

**MINUTES OF
REGULAR CITY COUNCIL MEETING
LORIS CITY HALL – COUNCIL CHAMBERS
MONDAY, AUGUST 4, 2025 – 6:00 P.M.**

PRESENT:	MAYOR	MICHAEL E. SUGGS
	COUNCIL	ANDREA L. COLEMAN JOAN S. GAUSE KELLI D. GERALD LEWIS C. HARDEE, JR. CARROLL D. PADGETT, JR. TONYA F. SYKES
PRESENT:	INTERIM ADMINISTRATOR	ANGEL NEIGHBOURS
PRESENT;	ATTORNEY	JOHN C. ZILINSKY

CALL TO ORDER:

The council meeting was called to order by Mayor Suggs at 6:00 pm on Monday, August 4, 2025.

INVOCATION:

The invocation was given by Councilwoman Gause.

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

The Pledge of Allegiance was led by Mayor Suggs.

ROLL CALL

The roll was called by Meredith Holmes, Planning and Zoning Director.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

A. MAY 29, 2025 – PUBLIC HEARING

The minutes of the May 29, 2025, public hearing were presented for approval. A motion was made by Councilman Padgett, seconded by Councilman Hardee, to approve the minutes of the May 29, 2025, public hearing. Mayor Suggs and all members voted favorably. Motion passed.

B. JUNE 2, 2025 – REGULAR COUNCIL MEETING

The minutes of the June 2, 2025, council meeting were presented for approval. A motion was made by Councilwoman Sykes seconded by Councilwoman Gerald, to approve the minutes of the June 2, 2025, regular city council meeting. Mayor Suggs and all members voted favorably. Motion passed.

C. JUNE 16, 2025 – SPECIAL COUNCIL MEETING

The minutes of the June 16, 2025, special council meeting were presented for approval. A motion was made by Councilwoman Gerald, seconded by Councilman Hardee, to approve the minutes of the June 16, 2025, special council meeting. Mayor Suggs and all members voted favorably. Motion passed.

D. JULY 2, 2025 – REGULAR COUNCIL MEETING

The minutes of the July 2, 2025, special council meeting were presented for approval. A motion was made by Councilman Hardee, seconded by Councilwoman Sykes, to approve the minutes of the July 2, 2025, special council meeting. Mayor Suggs and all members voted favorably. Motion passed.

COMMUNICATIONS:

A. MAYOR'S REPORT:

Mayor Suggs reported the following:

The road construction project on Highway 701 North is substantially complete. SCDOT should be putting the finishing touches on it over the next couple of weeks. The road project on SC Highway 9 is progressing and there will be some traffic pattern changes in the coming days. DOT has a sign near the Presbyterian Church that will notify motorists of when those changes will be in effect.

The cleanup of the old Loris High School site on Broad Street is practically finished. There are still some mowing and other minor cleanup issues to be addressed.

The city's purchase offer for the refurbished aerial platform truck was accepted by the Upper Macungie Fire District in Pennsylvania. The truck passed inspection, was certified and the purchase was completed for \$33,000.00.

Loris hosted the quarterly Horry County League of Cities meeting on Thursday, July 24th at the Public Safety Building. Mayor Suggs thanked all council members for attending. Loris was the only city that had the mayor and all council members present.

The city's leaf and limb truck developed a problem with its brakes and is being repaired. The regular pick up schedule should resume in a few days.

The Loris Lions Club is having a vision screening for children on Tuesday August 12, from 6 until 8 pm at the State Theater Building on Main Street. This is a great opportunity for parents to have their child's eyes checked before starting back to school.

High school football season begins soon. The Loris Lions travel to Green Sea Floyds to open the season on Friday, August 22nd. It is the annual bog-off bowl with bragging rights on the line. He urged everyone to support our local high school team.

Loris Chamber of Commerce Executive Director Samantha Norris was not present at the council meeting and no chamber of commerce update was presented.

B. ADMINISTRATOR'S REPORT:

Interim Administrator Neighbours reported that the first phase of the sewer line replacement and manhole upgrades was almost complete and that phase two will replace the sewer line and manholes from the Bayboro Street wastewater treatment plant to Rogers Road.

The city will soon make application for a grant to conduct a drainage study for the Northern side of the city which will help determine the actions needed to alleviate some of the flash flooding issues in that area.

Also, bids are being taken from paving companies to repair road cuts and pot holes throughout the city. The city is also engaging a painting contractor to restripe parking spaces along Meeting Street and repaint the handicapped parking areas that were covered by the recent SCDOT repaving project. The contractor will also restripe the parking spaces along Main Street.

C. COMMITTEE REPORTS:

1. FINANCE AND PERSONNEL COMMITTEE

Councilwoman Coleman, Chairman of the Finance and Personnel Committee, reported that the committee met on July 17, 2025, at 6:00 pm. All members were present. The committee reviewed resumes and interviewed candidates for the vacant city clerk position. No action was taken.

D. DEPARTMENT HEAD'S REPORTS:

Mayor Suggs advised that written reports were prepared by each department and provided in the council meeting packet.

1. **CODE ENFORCEMENT & PLANNING** – Planning Director Meredith Holmes presented the latest information regarding the Horry County Multi-jurisdictional all Hazards Mitigation Plans Update. The thirty day comment period is now open during which Horry County is soliciting citizen comments regarding the plan. The plan will be finalized later this year after acceptance of all participation jurisdictions including the City of Loris. Also, Horry County is having a Hurricane preparation and safety event. Fliers are available giving more information on both the Hazard Mitigation Plan and the Hurricane preparation event. The Rural Long-Range Transportation Plan is being developed. This will possibly assist the city with grants for transportation improvements. The next meeting on the plan is scheduled for October 9th with the Waccamaw Regional Council of Governments.
2. **FIRE** – No additions to the written report.
3. **POLICE** – No additions to the written report.
4. **PUBLIC WORKS** – No additions to the written report.
5. **RECREATION** – No additions to the written report.

BUSINESS:

A. PRESENTATION OF HOSPITALITY AUDIT REPORT: MARC WOOD, CPA OF SHEHEEN, HANCOCK AND GODWIN, LLP, CERTIFIED PUBLIC ACCOUNTANTS, CAMDEN, SOUTH CAROLINA.

Marc Wood, CPA explained that his accounting firm was engaged by the City of Loris to perform an extensive audit of the city's hospitality fund account due to concerns that there may have been expenditures that were not made in accordance with the state guidelines. The preliminary audit has been done and Mr. Wood indicated that his report as presented to council at this time is a preliminary report which will indicate that some expenditures met the guidelines while others did not, and a final comprehensive report will be given at a later date. Mr. Wood explained that S.C. Code § 6-1-730 allows the revenue generated by the hospitality tax to be used exclusively for the following purposes: (1) tourism-related buildings including, such as, civic centers, coliseums, and aquariums; (2) tourism-related cultural, recreational, or historic facilities; (3) beach access and re-nourishment; (4) highways, roads, streets, and bridges providing access to tourist destinations; (5) advertisements and promotions related to tourism development; (6) water and wastewater infrastructure to serve tourism-related demand; This state statute is what he used to evaluate the expenditures made from the city's hospitality fund account. Mr. Wood stated that he reviewed approximately 500 transactions which include invoices and cancelled checks from the years 2017 through 2023. Mr. Wood explained that the audit had taken quite some time to complete because of the time necessary for city staff to pull the documents associated with 500 transactions, working the audit into Mr. Wood's regular

schedule of audits for other entities, including the City of Loris, and the arrest of a former city employee on charges unrelated to the city. Upon receiving information regarding the arrest of the former city employee, Mr. Wood expanded the scope of both the hospitality audit and the city's regular annual financial audit which necessitated pulling other documents and thus, further delayed the report of the hospitality audit. As a result of the findings to be disclosed in the preliminary report, Mr. Wood has asked the city to do another extensive review of both the fiscal years ending June 30, 2024, and June 30, 2025 to pull in as many years as possible and expand the report so that he can give a final report and make council aware of all issues that may exist and prevent any problems going forward. Mr. Wood believes that this is necessary and prudent. This may take another couple of months to complete. When completed Mr. Wood will return and present a final report and go into as much detail as necessary.

As to the preliminary report, Mr. Wood indicated that 495 transactions from December 31, 2017, through December 31, 2023, were reviewed which totaled \$1,515,000.77. These transactions, and Mr. Wood's findings of the hospitality audit, are categorized as follows:

1. 113 transactions, which are 22% of the total transactions reviewed, totalling \$203,847.60 and is 13.5% of the \$1,515,000.77 total hospitality account expenditures for the review period met the South Carolina guidelines for hospitality tax use.
2. 292 transactions, which are 59% of the total transactions reviewed, totalling \$1,192,578.58 and is 78.8% of the \$1,515,000.77 total hospitality account expenditures were questionable as to meeting the South Carolina guidelines for hospitality tax use due to numerous transactions related to recreation, improvements to the recreation complex and concessions items. The city should have made a determination of the recreation expense related to tourism and which expenses were for city use. Also, some transactions were questionable due to not having an invoice or approval from city council.
3. 90 transactions, which are 18% of the total transactions reviewed, totalling \$118,574.59 and is roughly 8% of the \$1,515,000.77 total hospitality account expenditures did not meet the South Carolina guidelines for hospitality tax use at all.
4. Of the 292 transactions that are questionable, 57 transactions, totalling \$134,200.99 did not have supporting invoices or any documentation as to the purpose of the expenses. 21 of the questionable transactions, totalling \$370,115.28, did not have full approval of council.

Mr. Wood stated that he will give examples as to why transactions are questionable when he issues his final report and will give details of the transactions at that time.

B. DISCUSSION AND APPROVAL OF AGREEMENT FOR THE PROVISION OF SECURE DETENTION SERVICES WITH THE SOUTH CAROLINA DEPARTMENT OF JUVENILE JUSTICE'S JUVENILE DETENTION COMPLEX FOR FISCAL YEAR 2025-2026.

Mayor Suggs informed council that this is an annual agreement that allows juveniles arrested by the city police department who must be detained to be housed at the South Carolina Department of Juvenile Justice's Juvenile Detention Complex. This agreement is similar to agreements used in prior years, and the daily fee charged to the city is a maximum of \$50.00 per day. Attorney Zilinsky added that the new contract for 2025-2026 includes a provision for a capital expenditures charge of \$125.00 per day in addition to the daily charge of \$50.00 which is mandated by the state budget. A motion was made by Councilman Hardee seconded by Councilwoman Gerald, to approve the agreement for the provision of secure detention services with the South Carolina department of juvenile justice's juvenile detention complex for fiscal year 2025-2026. Mayor Suggs and all members voted favorably. Motion passed.

C. DISCUSSION AND APPROVAL OF THE WACCAMAW REGIONAL COUNCIL OF GOVERNMENTS CONTRACT FOR PLANNING AND TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE FOR FISCAL YEAR 2025-2026.

Planning Director Meredith Holmes explained the services provided by the Waccamaw Council of Governments under this contract include practically all of the technical assistance needed by the city's planning and zoning department and includes such things as maintaining the on-line zoning map to keep it current regarding zoning districts, annexations and subdivisions of property. Mayor Suggs inquired if the cost for the technical services provided for by the contract is a not to exceed cost of \$30,000.00 for the 2025-2026 fiscal year. Ms. Holmes confirmed. Attorney Zilinsky indicated that the contract provides for the services to be billed to the city on a quarterly basis. A motion was made by Councilwoman Gerald, seconded by Councilwoman Gause, to approve the Waccamaw Regional Council of Governments contract for planning and technical assistance for fiscal year 2025-2026. Mayor Suggs and all members voted favorably. Motion passed.

D. DISCUSSION AND APPROVAL OF PROPOSED CONTRACT WITH ENTERPRISE FLEET MANAGEMENT.

Attorney John Zilinsky reported that the concerns he expressed at the July meeting regarding certain contract language regarding indemnification by the city had been resolved with Enterprise Fleet Management, and the contract regarding purchase of new city vehicles is now satisfactory and ready for council action. A motion was made by Councilman Padgett, seconded by Councilwoman Coleman, to approve the contract with Enterprise Fleet Management and to authorize Interim City Administrator Angel Neighbours

to sign the contract on behalf of the city. Mayor Suggs and all members voted favorably. Motion passed.

PUBLIC & PRESS COMMENTS:

Kimberly Rudelitch of 3806 Bryant Street, Loris, informed council of an incident in her neighborhood regarding a young adult male discharging a firearm several times in close proximity to residential homes. She requested that council review ordinances from other jurisdictions regarding careless discharge of firearms. She explained that she does not want anyone's firearms rights to be restricted but wants unsafe and negligent discharge of firearms to be addressed. Chief Buley indicated that he has a proposed draft of an ordinance that can be discussed by council in the near future.

EXECUTIVE SESSION:

Interim Administrator Neighbours indicated to council that there was one personnel item that needed to be addressed in executive session. A motion was made by Councilwoman Gause, seconded by Councilwoman Gerald, to enter executive session to discuss a personnel matter. Mayor Suggs and all members voted favorably. Motion passed.

Upon returning from executive session, a motion was made by Councilman Hardee, seconded by Councilwoman Gerald to exit executive session and reconvene in open session. Mayor Suggs and all members voted favorably. Motion passed.

Mayor Suggs announced that in executive session council discussed a personnel matter and that no action and no vote was taken in executive session.

ADJOURNMENT:

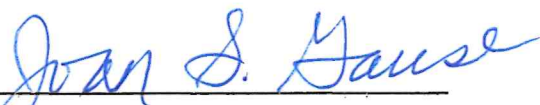
A motion was made by Councilwoman Gause, seconded by Councilman Hardee to adjourn. Mayor Suggs and all members voted favorably. There being no further business the meeting was adjourned at 7:18 P.M.

ATTEST:


ANGEL NEIGHBOURS
INTERIM ADMINISTRATOR

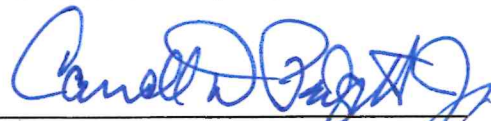

MICHAEL E. SUGGS, MAYOR

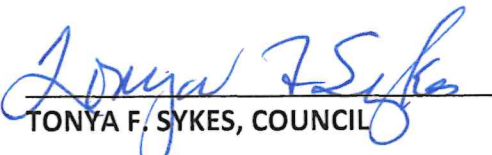

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