

Town Council Regular Meeting

December 16, 2025 @ 2:30 PM

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Seabrook Island Town Hall, Council Chambers
2001 Seabrook Island Road
Seabrook Island, SC 29455



MINUTES

CALL TO ORDER

Mayor Kleinman called the meeting to order at 2:32 pm.

ROLL CALL

Councilmembers Present: Bruce Kleinman; Mayor, Councilmembers Raymond Hamilton, Dan Kortvelesy, Darryl May, and Gordon Weis.

Town Staff Present: Joe Cronin (Town Administrator), Amber Howard (Finance Director), Tyler Newman (Zoning Administrator), Abby Grooms (Community Affairs Director), and Peter Wiggins (Town Clerk).

FOIA STATEMENT

The Town Clerk confirmed that the meeting was advertised in compliance with the requirements of the South Carolina Freedom of Information Act. Agendas were posted and furnished to news media and all others requesting notification.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

November 18, 2025

Councilman Kortvelesy motioned to approve the minutes of November 18, 2025, seconded by Councilman Hamilton.

Councilman Kortvelesy's motion was APPROVED unanimously.

PUBLIC HEARING ITEMS

Ordinance 2025-09, An ordinance amending the town code for the Town of Seabrook Island, South Carolina; Chapter 2, Administration; Article IV, Committees; Section 2-401, Advisory Committees, so as to amend the town's advisory committees

Mayor Kleinman opened the public hearing on Ordinance 2025-09.

Upon hearing from the Town Clerk there were no persons wishing to be heard on the ordinance, Mayor Kleinman declared the public hearing closed.

Ordinance 2025-10, An ordinance to adopt a budget

Mayor Kleinman opened a public hearing on Ordinance 2025-010.

for the Town of Seabrook Island, South Carolina, for the fiscal year beginning January 1, 2026, and ending December 31, 2026

Upon hearing from the Town Clerk there were no persons wishing to be heard on the ordinance, Mayor Kleinman declared the public hearing closed.

CITIZEN COMMENTS

There were no Citizen Comments.

REPORTS OF TOWN BOARDS, COMMISSIONS, AND COMMITTEES

Community Promotions and Engagement Committee

No report.

Environment and Wildlife Committee

No report.

Public Safety Committee

Councilman Kortvelesy stated the Public Safety Committee discussed the implications of reduced FEMA funding for local governments recovering from natural or manmade disasters.

Councilman Kortvelesy thanked the members of the 2024-2025 Public Safety Committee.

Seabrook Island Utility Commission (SIUC)

Commissioner Ferland gave an update on the finances of the utility commission for the month ending November 30, 2025.

Commissioner Ferland stated the only major work ongoing is the rehab of Pump Station #1, located on Royal Pine. He went on to say the work should be completed in the next two weeks.

Councilman May asked if Pump Station #1 is still operating while repair work is being performed.

Commissioner Ferland stated the pump station is bypassed while the work is ongoing.

Councilman May asked if there was a service agreement between SIUC and Kiawah River Estates to service the new Indigo condominiums.

Commissioner Ferland stated there is an agreement between the commission and Kiawah River Estates to service the new condominiums.

Mayor Kleinman asked if the refurbishment of Pump Station #1 was budgeted.

Commissioner Ferland stated the work was planned for and budgeted.

STAFF REPORTS

Town Administrator

Mr. Cronin provided an update on the holiday schedule for Town Hall.

Finance Director

Ms. Howard provided an update on the town's finances for the month ending November 30, 2025.

Councilman Hamilton asked if the town was accounting for vacation leave that staff has been accruing at the end of every year they are employed with the town.

Mr. Cronin stated the town does track leave balances. He also stated that going forward, the audited financial statements will account for those liabilities in the event an employee leaves the town in good standing.

Councilman May asked a clarifying question related to how much vacation leave an employee can accrue.

Mr. Cronin stated an employee can carry no more than six weeks of unused vacation leave.

Councilman May asked if there was a plan for the Conservation Fund.

Mr. Cronin stated that there were no projects in the immediate pipeline. Mr. Cronin said these funds could be used to purchase conservation easements for the preservation of greenspaces, beautification or town parks, and tree planting.

Zoning Administrator

Mr. Newman gave an update on zoning and code enforcement activities since the November meeting.

Councilman May asked if the town had seen a slowdown in new construction.

Mr. Newman stated that he had not seen a noticeable downturn in the issuance of new construction permits, as the number of permits issued from month-to-month will vary.

Communication & Events Manager

Ms. Grooms stated the town will host a Swearing-In Ceremony for the newly elected mayor, councilmembers, and utility commissioner on January 6th, at 12:00 pm.

ORDINANCES FOR SECOND READING

Ordinance 2025-09, An Ordinance amending the town code for the Town of Seabrook Island; Chapter 2, Administration; Article IV,

Councilman Hamilton motioned to approve Ordinance 2025-09 at Second Reading, seconded by Councilman Kortvelesy.

Councilman Hamilton's motion was APPROVED unanimously.

**Committees; Section 2-401,
Advisory Committees, so as
to amend the town's
advisory committees**

**Ordinance 2025-10, An
Ordinance to adopt a
budget for the Town of
Seabrook Island, South
Carolina,
for the fiscal year beginning
January 1, 2026, and ending
December 31, 2026**

Councilman May motioned to approve Ordinance 2025-10 at Second Reading, seconded by Councilman Kortvelesy.

Mr. Cronin reminded the council of the amendments made to the FY 2026 budget at first reading, mainly the removal of the Public Safety Director position. Mr. Cronin then provided a brief update on his changes to the FY 2026 budget.

Mayor Kleinman stated the ordinance requiring the fund balance to be no more than 100% of the general fund budget is an arbitrary number. He further stated this is a good problem to have and thought that Mr. Cronin's proposal is the best way of handling this issue.

Councilman Hamilton stated he agreed 100% with Mr. Cronin's proposed changes to the Second Reading version of the budget.

Councilman May stated that it was his belief that council, in 2026, should review the fund balance policy found in the ordinance.

Councilman Hamilton motioned to amend the FY 2026 budget at second reading, per the changes made by Mr. Cronin, seconded by Councilman Kortvelesy.

Councilman Hamilton's motion was APPROVED unanimously.

Councilman May's original motion, as amended, was APPROVED unanimously.

ORDINANCES FOR FIRST READING

**Ordinance 2025-11, An
ordinance amending the
Town Code for the Town of
Seabrook Island, South
Carolina; Chapter 2,
Administration; Article VI,
Financial Administration;
Division 1, Generally;
Section 2-608, Fund Balance
Policy; so as to amend the
town's Fund Balance Policy**

Mr. Cronin stated this ordinance was a recommendation from the town's attorney. Mr. Cronin further stated passing this ordinance will give town council the authority to suspend the fund balance policy for a specified period of time.

Councilman Hamilton motioned to approve Ordinance 2025-11 at First Reading, seconded by Councilman Kortvelesy.

Councilman Hamilton's motion was APPROVED unanimously.

OTHER ACTION ITEMS

Res. 2025-32, A resolution amending the Town of Seabrook Island Employee Handbook

Mr. Cronin stated there was a need for minor revisions to the Seabrook Island Employee Handbook. He stated some changes were due to staff performing new and/or different roles within town hall. He further stated there were minor changes to the town's smoking and tobacco use policy, the removal of references to evening code enforcement officers, an amendment changing the manner in which employees who are working less than 37.5 hours per week accrue vacation leave, and a change in the town's bereavement leave policy.

Councilman Hamilton stated he wished the word "instead" could be struck from the Anti-Harassment Policy, found on page five of the Employee Handbook.

Councilman Hamilton asked who is investigating harassment complaints made by staff.

Mr. Cronin stated the handbook was written to maintain some flexibility based on against whom the allegation is made.

Councilman Hamilton stated that there should be training made available to whomever will be investigating harassment complaints.

Councilman Hamilton, with respect to staff accepting gifts, stated that there is too much ambiguity if the Town is the sole decider of when the gifts and gratuities policy has been violated.

The town's attorney stated this language was modeled after South Carolina's Ethics Act. He cautioned the council from making this portion of the handbook too detailed.

Councilman Hamilton, with respect to the town's social media policy, asked why the town would allow staff to access social media sites during working hours.

Mr. Cronin stated that some staff must access social media as part of their daily duties. Mr. Cronin said this verbiage came from a labor attorney, and if it is the wish of council to alter the language, the town would need to consult a labor attorney.

Councilman Hamilton, with respect to the town's Bereavement Policy, asked if it is needed to state, more than once, in the policy that an employee may request additional leave beyond the days already given by the policy.

Mr. Cronin stated the first mention of additional leave is additional bereavement leave given at his discretion. He stated the second mention of additional leave is annual or sick/personal leave given in

addition to bereavement leave given by the policy and given at the discretion of the administrator.

Councilman Kortvelesy motioned to approve Resolution 2025-32, seconded by Councilman Weis.

Councilman May asked how Councilman Hamilton's question affected the motion currently on the floor.

Mr. Cronin stated that Councilman Hamilton's questions along with other issues that have been discussed with the Human Resources Manager as well as the mayor, are not time sensitive. He stated the primary time sensitive amendment to the employee handbook was the leave accrual policy.

Councilman Kortvelesy's motion was APPROVED unanimously.

2026 Meeting Calendar

Councilman Weis motioned to approve the Town of Seabrook Island 2026 Meeting Calendar, seconded by Councilman May.

Councilman May stated he had no problem with the calendar provided meetings can still be cancelled or postponed as needed.

Mayor Kleinman stated that he was absolutely correct.

Councilman Weis' motion was APPROVED unanimously.

CITIZEN COMMENTS

There were no Citizen Comments.

EXECUTIVE SESSION

Mayor Kleinman stated there was a need for an Executive Session to discuss negotiations incident to proposed contractual arrangements.

Councilman Kortvelesy motioned to adjourn into Executive Session, seconded by Councilman Weis.

Councilman Kortvelesy's motion was APPROVED unanimously.

Town Council entered into Executive Session at 3:52 pm.

Councilman Kortvelesy motioned to adjourn the Executive Session, seconded by Councilman Hamilton.

Councilman Kortvelesy's motion was APPROVED unanimously.

Town Council reopened the public meeting at 4:26 pm.

Mayor Kleinman motioned to enter into the agreement discussed in Executive Session, seconded by Councilman Kortvelesy.

Mayor Kleinman's motion was APPROVED unanimously.

COUNCIL COMMENTS

Mayor Kleinman

Mayor Kleinman thanked town council for their work over the last two years. He stated that council had a productive two years.

Mayor Kleinman thanked all of the committee volunteers. He stated they could be doing other things but instead chose to donate their time to the town.

Mayor Kleinman welcomed newly elected council members Tom Hund, Pat Faulkner, and future committee members.

ADJOURNMENT

There being no further discussion, Mayor Kleinman declared the meeting adjourned at 4:29 pm.

Peter D. Wiggins II, MPA
Town Clerk