



**Christmas is a season  
for kindling the fire for  
hospitality in the hall,  
the genial flame of  
charity in the heart.**

**Washington Irving**

**GCRA Board Meeting  
Thursday, December 5, 2024**

# December 2024

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
1	2	3	4	5 Board Holiday Luncheon, 12:00 Noon, Halls Chophouse	6	7
8	9	10	11	12	13	14
15	16	17	18	19	20	21
22	23	24 Christmas Eve (Office Closed)	25 Christmas Day (Office Closed)	26 Day After Christmas (Office Closed)	27	28
29	30	31				

# January 2025

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
			1 New Year's Day (Office Closed)	2	3	4
5	6	7	8	9	10	11
12	13	14 Administration Committee meeting, 12:30	15	16 Operations Committee meeting, 12:30	17	18
19	20 Martin Luther King, Jr. Day (Office Closed)	21	22	23	24	25
26	27	28 Board meeting, 12:30	29	30	31	

# February 2025

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
						1
2	3	4	5	6	7	8
9	10	11 Administration Committee meeting, 12:30	12	13 Operations Committee meeting, 12:30	14	15
16	17 Presidents' Day (Office Closed)	18	19	20	21	22
23	24	25 Board meeting, 12:30	26	27	28	

**GCRA Board Meeting Agenda**  
**Thursday, December 5, 2024 – 12:00 Noon**  
**Halls Chophouse, 550 S. Main Street, Greenville, SC 29601**

- 1) Call to Order Chair Barry Coleman
- 2) Invocation
- 3) \*Approval of the November 21, 2024 Board Minutes (Pages 6 – 9)
- 4) Executive Session. When necessary, the Board convenes in Executive Session for the discussion of negotiations incidental to proposed contractual arrangements and proposed sale or purchase of property, the receipt of legal advice where the legal advice relates to a pending, threatened, or potential claim or other matters covered by the attorney-client privilege, settlement of legal claims, or the position of the public agency in other adversary situations involving the assertion against the Redevelopment Authority of a claim, or other matters authorized by the South Carolina Freedom of Information Act.
- 5) Adjournment



**Minutes**  
**Greenville County Redevelopment Authority**  
**Regular Session**  
**Thursday, November 21, 2024**

**Board Members Present:** Charlotte Osmer, Chair  
Lawson Wetli, Vice Chair  
Allen White, Treasurer  
Amy Coleman  
Barry Coleman  
Denise Ernul  
James Hammond  
Robert Julian  
Jane Kizer  
Diana Weir

**Board Members Absent:** David Doser  
Walter Moragne

**Staff Members Present:** Joe Smith, Executive Director  
Pamela Proner, Finance Director  
Meg Macauley, Senior Executive Assistant & Office Manager

**Guest Present:** Joanna Reese, incoming board member

1. **Opening and Roll Call.** The meeting was called to order by the Chair at 12:30 p.m. Ms. Osmer then introduced new board member, Joanna Reese, who spoke about herself briefly. Board and staff members then introduced themselves to Ms. Reese.
2. **Invocation.** The invocation was offered by Mr. Coleman.
3. **Approval of October 22, 2024 Board Minutes.** On a motion by Ms. Coleman, seconded by Ms. Weir, the Board unanimously approved the minutes of the October 22, 2024 Board meeting as presented.
4. **Election of Officers.** Ms. Osmer opened the floor for nominations for Chair. Mr. Hammond nominated Mr. Coleman; Ms. Coleman seconded the nomination. Ms. Coleman moved to close nominations for Chair; Ms. Weir seconded. Mr. Coleman was appointed Chair by acclamation.

Ms. Osmer then opened the floor for nominations for Vice Chair. Ms. Ernul nominated Mr. White; Mr. Hammond seconded the nomination. Ms. Coleman moved to close nominations for Vice Chair; Ms. Weir seconded. Mr. White was appointed Vice Chair by acclamation.

Ms. Osmer then opened the floor for nominations for Treasurer. Mr. Coleman nominated Ms. Coleman; Mr. Hammond seconded the nomination. Mr. Hammond moved to close nominations for Treasurer. Ms. Coleman was appointed Treasurer by acclamation.

**5. Board Business for the Next Year.**

- a. Review Standing Committee Purpose.** Mr. Smith referenced pages 9 and 10 of the packet and spoke about each committee's responsibilities and oversight.
- b. Committee Member Assignments TBD.** Mr. Smith stated that the new Chair will assign board members to the two committees between now and the December 5<sup>th</sup> holiday luncheon, and advised the board members to speak to Mr. Coleman if they have particular committee assignment requests. He requested that once committee members are determined, board members please consider who they would like to nominate for committee officers in January.
- c. 2025 Meeting Schedule.** Mr. Smith referenced page 11 of the packet and stated that the final version of the schedule will be provided after committee assignments are made and committee officers are determined at the January committee meetings. He requested that the board members mark their calendars for the meeting dates to ensure their attendance.

**6. Administration Committee.** Ms. Coleman stated that there was no October Administration Committee meeting, as there were no approval items for approval.

**7. Financial Highlights – KPI.** Ms. Proner reviewed the financial report for the month of September. Revenue was \$771,000, which is a small increase, and Expenditures were \$957,000, a slight decrease. She noted that the most significant impact to the rental portfolio was Project 43; this was the month that legal, insurance, and renovation expenses were incurred. After these one-time expenses, the portfolio's financials should stabilize. Questions regarding taxes and insurance were asked and answered. Ms. Proner stated that aside from the rental portfolio, the largest activity for the month was for a housing development partner project payment of \$363,000. The Local Government Investment Pool (LGIP) balance is \$8.6 million; the fund earned \$38,861 in interest for the month at a rate of 5.34 percent, which is just a small decrease from the previous month. Ms. Proner noted that we are still waiting for \$200,000 from the County; Ms. Proner has spoken to County staff and is awaiting follow-up.

**8. Operations Committee.** Mr. Coleman stated that there was no October Operations Committee meeting, as there were no approval items for approval.

**9. Other Business – Executive Director Updates.** Mr. Smith provided updates as follows:

- a. Fairview Townhomes Grand Opening.** Mr. Smith thanked all who were able to attend and stated that we received positive press coverage via the Upstate Business Journal and the City of Greer's communications department. He noted that interest was generated; several offers to purchase townhomes have been received and two are under contract.

- b. Appreciation for Departing Board Members.** Mr. Smith expressed gratitude to outgoing board members Charlotte Osmer and Lawson Wetli for their service on the board and particularly as officers. Board members echoed their gratitude.
- c. New Board Member Orientation.** Mr. Smith stated that Ms. Reese and our second new board member, Mr. Dean Doolittle, will receive an orientation session early in the new year. He would like them to plan for approximately half a day spent partially in the office over lunch, and partially in the field for a tour of GCRA projects.
- d. Project Drive-In.** Mr. Smith stated that the ordinance to deed the property to GCRA was approved by County Council at third reading. He recently spoke with the new county attorney to discuss transfer of the property to GCRA, which should occur before year-end.
- e. Operations Annex.** Mr. Smith stated that the annex renovation is out for bids; he expects two to three builders to be responsive, with bids due back in about a month. He expects to bring a profile for approval to the board in winter and hopes to have the work completed by late spring.
- f. Project “Old School.”** Mr. Smith stated that the County has opted to keep this property for athletic fields. There are other property opportunities for GCRA and this will save approximately \$1 million in expected demolition cost. Funding for Phase I and II environmental assessments will still be paid via GCRA’s existing Brownfields grant.
- g. Project Piedmont.** Mr. Smith showed a map of a property on Piedmont Highway and told the board about another property Greenville County would like to deed to GCRA. He noted a power line easement and creek that will be unusable portions of the parcel that can remain permanent green space. He expects that the upper portion of the parcel should be developable for single-family housing; staff will complete due diligence to determine feasibility. Brownfields grant funds may be helpful for a Phase I environmental assessment of this parcel.
- h. Project Woodfield.** Mr. Smith spoke about another opportunity to receive property from Greenville County and showed a map including street view of 48 Ridgeway Drive. He spoke about the history of the property, including some issues with neighborhood residents and eventual demolition of the old, condemned community center structure by the County Codes Enforcement Department. Mr. Smith noted that portions of the parcel have problematic topography and may need considerable grading; he plans to speak with representatives from one of GCRA’s engineering vendors for their professional opinion. He hopes that ten lots could be developed for single-family homes. Discussion ensued regarding feasibility, potential cost and timeline, and seeking community member input. Ultimately, the plan is to complete due diligence and determine development plans, then hold a meeting at the Upstate Circle of Friends community center to speak to community members before determining if GCRA is willing to receive the parcel from the County.
- i. Staff Vacancies.** Ms. Coleman inquired about the vacancies for Operations Director and Program Manager. Mr. Smith stated that Mr. Chesney, GCRA’s Project Manager, will likely move into an Operations Manager role as he gains experience and time at the agency. Mr. Reynoso, GCRA’s Senior Community Development Planner, is functioning



as an interim Program Manager, communicating with HUD representatives and overseeing reporting and environmental assessment tasks. Mr. Smith has conducted interviews with several candidates but has not found the right one yet; he emphasized the importance of being selective and hiring the right person, and noted that critical deadlines and reporting requirements were being met with current staff, therefore affording the time necessary for the job search.

- j. Board Retreat in 2025.** Mr. Smith asked for input from board members regarding timing as well as a suitable venue for a board retreat, perhaps in spring of the new year. The last retreat was approximately five years ago. He noted that at least half a day would be necessary; a full day may be ideal. Discussion ensued; Furman University was recommended, and Ms. Ernul suggested that staff identify several potential dates for the board to consider.
  - k. Disaster Assistance Program.** Ms. Proner shared that staff are working on an application for Disaster Assistance Program (DAP) grant funding via the SC Housing Authority; the state received \$9.2 million with only 18 months to spend it. The DAP aligns well with GCRA’s existing home repair program.
  - l. SC Housing Trust Fund Advisory Committee.** Mr. Smith stated that he will be taking over a vacated position on the SC Housing Trust Fund Advisory Committee; through this service, he will be able to advocate for additional resources to advance our mission.
  - m. Sterling Land Trust Property.** Mr. Smith stated that he was recently contacted by the Greenville Housing Fund who are working with the Sterling Land Trust (SLT) on the property formerly known as “The Huddle” in Sterling. The SLT would like to develop affordable housing on the site after demolishing the old structure. However, the property is constrained by deed restriction requiring that if the parcel is ever annexed into the city limits, it will revert to GCRA. We are seeking clarity from HUD as well as our attorney as to how we may be able to allow the development to occur after annexation into the city.
  - n. Political Climate.** Mr. Hammond inquired as to management’s thoughts regarding changes in administration at the national level as well as changes to County Council. Much discussion ensued as to historic funding levels for GCRA’s mission and that historically, funding amounts for GCRA are set through census data and income levels and have remained consistent regardless of administration throughout the history of the agency. GCRA’s ultimate goal is to educate new council members on the successful production of affordable housing regardless of the definition, as well as the delivery of human services and home repair programs which are necessary across the spectrum of income and age.
- 10. Adjournment.** There being no further business, on a motion by Ms. Ernul, seconded by Ms. Weir, the meeting was adjourned at 1:47 p.m.

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Secretary

## SC homeowners face rising insurance costs. Coverage, contributing factors explained.

BY TERI ERRICO GRIFFIS AND MEGAN FERNDANDES TEGRIFFIS@POSTANDCOURIER.COM  
MFERNANDES@POSTANDCOURIER.COM

NOV 19, 2024



A fallen tree damaged a home in Anderson during Tropical Storm Helene, Sept. 27, 2024.

FILE/CONOR HUGHES/STAFF

Around South Carolina, homeowners are experiencing sticker shock with rising costs to insure their property.

While homeowners insurance is not legally required in the U.S., lenders in South Carolina require it for anyone who has a mortgage. That means most homeowners have it — and increasingly are paying more for the coverage.

Premiums nationwide have risen 26 percent in a year, according to a Bankrate analysis.

The national average cost of home insurance is \$2,285 per year for a policy with a \$300,000 dwelling limit as of October, the financial publisher said. The average rate in South Carolina is \$2,386 annually.

The coverage protects a house and just about everything in it from catastrophes. But with factors outside of residents' control like increased natural disasters causing more claims and homes becoming more expensive to rebuild, some residents are finding insurance costs are more than they bargained for when they bought their home even just a few years ago.

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By the end of 2024, South Carolina is anticipated to see the sixth-highest insurance rate hikes in the nation, according to the North American Association of Realtors.

Here's the breakdown of homeowners insurance and what's causing the rising prices.

## **What is homeowners insurance and what does it cover?**

Homeowners insurance is a policy that covers your home's physical structure, personal belongings inside the house, liability protection and coverage for additional living expenses.

A policy should pay to repair or rebuild your house if it is damaged by fire, hurricane, hail, lightning or other disasters that are listed in your agreement, according to the [S.C. Department of Insurance](#), or DOI. Depending on your policy, detached structures such as garages, sheds or gazebos may or may not be covered.

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Coverage should include the cost to rebuild your home as determined by an adjuster who comes to your house after a loss to provide an estimate of the repairs, said Andrew Muller with Mappus Insurance Agency in Mount Pleasant.

"They use certain software that helps them determine how much it will cost to repair the home," he said.

"Homeowners also have the ability to reach out to contractors to get quotes, and then they can work with the adjuster to see what the appropriate price is."

Repairs typically replace exactly what was lost — so don't get too excited that you may get a brand new kitchen. If you have fluorescent lights and were hoping to step up to something more modern, the upgrade will most likely cost you extra.

Your plan's liability protection further covers you financially if you're responsible for someone else's injuries, such as a fall down your stairs.

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## **What's *not* covered under homeowners insurance?**

A standard policy does not cover damage caused by earthquake or routine wear and tear.

Homeowners insurance also *does not* cover flooding by rising waters. Water damage covered under a typical homeowners insurance policy includes situations such as burst pipes, an overflowing dishwasher, a tree falling through your roof that lets rain in or water damage from putting out an accidental fire.

Earthquake damage also is not generally covered under homeowners insurance in South Carolina, where approximately 10 to 15 earthquakes are recorded annually. The coverage more often than not requires a separate plan.

“Earthquake insurance typically only covers direct damage to the property resulting from the shaking of an earthquake,” the state insurance department notes. “Indirect damage, such as fire and water damage from burst gas and water pipes, is covered under a homeowner’s policy.”

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## **What about flood insurance? Do I need it?**

Flood insurance is not required by state or federal law, but property owners in a high-risk flood zone with government-backed mortgages are required to have flood insurance.

DOI recommends every homeowner purchase a policy whether they are in a flood zone or not. The coverage generally protects a house from water entering from street flooding, an overflow of a creek, river or stream or from a storm surge.

One inch of water can cause up to **\$25,000 worth of damage**, according to DOI.

Hurricane Helene’s impact on the upstate and the thousand-year flood event of 2015 are testaments to how unexpected and devastating water events can be anywhere in South Carolina.

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## **What to know about deductibles?**

No two plans are equal and it's important to remember that when shopping around. While you may want the cheapest plan, the coverage and deductible — the out-of-pocket amount paid for a claim before insurance steps in — can widely vary.

Think of it like medical insurance. You can pay \$400 a month for a \$1,000 deductible or \$100 a month for a \$10,000 deductible. Read the fine print.

Deductibles are either a fixed dollar amount or a percentage of the home's insured value — not of the claim. For example, a homeowner who has a 2 percent deductible for a home insured at \$250,000 will need to pay a \$5,000 deductible before insurance kicks in.

Most homeowners insurance policies in South Carolina also provide up to \$500 for tree removal.

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“If a tree falls on your home or other structure covered under the terms of your homeowner's policy, your insurance policy should cover the cost of removing the tree from the damaged structure,” DOI explains. “This would be paid under the dwelling portion of your policy.”

## Why is your coverage rising?

Experts attribute growing coverage costs to three main factors:

- an increase in the number of natural catastrophes
- inflation
- rising reinsurance costs

And they all play off each other.

More natural disasters means more claims are filed. More claims means more rebuilding at higher inflationary prices. Rising home prices and more customers moving to the area then mean bigger liabilities and bigger payouts for insurance companies.

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In 2024, homes cost nearly twice as much as they did five years ago.

The median sales price in Charleston County was \$725,000 in September, up from \$370,298 that same month in 2019, according to the Charleston Trident Association of Realtors.

That means homeowners now have to pay coverage for a home worth nearly three-quarters of a million dollars whether they bought one or not. And insurance companies have to pay to rebuild that same property as building materials like wood and steel surged 55 percent between 2020 and 2022.

Companies like State Farm and Liberty Mutual don't have cash on hand to cover the surging damage claims, so they buy reinsurance policies from companies like Lloyd's of London as a backup.

Russ Dubisky, of the S.C. Insurance Association, said the once-lucrative returns within the reinsurance business have not met expectations over the last several years because of the uptick in catastrophic claims.

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In the last four decades, the four worst years for severe storms, tropical cyclones and flooding were 2020, 2021, 2022 and 2023, according to data from the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration.

And it's not only major events like hurricanes that are having an impact. On June 10, a supercell thunderstorm tore across the Lowcountry bringing damage and golf ball-sized hail. A summer storm days later on July 1 flooded downtown Charleston and West Ashley.

## **How much oversight does the state have on insurance rates?**

Traditional insurance companies are required to file potential homeowners-insurance rate increases with the state Department of Insurance for approval. The department then reviews the proposal to ensure the rates are "adequate, not excessive, and not unfairly discriminatory in accordance with South Carolina law," DOI Director Michael Wise said.

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When insurance companies request rate changes, they ask for a range that will accommodate different types of risks across the state. If the proposed rates are rejected by DOI, they are not approved to apply to South Carolina policies.

DOI also investigates consumer complaints against insurance company practices and regulates individuals and companies doing insurance business in the state.

Wise said as the state grows and develops, the agency sees a need to recruit more insurance companies to South Carolina to encourage competition.

"Having a healthy insurance market with multiple options for consumers to choose from is key to keeping rates as competitive as possible," Wise said.

## **How does the claims process work?**

When filing a claim, first document all the damage. Take as many photos and videos as you can. Then call your insurance company or agent.

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Once a claim is submitted, an adjuster will inspect the damage and calculate a payout for repairs based on the terms and limits of the homeowner's policy. Payout times can vary from days to weeks after a claim is approved, depending on the carrier and nature of the claim. A claim filed in the midst of a disaster like Hurricane Helene

could also cause a backlog.

The first check policyholders get from their insurance company is often an advance against the total settlement amount and not the final payment. Some insurance companies opt to pay the mortgage lender and contractors directly.

When personal belongings are part of the claim, it is often a separate payout, with items calculated on cash value with depreciation. To get fully reimbursed for damaged items, insurance providers require receipts to prove the item has been replaced.

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The Insurance Information Institute recommends homeowners maintain a digital home inventory list that catalogs serial numbers, descriptions, photos, videos and receipts of items in the home.

When the entire house and its contents are damaged beyond repair, insurers generally pay what the home and contents were insured for at the time of the disaster.

Insurers cut a separate check for additional living expenses to cover the cost of a hotel, car rental and meals incurred while the home is being repaired.

MORE INFORMATION

SC renters have little legal protection from mold. Climate change could worsen the issue.

Helene was the worst storm to slam the Carolinas in a generation. Here's how it unfolded.

Famous pink mansion on Charleston's Battery hits market for \$22.25M

Charleston home sales drop 2.5 times faster than US average. What happened?

Charleston-area homebuilder wants right to cancel contracts any time. SC Judge says its unethical.

Are Charleston homes overvalued? Local brokers weigh in on rising prices.

Charleston market remains strong as buyers 'know what they want' in a Lowcountry home

New West Ashley store lures shoppers, plus, the Charleston-area's busiest Harris Teeters. Where's No. 1?

\$213M Kiawah senior project adds Bishop Gadsden, as West Ashley acreage is cleared. Here's what's coming.

Broken dams, torrential rain and ripped-up roads: How raging floodwaters devastated Orangeburg

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## **TERI ERRICO GRIFFIS**

Teri Errico is the senior business reporter at The Post and Courier, focusing on retail and real estate. An award-winning journalist, Griffis previously worked as a Southeast commerce reporter for the Journal of Commerce and a reporter for the Charleston Regional Business Journal where she covered all business in the Charleston region. Raised in Connecticut and New York, she has called South Carolina home since 2012.

## GSA Business Report:

### Developers begin construction of new housing for Greenville seniors



*The new apartment community will feature 90 modern, affordable one- and two-bedroom units along the Woodruff Road corridor. (Rendering/Greenville Housing Fund)*

**Ross Norton – November 27, 2024**

Organizers of a groundbreaking Nov. 21 at Southpointe Senior Residences say the occasion marked a milestone in local efforts to increase and enhance the number of affordable housing options available to Greenville’s senior citizens.

The new apartment community will feature 90 modern, affordable one- and two-bedroom units, strategically located just off the Woodruff Road corridor, all reserved for low- and moderate-income renters over age 55, according to a news release. Preleasing on the units is expected to begin in December 2025.

[Greenville Housing Fund](#) and [Lowcountry Housing Communities](#) collaborated on the project, along with several key partners. “We are so grateful for our partnerships with the [Greenville County](#) Redevelopment Authority and the [Greenville Housing Authority](#), which have made this affordable housing development for our lowest-income seniors a reality,” Bryan Brown, president and CEO of the Greenville Housing Fund, said in the release.

Lowcountry Housing Communities is a new developer in the Greenville market, and brings more than two decades of experience developing affordable, senior-living communities across South Carolina and Georgia.

Brown said SC Housing provides a crucial role in providing essential financing for Southpointe Senior Residences through their 9% Low-Income Housing Tax Credit (LIHTC) program.

“We are incredibly thankful for the tax credit financing and for all the efforts SC Housing is making to increase affordable housing opportunities in the rapidly growing Upstate,” Brown said in the release.

According to a spokesperson for the dedicated on-site property manager, CAHEC Management Inc., Southpointe Senior Residences has been designed for comfort and connection, and is expected to become a vibrant, welcoming community for seniors.

The three-story building features a mix of one-bedroom/one-bathroom and two-bedroom/two-bathroom apartments. Amenities include a business center equipped with computers, a flexible and programmed community room, an exercise facility and off-street parking. It is located near a variety of essential services and amenities, with access to shopping and a Greenlink Transit connection for residents without a car.

In almost six years since its inception, GHF has invested over \$19 million and leveraged \$250 million in creating or preserving more than 1,550 units of housing in Greenville County.



## SC's largest county faces seismic political shift. Leaders are taking major action before it happens.

BY CONOR HUGHES CHUGHES@POSTANDCOURIER.COM

DEC 4, 2024



Greenville County Councilman Butch Kirven attends a meeting. Greenville County Council will see a big change next month that could shift the balance of power on the 12-member body known for its battles.

TIM KIMZEY/SPECIAL TO THE POST AND COURIER

**GREENVILLE** — Next month, Greenville County Council is poised to see a seismic change that could shift the balance of power on the 12-member body known for contentious political battles as it governs the largest county in South Carolina.

Ahead of that shift, the final gathering of the outgoing council saw a flurry of actions taken that put major policy initiatives into force — and other actions that incoming members largely oppose.

On Dec. 3, a busy 12-page agenda featured some big-ticket items, including the county's **new unified development ordinance**, **updates to the county affordable housing policy** and extending County Administrator Joe Kernell's contract, as well as a slew of economic development deals to bring industrial projects to the area.

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Critics have charged that sitting council members rushed through policy decisions before newcomers could take their seats out of fear they would derail major initiatives.

Members of the council, however, have defended the raft of actions, saying many items taken up at the Dec. 3 meeting were months, or sometimes years, in the making. Or, in the case of the tax agreements, decisions were driven by the action of private companies, not council decisions.

In June's primaries, **challengers unseated sitting Councilmen** Butch Kirven, Mike Barnes and Chris Harrison in the wake of an unpopular 2023 property tax increase — the county's first in three decades — that comes out to about \$58 a year for \$200,000 house.

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The councilmembers-elect — Garey Collins, Kelly Long and Curt McGahhey — all attacked the incumbents from the right, denouncing the hike as well as the rate of growth in Greenville County.



Greenville County Councilman Steve Shaw.

TIM KIMZEY/SPECIAL TO THE POST AND COURIER

Their entrance onto council next month could dramatically change the dynamic of a body that has been split into two factions for the past two years. One side, led by Council Chairman Dan Tripp, has enjoyed a clear majority during that time, typically winning by a margin of between four and eight votes. The other

faction — whose ranks include Councilmen Steve Shaw, Stan Tzouvelekas and Benton Blount — has been more critical of council decisions and county staff.

That division was on clear display during the Dec. 3 meeting, with a 10-2 vote to extend Kernell's contract and a 7-5 final approval of the unified development ordinance, a document county staff has been working on for four years that has drawn criticism in recent months.

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On more than a dozen tax break agreements with businesses, the pattern persisted, with most votes coming out 8-4.

Council members who support the fee-in-lieu-of-tax agreements have argued the deals are necessary to draw job creators into the area and prevent the county's economy from stagnating, while the opposition has contended that the council has been too freehanded with the incentives, which they say are accelerating growth faster than the area's infrastructure can accommodate.

It appears that Long, Collins and McGahhey all align more with Shaw, as does Frank Farmer, who will replace Tzouvelekas, who made an unsuccessful bid for state House.

That six-vote swing could shift the power balance on council, making it more difficult for large companies to secure tax breaks from the county. And while the UDO — which consolidates documents that govern development, including the zoning ordinance and land use regulations — passed, Shaw has said the new council plans to explore repealing it.

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New council members have also voiced a desire to repeal the 2023 tax increase, though it's unclear if they have the ability to do so outside of the normal budget cycle.

Collins said he saw the council's mound of items to vote on this week as an attempt to rush through policies he and his colleagues did not support before they took office.

In a combative address to council Dec. 3 during which he clashed with Tripp, McGahhey indicated next month would mark a sea change on the governing body.

But Kirven, who was the longest-serving member with two decades before he lost his seat to Collins, said the items such as the fee-in-lieu deals and Kernell's contract were taken up in the normal course of the council's functions, whereas others like the UDO had been years in the making and were far from rushed.

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"My view is we have work to do to finish up our term," he said.

Follow Conor Hughes on Twitter at [@ConorJHughes](#) or reach him on his email at [chughes@postandcourier.com](mailto:chughes@postandcourier.com).

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**CONOR HUGHES**

REPORTER

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