



Government Services
Project & Planning Committee Meeting via Zoom
January 29, 2026- 2:00PM

MINUTES

Present: Jeffrey Graham (Chairman), Wayne Hancock, Travis Windham, Jim McCain, John Thomas, Chuck Wilson, Julia Nelson

Absent: Roland Robinson

Guests: Leah Quattlebaum, Lyle Lee, Brian Klauk

Staff Present: Dennis Cyphers, Jeff Parkey, Lisa Mann, Esmonde Levy, Linda Jackson

1. **Welcome and Call to Order:** Chairman Jeffrey Graham called the meeting to order at 2:00 pm.
2. **Invocation and Pledge of Allegiance:** Chairman Graham provided the invocation.
3. **Pledge of Allegiance:** All attendees participated in the pledge.
4. **Determination of Quorum:** Dennis Cyphers determined that there was a quorum.
5. **Approval of Agenda:** Chairman Graham called for a motion to approve the agenda. Mayor Julia Nelson made the motion, and it was seconded by Mr. Jim McCain. All were in favor, and the motion passed unanimously.
6. **Approval of Previous Meeting Minutes:** Chairman Graham called for a motion to approve the previous meeting minutes. Councilman Jim McCain made the motion, and it was seconded by Councilman Wayne Hancock. All were in favor, and the motion passed unanimously.
7. **Old Business:** N/A
8. **New Business:**
 - a. **WQMP Conformance Reviews 2025:** Planning Director Jeff provided an update on the Water Quality Management Plan Conformance Reviews; he noted an increase in the number of reviews compared to recent past years.
 - b. **SCDOT Projects Updates:** SCDOT staff presented the following:

- A brief update was presented on the Black River Project and the US 521 Corridor Feasibility Studies.
- SCDOT Staff gave an update on the Bishopville Project 2023: Staff indicated that FHWA raised concerns about fiscal constraints for both phases and the project's impact on the local economy. The committee was informed that additional studies and public outreach would be required to address these concerns and move forward with the project.
- SCDOT explained that recent changes in regulations and staffing at FHWA have created challenges, including the need to work with North Carolina's environmental group instead of their local representative. SCDOT staff expressed worry about changing goals and cost estimates, noting that the project's cost has increased from an earlier estimate of \$36 million to a projected \$50-60 million for Phase 2, which others find concerning, given the project's impact on downtown businesses and pedestrian safety.
- SCDOT staff discussed options for proceeding with a transportation project, including a task force for workforce development and potential discussions with FHWA. The group considered two main options: proceeding with the full project despite delays and additional costs or moving forward with only Phase 1 by changing the purpose and need to remove truck traffic from downtown. Financial implications were examined, showing deficits of \$14 million and \$18 million, respectively, for the two options, exceeding the commission's policy threshold for advancement
- SCDOT staff indicated concerns about cost estimates for transportation projects, explaining that while current estimates show costs in the \$50-60 million range, future costs could increase to \$80-90 million due to inflation and unknown factors.
- Executive Director Cyphers raised concerns about how increasing costs might affect other projects in the region, to which SCDOT staff acknowledged the unique situation caused by COVID-related inflation and emphasized the importance.
- SCDOT staff indicated that FHWA would have to be involved in any investment of funds for this project to include both Phases 1 & 2.
- Senator Jeffrey Graham emphasizes to the Board that the Feds are saying the Bishopville project cannot be done; he indicated that this was not a decision made locally. SCDOT indicated that the Black River Road Project was approved by the Feds and raises no issues at this time.
- After further discussions and questions raised by the committee to SCDOT, Chairman Graham called for a motion to table discussions around the Bishopville project and the Black River Project until SCDOT provides more clarification regarding both projects within one week. The motion was made by Councilman Wayne Hancock, and Mayor Nelson seconded the motion. The majority were in favor of the motion.
- Chairman Graham agreed to reschedule the next meeting in two weeks to allow time to review the new information from SDOT.

c. **SWRTA:** Director Cyphers gave updates on federal updates to the Santee – Wateree Regional Transit Authority.

d. **Safe Streets for all grant updates:**

- Asst. Planning Director Lisa Mann announced that Kershaw County had received a \$1 million Safe Streets planning and demonstration grant, with funds already awarded for both planning and demonstration phases.

9. **Other Business:** N/A

10. **Chairman's Report:** Chairman Graham thanked everyone for attending the meeting.

11. **Adjourn:** Chairman Graham called for a motion to adjourn. Mr. Chuck Wilson made the motion, and it was seconded by Councilman Travis Windam. All were in favor, and the motion passed unanimously.

Respectfully Submitted,

Dennis Cyphers,



Dennis Cyphers

Executive Director