

THE TOWN OF SWANSEA
REGULAR COUNCIL MEETING
DECEMBER 30, 2025
6:00 P.M.

ATTENDANCE

Mayor Doris Simmons
Pro Tem Michael Luongo
Councilwoman Angie Alley
Councilwoman Melissa Williams

The meeting was called to order by Mayor Doris Simmons at 6:00 P.M. at the Swansea Municipal Building Courtroom, 320 West Third Street, Swansea, SC 29160.

All media notifications were sent, and the agenda was posted at the town hall, the police department, and the town's website.

The Mayor stated that the Town had a quorum for the meeting. The Invocation was presented by Rev. Michael Copeland, followed by the Pledge of Allegiance.

The Mayor asked for consideration of approving the minutes of the October 13, 2025, Special Call Meeting; October 27, 2025, Regular Council Meeting; November 24, 2025, Meeting; and December 1, 2025, Special Call Meeting.

A motion was presented by Councilman Luongo to approve the minutes of October 13, 2025, October 27, 2025, and November 24, 2025, with the one exception of December 1. There is an item within the body that needs to be corrected regarding the motion of re-appointment.

Councilwoman Alley seconded the motion to approve the minutes and to table the December 1 minutes until next month. **Motion passed unanimously.**

The Mayor asked if there was a motion for a Second Reading of the Stormwater Management Ordinance. The motion was presented by Councilwoman Angie Alley and seconded by Councilman Luongo. **Motion passed unanimously.**

“The Mayor asked for consideration of approval for herself or her designee to utilize online payment options for town bills.” The motion was presented by Councilman Luongo, who authorized the Mayor or her designee to utilize payment options to address the Town's bills. The motion was seconded by Councilwoman Williams. **Motion passed unanimously.**

The Mayor wanted to know if there was a consideration to approve the Insurance Reserve Fund policy with the Town of Swansea. Councilman Luongo presented the motion for approval, except for a question about the property on Fifth Street. The Mayor said Councilman Luongo's question was covered under the General Tort Policy. The insurance policy also covers volunteers and events. The motion was seconded by Councilwoman Alley. **Motion passed unanimously.**

Joel Gordon gave a presentation on information for a Merchant Association in the Town of Swansea.

- Reached out to the Helping Hands group to join them in the next meeting.
- Still have to reach out to the P.U.L.L. Organization to get them involved.

They discussed planning and exploring various events to draw attention to the town. They are looking for ideas to drive traffic to the central part of town and engage businesses.

Community Development Block Grants. A grant writer's resources help secure funding to redevelop the area.

- Discuss Hospitality Tax,
- Oversight committee to help manage it
- Growing the committee out of the association

Representatives who are actually impacted by the Hospitality Tax that pay into it. They would like to direct those funds to benefit everyone.

- January 21, 2026, meeting at 7:00 at The Kozy Kitchen.
- Looking into a naming convention to get started and doing Articles of Incorporation
- They would like to see more business and managers get involved.

Robert Wolf of MASC Field Representative of MASC of Lexington County and the entire upstate region.

He congratulated Mayor Simmons, Councilwoman Williams, and Councilwoman Alley on their recent election to the Council. January 20, Hometown Legislation Day; January 21, Conference Municipal Elected Officials' Institute. A Small City Summit in August to offer specialized training for small programs for small municipalities.

His main goal is to be a resource, providing help and assistance with education and training within the association.

He delivered the packets for the newly elected members.

Linda Davis, speaker for AFFLAC, aims to support municipal employee hiring and retention.

- AFFLAC's goal is to make sure this does not break the municipal bank.
- Employee Funded/Consultation style
- Assist employers with insurance that PEBA does not cover
- Cancer policies, the first time you get cancer, pay for itself
- Public sector whole life policies that are portable
- A source of Pride to help communities

Presentation Grace Crocker of Lexington, Richland, Alcohol, Drug Abuse Council. She serves as a prevention specialist. Provide the most recent information and programs that support communities. Community health works together to keep everyone in the community healthy, safe, and supported.

LRADAC would like to support Swansea Community Health related to Substance and Mental Health well-being.

Some of the initial tools they would like to share with Swansea include listening sessions in which Swansea members share how they can help workshops align with community members' interests, and community events.

How do you deal with the homeless in public places? It is by transporting them to their treatment. Begin talking to your kids about substance abuse at community events.

NO PUBLIC COMMENT

Councilman Luongo shared with the council that a traveling Yeti video was filmed in Swansea, October 2025. He encourages people to look at it for themselves. How bad it is in the town of Swansea and how it's talked about in the real world.

Councilwoman Williams told the council, "It's all about coming up with a solution to make things better here in the Town of Swansea, for the residents who live here, everyone, people who have businesses and residents." There is a need for solutions regarding homelessness. So, if you are going to speak on homelessness, you need to have a solution for the homeless in the Town of Swansea.

Councilwoman Alley thanked the Council and the constituents for the parade and the tree lighting. Great turnout, a lot of businesses participated. Thank you. Operation cleanup: Many volunteers will be coming out to clean up the Christmas decorations. She is looking at 2026 to see what they can do in the town to take ownership of with the Mayor and Council. She would like input on what those things look like to help bring different perspectives to the community.

Mayor Simmons thanked everyone for coming out and supporting her. She stated that it was a very good election and appreciated the outcome.

The parade was very nice. She thanked the folks who decorated the Town, as it was beautiful.

Councilwoman Alley said all the decorations were sponsored with donations, and each had a story behind it.

JOINT MUNICIPAL WATER REPORT

Jay Nicholson presented the following:

- Congratulated everyone on their newly elected position.
- Shared a draft communication, considering the press release, letter proposal, and billing search option to communicate.
- Approval from USDA move with Waiver.
- Bond - town has a partnership with Truist Bank, approved by the USDA

Bond Ordinance, the Town has been approved by the USDA and Truist, the Lien holder. It says the Town cannot lease or sell the system because the system's revenue is committed to the debt. The approved Waiver in its favor and move on. However, it moves the commencement date to February 1.

They have some money left over and have extended the balance of the planning study, which RAI allows them to use for specific meter-read inventory work.

They have a list compiled by the Town and by JMW, and the contractor will review it to ensure it is an accurate inventory.

The contractors and Joint Municipal Water will install all new meters for the Town of Swansea in February. They also applied through the South East Crescent Region Commission for a federal grant for State Economic Infrastructure. The Grant was funded by the 2008 Farm Bill.

It is a 400K project with a 200K one-half-match promise. Project Chlorine Booster Station.

There is a tentative plan for a community meeting on January 20, 2026, at Freshman Academy Cafeteria. They met with a small group of business leaders earlier in the month. It was a small group, but an eye-opener on some of the things they will be dealing with.

The change in the water bill will not be much different from theirs.

The biggest change will be in the town sewer, but there has been a billing lapse because the readings are much worse than they originally thought would be needed for accurate readings. A couple of businesses should use substantially more water than they did, showing very little usage. The new meters will be more accurate.

BOOKKEEPERS REPORT

Timothy Hillan shared the Town of Swansea's monthly activities.

- The Statement of Cash and Debt
- The Mayor explained the USDA's inability to draft payments for October, November, and December not paid. The monthly payment of 11,406.00

Something happened in October. They realized it, and the government shut down for 45 days. She communicated with Bryan Jordan of the USDA, who said everything was fine. She offered to send a check, but he said no, as it would mess everything up.

The money showing in the Water Department Fund is about 87K. The amount of 40K plus is USDAs, and the balance is Joint Municipal Water.

The Mayor will speak with Cayce Waste Water to see if there is any way they can get a credit. The Sewer lines have been collecting Sewer Water in the Sewer lines. Sewer payments are mostly Water payments. She wants to see what they will say. She has set up an appointment. It has cut the town up for paying for the Sewer or rainwater.

The Mayor wanted to explain the funds to the Water Department, as they appear to exceed what they have.

- Timothy Hillian - The Hospitality Tax was probably a human error. Because it should be closer to the other one 50K. The Cash in Bank first page should match what's on the Revenue Statement and the Budget, but it doesn't because he thinks he put in the wrong number.

Timothy Hillian shared the liabilities of the old credit card, cut off, and the new card came in. The new credit card is with Truist Bank. It is an unsecured card with no charges at this time.

Mayor: The credit card is with the Town, not with her or any other Council member. In the past, 10,000K was set aside for the card. This is not the case now. The money is freed up for the town.

Timothy Hillian asked Jay Nicholson a question. When is the Water Department handed off to Joint Waters? There will be some expenses coming in for the Water Department during the transition of service. There will be a transition of financial accountability. When will this happen?

When they stop in February, they will still have some bills coming in.

Councilman Luongo wanted to know how to handle bills that were delayed by a prior administration and are now being paid by the new administration. How do you show accountability?

Atty Dickey shared that the new administration still represents the Town. Apologize on behalf of the Town and let them know they are working to rectify the issue.

Councilman Luongo commented that the Council should specifically tell the Town what the Hospitality Tax money can be used for.

Councilwoman Alley concurred on clarification as well, of what and when.

The Mayor inquired if there was a motion to go into Executive Session. A motion as presented by Councilman Luongo and seconded by Councilwoman Alley.

The Mayor asked if there was a motion to come out of Executive Session. A motion was made by Councilman Luongo and seconded by Councilwoman Williams.

The Mayor shared that no actions were taken during the Executive Session.

NEW BUSINESS

Operation Hours Signs – The Mayor asked for ideas and suggestions for signs at L. O. Rast Park and the Water Fountain Park.

The Mayor shared that there was some discussion on Social Media about talking to the homeless to see what they can do to help them. This is why she asked LRADAC. Who said they can move them? However, they may be happy where they are. They do not have a place for them.

The Mayor said they do not have a way to regulate, except through the Lexington County Sheriff's Office.

She has called the Lexington County Sheriff's Department to have them move on. She asked them to do a daily check on them at the locations when they come

through Swansea. They informed the Mayor that it could be done; every 30 days, she would have to communicate back with them. They can go out and talk to them. The next time, the Lexington County Sheriff can give them a warrant. The third time, they have to go back to the park, and they are still there. They can be taken to jail.

The Mayor stated that some people don't want to go to the park because they don't like those guys being there. They don't want to take their children there, and there have been drugs, paraphernalia, and needles left at the park. They have one guy that have five bags sitting on the bench. He practically lives there and has a dog.

Councilwoman Williams, once again, it comes back to solutions. When she spoke with the Mayor earlier regards to that situation. There has to be a solution. If her pastor were still there, he would partner with local churches. The place up the street. There is Hope to put someone there. If they have ever checked.

The Mayor indicated that she did not know whether they still do it.

Attorney Dickey suggested they could possibly check with His House, Oliver Gospel Mission downtown. There is a partnership educate the communities. They have educated some people in their communities and at Town Hall meetings. There are things you can do that do not necessarily prevent or stop Homelessness, but they help address it!

As far as the park goes. The Town needs a sign with posted rules, regulations, and hours. It needs to be brought before Council and adopted; at least that helps.

There are things you can do before you just start putting them in jail. I understand sometimes you have no recourse.

He could possibly reach out to Goodwill to see if they would partner with the Town of Swansea.

Councilwoman Alley stated that what she found in Section 15 in the Code of Ordinances about the town was somewhat confusing. There was nothing about

the park and no rules. They were talking about two separate things. The Park and the Homeless. She thinks it needs to be separate.

The Mayor reiterated that the signs requesting the hours of operation were knocked down in July 2025.

Councilwoman Alley mentioned that Joel and the business merchants should come up with some stuff to assist in this work, depending on what they want.

Attorney Dickey shared that the Town could possibly create a Beautification Foundation, run by the Town, and appoint other members of the community. Some of their responsibilities include beautifying the Town through a tree campaign, a clean-up campaign, and getting more people involved.

Council does not control it as a town. As a Town, you own your private non-profit foundation. The Town would use the money it raises through events or donations to fund Town projects. An example is the Town of Swansea Beautification Foundation, which donates \$20,000 to the town for land grants.

The Mayor shared that the Planning and Zoning Commission volunteers have been on the commission for more than 3 years. They would have to reapply to be on the commission this year.

Councilwoman Alley spoke on the signs in the Town of Swansea, the revenue, and how it needed to be enforced.

Attorney Dickey recommended that they review the Town of Swansea Ordinance, compare it, and discuss it in the next meeting in Executive Session.

There was no other business to discuss, and the Mayor asked if there was a motion to adjourn. A motion was presented by Councilwoman Alley and seconded by Councilwoman Williams. **Motion passed unanimously**

Respectively Submitted,

Margaret Harvey
Clerk Treasurer