

**COMMITTEE OF THE FLORENCE COUNTY COUNCIL ON
JUSTICE & PUBLIC SAFETY MEETING, THURSDAY, MAY 15,
2025, AFTER REGULAR COUNTY COUNCIL MEETING,
COUNCIL CONFERENCE ROOM, ROOM 804, COUNTY
COMPLEX, FLORENCE, SOUTH CAROLINA**

COMMITTEE MEMBERS PRESENT:

Jason M. Springs, (Council District 1), Committee Chairman
Jerry W. Yarborough, Jr., (Council District 4), Committee Member
Stoney C. Moore, (Council District 6), Committee Member

ALSO PRESENT:

Kevin Yokim, County Administrator
D. Malloy McEachin, Jr., County Attorney
Hope M. Jones, Clerk to Council
Mitch Fulmore, Deputy Administrator of Public Safety
Sam Brockington, Fire/Rescue Coordinator
Chief Worrell, West Florence Fire Department
Chief Dillon, Howe Springs Fire Department
Ron Scott, Haynsworth Sinkler Boyd

Copies of the meeting Agenda were posted in the lobby of the County Complex, and provided to the media and others requesting copies of meeting agendas, provided to the Florence County Library for posting at the main library as well as all branches, and on the County website at www.florenceco.org/council in compliance with the Freedom of Information Act requirements for notice of meetings.

Chairman Springs called the meeting to order at 11:16 A.M. Councilman Yarborough provided the invocation, and Councilman Moore led the Pledge of Allegiance to the American Flag. Chairman Springs welcomed everyone who was in attendance.

MINUTES APPROVAL

Councilman Yarborough made a motion to approve the minutes of the March 20, 2025, Justice Public & Safety Committee meeting. Councilman Moore seconded the motion, which was approved unanimously.

Old Business:

Update on the Fire Study:

Mr. Yokim stated that a second draft of the report has been emailed to the Committee. He requested that members review the draft and provide any comments or note additional items that should be included.

Chairman Springs asked that the second draft also be shared with the Fire Chiefs.

Update on the EMS Study:

Mitch stated that Barrott Dowdy has been in contact with the consulting firm and that they are in the final stages of preparing the report, with a rough draft forthcoming.

Mr. Yokim noted that the study must address strategic decisions regarding how and where resources are deployed, emphasizing that these are critical components of the County's emergency response strategy.

Mr. Yokim added that they are working to hire four 12-hour shift workers but have only identified two individuals willing to move to that schedule so far.

Chairman Springs emphasized the need to fully staff the EMS trucks. He also mentioned that some calls are being placed on hold and, while some delays may be unavoidable, he believes the current system is not operating as efficiently as it should be.

In response, Mr. Yokim said that these concerns will be incorporated into the study. He discussed ongoing staffing shortages and expressed hope that measures in the upcoming budget will provide relief. Over the past 12 months, the County has lost seventeen paramedics—half left for new careers, and the other half moved to jurisdictions offering similar pay but with lower call volumes. To improve retention, the new budget includes a 7% increase in paramedic pay, in addition to a 3% cost-of-living adjustment (COLA).

New Business:

Discussion on Ordinance No. 72-2024/25:

Mr. Yokim explained that Ordinance No. 72-2024/25 amends Ordinance No. 13-2018/19. The original ordinance references an "Advisory Committee" and a "Fire Coordinator." With the anticipated hiring of a Fire Chief, these responsibilities will transfer to that position. The amendment updates the ordinance to replace both terms with "Fire Chief," thereby officially assigning these duties to the new role.

Mr. Yokim recommended approving Ordinance No. 72-2024/25 for this terminology change. He noted that further amendments can be made later if needed, particularly after the Unified Fire District is consolidated.

Chairman Springs expressed concern that the Committee has not yet received the full report and thus lacks direction and recommendations. He is hesitant to eliminate the Advisory Board without more information.

Mr. Yokim clarified that while Ordinance No. 72-2024/25 is on the agenda, it has been deferred. The second reading is scheduled for June 19, with the third reading possible as early as July 17. This timeline provides the Committee with an opportunity to review the report. If the Committee prefers to retain the Advisory Board temporarily or defer the ordinance further, those options remain open. He emphasized the importance of aligning the ordinance with the Fire Chief's hiring—without the amendment, the Fire Chief cannot perform the designated duties.

Councilman Yarborough asked for confirmation that the only current change to the ordinance is the replacement of terminology with "Fire Chief." He added that additional revisions can be made after the Fire Study is complete.

Sam Brockington noted that specific items should be included in the ordinance regarding County Fire Protection.

Chairman Springs clarified that the amendment pertains only to Chapter 12: Administration of the Unified Fire District. Mr. Yokim confirmed this.

Mr. Yokim added that once this ordinance is finalized, the focus can shift to codifying policies and procedures.

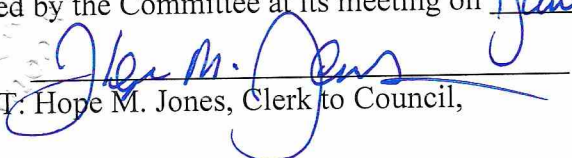
Councilman Yarborough moved to advance Ordinance No. 72-2024/25 to the next month's agenda for a second reading. Councilman Moore seconded the motion, and it was unanimously approved.

ADJOURN:

There being no further business before the Committee, Councilman Moore made a motion to adjourn, and Councilman Yarborough seconded the motion, which was approved unanimously.

THE MEETING ADJOURNED AT 11:45 A. M.

Approved by the Committee at its meeting on June 27, 2025.

ATTEST:  Hope M. Jones, Clerk to Council,