

**“I do not think that there is any other quality so essential to success of any kind as the quality of perseverance. It overcomes almost everything, even nature.”**

**– John D. Rockefeller**



**GCRA Board Meeting  
June 23, 2026**

# July 2026

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
			1	2	3 Independence Day (obs.) (Office Closed)	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	21	22	23	24	25
26	27	28 Board meeting, 12:30	29	30	31	

# August 2026

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	18	19	20	21	22
23	24	25 Board meeting, 12:30	26	27	28	29
30	31					

**GCRA Board Meeting Agenda  
Tuesday, June 23, 2026 – 12:30 p.m.  
GCRA Board Room**

- 1) Call to Order Vice Chair Denise Ernul
- 2) Invocation
- 3) \*Approval of May 26, 2026 Board Minutes (Pages 5 – 8)
- 4) \*Approval of Fiscal Year 2027 Cost-of-Living Adjustment for Employees (Page 9)
- 5) Administration Committee (Pages 10 – 13)
  - a) Financial Highlights – KPI (Page 14)
- 6) Operations Committee (Pages 15 – 18)
  - a) \*Approval of Proposed Operations Goals for Program Year 2026
- 7) Other Business
  - a) Plans for Compensation Study and Employee Performance Reviews
  - b) Executive Director Updates
- 8) 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.
- 9) Adjournment



**Minutes**  
**Greenville County Redevelopment Authority**  
**Regular Session**  
**Tuesday, May 26, 2026**

**Board Members Present:** Jane Kizer, Chair  
Denise Ernul, Vice Chair  
Diana Weir, Treasurer  
Barry Coleman  
Dean Doolittle  
David Doser  
James Hammond  
Robert Julian  
Matthew Nocella  
Joanna Reese  
Paul Schweikardt  
DeAndra “DJ” Wilson (virtually)

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

**Guest Present:** Russell Dodds, prospective board applicant

1. **Opening and Roll Call.** The meeting was called to order by the Chair at 12:30 p.m.
2. **Invocation.** The invocation was offered by Mr. Doser.
3. **Approval of the April 28, 2026 Board Minutes.** On a motion by Ms. Weir, seconded by Mr. Doser, the Board unanimously approved the minutes of the April 28, 2026 Board meeting as presented.
4. **Approval of United Ministries Request.** Mr. Smith stated that United Ministries (UM) staff are still in conversation with the City of Greenville regarding engineering of utilities; the parcel has not been annexed or rezoned yet. UM are preparing to begin fundraising, so he provided a draft lease agreement they can share with their board. Mr. Smith would like to finalize the lease agreement soon so that key donors can have a level of comfort. He shared that the City of Greenville has been an excellent collaborator with UM, and that they have been receiving assistance from their architect, engineers, and development partner.

Ms. Weir asked about remuneration. Mr. Smith responded that while there would not be any payment during the ground lease, UM have requested an option to buy the parcel for its appraised price in not less than eight to ten years. This will be codified into the lease agreement, indicating that an appraisal would be performed so that a market rate could be established at the time of purchase if and when that option were invoked. Mr. Doser noted that he is in strong support of the proposed partnership, but requested a change to the approval item to authorize Mr. Smith to negotiate the terms, with the final document coming before the board for questions and approval before it is executed.

Questions were posed and discussion ensued about the particulars of United Ministries' plans for the housing village. They plan to construct 32 units of permanent housing with supportive services, a community building, and security to include fencing and controlled access. The residents would be permanent/long-term renters, to be identified from the pool of existing UM clients and vetted by experienced staff who could best determine when they are ready.

The property is a difficult parcel we cannot otherwise easily develop; the proposed partnership and project will not require the use of federal dollars; and the project would result in a conservative level of density without contributing increased vehicular traffic to the narrow roads in the neighborhood. GCRA will require United Ministries to cover the development with their own insurance, and they will need to name GCRA as an additional insured party.

On a motion by Mr. Julian, seconded by Mr. Hammond, the Board unanimously approved authorizing the Executive Director to negotiate a long-term lease agreement with United Ministries for the proposed "Project Railroad" partnership.

**5. Administration Committee.** There were no approval items presented at the committee meeting.

**a. Financial Highlights/KPI.** Ms. Proner presented the Financial Highlights for the month of March, stating that the report is now showing the fruition of the County's contribution of \$2 million and the past due \$200,000; Cash, Net Position, Unrestricted Net Assets, and Revenue are all impacted by this amount. Two demolitions and some subrecipient distributions occurred during the month to contribute to meeting the CDBG timeliness deadline. The Rental Portfolio showed a negative \$23,000 for the month, largely attributable to a large payout for insurance premiums that came due simultaneously for the former Project 43 properties.

Most of our cash on hand is still being invested into the LGIP, with an interest rate of 3.86 percent and \$50,195 earned for the month and \$430,852 for just the current fiscal year.

The Fairview loan balance is \$450,000, which amounts to two contributions of \$175,000 and one of \$100,000 from the next three sales to pay off the note in full.

**6. Operations Committee.**

- a. Approval of Change Order.** Mr. Doser stated that the committee approved a change order for a recently executed contract to complete infrastructure work for the Fairview Townhomes development. The change order was necessary because City of Greer representatives requested additional items for the scope, including fencing, sidewalks and ADA ramps; the cost will come from Greer's CDBG allocation, so GCRA staff have agreed to accommodate the request for additional work.

Ms. Kizer noted that as the item had been inadvertently omitted from the agenda, she would request that any motion be seconded. Therefore, on a motion by Ms. Weir, seconded by Mr. Hammond, the Board unanimously approved the change order for Upland Builder Group for \$53,600 for the Fairview Townhomes Infrastructure Closeout, as presented.

**7. Other Business – Executive Director Updates.**

- a. Article.** Mr. Smith noted the article in the packet about housing affordability.
- b. Greenville Housing Fund Meeting.** Mr. Smith stated that he had attended a meeting to discuss the future of the Greenville Housing Fund including their search for a new CEO; he was invited to provide input as GCRA is a stakeholder and partner. Deborah McKetty, a career affordable housing expert and former first CEO of the Housing Fund, is their Interim CEO until a successor can be identified. Mr. Hammond inquired as to their source of recurring funds. Mr. Smith responded that they primarily collect developer fees from their partnership deals.
- c. Fairview Townhomes Marketing & Down Payment Program for County Employees.** Mr. Smith stated that after lowering the price at Fairview, our realtor has been receiving more interest, with four to five showings to interested potential buyers in the past two weeks. Mortgage rates have unfortunately increased a bit in recent weeks.

Ms. Reese asked if, due to the difficulty in selling more of the Fairview Townhomes, there has been any consideration regarding converting the remaining eight units into rentals. Mr. Smith responded that while staff have discussed this possibility, we would rather lower the price and sell them as planned. Once the final site work including benches, privacy fence, and sun shelter is complete, we will hold a second grand opening/open house event. Mr. Smith noted that the people who would normally be our typical buyers are struggling more financially than before. He also noted that especially due to homeowner association requirements and increases in insurance premiums, we would not be wise to take on a project like Fairview again unless it were for rental; we are instead better suited to continue contributing a funding layer towards larger developments.

Discussion turned to the new down payment program for County employees. While we waited for the county to fund the program, GCRA staff worked diligently to craft program guidelines, applications, and marketing materials. Discussion ensued regarding the likelihood of a small potential buyer pool, the need for significant counseling and education before many folks are ready to purchase a home, and clarification regarding the groups who are eligible for the program. Employees of the municipalities are not included, just Greenville County employees including EMTs and the Sheriff's Department; firefighters are not eligible because they work for Parker District and other special purpose districts separate from the county; the Greenville County School District is a separate entity from Greenville County and is therefore not included. Mr. Smith noted that we worked with Greenville County's human resources department to go through appropriate channels to send email communications to county staff.

- d. **Property Transfers/Annexation/Partners.** Mr. Smith stated that the Worley Road LIHTC application is still self-scoring in first place in the state. Mr. Smith clarified that the applications are due in June, but awards will not be made until September. The proposed project has considerable support, including from public officials. The only significant unresolved issue is sewer, which MetroConnects and our development partners along with GCRA are working to solve.

Due diligence for the Belle Meade parcel is well underway. Staff are evaluating the two lots donated to us by the City of Greer. Staff have been discussing Project Drive-In, with plans to publish a request for proposals soon.

- e. **Federal Bill.** Mr. Smith stated that there has been no change since last month, noting that more discussion is expected in the fall when budget season resumes.
- f. **Greenville County Budget.** Mr. Smith stated that County Council continues to work through budget discussions for the upcoming year, with some contentious interactions being covered in the media. The conversation and focus for this budget cycle are different from last year; in particular, the possibility of a penny sales tax is being revisited. Discussion ensued regarding support, messaging, and the potential impact to the county budget. Rather than pressing for more than the million dollars allocated for GCRA in this year's budget, we plan to support the passage of the penny sales tax. Mr. Smith also shared that he was pleased to see that County Administrator Joe Kernell was quoted in a recent article regarding the 20-year agreement regarding the Prisma Health System settlement, noting that only about eight years have passed since the beginning of the agreement.

- 8. **Adjournment.** There being no further business, on a motion by Mr. Doser, seconded by Mr. Hammond, the meeting was adjourned at 1:11 p.m.

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Secretary



# GCRA

Greenville County Redevelopment Authority

## Memorandum

**To:** GCRA Board

**From:** Joe Smith  
Executive Director

**Date:** June 23, 2026

**Subject:** Fiscal Year 2027 Cost-of-Living Adjustment for Employees

After reviewing the fiscal year 2027 budget, staff recommend a cost-of-living adjustment (COLA) of four percent (4%) for eligible employees according to the 2023 compensation study/analysis and GCRA Employee Handbook.

The total cost of the increase plus promotions for eligible employees will be approximately \$63,501.85.

**Staff Recommendation:** Approve the proposed four percent (4%) cost-of-living adjustment for staff for fiscal year 2027.



## Memorandum

**To:** GCRA Board Members  
**From:** Joanna Reese, Administration Committee Chair  
**Re:** Administration Committee Meeting, June 9, 2026  
**Date:** June 9, 2026

1. **Opening and Roll Call.** The Administration Committee met on Tuesday, June 9, 2026, at 12:30 p.m. Committee members present were Joanna Reese, Chair; Dean Doolittle, Vice Chair; Barry Coleman; Jane Kizer; Paul Schweikardt; and Diana Weir. Staff present were Joe Smith, Executive Director; Kelly Stevenson, Controller; Francisco Arnaiz, Program Manager; and Meg Macauley, Senior Executive Assistant & Office Manager.
2. **Invocation.** The invocation was offered by Ms. Weir.

\* \* \* \* \*

Please review the following items of business discussed at the Administration Committee meeting. These items will not be discussed in the Board Meeting unless there is a question or comment about them.

### 3. Administration Reports

- a. **Subrecipient Report.** Mr. Arnaiz presented the report, stating that all that will remain after this month are the subrecipients with summer programs; we have no concerns about any full expending funds or completing final reimbursement requests. Staff will be meeting with representatives of Unity Health on Main due to the departure of their former Executive Director. Mr. Arnaiz also noted that he and Ms. Rivera have met recently with new subrecipients who were approved for funding for the coming year.

### 4. Financial Reports

- a. **Financial Highlights – KPI.** In Ms. Proner's absence, Mr. Stevenson provided updates for the month of April, noting that Cash is higher than usual due to additional money that was drawn to meet the timeliness test. Revenue and Expenses have fluctuated over the past couple of months due to receipt of the \$2.2 million from the County. Expenditures included a \$215,000 payment to CommunityWorks.

Of our \$17 million in Cash, \$16 million is invested in the LGIP; year-to-date, almost \$500,000 in interest has been earned. Mr. Stevenson shared a note from Ms. Proner that as we placed more of our cash into the LGIP, we had assumed we would have to pay fees to one of our banks for carrying less cash with them; however, staff met with bank representatives last month and learned that they increased our interest so that we would pay little to no service fees. Mr. Stevenson also noted that the house at 1306 W. Bramlett Road has been on the market for 152 days; the hope is that it will sell soon so that HUD's requirement to convert a homeownership unit to rental after nine months will not be an issue.

**b. April Financials.** There were no questions posed regarding the financial statements.

## **5. Other Business – Executive Director Updates.**

**a. Marketing & Education.** Mr. Smith stated that much of the final site work has been completed at Fairview, so the overall curb appeal is much improved. GCRA's realtor, Denise Franklin, is obtaining updated photographs and will virtually stage the units for her online listings. Ms. Franklin has provided a market snapshot and recommends that we consider another \$10,000 reduction in price for a better chance of selling the units soon. There have been more showings, and prospective buyers are providing favorable reviews, but comparable properties nearby are selling for less than our current pricing. Staff will meet with Greer officials next week to discuss plans. Mr. Smith shared that the biggest takeaway from Ms. Franklin's latest communication is that the strongest indicator of value is closed sales data. Ms. Reese noted that the market is currently overrun with an abundance of townhome units. Mr. Doolittle inquired about the possibility of building more units next year. Mr. Smith responded that there has been conversation with Greer about the 19 remaining units originally planned for Fairview; the market needs to rebound before it would be wise to continue building. He added that our affordable homeownership partners are having the same problem we are; they built detached single-family homes near Armstrong Elementary School and are struggling to identify qualified and interested buyers.

Mr. Smith stated that Ms. Franklin will be holding a homebuyer education class and an open house at Greer City Hall on June 27<sup>th</sup> and July 11<sup>th</sup>, respectively, both of which are open to the general public as well as City of Greer employees. Mr. Smith again emphasized that homebuyer education is essential, noting that those of us heavily involved in affordable housing, real estate, etc. can forget that many folks lack the knowledge required to be well-educated buyers.

Mr. Arnaiz provided an update regarding the down payment assistance program for Greenville County employees. All program guidelines and supporting documents have been finalized and are posted on a new page of the GCRA website. He and other staff members held a lunch and learn session with County staff on the third floor, inviting employees from Long Range Planning, Subdivision, Codes, Permitting, etc. to

attend to learn more about GCRA in general and the down payment program in particular. Attendees were engaged and asked good questions; some senior/management staff who already own houses will disseminate information into their departments. Mr. Arnaiz noted that historically, GCRA has not needed to actively market our programs and products because there has been enough demand, but recently, staff have felt the need to conduct more marketing and outreach to communicate what we offer to a wider and better audience. Staff will soon be in touch with Greenville County's human resources representatives to schedule more information sessions with other departments. Mr. Smith praised Program staff and others who have gone past their typical job requirements and comfort zones lately for this outreach. He also noted that GCRA staff worked to craft program guidelines, applications, and marketing materials in good faith while waiting for the county's funding for the program to be sent, but held back from marketing the program until funding was received due to some Council members seeking potential "claw-back" of the funding after it was approved through last year's budget.

Mr. Smith stated that the house at 1306 W. Bramlett in City View had two showings last weekend. There has been no pushback regarding price; the two-story house layout and/or corner lot location may be detractors.

Mr. Smith also stated that staff will formalize an executive summary and plan for Fairview to share with the bank, as we would like to extend our loan by one year if possible instead of paying it off by August with available cash on hand.

- b. Greenville County Budget.** Mr. Smith stated that the County's budget passed second reading and will go before Council for final reading on June 16<sup>th</sup>. There has been some discussion among Council regarding proposed salary increases for certain departments. Mr. Smith shared that he was encouraged by the County Administrator's recent comments about the 20-year Prisma Health System settlement, and emphasized that we produce an approximate 20:1 leverage on the money that comes to GCRA from the County. Council continues to edit the verbiage for the proposed penny sales tax referendum; we hope to see it appear on the ballot in a way that the public will understand and support.
- c. Partner Projects.** Mr. Smith stated that the United Ministries' board at their May 18<sup>th</sup> meeting authorized proceeding with a ground lease, allocating funds for civil design work, creating a site development plan budget, and launching a capital campaign upon receipt of a lead gift. Engineering for the project and conversation between UM and the City of Greenville are ongoing.

The Worley Road LIHTC project application has been submitted; State Housing should make awards in September.

- d. Modular Home Builder Field Trip.** Mr. Smith stated that he was invited by City of Greenville and Greenville Housing Fund staff to join them on a tour of a modular home builder's factory in North Carolina on June 17<sup>th</sup>. While it is possible that modular options will be more expensive than traditional stick-built construction, Mr. Smith is open to seeing what is possible and whether modular can work in an affordable housing capacity.
  - e. Presentation to County Communications & Governmental Affairs Committee.** Mr. Smith stated that on June 9<sup>th</sup> he will be making a presentation to the County's Communications & Governmental Affairs Committee at their request to advise them about the responsibilities of our board and the ideal type of GCRA board member candidate. This committee is part of Council's recent efforts towards increased transparency with and involvement from citizens. Mr. Smith plans to note that we encourage interested prospective board applicants to attend our board and committee meetings to help them determine if they could be a good fit for GCRA.
- 6. Adjournment.** There being no further business and on a motion by Ms. Kizer, seconded by Ms. Weir, the meeting was adjourned at 1:17 p.m.

**GCRA Financial Highlights**  
**Month at a Glance April 26**

<u>Government-Wide</u>	<u>Month</u>	<u>Change from Prior Month</u>	<u>%</u>	<u>Change from FY25 (FYTD)</u>	<u>%</u>
Cash	17,560,864	Increase	4%	Increase	19%
Total Assets	49,378,671	Increase	1%	Increase	7%
Notes Payable	4,854,628	Decrease	0%	Increase	74%
Debt-to-income			6%		0%
Net Position	40,709,151	Decrease	-1%	Increase	2%
Net invest. in capital assets	11,892,579	Decrease	0%	Increase	0%
Unrestricted net assets	28,816,572	Decrease	-1%	Increase	3%
<u>Governmental Funds</u>	<u>Month</u>	<u>Change from Prior Month</u>	<u>%</u>	<u>YTD</u>	
Revenue	359,015	Decrease	-87%	8,878,043	
Expenditures	688,124	Increase	52%	6,753,625	
Net change in fund balance	(329,109)	Decrease		2,124,418	
<u>Rental Portfolio</u>	<u>Month</u>	<u>Change from Prior Month</u>	<u>%</u>	<u>YTD</u>	
Net Income (loss)	(13,717)	Increase	42%	35,097	**
<u>Local Government Invest. Pool</u>				<u>Interest</u>	
LGIP Balance:	16,230,830	% of total cash:	92%	51,775	<b>Month</b>
		Avg Interest rate:	3.89%	482,627	<b>YTD</b>

Fairview Loan Balance                   \$     450,000   Due 8/30/26  
Fairview remaining units to sell:                   8 units

1306 W. Bramlett For Sale                   \$     275,000

**Rental Portfolio:**

\*\* With intercompany transfers



## Memorandum

**To:** GCRA Board Members  
**From:** David Doser, Operations Committee Chair  
**Re:** Operations Committee Meeting, June 11, 2026  
**Date:** June 11, 2026

- 1. Opening and Roll Call.** The Operations Committee met on Thursday, June 11, 2026, at 12:36 p.m. Committee members present were David Doser, Chair; James Hammond, Vice Chair, Denise Ernul; Robert Julian; Matthew Nocella; and DeAndra “DJ” Wilson. Staff present were Joe Smith, Executive Director; Levi Chesney, Project Manager; and Meg Macauley, Senior Executive Assistant & Office Manager.
- 2. Invocation.** The invocation was offered by Mr. Doser.

**Action Item:** The following item which was considered by the Operations Committee must be approved or ratified by the Board.

- 3. Approval of Proposed Operations Goals for Program Year 2026.** Mr. Chesney referenced page 12 of the packet and presented the proposed Operations Goals for Program Year 2026, noting that the goals are reflective of the Annual Action Plan. Home Repair, New Construction for Rental, and New Construction for Sale categories represent 23 units and \$3,905,000 of the budget, and partner projects comprise another two units at \$163,000 for a total goal of 25 units and a budget of \$4,405,000. Mr. Chesney also noted that under Unincorporated, the six units listed for Rental New Construction are the units planned for rental at Gridley Place, and the five units listed for New Construction for Sale will be the Gridley Place houses for homeownership; for Greer, the two units listed are the parcels that the City of Greer recently donated to us for single-family homeownership. Infrastructure projects planned for the coming year include a Miller Road Sidewalk project with \$700,000 committed, and the Swamp Rabbit Trail connection in the City of Travelers Rest and College Park Improvements in the City of Simpsonville, both with cost commitments to be determined. Discussion ensued about the details of the infrastructure projects; staff showed maps of the locations.

On a motion by Mr. Hammond, seconded by Ms. Ernul, the committee unanimously approved the proposed Operations Goals for Program Year 2026 as presented.

\* \* \* \* \*

**Please review the following items of business discussed at the Operations Committee meeting. These items will not be discussed in the Board meeting unless there is a question or comment about them.**

#### **4. Operations Reports**

- a. Home Sales Report.** Mr. Smith stated that GCRA's realtor, Denise Franklin, is obtaining updated photographs and will virtually stage the units for her online listings. She has provided a market snapshot and has recommended another \$10,000 reduction in price for a better chance of selling the units soon; staff have asked her to proceed. There have been more showings, and prospective buyers are providing favorable reviews, but comparable properties nearby are selling for less than our current pricing. Our potential buyers are highly payment-sensitive and are making decisions based on affordability. The current inflation rate is hurting our target demographic more than average; another negative factor is that interest rates have increased to about 6.5 percent. Ms. Franklin will hold a homebuyer education class and an open house at Greer City Hall in the next few weeks; City of Greer employees as well as the public are welcome to attend.

Mr. Chesney showed photographs of the latest site work completed at Fairview, including crosswalks, mail kiosk striping, new fencing, installation of a mulch area, and a pet waste station. Two park benches and a shade structure will also be installed; work is expected to be completed next week.

- b. Rental Property Reports.** The rental portfolio remains at nearly 100 percent occupancy, with the exception only of houses under construction or repair.

The Rental Delinquency Report for May reflected a balance of \$16,800. Several tenants are now on payment plans, and others are or will soon be under eviction proceedings. Mr. Smith noted that the tenants in the former Project 43 properties are extremely consistent with making their payments on time.

- c. Public Works, Partners, & Repairs Report.** Mr. Chesney presented the report for May, noting that the Gridley Place project is the most challenging right-of-way project he has ever encountered, due to the number of surprises uncovered along the way; records either do not exist or are incorrect for the late-70s utilities in question. Coordination among utility representatives and engineers has also posed significant delays. Mr. Chesney continues to work with Greenville Water to address conflicts with sewer and water crossings.

There has been some progress on the Iola Wilson Street project; Mr. Smith has spoken with a CoTransCo contact who indicated that a large project in front of us is now complete with one more after that before they are ready to bid ours. He

emphasized to them that the project must be completed soon or we will have to cancel the project and seek reimbursement of funds we already contributed; the current time estimate is August or September.

Mr. Chesney stated that Habitat for Humanity have nearly completed their new homes on Sturtevant Street. The contractor for the replacement rental house at 102 Heatherly Drive attempted to pull his permit two weeks ago and was informed by County Permits Department staff that they are four weeks behind due to turnover, and that they are attempting to hire new staff to help with the backlog. Discussion ensued regarding continued slow response time from several of the County departments. One additional home repair job was completed during the month; \$84,000 remains in the current year's budget for home repairs.

## 5. Other Business – Executive Director Updates.

- a. **Marketing & Education.** Fairview updates were discussed above. Mr. Smith added that the house at 1306 W. Bramlett in City View had two showings last weekend. There has been no pushback regarding price; we are waiting for a potential buyer who likes the floor plan and location.

Mr. Smith also stated that staff are working with the County's Governmental Affairs Coordinator and are scheduling meetings with department directors to conduct informational sessions regarding our down payment assistance program for Greenville County employees. A lunch and learn session with County employees from Long Range Planning, Subdivision, Codes, and Permitting was held last week, with good feedback.

- b. **Greenville County Budget.** Mr. Smith stated that the County's budget passed second reading and will go before Council for final reading on June 16<sup>th</sup>. We believe our \$1 million is secure and are not pressing for additional funding this year.
- c. **Presentation to County Communications & Governmental Affairs Committee.** Mr. Smith stated that on Tuesday evening, he made a presentation to the County's Communications & Governmental Affairs Committee to advise them about the responsibilities of our board and the ideal type of GCRA board member candidate, and he was pleased to receive a positive reception. This committee is part of Council's recent efforts towards increased transparency with and involvement from citizens. Council have removed the requirement for a prospective applicant to attend at least one board meeting first, but this is still strongly encouraged to help them determine if they could be a good fit for GCRA.

- d. Partner Projects.** Mr. Smith stated that he spoke this week to the developer who is assisting United Ministries with their proposal for a permanent rental housing village on GCRA's Project Railroad property; progress is positive. Their board has authorized them to proceed with a ground lease, allocate funds for civil design work, create a site development plan budget, and launch a capital campaign upon receipt of a lead gift. Mr. Smith hopes that after more conversation with the City of Greenville and as UM's fundraising begins, a timeline will be determined soon. Annexation into the City has not yet been sought; it does not appear that rezoning will be necessary, but if it is, that can occur concurrently with annexation. The City Manager and several City Council members are supportive.
  - e. Modular Home Builder Field Trip.** Mr. Smith stated that he was invited by City of Greenville and Greenville Housing Fund staff to join them on a tour of a modular home builder's factory in North Carolina on June 17<sup>th</sup>. He is looking forward to seeing what may be possible for modular construction of affordable housing. Discussion ensued regarding questions of quality and price; modular construction could work for affordable housing, given the right property and if enough volume were possible to achieve economies of scale.
- 6. Adjournment.** There being no further business and on a motion by Ms. Ernul, seconded by Ms. Wilson, the meeting was adjourned at 1:28 p.m.

[https://www.postandcourier.com/greenville/news/greenville-county-council-incumbents-lose-elections/article\\_5bdfc4e2-22e8-4070-a2a2-4b24bac8a8fd.html](https://www.postandcourier.com/greenville/news/greenville-county-council-incumbents-lose-elections/article_5bdfc4e2-22e8-4070-a2a2-4b24bac8a8fd.html)

## ‘I wish to hell I never got involved.’ Greenville County incumbents pay the price for voter anger.

BY SETH TAYLOR STAYLOR@POSTANDCOURIER.COM

JUN 15, 2026



From left to right, Greenville County Council members Rick Bradley and Alan Mitchell both lost reelection during the primary, among several incumbents to lose in recent years.

FILE

**GREENVILLE COUNTY** — On election night in Greenville County, just about the worst thing you can be is an incumbent.

In back-to-back-to-back elections, voters have unceremoniously ousted incumbents — Democrats, Republicans, moderates, conservatives, members both long-term and short.

**Tuesday's elections** — in which first-term members Rick Bradley and Alan Mitchell were defeated — make clear that **Greenville County's politics** remain turbulent and voters remain frustrated.

Elected officials are frustrated too.

“I wish to hell I never got involved,” Bradley told The Post and Courier the day after the election. After four tumultuous years on County Council, he unloaded, criticizing his opponent and other elected officials and using an expletive to describe the council’s future.

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“I'm gonna have a hard time going back,” he said. “I may take six months’ hiatus and collect that little bit of money and tell them all to kiss my ass. That's how I feel right now.”

Longtime politicians are losing across the Upstate. On primary night, two long-term Anderson County Council members were upset, and two Spartanburg County Council members were forced into runoff elections. Between those two bodies, three officials decided to retire rather than run for reelection.

Growth was a driving issue in each of the races. And Greenville County is at the center of it.

In recent years, infighting and frequent turnover have plagued Greenville County Council as it grapples with [explosive growth](#) and a multibillion-dollar [roads crisis](#).

In 2022, three incumbents lost in the Republican primary, including then-Council Chair [Willis Meadows](#). In 2024, it happened again: Three Republicans lost their seats in the primary, including five-term Councilmember Butch Kirven.

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This year, first-term Councilmember Joey Russo and two-term Councilmember Dan Tripp decided not to [run for reelection](#). They cited personal reasons and not political considerations.

With Bradley and Mitchell out as well, that means at least four new faces will join the 12-member council come January 2027.

Normally, incumbents are at an advantage, said Danielle Vinson, professor of politics and international affairs at Furman University. That’s especially true at the local level, where limited news coverage and fundraising mean challengers have to work harder to reach voters.

That changes when voters become fed up with politics. That’s happening across the country as voters confront issues like the high cost of living and rising gas prices, Vinson said. While national politicians are in the headlines, local politicians pay the price as well.

“If everybody's fed up with politics, if everybody's frustrated with County Council, or if everybody's frustrated with Congress, they may just turn against incumbents,” Vinson said.

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“We're definitely in the, ‘We're mad at everybody who's currently in office,’ sort of political environment,” she added.

On Greenville County Council, incumbents from all sides have lost.

In 2024, voters ejected three powerful council members after they supported a **controversial tax increase**. Bradley was one of the people who opposed that tax increase. Yet in 2026, he was also defeated. Damned if you do, damned if you don’t, Bradley said.

“I packed up everything last night and threw it in a dumpster,” he said. “... I mean, hell, they don't want me, I'm gone.”

Bradley — who himself unseated an incumbent in 2022 — was defeated by **Daniel Rumfelt**.

Rumfelt criticized the county for taking away funding from other county governments and cutting the budget for the Historic & Natural Resources Trust. He campaigned on funding road improvements, creating more efficient public transportation and starting a Southern Greenville Conservation District, among other things.

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Rumfelt attributed his success to being visible in the community. Incumbents, he said, can seem disconnected once in office.

Bradley blamed his loss on a series of dramatic mailers attacking him for “putting families and first responders at risk.”

Bradley said the mailers were an “absolute lie” and “dirty politics.” Rumfelt said his campaign was not involved with the mailers and that he did not know who sent them. He said he didn’t believe Bradley was anti-law enforcement.

While most incumbents have been ousted in Republican primaries, Mitchell, a Democrat, came in last in a three-way primary this year, missing the runoff.

Mitchell’s opponents — [Angela Aiken](#) and [David Mitchell](#) — cast him as an absent leader. They campaigned on issues like affordable housing, infrastructure, environmental protection and public transit. They promised to show up and deliver results in ways Mitchell hadn’t.

“People want to be heard, they want to be represented, they want the issues brought forth and they want solutions,” David Mitchell said. “... They got a lot of empty promises, but no solutions. And that's what people are fed up with across the nation and across the county. People want results.”

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On election night, Alan Mitchell said he was disappointed.

“People don't really understand the way the government works,” he said. “They think that we can get in there and we can solve all of their problems, all of their issues, answer all of their questions, wave our magic wands, and make everything right, and we just can't do it.”

Voters might be clamoring for change, but frequent turnover can have consequences, Vinson said. When longtime politicians lose, institutional knowledge goes with them. Government may be slower to respond to issues as newcomers learn the ropes. Career staff members have more say, because they have experience navigating the bureaucracy.

“Sometimes candidates don't always know as much about the way things currently work as they think they do,” Vinson said. “They just see a problem and think, ‘Oh, there's a quick solution.’ But usually there are reasons that there have not been quick solutions.”

Not all incumbents have lost. Some went unchallenged while others eked out victories. In 2024, Councilmember Ennis Fant won reelection by 25 votes and Councilmember Steve Shaw won after being forced into a runoff.

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And just because an incumbent loses doesn't mean they're out of politics forever.

Joe Dill served on County Council 24 years before losing to Russo in 2022.

Now, he's trying to make a comeback. Dill won nearly 50 percent of the vote in a four-way race to replace Russo. He faces a runoff with Travis Forrester, who is casting the election as a decision between the status quo or a new direction.

Dill said the problem is growth. People in his district, a mountainous region in the northern reaches of the county, are fed up with it, and they want to see elected officials doing something about it. If they don't, they'll make a change.

Dill said he's confident he can win this time, because he knows what his voters want.

“I'm just going to be their voice,” he said. “They're going to get me elected, and I'm going to go down there and do exactly what they tell me to do.”

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## **SETH TAYLOR**

Seth Taylor covers Greenville and the Upstate for The Post and Courier. Born in Iowa, he worked in Wyoming at the Buffalo Bulletin before moving to the Palmetto State.

[https://www.postandcourier.com/greenville/news/greenville-county-budget-greenlink-housing-sheriff/article\\_5ea20261-6d23-46c3-bf77-008a5238fdec.html](https://www.postandcourier.com/greenville/news/greenville-county-budget-greenlink-housing-sheriff/article_5ea20261-6d23-46c3-bf77-008a5238fdec.html)

# Greenville County passes \$475M budget, skirting controversy while considering new sales tax

BY SETH TAYLOR STAYLOR@POSTANDCOURIER.COM

JUN 18, 2026



Greenville County's budget for the 2027 fiscal year includes funding for affordable housing, land preservation and public transportation.

STAFF/FILE

**GREENVILLE** — To the surprise of even some council members, Greenville County's **\$475 million budget** passed relatively smoothly Tuesday night.

Council members chose to keep funding for hot button topics like affordable housing and land preservation and dismissed an attempt to cut funding to the Greenville Transit Authority, avoiding last year's contentious finish.

Council member Ennis Fant joked that he took some Aleve in preparation for the June 16 Council meeting, where Council considered not just the budget but also a potential sales tax referendum.

“I just knew this was gonna be one of those days,” he said.

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Yet while council members offered late amendments and a few sharp words, the budget passed 8-4 without many fireworks.

“This group is quite contentious a lot of the times,” Fant said. “But today, I think Greenville County can be proud of the way everybody sat down. Nobody got exactly everything they wanted, but there was a willingness to find common ground that we could all live with.”

Council members Kelly Long, Frank Farmer, Rick Bradley, Benton Blount, Liz Seman, Alan Mitchell, Ennis Fant and Dan Tripp voted in favor while Council members Joey Russo, Steve Shaw, Curt McGahey and Garey Collins voted against.

It was a contrast from last year, when the [budget process](#) culminated in a marathon meeting, dozens of proposed amendments, a tied vote and a last-minute compromise.

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The new budget charts a path forward for South Carolina’s largest county as it tries to balance its priorities and avoid turmoil.

The county faces a \$2 billion roads crisis, a sheriff demanding more money for his deputies, voters still angry over a recent tax increase, and activists fighting for funding for affordable housing, public transportation and land preservation.

After voters ousted several County Council members in 2024 in the wake of a controversial sales tax, the new Council has focused on road funding, choosing to cut budgets for affordable housing and land preservation.

This year, officials are spending roughly \$27.5 million to improve roads, about \$6 million less than last year.

Council member Steve Shaw's attempt to drastically cut funding to the Greenville Transit Authority and affordable housing — which he ruefully acknowledged was unlikely to pass even before he proposed the changes — was quickly defeated 10-2.

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Before the vote, more than a dozen people spoke against Shaw's amendment, and the audience applauded when it failed.

Included in this year's budget is \$1 million for affordable housing, \$3.5 million for the Greenville Transit Authority and \$1.5 million for the Greenville County Natural & Historic Resources Trust — all priorities on the chopping block at one point.

Last year, the county's budget included \$3.5 million for the Transit Authority, \$2 million for affordable housing and \$1 million for the Natural & Historic Resources Trust, according to previous Post and Courier reporting.

Councilmember Joey Russo also offered an amendment to increase law enforcement salaries. Russo asked to increase their raise from the proposed 4 percent to 6 percent.

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Earlier this year, [Sheriff Hobart Lewis](#) called out the county when it proposed a 5 percent raise for Sheriff's Office employees. He said the raise fell far short of what was needed to recruit deputies to work at one of the largest law enforcement agencies in the state. Lewis asked for \$11.5 million to give each of the agency's employees a \$12,000 raise.

A majority of council members said the County simply doesn't have the money to raise law enforcement salaries any further. County Administrator Joe Kernell said stretching the budget much more risks draining its funds and harming its credit rating.

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Russo's amendment failed 9-3.

The budget's passage came at the same time as the County considers alternative sources of funding in the future.

At a meeting immediately prior to the regularly scheduled Council meeting, officials debated a new sales tax — a tax similar to one proposed and defeated two years ago.

Officials said they hope the tax, which would generate as much as \$1.1 billion over eight years, could fund not just road improvements but also the Natural & Historic Resources Trust and the Transit Authority.

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If that funding passes, Council members indicated they plan to strip out funding for those organizations from the general fund.

“I think we all know the writing's on the wall to get (Greenlink) off the general budget,” Russo said.

A final vote on the 1 percent sales tax, which will require voters' approval, is scheduled for July.

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#### **SETH TAYLOR**

Seth Taylor covers Greenville and the Upstate for The Post and Courier. Born in Iowa, he worked in Wyoming at the Buffalo Bulletin before moving to the Palmetto State.

# The Greenville Journal – Annexations are on the rise in Greenville. What’s the strategy behind it?

June 18, 2026 – Megan Fitzgerald



Photo by Megan Fitzgerald

Greenville continues to steadily expand its municipal boundaries through annexation, bringing more residents and businesses into the city’s fold.

Annexations have become a frequent item on Greenville City Council meeting agendas. Mayor Knox White said the city used to annex properties more sporadically than it has in the last five years.

“It’s always been a real personal passion of mine,” White said. “Another mayor told me many years ago that if you don’t believe in annexation, then you don’t believe in your city, and I have always remembered that.”

A total of 1.84 square miles of property – equal to 1,177.97 acres – have been annexed into the city of Greenville since 2021. Today, the city spans 31.57 square miles inside Greenville County.

*“Managing growth the right way is more important than ever. It’s better that properties be in the city than not because we focus on good planning and quality of life.” – Greenville Mayor Knox White*

The recent rise in annexations in Greenville can be traced back to the creation of the [GVL2040 Comprehensive Plan](#) in 2021. The planning document serves as a tool for shaping and managing the city’s growth and development over the next two decades.

Greenville City Manager Shannon Lavrin said annexations can support many of the priorities outlined in GVL2040, including affordable housing development and open space preservation.

City Council instructed Lavrin to keep annexations top of mind when she was appointed as city manager in June 2023. This request prompted city staff to take a closer, more strategic look at annexations.

### **Application process**

It's important to note that cities in South Carolina cannot annex any property they choose. A property can only be eligible for annexation if it's contiguous to the existing municipal boundaries. State law also makes it difficult for an annexation to occur against a property owner's wishes.

"Council is not supportive of annexing in any kind of hostile way. That is a lose for us," said Greenville City Councilmember Dororthy Dowe.

Two primary annexation methods are used by the city of Greenville. The 100% method is a voluntary annexation in which all property owners agree to be brought into the city.

The other annexation method requires a petition signed by at least 75% of the property owners with at least 75% of the assessed property value within the annexation area. Property owners within the defined annexation boundary who do not sign the petition would also be annexed under this method.

### **[Read more about annexations](#)**

City staff meet with property owners interested in annexation to assist them with the process. Annexation applications submitted to the city are evaluated by the city's planning and development staff and other departments. Lavrin said each annexation application is different and requires careful consideration.

"We have to look at each one individually," Lavrin said. "I think that one of the things that the planning staff does a really good job at in their staff reports is analyzing how each of these annexations fit within the city, how they meet GVL2040 and why they're being annexed into the city."

The city's Planning Commission will review the annexation application and concurrent rezoning request to make a recommendation to the City Council. Annexation applications require two readings by council for final approval. Greenville City Councilmember John DeWorken said he evaluates each application by determining whether the annexation brings value to the city's current residents.

"When you bring in other neighborhoods or if you bring in businesses, I think it's obviously an added value for them, and it's an added value for us as well," DeWorken said.

### **Mutually beneficial**

For the past several years, city staff have focused on educating residential and commercial property owners on the potential advantages of annexation. White said it should be mutually beneficial.

[The city promotes that annexed property owners](#) gain access to enhanced police and fire protection, lower water utility rates, public infrastructure improvements and other municipal services. Lavrin said the city has increased the budgets for police, fire and public works to ensure these departments have the staff and equipment needed to respond to the newly annexed areas.

Hampton Station was annexed into Greenville in September 2025. Abacus Capital, owner of Hampton Station, applied for the annexation to complete future enhancement projects on the property. The firm is looking to activate a vacant lot next to the Prisma Health Swamp Rabbit Trail by potentially creating a dog park or outdoor sports courts.

***“Through 60 annexations this past year alone, we grew by more than 395 acres, a 2% increase in city size. Greenville is growing and we are growing smart.” – Greenville City Manager Shannon Lavrin***

“When we had initially started those conversations with the county, it didn’t go anywhere. There was no willingness to kind of accommodate it, and it just kind of died on the vine,” said Will McGinnis, vice president at Abacus Capital. “We had a conversation with the city about it, and they were willing to kind of figure out ways for us to improve that site.”

Annexations benefit the city of Greenville by increasing its population and tax base. The city had a total population of 79,396 residents in 2025. Greenville City Councilmember Lillian Brock Flemming explained that additional tax revenue created by annexations helps fund city infrastructure projects and public services.

## ANNEXATION BENEFITS

The city of Greenville promotes that property owners who are annexed into its municipal boundaries receive:



7.35 police officers per square mile versus .04 in the unincorporated areas of the county



Average emergency response time of 7 minutes versus 15 minutes in the unincorporated areas of the county



One-third lower water rates from the Greenville Water System



In some cases, lower property taxes

Source: City of Greenville

Cherrydale remains one of Greenville’s largest annexations in the past five years, adding approximately 126 acres of commercial property into the city limits. This annexation was approved by City Council in 2024, providing more property and business license revenue for the city.

Lavrin said bringing commercial properties into the city limits can also unlock other redevelopment opportunities. One example she gave was the city’s recent annexation of the historic Judson Mill, which was redeveloped into a vibrant mixed-use community with apartments, office and retail space.

“Bringing some of those strategic properties into the city allows us to really see economic development flourish within our own boundaries, and that’s something that we want to continue to support as a city,” Lavrin said.

### **Strategic planning**

Greenville continues to see more annexations on the western edge of the city limits. City leaders said it is an area where property taxes are lower when annexed into Greenville.

In comparison, White said property owners east of the city are less likely to apply for annexation because it would increase their property taxes. He noted other natural boundaries the city wouldn’t consider annexing past due to service delivery issues, such as Interstate 85 to the southeast or the former Union Bleachery mill site to the north of Greenville.

“Our planning department has spent more time actually studying that, you know, what are the areas that we desire to come into the city,” White said. “Early on, we decided that the textile mills would be a good goal.”

Brandon Mill in West Greenville was annexed into the city in the fall of 2025. City Council also approved the annexation of the historic American Spinning Mill in December 2025. White said annexing these mills is important due to their historical significance to the city. Many of these properties have also been redeveloped into apartment complexes, adding more residents to the city’s population.

The city has also focused on closing and avoiding the creation of “doughnut holes” through annexation. These are pockets of unincorporated properties in Greenville County that are surrounded by city boundaries. Dowe said such holes can make emergency response and sanitation service delivery, such as trash pickup, more difficult.

Some surrounding fire districts have pushed back against the city’s annexation practices in recent years, including the Parker District Fire Department. However, White said he has heard “nothing but good things” from Greenville County Council members.

“I think at the end of the day, (annexations) give the city a greater voice in what happens in the region, and I think it promotes quality of life and good planning,” White said.

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### **Definition**

“Annexation is the process of transferring property from unincorporated areas of Greenville County into the service area and jurisdiction of the city of Greenville.”

Source: [City of Greenville](#)

## Annexation benefits

The city of Greenville promotes that property owners who are annexed into its municipal boundaries receive:

- 7.35 police officers per square mile versus .04 in the unincorporated areas of the county
- Average emergency response time of 7 minutes versus 15 minutes in the unincorporated areas of the county
- One-third lower water rates from the Greenville Water System
- In some cases, lower property taxes

Source: [City of Greenville](#)

## By the numbers

A total of **1.84** square miles of property – equal to **1,177.97** acres – have been annexed into the city of Greenville **since 2021**.

## GVL2040 priorities

Annexations support many of the priorities outlined in the [GVL2040](#) Comprehensive Plan, including [affordable housing](#) development and open space [preservation](#).

Greenville City Manager Shannon Lavrin said during the state of the city address in early June that the city's most recent annexation cycle added 186 affordable units. Through annexations, the city has also enabled 2,364 new housing units citywide.

Annexations can also support the city's efforts to preserve existing open space. For example, Greenville City Council recently approved the annexation of seven acres of open space on Grove Road and West Faris Road for the Swansgate community.