

THE OLANTA TOWN COUNCIL MEETING
Thursday, August 6, 2026, 6:30 P.M.
Town of Olanta Community Center
215 Main St, Olanta, SC 29114

PRESENT:

Michael W. Welch, Mayor
Josh Jones
Levi Mims

In compliance with the Freedom of Information Act, a notice of the regular meeting of the Olanta Town Council was posted on the door of the Olanta Town Hall. A notice of the regular meeting was also provided to members of the public requesting copies.

CALL TO ORDER, INVOCATION & PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

Mayor Welch called the meeting to order and thanked everyone for their attendance. Mr. Josh Jones gave the invocation. Mayor Welch led the Pledge of Allegiance to the American Flag.

APPROVAL OF AGENDA–THURSDAY, AUGUST 6, 2026, TOWN COUNCIL MEETING

Mayor Welch requested a motion for Council to approve the agenda as presented for August 6, 2026, regular town council meeting. Council Member Mims made a motion to approve the agenda. Council Member Jones seconded the motion. The agenda for the August 6, 2026, meeting was approved unanimously.

APPROVAL OF AGENDA–THURSDAY, JULY 9, 2026, TOWN COUNCIL MEETING

Mayor Welch requested a motion for Council to approve the agenda as presented for July 9, 2026, regular town council meeting. Council Member Jones made a motion to approve the agenda. Council Member Mims seconded the motion. The agenda for the July 9, 2026, meeting was approved unanimously.

Special Recognition

Yard of the month: 308 Liberty St

Old Business

A. SCIIP GRANT A-23-C154 WATER EXPANSION - UPDATE

Mayor Welch informed the council Approximately 10 service taps remained to be completed. Final permits from the South Carolina Department of Environmental Services were also pending. Once the taps and final permits are complete, the project will be finished.

B. SRF GRANT 210006-05 LEAD/COPPER/ASBESTOS LINE REPLACEMENT/WATER TANK REHAB

Mayor Welch informed council that Bid openings were scheduled for August 12. Council will receive the bid results and contractor information at the next meeting. The work includes lead/copper/asbestos line replacement and rehabilitation of the water tank. Most water-line work will occur on Hampton Street, with additional work on three smaller streets. Residents may experience brief service interruptions and temporary discoloration during cutovers. The improvements are expected to reduce main-line leaks.

NEW BUSINESS

A. SALE OF OLD LIBRARY

Mayor Welch informed council that this matter was deferred to the next meeting pending an appraisal. Recent nearby property sales were discussed as information that may assist with valuation. Council members were asked to consider an acceptable sale price and the goal of returning the building to productive use.

B. SMALL TOWN SUMMIT AUGUST 12 (REGISTRATION ENDS JULY 30)

Mayor Welch informed council he wasn't going to be able to attend the Small Town Summit and identify an alternate attendee if the registered representative is unable to participate. Of particular interest is the State's approach to municipal audit requirements and the financial effect of audits on small towns. Council noted that current audits are necessary to remain eligible for grant funding.

C. GIRL SCOUT USE THE RAINES CENTER

Mayor Welch informed council that A Girl Scout troop requested permission to meet at the Raines Center on Sunday afternoons, beginning August 31, on a biweekly basis. The troop provided a certificate of liability insurance. The facility will be made available without charge, subject to any previously scheduled rental, and arrangements will be made for a key.

Council Member Mims made a motion to approve the troop's use of the facility. Mayor Welch seconded the motion. The use of the facility was approved unanimously.

D. RIA VIABILITY IMPROVEMENT PROGRAM

Mayor Welch informed council a meeting was scheduled for Monday to set a date for the RIA team's on-site meeting. Town representatives will be needed for discussions concerning finances, billing, rates, repairs, and system operations; technical staff and Eastern Engineering will participate in the infrastructure portion. The meeting is expected near the end of August, with a rapid assessment due by the first of October. The assessment will help the Town plan for outages, major repairs, financial reserves, rates, and long-term system sustainability. The RIA team will later present its findings at a council meeting.

E. PROPERTY -214 MAIN STREET DONATION TO TOWN

Mayor Welch informed council that The Hodge family offered to donate the property across from the Raines Center to the Town. Council discussed the poor condition of the structures, potential demolition, and the need to determine a safe method of removal. Council reached consensus to proceed with the transfer. The mayor will contact the town attorney, and contact information for Mr. Robbie Hodge will be provided. A remote closing at Town Hall may be used, with the attorney filing the documents. Council Member Jones made a motion to approve the donation. Council member Mims seconded the motion. The motion was approved unanimously.

F. MAYOR'S FINANCIAL REPORT

Attached

G. REPORTS FROM COUNCIL

1. **Water & Sewer** – Council discussed resident concerns about recent utility-rate increases. It was noted that sufficient revenue is necessary to operate and maintain the water system and to fund repairs. The increase in the solid-waste charge was described as a pass-through of the provider's increased cost.
2. **Grants and Economic Development** – Council discussed a grant opportunity for additional trees. Possible locations include areas near town entrance signs where existing vegetation may obstruct visibility. Palm trees or other lower-impact plantings were suggested. Leighann Beard was asked to assist with the application; financial information is available in the recently completed fiscal year 2025 audit.
3. **Public Safety** – Police Chief Robert Barfield reported on a planned August 15 picketing event concerning a camera located in town that is not owned by the Town. Under the Town's picketing ordinance, organizers must provide written notice at least 24 hours in advance, including the planned start and end times.

The ordinance permits use of town property and calls for officer presence. A copy of the ordinance will be provided to Chief Barfield. Public-safety efforts will focus on pedestrian and traffic safety near U.S. Highway 301.

4. **Events Report**
 - a. Next Gator Festival – everything is running smoothly
 - b. Main Street: Thursday Night Live 2026 Events – The next Thursday Night Live event was announced for August 27. For the following year, council discussed holding the July and August events inside the Raines Center because of summer heat. Residents will be encouraged to share event information through social media.

PUBLIC COMMENT

ADJOURN

There being no further business to come before Council, Mayor Welch asked for a motion to adjourn. Council Member Mims made a motion to adjourn, and Council Member Jones seconded the motion. There was no opposition to the vote, and the meeting was adjourned.