



NEWS RELEASE

For immediate release

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City Council alters meeting schedule to improve efficiency, further enhance public involvement

A new meeting schedule will enable the Beaufort City Council to more effectively and efficiently conduct the public's business, council members said this week.

The difference in the new schedule is that it combines previously separate work sessions and formal regular meetings. The Council had been meeting every Tuesday afternoon. The new Council Schedule is as follows, with all meetings held at City Hall, 1911 Boundary Street in Beaufort:

- Second Tuesday of each month – Work session at 5 p.m. followed by regular meeting at 7 p.m.
- Third Tuesday – Work session at 5 p.m.
- Fourth Tuesday – Work session at 5 p.m. followed by regular meeting at 7 p.m.

The work sessions are more casual meetings where the Council members and interested members of the public literally sit around a conference table to discuss city issues. No votes are taken at work sessions. All the meetings are open to the public and the public is encouraged to attend and weigh in on agenda issues of concern.

“We’ve found the work sessions to be incredibly productive, because people on all sides of the table are much more inclined to share their ideas outside of the formality of a regular City Council meeting,” Beaufort Mayor Billy Keyserling said. “We get a lot done and consequently are better prepared for the formal meetings in the Council Chamber.”

Under the new system, nothing discussed in a work session will be voted on at the City Council regular meeting that same night, Keyserling said.

“We will wait a week, thereby giving the public adequate notice and council members more time to reflect on the discussion and listen to constituent concerns before they vote,” he said. “This removes the notion of railroading issues through on one night without adequate time for public notice and input.

“This council has been one of the most informed, deliberate and transparent councils in recent years and will continue to seek additional ways to enhance opportunities for public input, thorough consideration of issues and time to for the public to be heard,” Keyserling said.

The new schedule is in place through May. If Council members like the schedule, they may vote this summer to make it permanent, Beaufort City Manager Scott Dadson said.

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