

**MINUTES OF
REGULAR CITY COUNCIL MEETING
LORIS CITY HALL – COUNCIL CHAMBERS
MONDAY JANUARY 5, 2026 – 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. SKYES
PRESENT:	INTERIM ADMINISTRATOR	ANGEL R NEIGHBOURS
	CLERK	MELINDA T. PRICE
	ATTORNEY	JOHN C. ZILINSKY

CALL TO ORDER:

The council meeting was called to order by Mayor Suggs at 6:00 pm on Monday, January 5, 2026.

INVOCATION:

The invocation was given by Councilman Padgett.

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE:

The Pledge of Allegiance was led by Mayor Suggs.

ROLL CALL:

The roll was called by City Clerk Price.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES:

A. DECEMBER 1, 2025 - REGULAR CITY COUNCIL MEETING

The minutes of December 1, 2025, regular city council meeting were presented for approval. A motion was made by Councilman Padgett, seconded by Councilwoman Gerald, to approve the minutes of the December 1, 2025, regular city council meeting. Mayor Suggs and all members voted favorably. Motion passed.

COMMUNICATIONS:

A. MAYOR'S REPORT:

Mayor Suggs reported the following:

Mayor Suggs started by saying he hoped everyone had an enjoyable Christmas Holiday with their families and wishing everyone a good year in 2026.

Thank you to the Chamber of Commerce for hosting the Christmas Tree Lighting ceremony. There were many people in attendance even though the weather was rather chilly. Thank you to our local ministers and musicians that took part in the event.

On Tuesday December 9th, Councilwoman Gerald, on behalf of the city, attended the Grand Opening of the Waccamaw Economic Opportunity Council's Myrtle Beach Head Start Center. The event was held at the Boys and Girls Club of the Grand Strand in Myrtle Beach and was a very nice event.

The replacement of two major sewer lines is under way, as well as rehabilitation of manholes. Ms. Neighbours will inform us more about these projects later in the meeting.

The street sweeper is back in operation after some major repairs. It should be out downtown beginning this week.

Clerk Melinda Price was thanked for taking on the task assigned to her by Administrator Neighbours in researching and organizing the city records. Council minutes, agendas, ordinances, and resolutions books have been reorganized and are being researched for proper retention. This project is still in process; however, it should be completed soon.

Thursday, January 15th from 9:00 am to 11:00 am, Administrator Neighbours and Mayor Suggs will be meeting with citizens here at city hall. Citizens are invited to stop by with any questions, input, or just to say hello. We plan to continue this informal meeting once a month.

January 05, 2026

Minutes of Regular City Council Meeting

Loris Chamber of Commerce Executive Director Samantha Norris was not present for the meeting.

B. ADMINISTRATOR'S REPORT:

Administrator Neighbours reported that the street sweeper should be out of the shop tomorrow and operations will resume. Tree trimming bids will be taken and hopefully the tree trimming can begin on time in the Spring and the Fall. Several sidewalk repairs have been completed with others being worked on. Administrator Neighbours gave an update on the eight Hurricane Florence FEMA projects discussed at the last meeting. Findings are that four of the projects have been closed out. Two projects are under review to be closed out. Two other projects are being worked on for closure, which probably will be completed by the end of February. Documentation has been the key to getting the projects closed. Administrator Neighbours stated that the projects in question that were funded by FEMA were completed. However, it has taken some research to find the proper documentation to submit due to issues with record retention and organization during the time the projects were actually being done.

C. DEPARTMENT HEAD'S REPORTS:

1. CODE ENFORCEMENT & PLANNING – Planning and Zoning Director Meredith Holmes has been out due to knee surgery and was unable to attend the meeting. No reports were received.

2. FIRE – Fire Marshall Robert Rudelitch reported a total of 1470 calls for the year with 125 of the calls being in the month of December. They had 10 calls on the first day of January, which is one of the busiest days on record. Fire Marshal Rudelitch reported that they have applied for the South Carolina Forestry Firefighters Grant which is a 50/50 grant and hope to hear from that soon. On the federal level, the federal Honoring Our Fallen Heroes Act was signed into law in late 2025. This act expands the federal PSOB (Public Safety Officer's Benefits) Program to recognize certain cancers as line-of-duty deaths or disabilities for firefighters, ensuring their families receive benefits. This is a good benefit for our firefighters and their families. There is a Fire Instructor class that our department will be hosting, 16 have registered for the class, of which 4 of them being from our department. The Fire Department has received a piece of equipment with support from McLeod Healthcare System, and a press release will follow shortly.

3. POLICE – Police Chief Gary Buley reported that he did not have a written report due to the cities merging with the Horry County reporting system and some technical issues relating to the new system. He reported that the department ended the year with 8834 calls with the most calls being in the months of June and July. Overall, it was a good holiday season. The

department is happy to report that six vests for officers have been received. These vests were from an outstanding grant.

4. PUBLIC WORKS – Administrator Neighbours reported that this year, we have added Shakima Grissett as our new water/sewer department billing clerk. Thomas DiMaggio has joined our water department as a water tech. William Stavrakis has joined us as meter reader. We are happy with these new additions to our water/sewer team. We are continuing with phase two of our sewer line installation/rehabilitation on Liberty Street. We have also partnered with SC Rural Water Association; they have inspected all 3 water tanks using a drone to assist with the inspection. This is part of DES inspection which is required. We are continuing with hydrant flushing and valve maintenance, which is required as well.

5. RECREATION – Recreation Director Woody Hinson was not present at the meeting. Mayor Suggs presented his written report. The kids worked hard however came up short in the district tournament. Basketball practices have officially started for this season. During the colder months Mr. Hinson is working on some needed repairs throughout the recreation building. He hopes to create a cleaner and more professional environment for the players and public.

BUSINESS:

A. MUNICIPAL COURT UPDATE FROM JUDGE HUTSON

Judge William N. Hutson began his tenure as city judge on July 1, 2025, and thanked City Council, the Mayor, and the City of Loris for trusting him with their court system. The first jury pool was impaneled last Fall. The number of pending cases has been reduced. Loris Municipal Court had 1301 cases pending as of June 2025. As of December 29, 2025, there are 400 cases pending, most of which are current cases. Judge Hutson report that 70% of the case load pending as of June 30, 2025, has been cleared. There are a little over 100 pending jury trial requests that the court is currently working on to determine if a jury trial is necessary for each case. An additional court date has been added each month. Municipal Court is now held on Tuesdays and Thursdays. This additional court date should cut down on paying overtime to officers previously required to attend court on days they were not working. Aundrea Washington, clerk of court, has been very helpful in clearing up backlogged cases in the system. Judge Hutson thanked Police Chief Buley and Lt. Williams for coming together to assist in clearing up the older cases. Judge Hutson acknowledged that the court and the police are different branches of government, but they work together in efficiently processing cases through the system. There were no questions for Judge Hutson. Council and Mayor Suggs thanked Judge Hutson for all he has done since becoming municipal judge last July. Judge Hutson will give another update in 6 months.

B. ELECTION OF MAYOR PRO-TEMPORE

Mayor Suggs explained that a Mayor Pro-tempore is required by state law to be appointed the first meeting after new Council Members have been sworn in following each general election. Mayor Pro-tempore will serve a term of two years. Mayor Suggs asked for nominations from Council. Councilman Hardee made a motion to nominate Councilman Padgett to the position, seconded by Councilwoman Sykes. Mayor Suggs and all members voted favorably. Motion Passed.

C. APPOINTMENT OF STANDING COMMITTEES OF COUNCIL

Mayor Suggs stated that city ordinances require standing committees to be appointed after every general election. The election was completed in November and Mayor Suggs appointed the Standing Committees of Council. A printed copy was provided to each Council member by Mayor Suggs.

PUBLIC AND PRESS COMMENTS:

The Horry Independent and Loris Scene was represented by one of their reporters. No one from the public or press signed up to speak.

EXECUTIVE SESSION:

There were no matters to discuss in executive session.

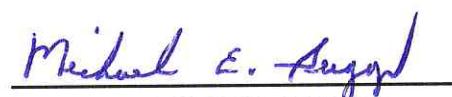
ADJOURNMENT

A motion was made by Councilwoman Gause, seconded by Councilwoman Coleman to adjourn the regular city council meeting. Mayor Suggs and all members voted favorably. There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned at 6:27 pm.

ATTEST:



MELINDA T. PRICE
CITY CLERK



MICHAEL E. SUGGS, MAYOR



ANDREA L. COLEMAN, COUNCIL

Joan S. Gause
JOAN S. GAUSE, COUNCIL

Kelli Gerald
KELLI D. GERALD, COUNCIL

Lewis C. Hardee
LEWIS C. HARDEE, JR., COUNCIL

Carroll D. Padgett, Jr.
CARROLL D. PADGETT, JR., COUNCIL

Donna F. Sykes
TONYA F. SYKES, COUNCIL