember Mike Hawkins stated we are losing Second Opinion Furniture Store. He stated AutoZone is coming. He stated he visited the liquor store at lower Main and encouraged the new owner which is from Gilbert to give the business three years.

Parks, Recreation, Events and Streets:

Councilmember Chad Hawkins stated summer ball will be starting soon. He stated the Clinton Laurens Tennis Association has several events going on. He stated Brown Street has been paved and wanted to remind our guys about adding risers for the manholes on Brown Street. Ethan McCullough asked about the stop bar on Brown Street and Councilmember Chad Hawkins stated the asphalt had to age and they will be painting the permanent markings in the next couple of weeks.

Police Department:

Chief Palmore reported the cases for the month. He stated they had a shooting at Miller Street Apartments on May 25th and they arrested one suspect and the other one is on the run. He thanked the Officers for putting in a lot of time in the first 48 hours with the investigation. He stated he met with the Housing Authority and told them it was an unauthorized party and we will not tolerate that behavior in our town. He thanked City of Newberry, Newberry County Sheriff Department and SLED for assisting us. He stated they assisted with the mobile food pantry and Prosperity Rikard traffic. He stated he attended the Business Association meeting. He stated he attended the Central Midlands Council of Government Transportation Meeting. He invited everyone to the July 4th

Fireworks at Newberry High School. He stated they will be assisting with the Patriotic celebration on July 5th, Community Impact Day -Shiloh AME Church July 11th and the Gala on July 31st. Councilmember McKea Kinard-Shelton stated the Chief attended the Juneteenth Celebration in Newberry/Prosperity and it was a great event.

Councilmember Chad Hawkins asked about downloading data from the speed signs. Discussion followed.

Town Attorney:

Jennifer Nichols had nothing to report.

Town Administrator:

Mrs. Livingston stated her and Mr. West are working on the CCR report. She stated they are reviewing the drought plan and it will be on the agenda for the June 30th meeting to approve. She stated town offices will be closed on July 6th for the Holiday.

OLD BUSINESS:

Second Reading to Adopt Newberry County Chapter 157: Public Nuisance and Unfit Dwelling Ordinance:

A **MOTION** by Councilmember Chad Hawkins to accept second reading to adopt Newberry County Chapter 157: Public Nuisance and Unfit Dwelling Ordinance; seconded by Councilmember Mike Hawkins, and so approved unanimously.

GENERAL COMMENTS:

Mayor Robert Martin thanked the Citizens for attending the meeting.

Councilmember Chad Hawkins reminded everyone that we moved our Council meeting to July 14th instead of July 21st.

Councilmember Mike Hawkins stated the garbage truck was at his house at 4am this morning. He stated the contract says 7 in the morning and we have had some complaints about it. He requested to change the October Council meeting to the 2nd or 4th Tuesday due to a conflict for him.

Mayor Robert Martin adjourned the meeting at 8:13 p.m.

Michelle B Wise Michelle B Wise, Clerk/Treasurer