



City Council Special Called Meeting
May 19, 2026

Easley City Council met for a Special Called meeting on May 19, 2026, at 6:00pm in the court room of the Law Enforcement Center. All members were present except Councilwoman Chris Clark. The press was notified of the meeting by email. The agenda was posted on the city's website and in the lobby of city hall. Jennifer Bradley, City Clerk, served as the recording secretary.

Mayor Talbert called the meeting to order at 6:00pm.

Daniel Hughes, City Attorney, announced that Councilwoman Chris Clark was unable to attend due to a pre-planned family vacation.

CITIZENS WISHING TO ADDRESS CITY COUNCIL

Ginny McJunkin explained that while a five-member council majority cannot place items on the agenda without a vote, the mayor and a small, aligned minority can do so unilaterally. This imbalance allows the mayor's minority to block items from the agenda, forcing the majority to call special meetings to address blocked issues. This situation creates a division between the mayor's majority and the council minority, leading to calls for amending the ordinance to prevent any officeholder from unilaterally controlling the agenda.

Crystal Clardy spoke to address conduct of a councilmember.

Dottie Rhodes identified herself as a lifelong Easley resident and speaks on behalf of long-time residents who want impartial governance rather than partisan advantage. Her remarks criticize outdated ordinance language and emphasize community expectations for fair process and accountability from elected officials.

Randy Bowers spoke on his concerns with the ordinance language.

Dan Bracken is in favor of the ordinance amendment.

Lisa McAdams is in support of amending the ordinance. She stated that she had spoken with constituents in a council ward and found most opposed to the existing rule, directly challenging official claims that residents oppose the change.

Rick Tate questioned whether a two-member minority should be able to block majority agenda action. He argued that every level of U.S. government follows majority control of the agenda, and that minority protections should not include a veto over what is discussed. Rick also raised procedural fairness concerns, noting that requiring special meetings to exercise majority authority imposes avoidable costs and friction.

JB Kelly asked for the motion to be table until constituents in wards are heard from. Proposed town halls to allow voiced concerns or support to be heard.

Kandy Kelly spoke against changing the ordinance and reported encouragement to act.

Kelsey Crook spoke in favor of the amendment to the ordinance.

Antoinette Castle spoke against the ordinance amendment.

Lynn Crush appreciates the council and the work they do.

Jeff Cooper made an analogy to a scam, warning that allowing small procedural manipulations could lead to larger abuses of power. He emphasized the need for council harmony and support for the mayor to ensure the city's progress. Cooper urged the council to stop what he perceived as a divisive tactic that could undermine the city's governance.

Andi Hendricks spoke about the importance of respectful communication among council members. She highlighted the need for unity and civility, urging the council to listen to one another and to the citizens they represent. Ms. Hendricks criticized the misinformation circulating on social media, particularly regarding the cost implications of the ordinance, and stressed that the council should focus on facts rather than fearmongering. She expressed disappointment over recent setbacks to the mayor's office and called for an end to the discord.

Susan Sheridan, a lifelong resident and business owner, expressed concern over the potential chaos and inefficiency that could result from the proposed changes. She noted that traditionally, the city administrator and mayor have set the agendas, which has worked well. Sheridan urged the council to delay the vote on the ordinance to allow for better public understanding and input, emphasizing the importance of supporting the mayor and each other for the city's benefit.

NEW BUSINESS: Ordinance First Reading:

A. Ordinance 2026-18 to amend Chapter 30 ("City Council") of Title III ("Administration") of the Easley City Code. Motion to approve made by Councilwoman April Searcy, seconded by Councilman Justin Alexander. The ordinance sought to clarify that the city administrator would prepare the agenda in consultation with the council, and that any matter requested in writing by at least three council members by a specified deadline would be placed on the agenda. This change aimed at preventing a minority of two council members from blocking items from being discussed. The city attorney, Daniel Hughes, provided a legal opinion affirming that the

ordinance complied with South Carolina state law. He explained that under the Home Rule Act and other state statutes, the legislative authority and powers of the municipality are vested in the city council, which has the right to set its own rules and procedures, including how agendas are prepared. The attorney clarified that state law does not specify who must set the agenda, leaving that decision to the council. He also addressed concerns about the "two objection vote" rule, noting that it conflicted with more recent state legislation and that the proposed ordinance aligned with current legal standards. Council members engaged in discussion about the ordinance's implications. Councilman Alexander explained the current process, where the mayor has significant control over the agenda and can block items even if a majority of council members support them. This member cited specific instances where requests to add items, such as a resolution recognizing Juneteenth or a project related to Canaan Land, were denied by the mayor. The proposed ordinance was presented as a corrective measure to ensure that a minority could not prevent the majority from bringing important issues to the public forum. Councilwoman Searcy addressed misinformation and fears circulating among the public, emphasizing that the ordinance did not seek to change the city's form of government or diminish the mayor's administrative powers. Instead, it aimed to clarify how the council conducts its legislative business. Councilwoman Searcy highlighted that updating rules and procedures is a normal part of governance and that the proposed changes would not allow the council to direct city employees or override the mayor's administrative role. The discussion also touched on the importance of transparency and public participation. Councilwoman Donna Rainey stated that this ordinance amendment is not to take administrative duties away from the mayor or the city administrator. It was noted that the current ordinance allowed a minority to block agenda items, which could stifle public debate on issues important to residents. The proposed change requires three council members to request an item to promote more open discussion and prevent a small group from controlling the agenda. Councilman Bob Fedder's statement is attached. Concerns were raised about the potential cost of a public referendum related to governance changes, with estimates around \$40,000. Some council members acknowledged this cost but argued that it was a worthwhile investment to ensure that citizens have a voice in important decisions. Others expressed skepticism about the necessity of such a referendum, emphasizing that the ordinance did not alter the fundamental structure of the city government. The mayor provided her perspective, explaining that she had denied certain requests to add items to the agenda based on appropriateness and the need for clear communication. She cited examples where she had engaged with council members and the city administrator to discuss agenda items and expressed concern about the lack of direct communication from some council members. The mayor also highlighted the importance of representing the views of constituents, many of whom had expressed opposition to the ordinance. Throughout the meeting, the theme of communication—or the lack thereof—between the mayor, council members, and the public was prominent. Several lamented the breakdown in dialogue and the resulting mistrust and misinformation. The mayor and council members acknowledged these challenges and expressed a desire to improve

collaboration and transparency moving forward. Motion carried with a 4-0 vote. Councilmembers Searcy, Rainey, Alexander, and Fedder were in favor with Councilmember O'Shields and Mayor Talbert opposed.

A motion to enter Executive Session to discuss a personnel matter involving attorney-client privilege (Section 30-4-70(a)(2)) was made by Councilman Justin Alexander, seconded by Councilman Bob Fedder at 7:09pm. Motion carried unanimously.

A motion to exit Executive Session was made by Councilman Tom O'Shields, seconded by Councilman Bob Fedder at 7:53pm. No votes or action was taken while in session.

With no further business, there was a motion to adjourn by Councilman Bob Fedder, seconded by Councilman Tom O'Shields.

The meeting concluded at 7:54pm.

Mayor Lisa Talbert

ATTEST:

Jennifer Bradley, City Clerk

I begin with the premise: "In a municipality in SC, is the creation of an ordinance an administrative or legislative function?" The answer I received was "Ordinances are typically created by the legislative body of the municipality, such as the city council.

Typically means usually, therefore, in my opinion, the desire to or want to place a proposed ordinance on the agenda for consideration by the council was never, as the mayor has implied d\so many times l the past , a desire to usurp the administrative function of the city or to change the form of government.

Rather, I have felt every time the mayor has blocked a request to add a proposal item or ordinance to the agenda that she is denying me and the other members of the council our first amendment right to discuss or debate the merits of an item or ordinance that l/we deem is pertinent to the constituents of our individual Ward and/or the city at large. I may or may not agree with what is on the agenda requiring my vote, but all I ask us the right to place it on the agenda for discussion.

This ordinance corrects a wrong that was in the system since 1979 that has allowed a minority of 2 council members to deny something to be added to the agenda. Under this proposal we are discussing it will require 3 cosponsors to have an item added to the agenda, and I say to you Mayor Talbert, or any of you council members that if this is passed and you need a cosponsor, that I will gladly add my name so the item can be brought publicly before the council for discussion and debate. That is all that is being requested here tonight.