



UNION CITY COUNCIL AGENDA (MINUTES)

- Mayor- Harold Thompson**
- District #1- Jackie Earls**
- District #2- Robert Garner**
- District #3- Gloria Rogers**
- District #4- Ricky T. Harris**
- District #5- Pam Sloss**
- District #6- Monty Cooke**

Regular City Council Meeting
February 17, 2026, 6:30 P.M.
101 Sharpe Ave.

THE MEETING MAY BE VIEWED ELECTRONICALLY ON OUR CITY OF UNION FACEBOOK PAGE.

{Summary minutes of City Council meeting. Audio tapes of the meeting are on file and are included by reference as part of this meeting. An agenda of this meeting has been either mailed or made available to persons, organizations and local news media as per their request. The agenda gives the date, time and place of the meeting as well as the order of business. This disclosure is in compliance with the South Carolina Code of Laws of 1976, Section 30-4-80 (e).}

- 1. MEETING CALLED TO ORDER BY MAYOR HAROLD THOMPSON**
- 2. INVOCATION – MAYOR THOMPSON**
- 3. PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE**
- 4. APPROVAL OF MINUTES:**

PREPARED BY: JOE NICHOLS – CITY ADMINISTRATOR

a. January 13th, 2026

Regular City Council Meeting Minutes

Motion by Councilmember Harris to approve January 13, 2026, Regular City Council Meeting Minutes.

Second by Councilmember Rogers.

Carried Unanimously.

5. CITY COUNCIL TO RECEIVE COMMUNICATION MONTHLY REPORTS:

a. MONTHLY REPORTS

Human Resources Director
Public Service Department
Public Safety Department
Planning Department
Maintenance Shop
Utility Department
Finance Department

Dena Lancaster
Dwayne Hardy
Robbie McGee
Kathy Teague
Leroy Edwards
Lance Davis
Laura Hembree

Motion by Councilmember Sloss to accept the monthly department reports as information.

Second by Councilmember Rogers.

Carried Unanimously.

6. FISCAL YEAR 2025 AUDIT PRESENTATION – MCKINLEY, COOPER & CO., LLC.- Marcy Loucks

We performed the audit for y'all for the fiscal year 2025. As auditors, we think it's the most important audit. We perform audits with the company financial statements, and that we think that they are generally presented in all material respects. So, in other words, we issued an unmodified opinion. We have to be independent. We did it with the according to service principles and standards and that y'all are responsible for preparation and fair presentation, and then the rest of it just kind of gets into more detail about what we audit. So we audit the financial statements through the notes. I'll talk about the first financial statements. This is on page 20. This is your balance sheet. As of June 30th, 2025 you have total assets and deferred outflows of 142 million, liabilities and deferred inflows of 26 million. And that left you with this positive net position of almost 116 million. And that's even what you have to be 68 so you're still 34 but the retirement, the people retirement, so, so even with that, we have a good positive net position. And then I like point out from this net position, 22% of it's unrestricted. 73% is tied up in building with some machinery and improvements, all that good stuff. And then only 5% is restricted. And so restricted is restricted by outside sources. So it was basically 22% unrestricted this year, y'all added about 9 million in improvements in water and sewer, 79 million in assets and new debt. Lots of buildings, and you see a lot of improvements in grants and stuff. So, no surprises. PAGE 21 is your statement of activities. This is like your income statement, your profit and loss. And I know it's kind of hard to read, but I'll kind of summarize what it says. For the year, you had total revenues of 52 million. They were up 8.4% from prior year, and you had total expenses of 44 million. They were up 16% from prior year, which left you with a positive change in that position of 7.2 million. There's some good I was, I was telling them there, if there's an MDNA by management, but there's some good descriptions on exactly why the increases in revenue, she could really get electric and all that stuff. On pages 15 and 17, I just read the y'all can go back when it in more detail of exactly which practices went up and all that stuff that will give you this related detail. If there aren't any questions on that, I like to point out on those tools. This is your balance sheet, governmental funds, that this is looking at your general fund, operating fund. A total fund balance of 8 million per year and just a unit that covered your expenses in the general budget. You've got good savings set up in there. It's all unrestricted. Page 32, this will give you more descriptions on your policies. Gives you more detail on like receivables and payables and your fixed assets and your debt and stuff. Except for leisure, gives me more detail on like a pension and all that stuff, and then the remainder of it is just the supplemental schedules and Physical tables and stuff like that. Gives you more detail.

7. ANNIVERSARIES

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Tom Alexander	Records Clerk	23 Years
Amy Knox	Business License & Permit Clerk	8 Years
Michael Weaver	Gas Crew Supervisor	13 Years

A round of applause was given for all and a “congratulations” for their service.

8. PRESENTATION- 2026 CITY OF UNION NEEDS ASSESSMENT

My name is Eleanor (Mixon). I am a community development planner with the Catawba Regional Council. Thank you for allowing me to join you this evening.

Notice of this assessment public hearing was posted at City Hall and Union County Courthouse on February 3rd. It was published in the Union County Courthouse on February 4th, which was more than 10 days before the hearing. The city has a citizens file with Kelly Larsen, and it is available for the public.

This plan outlines the steps that the city follows to allow citizens to participate in the process of identifying community problems and needs and planning for community development block grant opportunities. Notices, various notices are published and have started in the United States. And the public is always notified in advance of public hearings for community development block grant opportunities for notice of public hearing.

If a notice is going to be posted, it will be published at least seven days prior to the hearing. If it isn't posted, it will be posted at least 10 days prior to the hearing. There's a statement on public hearing notices that the city can get public information for the disabled with adequate notice time.

The city keeps the community informed through a series of public hearings. As noted on the citizen participation plan, a needs assessment public hearing is required to solicit public comment on community needs and priorities, and that's why we're here this evening. During a community development block grant project, which is... If there are any substantial changes to the project after it's been funded, a public hearing will be held to inform the public of the changes.

At the completion of the CCBG project, a closeout hearing is held as well to notify the public of what was accomplished during the project. The city of Union supports fair housing. Each year, the city passes a proclamation designating April as Fair Housing Month in an effort to create public awareness of fair housing and to support fair and equitable housing.

As mentioned, I am first going to provide some information about the community development block grant program and the various grant opportunities. The community development block grant program is a HUD program. The funds are allocated to each state, and in South Carolina, the funds flow through the South Carolina Department of Commerce Business Incentives Development.

When a locality submits an application, the application is sent to the Department of Commerce for review and approval. The community development block grant program is designed to provide assistance to units of local government in providing economic opportunities and meeting community revitalization needs, particularly for low- and moderate-income persons. Towns, cities, counties, units of local government are eligible, and they are the only eligible applicants.

Any localities that are in the CCBG entitlement area are not eligible. You're not in the CCBG entitlement area, so you are eligible. All projects must meet a national objective and address an eligible activity.

There are three national objectives for the CCBG program. The first, and one used most often, is benefit low- and moderate-income persons. The second is aid in the prevention or elimination of slums or flight.

And the third is meet other urgent community development needs. This third one is used rarely, and typically in the event of a national disaster. The community development program is competitive.

There are two rounds every year. The minimum grant request is \$50,000, and the maximum depends on the type of the project. There is a 10% match required, and again, the projects must meet an eligible activity and a national objective.

There are four community development program categories, and I'll run through them quickly. The first is the community infrastructure category. There are approximately \$8 million available statewide in this program year.

The grant maximum is \$1 million. However, there are waiver opportunities. The eligible activities would be water, sewer, road, or drainage activities. Application requests are due on the 20th, but the application is due on April 20th. Infrastructure projects must contribute to the creation of healthy and sustainable residential communities through water, sewer, roads, drainage, or other activities that address one of CDBG's priorities, which could be addressing health concerns, improving or resulting in a more viable regional infrastructure solution, or upgrading infrastructure to address quality standards where there are only general health concerns or to provide new services that are not near business centers when it is cost effective. The community enrichment program has approximately \$8 million available statewide this year.

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The maximum grant request is \$750,000. Application requests will be due in August, with the application due in September. Eligible activities, there are three priorities in this program.

The first is increasing economic competitiveness. Various projects that would fall under this category would be to ground-fill projects or demolition of obsolete buildings, including residential structures, downtown streetscape improvements, upgraded sidewalks, or various types of planning studies. The second priority is education and workforce development. Under this priority, you could improve library facilities or services, provide publicly owned child care facilities or multi-service centers that are publicly owned and geared towards education programming. Publicly owned transportation-oriented public facilities or services serving LMI workforce population is also eligible in this category. The third priority is safe and healthy communities, including public safety facilities or services such as police substations and fire substations or fire trucks, but not the primary station or fire. The publicly owned health and or social services facilities for equipment in underserved LMI areas is also eligible, as is ADA accessibility and energy efficiency. Local priorities program has about \$2 million available statewide, with a grant maximum of \$300,000. Application requests are due in August, with the full application due in July.

The outcome of the local priorities program is to meet community development needs that are not typically funded through other state CBG or HUD programs. These could be things such as historic preservation, parks, trails or greenways, energy conservation, that sort of thing. The fourth community development program is the Ready to Go program. There are \$750,000 available statewide, with a grant maximum of \$500,000, although there are communities who are waivers. Applications are available year-round, and as the name suggests, these projects must be ready to go. There are activities that are eligible under one of the other community development programs, but are ready to go right now, meaning that all pre-construction activities, such as design and permitting, are already complete.

In addition to the community development program, there is a business development program as well. There are \$250,000 available statewide, and the grant maximum depends on the number of jobs being created or retained, the area economic development potential, or the local goods and services. These applications are accepted on an ongoing basis, and these applications fund infrastructure to assist new or expanding businesses that will result in the creation or retention of jobs, 51% of which must be available to low- and moderate-income persons. There is a 10% grant match requirement for all CDBG grants. The match may be in the form of cash, other grants, labor fees, volunteer income services, anything of that nature. Before I go any further, do you have any questions about the CDBG program? No question. So what I would like to do now is I'm going to read through the city's 2025 prioritized community needs list, and then we'll talk about any changes that I would like made. Please do stop me if you have any questions. I can read through it.

One thing to remember is that some items on this list are not CDBG eligible, which is perfectly acceptable. The items for which you would like to consider applying for CDBG funds in the next year should be included in the one, two, or three on the list. Okay.

So number one, continue water sewer and stormwater infrastructure improvements throughout the region to include assisting other Union County localities in accessing funds for regional infrastructure solutions and or improvements, as well as local improvements and revitalization efforts in the Modern Mill and Buffalo Mill areas in cooperation with Union County. Two, continue revitalization efforts in downtown Union to include additional streetscape, street sidewalk improvements, building renovation and facades, farmer's market, and beautification projects. Three, partner with Union County to seek funding and complete brownfields, site assessments, and cleanup.

Four, make street and sidewalk improvements based on the recommendations from the walkability study to include resurfacing, pothole repairs and ADA compliance upgrades in areas around the city. Five, seek funds for additional police and fire substations and fire trucks in the city due to increased residential growth. Six, continue activities to support economic development in order to create jobs for low and moderate income persons. Seven, increase affordable daycare options for all residents, especially low and moderate income residents. Eight, available housing options for residents to include workforce housing and affordable housing options for low and moderate income disabled and elderly citizens. Nine, roadway safety improvements to include added signage, road striping, lighting, and curbside tree removal. 10, improve and expand parks and recreation, healthcare, and cultural facilities, including James Moore Park and Foster Park. 11, seek ways to conduct neighborhood improvements to moderate income neighborhoods. 12, implement a gateway and beautification plan. 13, demolition of dilapidated houses in the city of Union. 14, improve fair housing opportunities for all citizens. Are there any comments on the city's priorities? Is there anything you would like to change and remove? Anything we need to update from the existing list?

Shannon Otto (Union Resident)- Would this include an outreach program to help the homeless that we have to get off the streets since it includes the grant, includes the social services board?

-Eleanor responded -- It certainly could go on the list.

Shannon Otto responded- I mean, I think it's important for our folks that are wandering the streets to have some kind of path. Thank you.

Joe Nichols (City Administrator) – One that I thought of, Mayor and Council, was to promote a project that enhanced the quality of life for the City of Union citizens. That kind of goes along with the dog park and the amphitheater. The amphitheater is getting ready to bid, so I thought that would be a good statement.

Monica Moorman (Union Resident)- My main thing is the utility bill. Would that affect the utility bill again, and again and again?

-Mayor Thompson responded- “this is not about utilities.”

-Monica Moorman responded- “I know, I know, I’m saying would this affect it in the long run?”

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-Mayor Thompson responded- "I don't see how it would"

-Lance Davis (Utilities Director) responded- "Like she mentioned a second ago, closing out projects. We're getting ready to close out a sewer improvement project. We need a lot of funding. And frankly, that money has to be spent because the infrastructure deteriorates. It's just the nature of things, right? They have to be improved upon. So that, that money will have to be spent. And any money that we're able to get through, through a grant source, then obviously doesn't have to come out of the regular city budget, which enables us to maintain some rates. The rest would come out of our property taxes and reflect on our bills, right? Whatever the difference is left from what the grant doesn't cover. Property taxes and, and utility bills are totally separate. You know, they don't want to affect the other. Well, I mean, yeah, there's costs that we have to spend that are not grant funded, but this allows us to offset some of those costs.

9. COUNCIL TO CONSIDER 1ST READING OF 2026 IPMC ADOPTION

Heath Gregory (Building Official) - Thank you, Mayor, Council. Good evening. I'd like to ask the consideration of the ordinance being adopted for the IPMC, which is known as the international property maintenance code. That's what really gives us the teeth and the violation descriptions and information that goes along with the violations that pertain to code enforcement. So this is just more or less just a formality of just going through the process of getting this approved by council and the adopted.

-Mayor Thompson responded "I think that's what's been slowing a lot of this cleanup. There's no teeth in our laws and everywhere else they're putting some teeth in it and making people clean up. And fining them and charging them if they don't.

Motion by Councilmember Sloss to approve the adoption of the updates to IPMC.

Second by Councilmember Rogers.

Carried Unanimously.

10. COUNCIL TO CONSIDER APPROVAL OF 2026-2027 BUDGET WORKSESSION MEETING DATES

Laura Hembree (Finance Director)- proposed the 2026/2-27 budget work session dates have been tentatively set for March 31st, and April 1st. (That's a Tuesday and a Wednesday 2026. For sessions beginning at 1:00 PM and staff recommends council to approve those dates for the 2026/2027 budget work sessions.

Motion by Mayor Pro Tem Garner to approve the dates for the budget work session 2026 2027 March 31st April 1st.

Second by Councilmember Sloss.

Carried Unanimously.

11. COUNCIL TO CONSIDER ANNEXATION & ZONING DESIGNATION OF 106 BISON STREET

Marty Little-CRCOG- Thank you Mayor and Council. The Planning commission considered this rezoning at 106 Bison St after the public hearing. Again, this is going from A2 Commercial to R6 Residential for the purpose of building a single family home. The Planning commission voted to recommend approval, discussions centered mostly on the fact that the street is already predominantly used for residential.

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Motion by Mayor Pro Tem Garner to accept the recommendation from the Planning Commission.

Second by Councilmember Rogers.

Carried Unanimously.

12. INFORMATION PRESENTED TO COUNCIL REGARDING THOMAS & HUTTON BID FOR DEVELOPMENT OF SYSTEM DEVELOPMENT FEES

Lance Davis (Utilities Director) presented- No action needed, it's really just informational.

So most municipalities, most entities have instituted some sort of impacts, capacity fees, things like that. The idea being when we have these areas of growth and obviously we're opening up a big corridor highway 176 for the sewer project that will be coming close to completion closer to the summer. We've got a lot of phone calls about both residential industrial and those areas are going to be a part of our system and obviously there is some capacity that's built into that project. So we have some room to grow but there. There's a limit to that just like any other place within the city limits for the most part infrastructure is there. Because of you know the footprint of the textile facilities that were there you know what's in their places now is generally residential. So you don't have the demand the idea for this and the reason that we found contact Thomas and Hutton is to look at the feasibility of instituting some sort of an impact fee for water and sewer infrastructure primarily in that corridor I think that we've kind of talked with them about this. I think there's a good opportunity for us. But if you do have these areas that do grow the way we anticipate them I think we need to. It's time to be a little forward-looking. And be thinking ahead and saying that it's not reasonable to expect if you do have that kind of growth and we do have to have say for instance a lift station upgrades or gravity lines increase or anything like that those costs should be primarily born by those you. Know that that need it. Not by our existing ratepayers. And so that's kind of the goal of this. We'll see where it lands. Like I said we've been talking with them. Hopefully we'll have some information by our budget workshops to talk with some specifics about what those what those numbers are because we certainly don't want to dis incentivize growth but we also have to you know make sure we're taking care of the fire you know infrastructure. Just letting you know what we're doing but if you have questions. But hopefully we'll have a little bit more information by Budget workshop.

13. COUNCIL TO CONSIDER AGREEMENT WITH MOTOROLA SOLUTIONS TO LEASE OR PURCHASE RADIOS AND CAMERAS

Robbie McGee (Public Safety Director)- As some of you know, we entered into a lease 5 years ago and the lease comes to an end in the middle of this year. He stated that they have connection issues with 911 regarding the radios they currently have. They received quotes from various companies

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including the company currently used, and we are asking for resolution to enter into an agreement with Motorola Solutions to provide both radios, fire pagers, body worn cameras, car cameras and video storage for all of the equipment.

Motion by Mayor Pro Tem Garner to accept the recommendation from the Planning Commission.

Second by Councilmember Rogers.

Carried Unanimously.

14. ANNOUNCEMENTS BY MAYOR AND COUNCIL

Mayor Thompson stated “We do have a small business that is going to open next Friday, the 27th, at 11:00am. I will be at the school with the kids that day, I want one of the Councilmembers to represent the City.”

15. CITY ADMINISTRATOR UPDATE

Joe Nichols (City Administrator)

Updates were provided on several city projects. The Jonesville Wastewater Project, valued at over \$10 million, is progressing well and expected to be completed this summer. Once finished, flows will be redirected to the Union system, with the Jonesville plant serving primarily as an equalization basin.

The City has secured over \$21 million in grant funding across 14 projects and recently applied for an additional \$1 million.

Work is beginning on the Eaton Air Conditioning Project to improve climate control in city facilities. Construction is also underway on the 20,000+ sq. ft. Fleet Maintenance Facility, which will allow large vehicles to be serviced indoors.

The City Administrator also addressed increased natural gas prices due to winter demand and market conditions. The City is using storage and contract strategies to help offset costs and is offering payment flexibility for customers experiencing higher bills.

Joe also reported that additional water sampling will be conducted throughout the system, including the source and reservoir, with samples sent to a third-party lab for analysis. The water remains safe for drinking and cooking and is in compliance with all state and federal standards.

Updates were also provided on recent business closures. Cedar Hill will begin phasing out operations in April and close in August as operations move to another facility. The building owner is working with the City to attract a new tenant. CSL, a pharmaceutical facility, recently closed due to financial issues but is currently seeking investors in hopes of reopening.

Joe Nichols also addressed a recent fire at an apartment complex under construction on Times Boulevard. The fire department and supporting agencies successfully contained the fire and prevented damage to surrounding structures. He also acknowledged recent setbacks but expressed confidence in the community’s resilience and continued economic recovery efforts.

16. PUBLIC COMMENT

THE FLOOR IS NOW OPEN FOR PUBLIC COMMENTS. CITIZENS OF UNION OR OTHERS WHO HAVE REGISTERED FOR TIME WITH THE CLERK CAN NOW ADDRESS COUNCIL FOR ANY MATTERS ON TONIGHT’S AGENDA OR OTHER MATTERS YOU WISH TO BRING BEFORE THE COUNCIL. SPEAKERS ARE ALLOWED UP TO 3 MINUTES AND POSSIBLY LONGER IF THAT SPEAKER IS RECOGNIZED IN ADVANCE AS REPRESENTING A LARGER GROUP WITH SIMILAR CONCERNS. TO PRESERVE THE DECORUM OF THIS PUBLIC MEETING, AND TO ALLOW ADEQUATE TIME FOR DISCUSSION AMONG THE ELECTED

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MEMBERSHIP OF CITY COUNCIL, THIS WILL BE THE ONLY TIME WE WILL RECEIVE UNSOLICITED COMMENTS TONIGHT FROM THE PUBLIC.

A. ELISE ASHBY- THE ROBINHOOD GROUP- SPEAKING ABOUT THE FARMER'S MARKET

An update was provided on the Union County Farmers Market, which has been managed for over 10 years. During that time, the senior voucher program has grown from 400 to 1,200 vouchers, bringing approximately \$60,000 annually to support seniors and local farmers. Additional programs have generated nearly \$20,000 in fresh produce sales for low-income residents and SNAP recipients, benefiting local farmers.

The commercial kitchen project experienced delays due to a government shutdown and winter weather but is expected to move forward with the goal of supporting small agricultural businesses by spring.

Requests were made for city assistance with periodic trash pickup for market boxes, a key to the locked water spigot, and consideration of relocating or removing the blessing box at the farmers market due to ongoing cleanup and misuse concerns.

B. Monica Moorman- City of Union Resident

She requested more information regarding the high utility bills recently. She stated she will attend more council meetings to get a better understanding of the breakdown.

C. David Gioia- City of Union Resident

He briefly discussed developments in the electric vehicle market, noting the potential for lower-cost electric cars in the future. He also shared information about shoe spikes designed to improve traction on ice, recommending them as a safety measure during winter storms to help prevent falls.

17. MOTION TO ADJOURN MEETING

Motion by Councilmember Rogers to Adjourn.

Second by Councilmember Sloss.

Carried Unanimously.

Meeting Adjourned at 7:33PM

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