



Beaufort County Stormwater Management Utility Board (SWMU Board) Meeting Minutes

December 10, 2025

Arthur Horne Building, 2nd Floor Meeting Room
104 Ribaut Road, Beaufort, SC

Attendees:

Marc Feinberg, Chair
Patrick Mitchell, Co-Chair
Steven Andrews, Board Member
Dennis Ross, Board Member
Ed Warner, Board Member
Nate Farrow, Ex-Officio Member – City of Beaufort
Andrea Moreno, Ex-Officio Member – Town of Bluffton
Van Willis, Ex-Officio Member – Town of Port Royal
Tom Reitz, County Council Board Liaison
Alice Howard, County Council
Taylor Brewer, Stormwater Program Manager
Stephen Carter, Stormwater Infrastructure Superintendent
Michelle Strader, Stormwater Business Manager
Sally McLeod, Public Works Sr. Administrative Specialist
Ellen Sturup Comeau, Clemson Extension
Jacob Terry, Town of Hilton Head
Dr. Ty Pettay, USCB
Anna Roberts, USCB

Absent:

Ron Buchanan, Board Member
Jeff Netzinger, Ex-Officio Member – Town of Hilton Head
Paula Brown, County Council Board Liaison

Visitors:

Kurt Chapman
Jim Lawton
Laura Wilson
Carol White

1. Call To Order – Meeting called to order by Marc Feinburg at 2:00 PM
 - Approval of Agenda – Motion and second by Ed Warner and Dennis Ross; approved
 - Approval of October 15, 2025 Minutes – Motion and second by Dennis Ross and Ed Warner; approved
2. Introductions were made.
3. Public Comments were completed.
4. Reports:
 - Monitoring Update: Anna Roberts stated that with the recent rainfall, Q4 wet sampling events are now complete and being processed. Once that is done, sampling for the 2025 calendar year will be complete. Monthly and MS4 sampling and analysis projects continue for the Town of Bluffton and with the Port Royal Sound Foundation. Work continues to bring online an in-house nutrient analyzer. The first student collected samples were done this week. That's going to expand the amount of in-house analysis that the laboratory can do and give the students more experience with real world analysis that they will do after graduation too. Mr. Feinberg asked if a 2025 report will be published in early 2026 with this past year's data. Dr. Pettay stated that it has not been done in the past, but he will work with Taylor and put something together.
 - Municipal Reports:
 - Port Royal – Van Willis stated that in November Engineers made a presentation on the update to the Stormwater Master Plan, which included a Capital Improvements Program. One of the IRA Drainage Projects for West Parris Avenue is nearly complete, and work will then begin at The Villages. We have to make sure our chronology's done correctly and we're facing deadlines with ARPA fund, but we'll be moving that forward. We'll be picking up over the next two or three years the additional projects that are a result of the master plans.
 - Beaufort – Nate Farrow stated the project is continuing going from the Waterfront Park up Charles Street that has the intersection of Charles and Bay closed. The new interim Capital Improvement Project Director, Brian Ranger, is leading that project. The early phases of the King Street Drainage Project have begun. The Waterfront Advisory Committee continues to meet and make

decisions regarding the upgrades and repairs in the future. Everything can be seen on the City of Beaufort website on the Capital Improvement page.

- Bluffton – Andrea Moreno stated the MS4 annual reporting year is coming to a close and is due to the State the beginning of April. The town will be rolling out a storm drain art pilot project after the new year that is aimed at middle and high school students where they design art, we pick one for each school and it will be a vinyl decal transfer. The art will be selected in March, and the decals will be installed in June. Following the Town's work with Dr. Pettay's lab and the MST Program, a Petway Station Program is being promoted. The information can be found on the Town of Bluffton website. The Owner Asset Report is being finalized. We also have a Resilience Plan RFQ out for bid currently and that will close on the 18th that South Carolina municipalities are required to implement. We are also planning revisions to the Town's Wetland Ordinance and that will be going to the Town Council Workshop in January. For the May River Watershed Action Plan Update, there is a 2025 water quality model for the May River headwaters that will be compared to 2018 and 2002 baseline model outputs. There is also then a final report on the May River Baseline Assessment Update that was conducted by DNR. We have received that and it will be put on our website shortly.
 - Mr. Feinberg stated a month or two ago, Mayor Toomer talked about canine waste being the number one pollutant for Bluffton. Is that what spearheaded the Pet Waste Stations? Ms. Moreno stated yes, it was an initiative that staff started doing door hangers and educating citizens on pet waste, but this is taking the next step to help get people to pick up after their pet.
 - Mr. Ross stated regarding the stormwater drain vinyl applications; is there going to be a timeframe when they're going to be placed on there and then picked up? Ms. Moreno stated they will be relatively permanent. The lifespan, especially in high traffic areas, is a year or two at most. In theory, since we already have the artwork, if we wanted to continue replacing them, we have the ability to do so.
- Hilton Head – Jacob Terry stated the Town of Hilton Head is undergoing a rewrite of the Land Management Ordinance. Housekeeping and municipal operations inspections are being completed to wrap up the calendar year annual reporting.
 - Mr. Feinberg stated we have been contacted by several communities who have had stormwater issues lately; about the roads being turned over to the Town of Hilton Head. Can you speak to that? Mr. Terry stated it would be an all-encompassing package for transportation and stormwater. I'm not abreast enough to answer that at this time.
- Maintenance Projects Report: Stephen Carter presented.
 - Quiet Cove Way – Lady's Island – installed crossline pipe and rip rap for erosion control for a total cost of \$15,703.
 - Burkes Beach Road – Hilton Head Island – cleaned out 694 linear feet of roadside ditch and jetted three driveway pipes and five crossline pipes for a total cost of \$10,512.
 - Valley Drains – Lady's Island – cleaned out 28,754 linear feet of valley drains for a total cost of \$11,798.
- Liaison Report: Mr. Tom Reitz thanked staff for an incredible year. After Storm Debbie, the work that started at Bay Pines has been incredible. That led to work at Tide Point, Old Woodlands, Bradley Circle, Sandy Beach Trail and Ms. Brewer and her team have been to these sites many times. The work and the effort have been incredible, but much more has to be done. The Town of Hilton Head voted to bring Cedarwoods Roads in-house; they were privately owned and nothing was done. The Town's goal is to have an island-wide master drainage plan. Ashton Cove is another project as to how we are going to address.

- Stormwater Utility Report: Taylor Brewer presented.
 - Stormwater Fee Restructure Update – The current database is very old and inefficient and requires a lot of manual inputs that has created errors in the past. A new database would be more efficient for staff use and more accurate and transparent for the taxpayer. In lieu of presenting at the SoLoCo Board, Beaufort County Administration would like to reach out individually to the upper Administrations of the municipalities to convey the approach and to allow for more discussion.
 - SoLoCo Design Manual – Town of Bluffton has adopted and implemented SoLoCo edits. We're working towards making it a solid manual before going to the other municipalities and suggest implementation for them, as well. We would like a regionally implementable product that we can take to Hardeeville, Ridgeland, Jasper County, and Colleton County. The Port Royal Sound Foundation received \$100,000 grant to work on a toolkit to create the documents for adoption of the SoLoCo Manual for smaller counties that may not have the staff to create those documents on their own.
- Projects Report: Taylor Brewer presented.
 - Alljoy – Seamon Whiteside has completed collection of survey data and assets inventory, current conditions modeling has begun. The next stage would be them proposing solutions and a draft update will be available in March or April and then would go into design from there.
 - Mr. Feinberg asked before we go to the design phase, would we not have a meeting with the residents of Alljoy to give them the results of that study? Ms. Brewer stated we like to have a meeting at the end when we have a Final Report to not only release the report to the public to have them fact check any areas that found of flooding, but to have input on proposed solutions as far as feasibility and needs for the community.
 - Bay Pines – Fence installation was delayed due to weather. Staff will be on-site for installation to ensure that it goes where and how we would like for it to. We have also coordinated with staff from Point Comfort, so they can be on site if they would like. We have started the process of reaching out about easement acquisition for the crossline pipes.
 - Shell Point – The maintenance shelf clearing project pivoted. The clearing of the maintenance shelves with every single tree coming down would be extremely intrusive. We have access to a new piece of equipment with a new type of mulching head that we think would be less intrusive than clearing the entire maintenance shelf. It would allow us to clear and grub the areas that we need without taking down any major substantial trees to give us access to the ditch. We are working to have a community meeting scheduled soon.
 - Mr. Ross stated we haven't reached out to the Shell Point neighborhood about the progress of this project that was brought about three or four years ago. The process has been painfully slow. J. Bragg & Associates had a meeting with the County Administrator in February of this year and there was a proposal for \$442,000 for a 24-month design period and then that was cancelled at the last minute, and we found out about it the day of the stormwater meeting. Now, we understand, in front of the Public Facilities Committee, that they've requested \$326,000 to continue this project. Do we have any type of feedback on the accounting of what J. Bragg has actually done over the past two years? How has this additional \$326,000 warranted for them to continue without any product being delivered? Ms. Brewer stated there has not been any further investigation into what's been spent or the task orders that were completed on the prior PO. The proposed contract would be for the design of the pond behind Food Lion and the Hamrick Drive outfall, which were both included in the original scope. Mr. Ross stated we have no idea what they're doing week to week? Ms. Brewer stated I'm not on that project, so I do not have any project updates on the design. Mr. Ross stated if I look back at my notes, and this was last updated in April of 2024, there was about \$355,000 that was allocated to J. Bragg for Phase I and Phase II, of which Phase I was 57% complete. Phase II was 6% complete. Do we have percentages on how complete they are

now in those phases? Ms. Brewer stated we have not received any additional deliverables or progress. Mr. Ross stated this is why I hope that we start getting some clear-cut answers from J. Bragg or from Mr. Fralix or anybody else that's involved in this project because there's a lot of money that's being thrown out there, taxpayer money, and it's not being accounted for in a very financially responsible way.

- Rivers End – Community meeting was held October 20. We presented the plans and had easement documents on hand for citizens to sign. There's a failing double-layer pipe system and we are replacing the system down the main drag that feeds into the pond that has not been maintained properly and the pond is owned by 154 people. Everyone in the neighborhood owns 1/154th of this pond and to obtain easements, we need 154 signatures. We have about 30% of the easement documents signed and returned. We are continuing to work through those and reach out individually if we need to. The last effort would be condemnation, which would be moving through a legal process for the county to take over the pond.
- Okatie River Park – This is a county land preservation project; the dam was failing of a stormwater pond that needed to be completely redone. We have gotten all the borings done and that's in design. We're in close communication with the Land Preservation Department to make sure that our design is coherent with their park design. It's going to be an innovative outfall; it's projected to have a bridge over it instead of just being a concrete box structure. It will make stormwater pretty and we'll have some environmental education signs along the way explaining aesthetically, what it's supposed to look like and then functionally, how it's supposed to work.
- Royal Pines – I have investigated the feasibility of trying to partner with the Green Space Program to purchase part of the old golf course. We met with the sellers and discussed with legal the feasibility of land acquisition from using stormwater utility funds and we got an initial "yes" from legal. We took our proposal to upper administration proposing to purchase the actual land with green space funds and then use stormwater utility funds to create a stormwater wet/dry park; that would be a trail that could be used in dry times that would allow for overflow and extra added capacity during wet times that would redirect the flow away from local residents. We're waiting to hear back from upper administration for instructions.
 - Mr. Mitchell stated what pieces of the old golf course? Is it the whole section or just the areas around Turtle Lane and Middle Road area? Ms. Brewer stated it's the lower upside-down L corner for partial purchase. I believe it's nine holes that are for sale. Since I have received a preliminary yes from legal for stormwater to purchase, we're looking into the feasibility of a buyout program. This would be separate from FEMA funds. This would be for structures that do not have repetitive structural loss, but that would be better suited for stormwater capacity over development. The land will then be owned by the county, this no building unless the county decides to sell that property. We're working though options of entering the land into a trust, a mini stormwater park where we could maintain a BMP to help aid in flood relief, or there's the option to leave the land and let it grow and return to nature and serve its purpose that way.
 - Mr. Feinberg stated do we have any idea on how much money we have in our stormwater fund presently and we anticipate how much we think it would cost? Ms. Brewer stated that would be part of the valuation of the program set-up. There would be stipulations on which parcels would be good for stormwater purposes. There would have to be a consideration process and then there would have to be, in my opinion, a limit of properties purchased per fiscal year. The fair market value of some of the properties are in the range of \$500,000. We are looking at Greenville as a model for this program. They have a very successful buyout program if you want to check out their website.
- Arthur Horne – Restoration of wetland in Port Royal. This project is going to restore stormwater function and provide habitat for waterfowl. We are using Cypress Wetlands as a model for this project. RFQ was issued and Black & Veatch was selected as the engineering firm for design, and they are working with Procurement to secure a contract.

- Professional Contracts Report: Taylor Brewer stated we have been instructed by upper administration to have three on-call firms to closely mimic the Engineering Department. It will allow us to more easily move through the procurement process and have more specialty difference between our firms. Woolpert is our current on-call for architectural and engineering services, and their contract expires this month. We are in the second round of interviews and hope to have contracts issued in January.
- Staff Update: Taylor Brewer stated we have a new Business Manager, Michelle Strader who has joined us transferring from Planning Department. We did a program assessment with our ACA and Mr. Moore, and he would like to see the stormwater department grow so we can handle the various needs of our citizens. We are asking for a various number of full-time employees for fiscal year 2027 to help aid us.
 - Mr. Ross stated what would it take in manpower to clean ditches every three or four years instead of every five to seven. Ms. Brewer stated we have not done a comprehensive study, but we do recognize that we would like to increase our level of service and that adding a crew would allow us to do that. We can look at other municipalities and their level of service. Mr. Ross stated how often is SCDOT doing their roads as far as clean-up? Ms. Brewer stated I'm not sure what their rotation schedule is like, but I will say our monthly coordination meetings with them have paid off in being able to target specific areas. Mr. Ross stated it would be very important that if we do decide to go to a more concise schedule, that we have a buy-in with SCDOT so that they would be able to match up.

5. Old Business: There was no Old Business.
6. New Business: Mr. Feinberg stated there are two openings on the Stormwater Board. Mr. Ed Warner can no longer serve as he moved out of Beaufort County. Mr. Feinberg thanked him for his service on the board.
7. Public Comment. Public Comment was made.
8. Next Meeting Agenda: Mr. Feinberg stated the next meeting is February 11, 2026 in the Council Chambers.
9. Adjournment: Mr. Feinberg adjourned the meeting at 3:00 PM.