



## City Council Meeting June 8, 2026

Easley City Council met for its regular meeting on June 8, 2026, at 7:00pm in the court room of the LEC. All the members were present. 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 7:00pm.

The invocation was given by Ron Winegard and was immediately followed by the Pledge of Allegiance.

A public hearing was opened for Ordinance 2026-17 regarding a proposed franchise agreement/franchise fee for Wire 3, LLC; no public speakers addressed the item at that time.

Minutes were approved as written.

### **Report from Council:**

Ward 6: Raised concerns from Old Market Square business owners about parking during large events and mentioned recurring speeding complaints and concerns about the appearance of the post office property.

Ward 5: Recognized Juneteenth and noted public feedback on the proposed agenda ordinance, including a message urging peace.

Ward 4: Emphasized listening to Ward 4 residents, responsible budgeting without a millage increase, downtown business support, public Wi-Fi, paving projects, and contingency budget use.

Ward 3: Reported concerns about street parking in new developments blocking stop signs and visibility.

Ward 2: Acknowledged emails for and against the proposed ordinance and reminded residents about the July 3 and 4 downtown Fourth of July celebration.

Ward 1: Reported substantial constituent opposition to the ordinance and stated he would vote against it.

**Mayor's Message:** Congratulated graduates, highlighted Camp iRock, American Legion Post 52 baseball events, farmers market, kids' events, Camp GreenWave, summer concerts, Fourth of July activities, and encouraged residents to vote.

**Updates on City Activity:** The City Administrator encouraged voting, shared Fourth of July event details, noted an extended fireworks display, and introduced new financial analyst Sarah Duffy.

Finance Director reported that real property tax, business license revenue, and permit revenue were expected to come in over budget, while local option sales tax may be slightly under budget. The city was reported to have approximately \$17 million in cash, with recent collections including about \$2 million in business licenses, \$4.3 million in property taxes, and an expected \$2.5 million insurance tax payment. The city also paid off a bond and sold West End Hall.

**Citizens wishing to address City Council:**

Antoinette Castle: Opposed changing the form of government and requested council vote against the ordinance, table it, or put it to referendum.

Ginny McJunkin: Supported the ordinance, stating it does not transfer administrative authority or change the form of government, but creates a transparent process for council-requested agenda items.

Gwinn O'Shields: Opposed the ordinance, arguing council already has ways to bring items forward and that the proposal shifts agenda authority away from the chief administrative officer.

Kandy Kelly: Opposed Ordinance 2026-18 and asked council to reconsider and revise it to include the mayor more clearly.

Seth Hunter: Opposed the ordinance and urged council and the mayor to improve communication, set the ordinance aside, and seek unity.

Lynn Crush: Urged council and the community to pursue peace, build bridges, and work together for the city.

Gary Hinton: Thanked the city for support of American Legion baseball and encouraged residents to vote.

Cathey Rampey: Opposed the ordinance, saying the current system has served the city well and asking council to vote against it.

Andi Hendricks: Urged council to leave personal feelings aside, listen to one another, and avoid misinformation about the ordinance.

Rick Tate: Supported the ordinance, citing history of Easley's form of government and argued the ordinance does not change the form of government but guarantees public concerns can be discussed.

Angela Jordan: Opposed amending the ordinance, stating council should not have administrative duties and asking why residents could not vote on the matter by referendum.

**UNFINISHED BUSINESS: Ordinance Second Reading:**

Ordinance 2026-15 to rezone parcel located at 1098 S. Pendleton Street, Easley, SC, identified as Parcel ID 5018-08-98-1206, from General Residential 2 (GR-2) to General Commercial (GC). Councilman Tom O’Shields made a motion to approve, seconded by Councilman Justin Alexander. There was no discussion. Motion carried unanimously with a 7-0 vote.

Ordinance 2026-16 to provide for the adoption of a city annual operating budget, its execution and effect, for the fiscal period July 1, 2026, through June 30, 2027. Councilman Tom O’Shields made a motion to approve, seconded by Councilwoman Chris Clark. Budget maintains current millage rate with no property tax increase. Includes funding for additional Flock camera technology for law enforcement. Discussion occurred regarding: Long-term personnel costs, growth in staffing levels, infrastructure funding and sustainability, and future planning and operational efficiencies. Mayor and Councilmembers acknowledged strong financial performance and the effort involved in producing a balanced budget. Council praised the balanced budget, strong financial performance, and staff efforts during the budget process. The Mayor noted staffing additions in planning and building departments addressed growth needs and reduced reliance on costly third-party inspections. Motion carried unanimously with a 7-0 vote.

Ordinance 2026-18 to amend Chapter 30 (“City Council”) of Title III (“Administration”) of the Easley City Code. Councilwoman Chris Clark made a motion to accept, seconded by Councilwoman Donna Rainey. Councilman Justin Alexander made a motion to amend Section 30.05(B) to strike the word, “date”, seconded by Councilwoman Chris Clark. Motion to amend carried with a 5-2 vote with Councilmembers Searcy, Clark, Alexander, and Fedder in favor and Mayor Talbert and Councilmember O’Shields opposed. Councilman Justin Alexander made a motion to amend Section 30.24(B) to add the words, “and Mayor”, seconded by Councilman Bob Fedder. Motion to amend carried with a 4-3 vote with Councilmembers Searcy, Clark, Alexander, and Fedder in favor and Mayor Talbert, Councilmembers Rainey and O’Shields opposed. Council discussed whether the ordinance changes Easley's form of government, whether agenda-setting authority is administrative or procedural, the role of the Mayor, Council, and City Administrator in agenda preparation, transparency and public notice requirements, and potential future implications of the ordinance. Councilmembers reported consultation with MASC representatives. According to guidance received: State law is silent regarding who prepares meeting agendas. Municipal councils have authority to establish agenda procedures through their rules. Similar provisions exist in other municipalities. The ordinance does not constitute a change in form of government. Councilmembers reported feedback received from the Attorney General's Office indicating: They found no indication that the ordinance diminishes the mayor’s authority, and they did not believe the ordinance changes the City's form of government. Copies of both are attached. Council Positions were split. Supporters stated the ordinance increases transparency, it ensures matters supported by three council members reach the agenda, it does not transfer administrative authority. Opponents stated the ordinance is unnecessary, existing procedures have functioned effectively, it creates opportunities for future abuse and shifts established authority. Motion to approve as amended carried with a 5-2 vote. Councilmembers Searcy,

Clark, Alexander, and Fedder in favor and Mayor Talbert and Councilmember O'Shields opposed.

**NEW BUSINESS: First Reading:**

A. Ordinance 2026-17 to authorize a franchise agreement. Motion to approve made by Councilmember Bob Fedder, seconded by Councilman Tom O'Shields. Staff explained that Wire 3 seeks authorization to install fiber infrastructure within city rights-of-way and provide telecommunications services. Additional permit reviews will occur prior to construction activity. Motion carried unanimously with a 7-0 vote.

**NEW RESOLUTIONS: None.**

**EXECUTIVE SESSION:**

Councilwoman Chris Clark made a motion to amend adding a discussion on a personnel matter (Section 30-4-70(a)(1)), seconded by Councilman Justin Alexander. Motion to amend carried unanimously with a 7-0 vote.

Motion to enter Executive Session for the two discussion matters made by Councilman Bob Fedder, seconded by Councilman Tom O'Shields. Motion carried unanimously with a 7-0 vote. Executive Session was entered at 8:25pm.

A. Legal advice pertaining to Project X. (Section 30-4-70(a)(2)).

Motion to exit Executive Session made by Councilman Tom O'Shields, seconded by Councilman Justin Alexander at 9:56pm

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

The meeting concluded at 9:56pm.

---

Mayor Lisa Talbert

---

Jennifer Bradley, City Clerk

Ward 6

Ward Report, Monday, June 8, 2026

I have heard from business owners around Old Market Square with complaints about the lack of parking in front of their businesses during events in the square. It seems that most of the parking places are taken up by folks who live above the businesses or workers for most of the day. I feel it is something that deserves discussing to find a remedy. We need to do everything possible for our local merchants to be able to conduct business.

I have received complaints about speeders on certain roads in my ward (many of them). A couple of specific issues I will forward on to Mr. Couch for resolution.

Recently I received complaints about the sorry appearance of our post office. That is one of the first things people see when they turn off 123 to head downtown and it looks really run down. Weeds and grass are high; it just looks sad and rundown, more so recently. I know it is out of our purview, but is there anyone we can talk to?

Ward 6

Re: Monday, June 8, 2026 City Council Meeting

MASC, Municipal Association of South Carolina:

**Mission Statement:** Formed in 1930, the Municipal Association of South Carolina represents and serves the state's [271 incorporated municipalities](#). The Association is dedicated to the principle of its founding members: to offer the services, programs and tools that will give municipal officials the knowledge, experience and tools for enabling the most efficient and effective operation of their municipalities in the complex world of municipal government.

The Municipal Association supports 11 affiliate organizations by providing training and networking for a variety of local government positions with specialized training needs. These include:

**Association of South Carolina Mayors**

**Municipal Court Administration Association of SC**

**Municipal Technology Association of SC**

**Palmetto Power Cities**

**SC Association of Stormwater Managers**

**SC Municipal Attorneys Association**

**SC Municipal Finance Officers, Clerks and Treasurers Association**

MASC offers an effective voice for the municipalities in the state by communicating with the state and federal lawmakers through an effective lobbying effort. By so doing the Association advocates for changes in state law that gives cities more authority to better serve residents and businesses.

Educational opportunities are available to municipal officials through four training institutes.

**SC Municipal Elected Officials Institute of Government**

**SC Advanced Municipal Elected Officials Institute of Government**

## Business Licensing Training Institute

## Municipal Clerks and Treasurers Institute

## Municipal Clerks and Treasurers Institute

Technical support is offered through field services managers who offer hands-on technical assistance, training, and consultation. Earlier this week I consulted with our regional manager; Rob Wolfe what this ordinance does and does not do. A specific question I asked was, "Does this ordinance represent a change of government?" After reviewing the ordinance which had passed its first reading and was a public document, he offered the following:

Hey Bob,

Had a chance to look through.

On setting the agenda – state law is silent on the matter of who creates the agenda for a council meeting, which leaves the power to set the agenda process is up to the council as part of the rules of procedure. We see this process play out through many different ways in cities across the state. Uptown had an article covering this topic a few years ago – it runs through several ways that cities prepare and present agendas. [Who Can Set or Change an Agenda? | MASC](#)

We had a similar provision to this ordinance in Cheraw regarding three council members. While I was in charge of preparing the agenda in Cheraw, our local rules allowed three council members to request an item be placed on an agenda.

([https://library.municode.com/sc/cheraw/codes/code\\_of\\_ordinances?nodeId=COOR\\_CH2AD\\_ARTIINGE\\_S2-10MECO](https://library.municode.com/sc/cheraw/codes/code_of_ordinances?nodeId=COOR_CH2AD_ARTIINGE_S2-10MECO)).

Regarding changing the form of government, that is a separate process set in state law that requires a referendum of voters. The exact process is outlined in Title 5 Chapter 5 of the SC Code ([Code of Laws - Title 5 - Chapter 5- - MUNICIPAL CORPORATIONS](#))

For the precise language of any ordinance I defer to your city attorney.

Hope this helps!

Sincerely,

Rob W.

Fw: AG Opinion Requested - Ordinance 2026-18, City of Easley - To amend Chapter 30

From: Matt Gates (mgates@scag.gov)

To: [REDACTED]

Date: Friday, June 5, 2026 at 03:34 PM EDT

Mrs Clark - please see feedback regarding your question from the Opinions division of the AGs office below. Please let us know how we may be of further assistance.

Sincerely,

Matthew R. Gates

Deputy Attorney General

Director of Government Relations

Office of the Attorney General

State of South Carolina

1000 Assembly Street

Columbia, SC 29211

803-622-0291

Mgates@scag.gov

---

**From:** Bob Cook <RCook@scag.gov>

**Sent:** Friday, 05 June 2026 11:31:56

**To:** Sabrina Todd <sabrinatodd@scag.gov>; Matt Gates <MGates@scag.gov>

**Cc:** David Leggett <DavidLeggett@scag.gov>

**Subject:** RE: AG Opinion Requested - Ordinance 2026-18, City of Easley - To amend Chapter 30

I agree with you all.

**From:** Sabrina Todd <sabrinatodd@scag.gov>

**Sent:** Friday, June 5, 2026 11:25 AM

**To:** Matt Gates <MGates@scag.gov>

**Cc:** Bob Cook <RCook@scag.gov>; David Leggett <DavidLeggett@scag.gov>

**Subject:** FW: AG Opinion Requested - Ordinance 2026-18, City of Easley - To amend Chapter 30

Matt,

We looked at some priors and did not find anything relevant to these proposed changes.

We don't see anything here that would diminish the Mayor's authority. So, we don't think this changes the form of government.

Thanks,

Sabrina

**From:** Bob Cook <RCook@scag.gov>

**Sent:** Friday, June 5, 2026 10:48 AM

**To:** David Leggett <DavidLeggett@scag.gov>; Sabrina Todd <sabrinatodd@scag.gov>

**Subject:** FW: AG Opinion Requested - Ordinance 2026-18, City of Easley - To amend Chapter 30

Would one of you look to see if we have anything helpful on this? Thanks

**From:** Matt Gates <MGates@scag.gov>

**Sent:** Thursday, June 4, 2026 4:47 PM

**To:** Bob Cook <RCook@scag.gov>

**Subject:** Fw: AG Opinion Requested - Ordinance 2026-18, City of Easley - To amend Chapter 30

Bob - I told councilman woman Clark we could check to see if we had a prior opinion that might address this issue. But also told her that we could not possibly research and draft one specific to their question prior to their vote on monday.

Sincerely,

**Matthew R. Gates**

Deputy Attorney General

Director of Government Relations

Office of the Attorney General

State of South Carolina

1000 Assembly Street

Columbia, SC 29211

803-622-0291

[Mgates@scag.gov](mailto:Mgates@scag.gov)

---

**From:** Chris B. Clark <clark630@bellsouth.net>

**Sent:** Thursday, June 4, 2026 4:34:04 PM

**To:** Matt Gates <MGates@scag.gov>

**Subject:** AG Opinion Requested - Ordinance 2026-18, City of Easley - To amend Chapter 30

You don't often get email from [clark630@bellsouth.net](mailto:clark630@bellsouth.net). [Learn why this is important](#)

Matt,

Thank you for taking my call to discuss an opinion from the Attorney General's office to amend Chapter 30 - City Council under Title III: Administration for the City Officials of Easley, SC, Code of Ordinances. I currently serve as the Ward 4 Representative for the City of Easley.

The question being championed by our mayor is whether this is changing the form of government. The current Form of Government is Mayor/Council. Our mayor seems to think the wording in this document usurps her authority and changes the form of government without a referendum.

As discussed, our city attorney, Daniel Hughes, has approved this revision, and we have the votes to pass these changes on second reading Monday night. What I would like to obtain is any prior opinion that could support this on behalf of the majority's decision. The last time this was changed was 1979. Your comment regarding the fact that current legislative bodies are not bound by a previous legislative body would help. Any other previous rulings that may jump out are appreciated as well.

I have attached the document.

Again, thank you so very much for taking my call.

Warm Regards,  
Chris

Christine B. Clark | Media Specialist

[clark630@bellsouth.net](mailto:clark630@bellsouth.net)