

Council

Kevin Phillips
Mayor

Jorge Guerrero
Mayor Pro Tempore

Jerry Ashmore
Mary Beth Heyward
Darryl Owens



Van Willis
Town Manager

Brooke Plank-Buccola
Asst. Town Manager

Fire Chief
Tim Ogden

Police Chief
Jeffrey Meyers

Minutes

Council Retreat

Port Royal Police Department, Training Room, 1748 Paris Avenue

February 20, 2026

Members Present: Mayor Kevin Phillips, Council Member Jorge Guerrero, Council Member Jerry Ashmore, Council Member Mary Beth Heyward, Council Member Darryl Owens

Staff Present: Fire Chief Tim Ogden, Police Chief Jeffrey Meyers, Police Deputy Chief Andre Massey, Town Manager Van Willis

I. CALL TO ORDER

Mayor Phillips called the meeting to order at 9:02 AM.

II. OPENING COMMENTS

A. Introduction of Desirée Fragoso, MASC - Facilitator

Desirée Fragoso, Field Service Manager for the Municipal Association of South Carolina acted as the facilitator.

B. Review progress from goals set last year

Council did a review of their prior year's goals.

Must do:

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- **Continue fostering relationships with Port Developers**
- **Promote local businesses by exploring incentives to stimulate economic activity in the downtown area**
- **Complete ongoing Capital Projects**

Council reflected that significant progress has been made in strengthening its relationship with the port developers, laying a solid foundation for continued collaboration. Over the past year, substantial movement was achieved, including completion of nearly all items outlined in the settlement agreement, marking the most productive period of engagement to date. With recent leadership changes on the developer's side, ongoing communication and proactive follow-up remain essential to ensure shared expectations, maintain momentum, and reinforce the Town's priorities. Council emphasized that continued transparency, regular updates, and consistent engagement are critical to sustaining public trust and fostering a strong, accountable partnership moving forward.

Council discussed ongoing efforts to promote local businesses and stimulate economic activity in the downtown area through targeted incentives and direct engagement. Two Town-owned buildings are being positioned as incubator spaces for emerging artists and food entrepreneurs seeking to transition into brick-and-mortar locations, with applications currently under review. Funding was redirected this fiscal year to allow the Town to more directly support business growth along the Paris Avenue and Ribaut Road corridor, complemented by participation in a USDA-supported business incentive study and a well-attended business breakfast that strengthened communication and collaboration. Continued visibility at ribbon cuttings and community events, along with coordination during projects such as the Paris Avenue Streetscape, reflects a commitment to working alongside local businesses to sustain momentum and shared success.

Staff reported that multiple capital projects are currently underway simultaneously, creating a demanding project schedule. Recently completed efforts include improvements at the Sands Beach causeway and boardwalk, as well as the West Paris drainage project. Work is beginning on the Villages drainage project and the entrance improvements to Paris Avenue, with several additional initiatives progressing in parallel. Overall, the Town continues to actively advance and manage a full slate of ongoing infrastructure projects.

Should do:

- **Conduct a downtown parking study**
- **Improve transparency**
- **Design and implement youth-focused events and programs, such as a potential "Family Day" initiative**

A downtown parking study was recently completed and presented to Council, providing a detailed assessment of existing conditions. While approximately 1,200 parking spaces were

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identified, a significant portion is located on side streets and within public rights-of-way adjacent to residential properties, prompting policy considerations regarding long-term use and classification of that inventory. The study confirmed that parking constraints are generally limited to a few peak events each year, with adequate capacity meeting typical daily demand. Planned improvements associated with the Paris Avenue project will include restriping and reconfiguration to optimize parking along the corridor, with some additional utilization of nearby side-street spaces.

Council affirmed its commitment to transparency and noted significant progress in strengthening public communication and trust. Increased visibility at public meetings, including participation from port representatives, along with the resolution of prior legal constraints, has allowed for more open dialogue and clearer updates to the community. The Town's police and fire departments have also played a critical role through consistent public engagement, social media outreach, and community events, reinforcing confidence, accessibility, and shared messaging. Collectively, these efforts have enhanced awareness, improved responsiveness, and strengthened the connection between Town government and residents.

Town leadership acknowledged ongoing discussions at the state level regarding potential limitations on existing local revenue sources, which can create uncertainty for municipalities. In response, the Town remains focused on fiscal responsibility, resourcefulness, and living within its means rather than relying on unpredictable earmarks or one-time funding. The Town has grown to approximately \$11 million while maintaining a disciplined and sustainable financial approach. Staff actively pursue competitive grant opportunities, including branding initiatives, CDBG funds, and Rural Infrastructure Authority programs—to supplement revenues and responsibly advance priority projects.

It was noted that while a formal "Family Day" event was not implemented, meaningful progress has been made in advancing youth-focused initiatives. The upcoming splash pad project represents a significant investment in family-friendly amenities, and the Town has hosted numerous youth-oriented and community-centered events, including high school Battle of the Bands and John Parker Day. Participation across departments, particularly the Police and Fire Departments, has further strengthened engagement through active involvement in community programming. Collectively, these efforts reflect continued commitment to providing events and activities that serve youth and families.

Could do:

- **Explore opportunities for sewer expansion**
- **Develop strategies to make Paris Avenue a key destination**
- **Strengthen community engagement through quadrant meetings and direct interactions**

Council stated that they are always exploring opportunities for sewer expansion and have been developing strategies to make Paris Avenue a key destination.

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Council strengthened community engagement through quadrant meetings and direct outreach, including hosting an off-site meeting at Bridges Preparatory School to bring government into the community setting. While initial attendance was modest, the initiative demonstrated a commitment to accessibility and is viewed as a model worth continuing annually. Engagement efforts have expanded to include school partnerships, youth-focused civic involvement such as a “Mayor for a Day,” exploration of a student recognition initiative, and collaboration with local schools on projects where students will help steward and represent designated portions of the Spanish Moss Trail. These efforts reflect a broader strategy to foster civic awareness, encourage youth participation, and maintain open, productive dialogue with residents across all areas of the community.

C. Establishment of New Goals

Ms. Fragoso walked Council through an exercise to establish their new goals for this year.

Must do:

- **Continue attracting new businesses and support existing business community**
- **Continue engaging Safe Harbor – make world class marina**
- **Communication strategy**
- **Advocate and enhance infrastructure, roadways and sidewalks**

Could do:

- **Intentionally community engagement strategy**
- **Continue sewer infrastructure improvements**
- **Environmental protection and preserving character**

Should do:

- **Engage local military partners**
- **Succession plan for staff and facilities**
- **Identify revenue sources**

III. DEPARTMENT HEAD UPDATES:

Robb Wells delivered his presentation at this time. He gave an overview of the Convention and Visitors Bureau’s role in marketing Port Royal and capturing visitor spending generated through accommodations tax, explaining that state law requires a portion of those funds be reinvested in destination promotion with full transparency and reporting. He shared data showing that roughly one-third of individuals in Town at any given time are visitors — 74% from out of state — driven largely by Marine Corps Recruit Depot Parris Island graduations, with average daily spending of approximately \$106, primarily on fuel and food. He noted that Port Royal successfully captures graduation-related and

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festival traffic, particularly during the Soft-Shell Crab Festival, and that assets such as Sands Beach, the boardwalk, and Cypress Wetlands rank among the most visited destinations in northern Beaufort County due to strong demand for water access and nature-based experiences. Geofence data also reflects significant activity at key commercial centers, highlighting the economic opportunity tied to visitor flow and wayfinding. He concluded that Port Royal's strongest marketing advantages remain with its waterfront access, outdoor recreation, festivals, dining destinations, and authentic historic character, all of which position the Town well for continued tourism growth and expanded public relations efforts.

A. Fire Department

Chief Ogden provided a 2025 overview, noting more than 6,000 calls for service to date — a 342% increase over the past ten years — with no staffing additions since Station 4 opened in 2017. Despite rising demand, response times remain below the five-minute target for service and ISO purposes. The department logged over 1,000 public education hours, 18,000 training hours, more than 400 inspections, and over 100 plan reviews, supported by one fire marshal and one inspector whose workload grows annually with development. Medical capabilities continue to expand, with 23 EMTs, 17 Advanced EMTs, and 11 paramedics on staff. The department maintains its Class 1 ISO rating, a significant asset for commercial recruitment due to potential insurance savings and again earned the Fire Safe South Carolina designation for community risk reduction and engagement efforts. Youth outreach initiatives, including the Sparking Embers Girls Empowerment Boot Camp, are producing recruitment interest, while participation in the military SkillBridge Program has resulted in successful firefighter hires transitioning from active duty. Ongoing challenges include growth, increasing call volume, traffic impacts on response, and securing a formal automatic aid agreement with the Beaufort Air Station, like the existing agreement with Parris Island. Strong automatic aid partnerships remain in place with Bluffton Fire District and others, with no exchange of funds. Planned initiatives include EMS co-location at the busiest stations, expansion of closest-unit response north of the Broad, continued youth programming, headquarters station renovations, replacement of SCBA equipment through grant funding, and expansion of the quick response vehicle program to preserve frontline apparatus availability.

B. Police Department

Chief Meyers highlighted several accomplishments from the past fiscal year, emphasizing expanded training and professional development. Mandatory quarterly block training for all officers was implemented, requiring eight hours of instruction every three months focused on operational review, legal updates, emerging technologies, and identified skill gaps. The department also restructured its field training program using the nationally recognized San Jose Field Training Model, creating a more structured and accountable process for evaluating officer readiness. Command staff advanced leadership development through the prestigious LEEDA training program, and Deputy Chief Massey became the department's first graduate of the FBI National Academy. Significant progress was made in equipment and technology, including deployment of a fully operational mobile command trailer, new patrol rifles, Axon body and in-car camera systems funded largely through grants, a mobile camera trailer for crime deterrence, and implementation of PowerDMS and Police1 training platforms. Total

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grant funding secured during the year exceeded \$850,000. Specialty units were expanded with school resource officers in all four schools through grant funding, participation in the county crime scene unit, establishment of a certified drone program, continued K-9 operations funded through forfeiture funds, and ongoing traffic and marine unit initiatives, though efforts are underway to secure funding to replace the marine patrol boat. Organizational improvements included departmental rebranding, restructuring of hiring and promotional processes, and completion of a Department of Justice organizational assessment with 45 actionable recommendations guiding a one- to three-year improvement plan. A DOJ team is now assisting with development of a three-, five-, and ten-year strategic plan that will be presented to Council upon completion. The department currently employs 30 personnel across sworn and civilian roles, including grant-funded school resource and traffic officers. Key priorities for the upcoming year include recruitment and retention, maintaining high training standards, addressing competitive salary gaps with neighboring agencies, and fostering a strong departmental culture. A major operational need is replacement of the department's records management system due to the current platform being discontinued; extensive research has identified several cost-effective options that meet departmental needs. Efforts are also underway to secure legal services to support prosecutorial functions, provide legal guidance, and assist with ongoing officer training.

C. Judicial

Manager Willis reported on Judicial Department operations using information provided by Clerk of Court Traci Haddock. During calendar year 2025, the court disposed of more than 2,100 cases. The court continues to utilize the Pre-Trial Intervention (PTI) Program through the Solicitor's Office, along with alcohol education, traffic education, and the Alive at 25 programs, which provides younger drivers an opportunity for education while helping mitigate long-term penalties associated with traffic violations. Funding remains in place for the municipal judge's required continuing education, and the court is working toward national certification in court management while the Clerk continues required administrative training. A new metal detector was purchased and installed in the lobby to enhance security. Carol Miller is serving as conflict attorney. Public defender services are provided through a local contract, Luke Pollack. Currently, 83 cases are pending, including jury trials, General Sessions matters, conditional discharges, and provisional programs. In the coming year, the court anticipates transitioning to new court management software, likely to be coordinated with the replacement of the LawTrak system. Once the transition occurs, court cases will appear in the Multi-Court Index system, which is not currently available.

D. Planning/Building/Codes

Recent development activity continues to reflect growth trends affecting municipalities across South Carolina, one of the fastest-growing states in the country, and Beaufort County, one of the fastest-growing counties in the state. Approximately 1,160 dwelling units were permitted or under construction prior to the moratorium, with an additional 168 units currently under review since the moratorium was lifted in November, representing a mix of housing types. Additional projects include a permitted 100-room hotel at Midtown, approximately 82,000 square feet of commercial space under review, and potential expansions at both the Bridges and Riverview campuses. A range of projects are currently in

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various stages including permit issuance, construction, completion, and review. Planning staff support ongoing development review, with Planner I Joey Ethem assisting with routine daily items while Planning Director Noah Krepps focuses on larger planning and policy matters. In accordance with state statute, the Comprehensive Plan must be reviewed every five years and fully updated every ten years. The plan addresses key elements including population, economic development, natural resources, cultural resources, community facilities, priority investment, and resiliency initiatives, with the upcoming cycle anticipated to be the five-year review. Near-term departmental goals include finalizing the sidewalk program policy and inventory to identify gaps, drafting a traffic calming policy, preparing a retail district ordinance for Paris Avenue, updating the fee schedule, and applying for assistance from the South Carolina Forestry Commission for tree canopy mapping. Staff also continue to participate in regional transportation and resiliency initiatives, pursue periodic code updates, and maintain professional training.

Recruitment efforts for the Chief Building Official position remain ongoing, though many candidates have presented salary expectations that exceed typical ranges. A qualified candidate with all required certifications has been identified; however, a personal matter has temporarily delayed the hiring process. Additional time has been provided to allow the matter to be addressed, with the expectation that the position may be filled within the next few months. Because the candidate already holds the necessary certifications, completion of the Chief Building Official examination will not be required. Until the position is filled, building code services continue to be supported by Safe Built. Once the role is established in-house, the department will continue working with Safe Built as needed to assist with workload demands while supporting ongoing efforts to streamline the permitting process.

Enforcement activity may increase in the coming year in response to community complaints and identified violations. Not all reported concerns result in violations, and staff often must clarify applicable codes to residents. When violations do occur, ordinances typically provide discretion and allow a reasonable period—generally about ten days—for voluntary compliance before further action is taken. The goal of code enforcement is to achieve compliance and resolve issues rather than generate revenue through citations. While this approach may not satisfy every concern, efforts remain focused on working with residents. When necessary, stronger enforcement measures may be used to achieve compliance; however, the overall philosophy continues to emphasize cooperation and practical solutions whenever possible.

E. Department of Public Works

Public Works operations remain stable, reflecting recent investments in equipment and resources approved in prior years. Department leadership typically focuses on operational needs rather than large funding requests, while continued administrative support from Amber Nieves has improved organization, purchasing coordination, responsiveness, and bulk pickup scheduling. Staff are encouraged to remain attentive when visiting parks and facilities by noting maintenance issues such as damaged equipment or safety concerns so they can be addressed promptly. To support this effort, facility checks are being coordinated to help identify and document maintenance needs across Town properties. The drainage project at the facility has been temporarily deferred due to higher-priority capital projects

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currently underway. As municipal responsibilities continue to expand, consideration is being given to adding a capital projects officer to oversee construction initiatives and provide consistent project management beyond the procurement and RFP process. This role could also assist Public Works with maintenance coordination and asset management. While engineering support remains strong, the loss of a former project management staff member has created additional challenges in maintaining dedicated oversight of multiple projects.

The final item relates to ongoing efforts to bring Town records management up to date. Approximately 400 boxes of records currently require scanning and digital archiving to ensure accessibility and proper preservation. The Town Clerk is working to digitize these records.

From an administrative standpoint, space within the building is becoming an increasing challenge. The anticipated addition of approximately two to three more staff members would largely exhaust available workspace. Despite these limitations, operations remain functional and administrative responsibilities continue to be managed effectively.

IV. PRESENTATION

A. Robb Wells, President & CEO of Visit Beaufort, Port Royal & Sea Islands

See above.

V. DISCUSSION TOPICS:

A. Capital Projects

- i. Sewer**
- ii. Road Projects**
- iii. Sidewalks**

Several infrastructure and capital projects are currently underway or approaching key milestones.

The **Villages project** is preparing to begin construction, while **West Paris Avenue** is substantially complete and moving through the federal close-out process, which requires additional documentation before final removal of remaining construction controls such as fencing. The Villages project, awarded to CBG, has received a notice to proceed and carries a firm completion deadline of **May 20** due to funding requirements. The project combines support from the Rural Infrastructure Authority, ARPA funds, and remaining GEO Bond funds. Contractor coordination with residents is being emphasized, including door hangers and clear communication of timelines, as temporary alley closures will be necessary during construction.

Implementation of the **Stormwater Master Plan** will require continued evaluation of project costs and available funding. Current stormwater fees are significantly lower than those of other municipalities in the County, and adjustments may be necessary to complete the full list of projects identified in the plan, including the larger Casablanca basin improvements that extend across Waddell into adjacent wetlands.

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Work is also advancing on the **Paris Avenue project**, where initial landscape removal and site preparation are underway ahead of major excavation. Ongoing communication with business owners and stakeholders has been maintained throughout the process. A recent change in ownership of a key parcel now allows that property to be incorporated into the project area, which was previously not possible. Regular status updates will continue at Council meetings, and coordination with BJWSA has been completed to avoid the utility conflicts encountered during earlier phases of West Paris Avenue.

The **Splash Pad project** has resolved its required capacity fee and technical coordination with BJWSA. Site planning has been awarded to JOCO, and design work is now underway with the goal of completing the project in time for summer use.

Planning for the **Public Works yard improvements** remains under consideration and is temporarily on hold while options are evaluated.

For the **Marina dock improvements**, the final authorization letter has been secured from Safe Harbor, which owns the marsh surrounding the property. This approval was necessary to allow access across the marsh to complete the improvements. Staff and engineering are also updating the Tax Increment Financing (TIF) project list and evaluating whether additional funds for the shrimp dock could be incorporated. Although approximately \$1.5 million has been set aside, current estimates place the full dock and processing facility project closer to \$3 million. Potential state earmark opportunities may also be explored.

The **Spanish Moss Trail connection** is progressing in coordination with the County's contractor to address the final segment near Appleton Way and Ritter Circle. Planned improvements include resurfacing, restriping, and establishing a shared lane configuration to accommodate the constrained area.

At **Cypress Wetlands**, work continues on the second phase of pathway improvements in partnership with the Friends group supporting the site.

For **Marshview Park**, the required environmental review has begun due to the use of CDBG funding. Additional grant funding is still pending, which could allow the CDBG allocation to serve as the matching portion and complete the overall project financing.

At **The Sands**, work on the shower installation is progressing, with the primary issue being identification of the drainage connection for the dog watering station.

CDBG funding opportunities are also being pursued in several areas. A military enhancement grant application is being coordinated with BJWSA to extend sewer service to the VA facility. In addition, the Town is evaluating a new CDBG application to address sewer connections in the Casablanca neighborhood. Although sewer infrastructure was installed in the past, many homes were never connected to the system. The proposed effort would help address those connections and may allow additional sewer improvements along Ribaut Road if supplemental funding becomes available.

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Sidewalk improvements are also under review following the adoption of updated conveyance ordinances. A second phase of installations is being considered by compiling the required linear footage and preparing cost estimates for potential inclusion in the upcoming budget. Available GEO Bond funding appears sufficient to support these improvements if Council chooses to proceed.

Finally, participation continues in the County **Transportation Advisory Committee** process related to the transportation referendum. For the Town, the primary focus remains intersection improvements rather than major roadway construction. The Town will host the committee's next meeting on the 25th.

B. Council Budgetary Donations

Mayor Phillips raised the Beaufort Jasper Housing Trust's recent request for the Town to consider participating in a housing repair matching program. The organization has approached the Town twice and indicated the program could be tailored to meet the Town's needs and available funding. Preliminary discussion considered a potential Town contribution of \$25,000 as a pilot effort, which could leverage additional funds through the Housing Trust to assist several households with needed repairs, particularly older residents. Unlike state or federal programs, the partnership could allow flexibility in setting eligibility guidelines and project types, potentially including housing such as mobile homes that are often excluded from other funding sources but remain vulnerable to major system failures. Manager Willis indicated that a \$25,000 allocation could be accommodated within the budget and recommended evaluating the program after one year to determine its effectiveness and whether adjustments or expansion are warranted. Council expressed general support for proceeding based on staff's recommendation and further coordination with the Housing Trust to develop program details.

C. Town Hall Policies

Staff raised concerns regarding increasing requests for use of the building. While the space was originally intended to accommodate local HOAs, management companies have increasingly begun requesting use of the facility, sometimes resulting in frequent weekend use and operational challenges, including audiovisual equipment being left disorganized and requiring staff to reset the room at the start of the week. While requests from outside the Town have not been formally denied, the preference is for the space to primarily serve local HOA meetings and for requests to be submitted directly by the HOA president rather than management companies. Council agreed with this approach and supported implementing a refundable deposit requirement to help ensure the space and equipment are left in proper condition after use.

D. Storm Water Utility Fee

The stormwater utility fee was discussed, and a spreadsheet will be prepared to provide Council with updated projections and supporting figures for review.

VI. MISCELLANEOUS

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Under miscellaneous items, Mayor Phillips raised several topics for Council's input before pursuing further action. The first involved a demographic trend discussion and a potential opportunity to engage with the **South Carolina Rural Initiative Program**, a nonprofit organization based in Columbia that works with communities experiencing population decline. The program assists municipalities with targeted marketing campaigns designed to attract new residents by promoting quality of life and relocation opportunities. While Port Royal is not facing population loss, the discussion focused on the importance of maintaining a balanced demographic mix, particularly encouraging younger working families in addition to retirees. Mayor Phillips proposed continuing discussions with program representative Taylor Daniel to learn more about the initiative and explore whether a tailored approach could support messaging aimed at attracting younger families and remote workers. Council supported continuing the conversation to gather additional information.

Mayor Phillips also requested feedback on potential ideas related to the **Street Music** program. Council generally agreed the event has been highly successful and expressed strong support for maintaining the quality of national touring bands that differentiate the program from other local music venues. Discussion included whether to expand the program, incorporate local opening acts, or provide direction regarding music style to encourage more high-energy performances. Some members noted that local musicians already have frequent opportunities to perform at area venues and festivals, while others expressed interest in finding ways to highlight local talent without creating logistical challenges. One concept discussed was the possibility of a separate local performance series—potentially acoustic in nature—at another time or location, such as the amphitheater once improvements are complete. Council supported continuing to explore ideas that maintain the program's unique character while considering additional opportunities for local performers.

Manager Willis added that he received an email from Jared Fralix indicating that, at Council's direction, the **Transportation Advisory Committee (TAC)** has been asked to develop a project list within three categories: roadway widening, safety and intersection improvements, and resurfacing or dirt road paving projects. The categories do not appear to include new road construction, and Council confirmed that safety and intersection improvements remain the Town's primary focus.

Mayor Phillips suggested exploring ways to encourage visitors to travel down Paris Avenue and into Town. On Saturday mornings, the Farmers Market operates from 9:00 a.m. to 12:00 p.m. and functions extremely well. A complementary activity could potentially follow the market, such as a **craft market** located closer to Town—perhaps in the parking lot near the shed or another suitable space. The concept would avoid competition by staggering times; for example, the Farmers Market could operate from 9:00 a.m. to 12:00 p.m., while a craft market might run from 11:00 a.m. to 2:00 p.m. This arrangement could encourage visitors to attend the Farmers Market, then travel into the Village for crafts, lunch, and other activities. The goal would be to create a natural flow of visitors without placing responsibility for organizing such a market on Town staff, as staff are not involved in the Farmers Market's operation. If a private individual or organization expressed interest in managing a craft market.

Mayor Phillips also raised the possibility of approaching **Safe Harbor** about installing a mural on the side of the marina's dry stack structure. A prominent mural visible from the water or bridge could create a

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strong first impression and help establish the Town's identity. Such a proposal would require approval from Safe Harbor and funding for design and installation.

Mayor Phillips also suggested scheduling additional **community meetings** with neighboring municipalities, Beaufort County, and the Board of Education. A joint meeting format could allow for open dialogue rather than formal presentations. Manager Willis noted that staff have already begun similar coordination with SCDOT and BJWSA to share development updates and coordinate projects. Mayor Phillips noted that such meetings could provide an opportunity to discuss shared issues, such as EMS services, directly with County officials. A single joint meeting involving the City of Beaufort, the Town of Port Royal, Beaufort County, and the School Board could allow for collaborative discussion without creating an excessive number of meetings.

Another topic raised was the long-term future of the Harbor Village property, which currently houses the **museum and visitor center associated with the Historic Port Royal Foundation**. Although the property has recently changed ownership and new leases are being signed with businesses, the possibility remains that the site could eventually be redeveloped. It may be beneficial for the Town to consider contingency plans for the museum and visitor center should that occur.

Mayor Phillips also discussed enhancing **holiday decorations** along Paris Avenue. Town Hall received positive feedback for its holiday lighting this year, and a resident has donated a large number of Christmas wreaths to the Town. One idea would be to organize a decorating contest for homes and businesses along Paris Avenue. Participants could decorate for the holiday season beginning in November, with Town Council selecting winners in categories such as first, second, and third place. Prizes could be modest, such as \$500 for the top entry. This initiative could create a festive atmosphere during the annual golf cart parade and encourage more residents and businesses to decorate, making the corridor more visually appealing and attracting visitors. Council also discussed replacing or updating banners on poles throughout Town, potentially with seasonal designs as part of broader beautification efforts along Paris Avenue.

Mayor Phillips also raised the idea of exploring a **trolley or golf cart transportation system** operating on Saturdays. Rather than the Town creating and operating such a system, the service could potentially be contracted through a private operator who already has the necessary licensing, insurance, and equipment. A small shuttle route could connect locations such as The Sands, Shellring Ale Works, the wetlands, and other areas of Town. Manager Willis expressed support for using a third-party vendor model. Council Member Guerrero noted that expectations would need to be carefully managed if the program were introduced as a pilot project, with clear parameters regarding capacity, schedule, and duration. A trial period—such as several months—could help determine whether the concept is viable. Discussion also included whether the Town should establish a dedicated tourism line item within the annual budget to support initiatives such as a pilot transportation program.

Additional budget considerations discussed included potential contributions to the Beaufort Jasper Housing Trust and a new golf cart.

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Council Member Guerrero also suggested expanding the **veterans monument at Naval Heritage Park**. With the addition of the VA clinic, the Town's already significant veteran population may increase. Over time, the monument could be enhanced to include additional elements—such as service emblems or a more formal memorial layout—similar to those seen in other communities. Such projects typically require coordination with military branches because service emblems are trademarked and must be approved.

Manager Willis noted that **Naval Heritage Park** as a whole may benefit from a broader evaluation and potential improvements. Recent work has included sidewalk installation, tree maintenance, storyboards, playground equipment, and other enhancements. There may also be opportunities to add parking or make additional improvements along the roadway adjacent to the park. The skateboard park facility may eventually require upgrades as well, as poured concrete structures are generally more durable than the current wood-based features. With its covered structure and location, the skate park and surrounding park space could become a more prominent community asset.

VII. CLOSING COMMENTS

Council agreed that significant progress had been made during the discussion and that the meeting was productive, with a shared commitment to continuing to move initiatives forward.

VIII. ADJOURNMENT

The meeting adjourned at 3:07 PM.

In accordance with South Carolina Code of Laws, 1976, Section 30-4-80 (a)(d)(e), as amended, notification of regular meetings was given at the beginning of the calendar year. A copy of the agenda was posted on the Town Hall's bulletin board and website www.portroval.org twenty-four hours prior to the meeting. A copy of the agenda was given to the local news media and requested public on file.

The Town of Port Royal does not discriminate on the basis of disability in the admission to, access to, or operations of programs, services, or activities. Qualified individuals who need accessible communication aids and services or other accommodations to participate in programs and activities are invited to make your needs and preferences known to the Civil Rights Coordinator. If at all possible, please give us at least a three to five day advance notice so we can adequately meet your needs. Civil Rights Coordinator at 843-986-2211.