

Abbeville Council changes meeting times and greenlights purchases

By Mya Atten
matten@indexjournal.com

Abbeville County Council announced Monday that its regular meeting time will shift from 6:30 p.m. to 6 p.m. beginning in January. Meetings will continue to be held in the Council Chambers of the Abbeville County Administrative Complex.

In other business: Brian Moon, Abbeville County Director, was approved for a \$5,000 raise starting in January. Moon has served as di-

rector since February, following the resignation of David Garner, who accepted a position in York County.

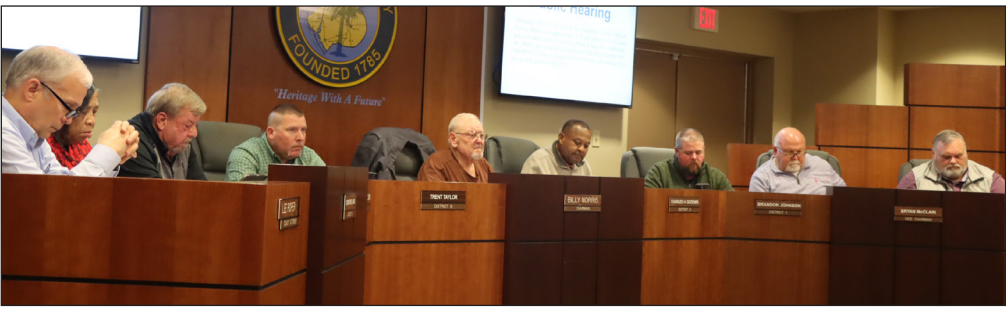
Resolution #2025-43 was approved to purchase one 2025 Chevrolet Silverado 1500LT, with upfitting by Palmetto Emergency Outfitters. The total cost will not exceed \$59,648.37.

Resolution #2025-44 was approved to purchase three 2026 Police Interceptor Utility AWD Base vehicles from Dick Smith Ford. Outfitters will handle the upfitting, and decals will be completed by Commercial Printing. The total cost will not exceed \$143,750.07.

Resolution #2025-45 was approved to enter into a purchase agreement with Hills Machinery for a CASE 2025 650M slop dozer. The total cost will not exceed \$137,865.

The next regular council meeting is scheduled for Jan. 12 at 6 p.m.

Contact staff writer Mya Atten at 864-943-5644 or email: matten@indexjournal.com.



MYA ATTEN | INDEX-JOURNAL

Abbeville County Council met Monday to change its meeting time and approve several major purchases. From left are Lee Roper, county attorney, Christine Long, James P. McCord, Trent Taylor, William C. "Billy" Norris, chairperson, Charles H. Goodwin, Brandon Johnson, Bryan McClain, vice chairperson and Brian Moon, county director.

A closer look at Lander’s annual Tree Lighting

As the semester comes to an end each fall, Lander students, faculty and staff have one last big event to look forward to: the Holiday Tree Lighting on the Lander plaza.

The Tree Lighting is a renowned event where the campus community comes together to share in the holiday festivities. While the current iteration of the tradition is new, starting in the 2010s, the first dated tree lighting goes back over 50 years.

In the Lander University archives, there are pictures dating back to 1972. Back then, the event was different compared to the large-scale event we know today. The first tree lighting on record occurred when



This is a photo of the first documented Tree Lighting at Lander in 1972. The event has become a beloved school tradition among staff and students.

Lander University was named Lander College. The festivities included a performance led by the Lander Singers, who sang iconic Christmas favorites. Elizabeth Jervey, who was the dean of students at the time, was determined to make this an event for everyone in the community to enjoy. In an archived Index-Journal article, Jervey said, "The

idea grew from the desire to provide a group activity in the spirit of the season that children, students and adults could participate in."

Because the Tree Lighting has become so well-known and enjoyed by many, it has become an even bigger event each year, aimed at creating a lively atmosphere for everyone to enjoy around the holiday season.

Meanwhile, planning of this event takes a lot of effort. Blake Sweezy, the production manager at Lander, said, "It's our biggest event of the year, and we've been planning it since May. Planning it logistically was certainly a challenge, but I liked working on it and planning for this event. While it was a lot of planning, communicating visions, and it required a lot of preparation and flexibility, I thought it went very well."

Sweezy also mentioned that his favorite part of planning for the event was the idea phase; as the event has become a tradition, Lander wanted to keep improving it. Sweezy said, "Because this was a new event for some of the [new] Lander faculty we got so many new ideas for improvement that kept the event refreshed and made it more impactful for the community, faculty, staff and students."

The Tree Lighting is becoming a cornerstone of Lander University's history. Every year, the celebrations become more elaborate with more fun activities for everyone. This year featured a gingerbread house building contest, a petting zoo, a Ferris wheel and a decorative hot chocolate station. The Lander University Cheer and Dance Team gave an incredible performance to a mash-up of high-tempo Christmas classics, and their cheerleader flying skills excited the audience.

Finally, toward the end of the night, President Richard Consentino lit the tree, and the crowd was able to enjoy both the tree and a vibrant fireworks show above the Cultural Center. It was a perfect way to wrap up the Fall 2025 semester.

Frank McVay, director of special events, said that part of what made this event so successful was the constant communication and wonderful environment that the teams involved created. He said, "Every time there was a change, there was a meeting and great communication from everyone involved. All teams involved were great to work with and all of the attention and focus from everyone really created a great atmosphere for working and for the event."

This event is not only for the Lander community, but it is created by the Lander community. The Lander faculty and staff put a tremendous amount of effort into the Tree Lighting, but so did the student workers. Adrian Yorick, production manager for special events, credits the students involved in setting up and cleaning up after the event for all their hard work and in making events like these possible.

Yorick says, "Having student workers really gives a backbone to our whole operation, which is very apparent during big events like this. Working with them and teaching them during events like these is very fun for me."

The Tree Lighting is an amazing and elaborate event put on thanks to the faculty, staff and students who work behind the scenes to make it all possible.

Armani Canty is a junior professional writing major at Lander University. Autumn McDonald is a senior professional writing major at Lander. In addition to co-authoring the Bearcat Babble, both work in Lander's Office of University Marketing and Communications as editorial assistants.

Make Christmas
unforgettable
with a gift from
Tidwell Jewelers
- timeless pieces that shine
brighter than the season itself.

Merry Christmas!

702 Montague Ave.
Greenwood * (864) 223-3140

SAY NO TO BACK SURGERY!

GREENWOOD Non-Surgical Spinal Decompression

**BACK PAIN-LEG PAIN
SCIATICA-HERNIATED
or BULGING DISCS
NUMBNESS-TINGLING**

Whiplash
Neck Pain

Bulged Disc
Herniated Disc
Sciatica
Pinched Nerves
Stenosis

FREE
M.R.I. Review

FREE BACK Evaluation
* Expires in 2 Weeks
\$ 150-Value
*Excludes Medicare/Medicaid

Dill's "The Unlocksmith" Lock & Safe

LIBERTY SAFE

BROWNING HOLLON SAFE COMPANY

Keep Your Secrets Here!

WE SELL THE BEST AND SERVICE THE REST

(864) 229-0962 • 205 Birchtree Drive, Greenwood, SC

**Dr. Chip Oncken, D.C.
DIRECTOR**

DISC CENTERS of AMERICA™

**423-B Calhoun Ave,
Greenwood, SC 29649**

**To Schedule call:
864-223-2224**

www.GreenwoodDiscCenter.com