



Workshop

Tuesday, August 11, 2026

Town Hall, Great Falls, SC

Councilmembers Present: Mayor Keevi Worthy, Councilmember Monica Eagle, Councilmember Eric Owens, Councilmember Wytricia Mack, Councilmember Hope Sims, Councilmember David Dutton. A quorum was present.

Councilmembers Absent: Mayor Pro Tempore Jody Knight

Staff Present: Chief Parker (Police), Jessica Eubanks (Mayor Assistant), Erica Dooley (Clerk Treasurer), Buddy Bigham (PW Supervisor), Warren Skinner (Wastewater Supervisor)

The public and media were duly notified of the date, time, and place of the meeting. Mayor Keevi Worthy called the Budget Workshop to order at 7:00 PM and led the Prayer and Pledge of Allegiance.

Town of Great Falls

Workshop Meeting Minutes

August 11, 2026 – 7:00 p.m.

Call to Order: The Town of Great Falls Workshop Meeting was called to order on Tuesday, August 11, 2026, at 7:00 p.m. at the Town Hall Community Center in Great Falls, South Carolina. The purpose of the workshop was to discuss the Town's financial reporting, grant opportunities, community events, ordinances, infrastructure, parks and recreation projects, and marketing strategies.

Prayer and Pledge of Allegiance: The workshop opened with a prayer, followed by the Pledge of Allegiance.

Amendment to the Agenda: Mayor Keevi Worthy made a motion to amend the agenda to add Outstanding Town Items and Heart & Soul. Councilmember Eric J. Owens seconded the motion. All members voted in favor, and the motion carried.

Review of Financials: A financial update from Mayor's Assistant Jessica Eubanks was presented to Council. The July financial statements were expected to be completed by the following

evening. The Town's goal is to provide monthly financial statements to Council by Thursday preceding each regular meeting to support accurate, timely, and transparent financial oversight. Councilmember Eric J. Owens requested that future financial reports include the Town's monthly revenues. Council also requested current account balances and clear identification of the budget line item charged for each purchase. This information would help Council, the public, and department heads monitor available funds, overtime expenses, and departmental spending.

Police Department Golf Cart Purchase: Police Chief James Parker explained the Police Department's purchase of a golf cart at a cost of approximately \$10,500. The golf cart will assist officers with mobility during festivals and other community events because the Town's existing side-by-side is not street legal and can be damaged when operated on paved roads. The golf cart was purchased through a state contract, saving the Town approximately \$3,000. The Town paid the state-contract tax cap of approximately \$500 rather than the full sales-tax rate.

Capital Outlay and Departmental Spending Authority: Chief Parker explained that the golf cart was purchased from the Police Department's Capital Outlay line item, which had been approved for \$15,000 in the prior fiscal year's budget. Capital outlay was described as funding for major physical assets with a useful life extending beyond one year, including vehicles, facilities, infrastructure, communications equipment, information technology, and specialized equipment. It was noted that the purchase had already been authorized through Council's approval of the departmental budget. Department heads are responsible for managing their approved budgets and may make purchases within the authorized line-item limits. A purchase should be brought back before Council if it exceeds the approved amount or changes the scope of the authorized expenditure. Council agreed that the Town should establish clear and consistent approval and notification procedures for all departments and clarify whether a written \$500 purchasing limit currently exists.

Fire Department Agreement: Cindy Johnston discussed the advantages and disadvantages of the Town's current agreement with the county fire department. Several members expressed appreciation for the arrangement. Concerns regarding previous Fire Department operations and leadership were also discussed. Councilmember Hope Sims and Mayor Keevi Worthy considered inviting representatives from the county fire department to a future workshop to explain the agreement, address concerns, and answer questions directly.

Police Department Staffing: Chief Parker reported that the Police Department currently has two officers and was actively recruiting additional personnel. One promising uncertified candidate was being considered. A certified candidate has also been reviewed but did not appear to be the appropriate fit for the department. Council discussed the difficulty of competing with nearby jurisdictions that offer tiered pay scales and other employment incentives. It was also

noted that some previous departures resulted from individual performance or suitability concerns rather than compensation alone.

Police Vehicle Purchase: The Police Department was attempting to locate an in-stock 2025 police vehicle through the dealer network. An available vehicle could be delivered within approximately 30 days, while a specially ordered vehicle could take three to four months. Arrangements were being made for the vehicle to be fully upfitted before delivery so it would be ready for service.

Law Enforcement Academy Reimbursements: Councilmember Hope Sims discussed reimbursement requirements when a trained officer leaves the Town. The Town may receive a full reimbursement when an officer leaves during the first year to join another law enforcement agency and a 50-percent reimbursement if the transfer occurs during the second year. Reimbursement would not be required if the individual left the law enforcement profession entirely.

Required Meeting Attendance: Councilmember David Dutton discussed whether hourly department heads must be compensated when required to attend Council meetings or workshops. It was recommended that the Town seek guidance from the town attorney. The preliminary understanding was that hourly employees must generally be compensated when meeting attendance is required as part of their employment duties.

County Policing Concept: Based on the Town's experience with county-provided fire services, Council discussed whether a similar arrangement for law enforcement should be explored. Such an arrangement could potentially address staffing challenges, administrative burdens, and liability concerns. No decision was made, and the matter would require additional research and discussion.

Grant Opportunities: Councilmember Eric J. Owens reviewed two Municipal Association of South Carolina impact-fund grant opportunities: the \$25,000 Problem Solver Grant and the \$100,000 Big Idea Grant. The application deadline was September 25, 2026. Both grants required a five-percent Town match, estimated at \$1,250 for the Problem Solver Grant and \$5,000 for the Big Idea Grant. A Council resolution authorizing the Town to apply would be required. Council was advised that a successful applicant may be ineligible to apply again for approximately two years.

Problem Solver Grant Proposal: Councilmember Eric J. Owens discussed using the \$25,000 Problem Solver Grant to upgrade the Council Chambers' audio, video, and livestreaming equipment. The proposed project, estimated at approximately \$24,800, would include nine microphones, a camera, livestreaming capabilities, and related equipment. The improvements would allow residents to hear Council proceedings more clearly, increase transparency, and

provide the Town with its own video record of meetings. The Town would obtain multiple quotes and consider state-contract pricing to reduce costs and meet procurement requirements.

Big Idea Grant Planning: Councilmember Eric J. Owens discussed potential projects for the \$100,000 Big Idea Grant, including an amphitheater, sidewalks, and other community improvements. Competitive applications require project readiness, including a clear concept, cost estimates, drawings, procurement information, and a strong supporting narrative. Councilmember Owens discussed taking the necessary time and assembling a team to prepare larger projects for a future grant cycle.

Long-Term Grant Planning: Councilmember Eric J. Owens discussed researching additional grants through the Council of Governments, including Community Development Block Grant opportunities. Councilmember David Dutton recommended developing a five-year plan to identify and prioritize Town projects. Rondy also discussed establishing a dedicated budget allocation for grant matches, planning, engineering, and application expenses. This would allow the Town to respond more effectively when funding opportunities become available.

Labor Day Event: Council discussed hosting a Town Labor Day celebration on Thursday, September 3, 2026, tentatively from 5:00 to 9:00 p.m. The event was proposed as an opportunity to bring residents together and strengthen community relationships. Council acknowledged that many community ideas had been discussed in the past but emphasized the importance of developing a plan and following through.

Labor Day Food and Entertainment: Suggestion included free hot dogs, two food trucks, local church participation, a snack stand, a dessert vendor such as Kona Ice, and other refreshments. Council discussed having Councilmembers serve the community during the event. Entertainment options included a DJ, live band, local performers, and school groups. Council also clarified that dancing would be permitted. The Town would determine the availability of chairs, staging, grills, music equipment, and other supplies.

Labor Day Planning and Volunteers: Mayor Worthy indicated that an events committee was already in place. Council discussed preparing a detailed plan, developing a volunteer roster, and assigning responsibilities. Organizers intended to finalize the event's food, entertainment, equipment, staging, and seating arrangements by the following week. Council would coordinate with the Hometown Association and other community partners.

Community Events and Partnerships: Council discussed organizing recurring events to promote unity and community involvement. Ideas included movie nights, an Easter egg hunt, student art displays, holiday decorations, a fall festival, Christmas activities, and participation from local churches, nonprofit organizations, schools, and community groups. The Hometown Association

indicated that it was planning a fall festival and was willing to work with Council. Council emphasized that these efforts should serve residents and bring the community together.

Ordinance Review and Codification: Councilmember Eric J. Owens discussed the need to locate, review, update, and codify the Town's ordinances. Glinda Coleman suggested reviewing one chapter at a time, locating all ordinances previously adopted through Council minutes and agendas, consulting the Council of Governments, and obtaining proposals from professional codification companies. Brian McGrath emphasized the importance of creating a clear plan before beginning the review. The immediate priority would be to assemble all adopted ordinances and determine which provisions require revision or formal codification.

Town Infrastructure: Councilmembers Eric J. Owens and David Dutton discussed several infrastructure needs, including sidewalks, vehicles, parks, information technology, and other long-term capital improvements. Council emphasized the importance of identifying projects in advance and developing plans that could support future grant applications and funding requests.

Information Technology Infrastructure: Councilmember Eric J. Owens discussed the Town's need for professional information technology services. The Town currently lacks a robust computer network and relies heavily on paper records. Council discussed hiring a managed service provider to assess the Town's needs and develop a secure system with data backups, audit trails, access controls, employee training, and protection from hacking, ransomware, and accidental deletion. Council recognized information technology as a necessary long-term investment rather than an optional expense.

Records Management and Digitization: Councilmember Eric J. Owens discussed digitizing the Town's historical and administrative records, implementing formal records-retention schedules, and improving the storage and disposal of documents. Some records are currently stored in the Town Hall basement. The Town would consider professional shredding and archival-storage services to protect confidential records and preserve documents that must be retained. Councilmember Hope Sims also provided an update regarding the Town's auditor and discussed obtaining guidance concerning financial records and internal controls.

Town Marketing Strategy: Councilmember Eric J. Owens discussed the need for the Town to establish a clear identity through coordinated marketing and wayfinding. Council considered how Great Falls should present itself to residents, visitors, businesses, and potential industries. A unified marketing strategy would help strengthen the Town's image, improve directional signage, attract visitors, and support economic development.

Mission, Vision, and Values: Councilmember Eric J. Owens discussed conducting a facilitated work session to develop formal mission, vision, and value statements for the Town. Mayor Keevi

Worthy had prepared an initial draft. Council considered using information collected through the Heart & Soul program to ensure the final statements reflected residents' priorities and the Town's long-term direction. Councilmember Owens noted that a strong marketing strategy and clear community identity could help attract industries to Great Falls.

Heart & Soul Program: Elizabeth Bowen and Elizabeth Morley Howe presented information concerning the Great Falls Heart & Soul program. They requested that Council adopt the Town's resident-based value statements. The statements were developed from 331 community stories, 150 surveys, and 777 data points. Heart & Soul representatives will prepare a draft resolution for Council's consideration at a regular meeting.

Heart & Soul Commitments and Action Plan: Elizabeth Bowen reviewed the commitments included in the Town's April 18, 2022, Heart & Soul resolution. Those commitments included involving all residents, focusing on what matters most to the community, taking a long-term approach, maintaining Council representation on the steering team, and sharing project information through the Town's communication channels. The Heart & Soul action plan would remain a living document containing resident-driven priorities and projects, including a possible community center serving residents of all ages.

Heart & Soul Council Representation: Councilmember Wytricia Mack was identified as the Council representative serving on the Heart & Soul steering team. Council discussed maintaining consistent representation and placing the adoption of the resident-based value statements on an upcoming regular Council meeting agenda.

Outstanding Town Items: Councilmember Hope Sims discussed the importance of identifying outstanding Town matters, assigning responsibility, and following each item through completion. These items included contacting the auditor, submitting required work orders, following up on park lighting, reviewing grant applications, completing ordinance research, and ensuring Town projects were not left unfinished.

Dave Miner's Park: Mayor's Assistant Jessica Eubanks reported that engineering work with Bolton & Menk was underway to address drainage issues and plan for the replacement of the playground at Dave Miner's Park. The playground area may need to close during construction, and the project timeline would be confirmed. A virtual coordination meeting was scheduled for Thursday. Councilmembers and residents also discussed inadequate lighting at the top of the hill and three non-working solar lights. Councilmember Wytricia Mack advised that a work order would be submitted and that the Town would follow up with the county regarding the lighting concerns.

Sunset Park: Joey Williams discussed proposed improvements for Sunset Park. Approximately \$330,000 was referenced for park improvements. A separate Community Development Block

Grant of approximately \$300,000 was also discussed for playground improvements. Council was advised that additional improvements could potentially be included if the Capital Project Sales Tax project were structured around parking improvements.

Capital Project Sales Tax Park Projects: Brian McGrath discussed four park applications, including Dave Miner's Park, Sunset Park, and the small park beside the theater, totaling approximately \$711,000. The county was reportedly allocated approximately \$715,000. Councilmembers were encouraged to review the applications, project descriptions, and proposed scopes to ensure the Town received the full benefit of the available funding.

Park Master Plan Meeting: Citizen Glinda Coleman discussed the upcoming public meeting regarding the park master plan, scheduled for September 10, 2026, from 10:00 a.m. until 12:00 p.m. at the Memorial Building. The Memorial Building will be reserved for the meeting. Councilmembers and residents were encouraged to attend and provide input.

Event Promotion: Councilmember Hope Sims was advised that Town events could be submitted to the Chester County Chamber of Commerce website. Tourism-related events may also be shared on the Visit Chester County website. Chamber membership is not required to submit eligible tourism events. The Town would use these resources to promote future activities and increase public participation.

Follow-Up Items: Staff and Council would continue improving monthly financial reports, establishing consistent departmental purchasing guidelines, clarifying the Town's spending thresholds, obtaining information technology assessments, and improving record management procedures. Council would place the grant authorization resolution and the Heart & Soul value-statements resolution on a regular meeting agenda. Additional follow-up included planning the Labor Day event, investigating ordinance-codification services, developing a five-year plan, budgeting for grants, reviewing park applications, submitting necessary work orders, addressing lighting concerns at Dave Miner's Park, coordinating a mission and vision workshop, and continuing the Town's branding and wayfinding efforts.

Adjournment: With no further matters presented, Mayor Keevi Worthy made a motion to adjourn the workshop. Councilmember David Dutton seconded the motion. All members voted in favor, and the motion carried.

Respectfully submitted,

Erica Dooley