REGULAR MEETING OF CITY COUNCIL
APRIL 24, 2025 — 5:00 PM
MUNICIPAL COURTROOM
2222 HIGHMARKET STREET
GEORGETOWN, SOUTH CAROLINA
AND LIVESTREAM:
https://www.facebook.com/cityofgtown/

Notice of this meeting has been made in accordance with the South Carolina Code of Laws as amended.

1. **CALL TO ORDER**

2. **ANNOUNCEMENT CONCERNING ELECTRONIC DEVICES**

3. **PROCLAMATION**
   - **A. A Proclamation proclaiming April 25, 2025 as Arbor Day in the City of Georgetown, South Carolina.**

4. **ELECTRIC UTILITIES**
   - **A. My Meter Software Presentation by VertexOne**

5. **ADMINISTRATION**
   - **A. Hate Crime Ordinance Presentation**

6. **FINANCE**
   - **A. Residential Utility Round-Up Program**

7. **ADJOURNMENT**
   - **A. Motion to Adjourn the Special Meeting of City Council.**

120 North Fraser Street • Georgetown, SC 29440 • (843) 545-4000

ACTION ITEM

Council Meeting Date:	April 24, 2025
Department:	Building Official
Issue Under Consideration:	A Proclamation proclaiming April 25, 2025 as Arbor Day in the City of Georgetown, South Carolina.
Amount Requested:	
In Current Budget?:	
If not, please explain:	
Financial Impact:	
Points to Consider:	
Options:	
Staff Recommendation:	

Reviews:

Stephanie Buccione	Approver	Created/Initiated
Ryan Call	Approver	Approved
Scott Whittier	Approver	Approved
Stephanie Buccione	Approver	Final Approval

Attachments:

1. Arbor Day Proclamation. 2025

TREE CITY USA®
An Arbor Day Foundation Program

★★★ OFFICIAL PROCLAMATION ★★★

WHEREAS in 1934, the State of South Carolina established a special day to be set aside for the planting of trees, *and*

WHEREAS this holiday, called Arbor Day, was first observed with the planting of more than a million trees in South Caolina, *and*

WHEREAS Arbor Day is now observed throughout the nation and the world, *and*

WHEREAS trees can be a solution to combating climate change by reducing the erosion of our precious topsoil by wind and water, cutting heating and cooling costs, moderating the temperature, cleaning the air, producing life-giving oxygen, and providing habitat for wildlife, *and*

WHEREAS trees are a renewable resource giving us paper, wood for our homes, fuel for our fires, and countless other wood products, *and*

WHEREAS trees in our city increase property values, enhance the economic vitality of business areas, and beautify our community, *and*

WHEREAS trees — wherever they are planted — are a source of joy and spiritual renewal.

NOW, THEREFORE, I, Carol Jayroe, Mayor of the City of Georgetown, do hereby proclaim April 25th **ARBOR DAY** in the City of Georgetown, and I urge all citizens to celebrate Arbor Day and to support efforts to protect our trees and woodlands, *and*

FURTHER, I urge all citizens to plant trees to gladden the heart and promote the well-being of this and future generations.

DATED THIS 24th day of April 2025.

_____ _____

Mayor Carol Jayroe Date

Arbor Day Foundation®

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ACTION ITEM

Council Meeting Date:	April 24, 2025
Department:	Electric Utilities
Issue Under Consideration:	My Meter Software Presentation by VertexOne
Amount Requested:	
In Current Budget?:	
If not, please explain:	
Financial Impact:	
Points to Consider:	
Options:	
Staff Recommendation:	

Reviews:

Ryan Courtemanche	Approver	Created/Initiated
Ryan Courtemanche	Approver	Approved
Scott Whittier	Approver	Approved
Stephanie Buccione	Approver	Final Approval

Attachments:

None

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ACTION ITEM

Council Meeting Date:	April 24, 2025
Department:	Administration
Issue Under Consideration:	Hate Crime Ordinance Presentation
Amount Requested:	
In Current Budget?:	
If not, please explain:	
Financial Impact:	
Points to Consider:	
Options:	
Staff Recommendation:	

Reviews:

Scott Whittier	Approver	Created/Initiated
Scott Whittier	Approver	Approved
Scott Whittier	Approver	Approved
Stephanie Buccione	Approver	Final Approval

Attachments:

None

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ACTION ITEM

Council Meeting Date:	April 24, 2025
Department:	Finance
Issue Under Consideration:	Residential Utility Round-Up Program
Amount Requested:	
In Current Budget?:	
If not, please explain:	
Financial Impact:	
Points to Consider:	
Options:	
Staff Recommendation:	

Reviews:

Kathy Vermeland	Approver	Created/Initiated
Kathy Vermeland	Approver	Approved
Elise Crosby	Approver	Approved
Scott Whittier	Approver	Approved
Stephanie Buccione	Approver	Final Approval

Attachments:

1. Round UP Program
2. Residential Utility Round Up Program Redlined 4.14.25

AN ORDINANCE TO CREATE THE RESIDENTIAL UTILITY ROUND-UP PROGRAM AND THE RESIDENTIAL UTILITIES ROUND-UP ASSISTANCE FUND

WHEREAS, the City of Georgetown, South Carolina (the "City") is a municipal corporation of the State of South Carolina (the "State"), located in Georgetown County, South Carolina (the "County") and as such possesses all general powers granted by the South Carolina Constitution (1895, as amended) and statutes of the State to municipal corporations; and

WHEREAS, pursuant to Sections 5-9-10 *et seq*. of the Code of Laws of South Carolina 1976, as amended (the "SC Code") and Section 2-1 of the City's code of ordinances, the City operates under the mayor-council form of government, with a mayor and six council members serving as the governing body of the City (the "City Council"); and

WHEREAS, the City provides electric, water, wastewater, and stormwater utility services and accepts payments from customers for their consumption of utilities; and

WHEREAS, City Council finds the cost of providing utility services has increased drastically; and

WHEREAS, the City has increased utility rates in response to the increased cost of operations and maintenance, affecting low-income utility customers within the City; and

WHEREAS, other cities providing utility services and electric cooperatives have successfully implemented round-up programs to financially assist those less fortunate in their communities; and

WHEREAS, the Mayor and Council have determined it is in the best interests of the citizens of the City of Georgetown to promote generosity and allow utility customers to participate in a local round-up program and, to that end, desire to provide seed money and initiate a round-up program;

NOW THEREFORE BE IT ORDAINED BY THE CITY COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF GEORGETOWN, SOUTH CAROLINA:

SECTION 1. Enactment
This Ordinance was enacted by the City Council by a positive majority vote.

SECTION 2. Creation of the Residential Utilities Round-Up Program.
The Residential Utilities Round-Up Program ("Program") is hereby created as a means to financially assist the City's utility customers who are eligible and qualify for the Program. The Program would be voluntary and utility customers would have the opportunity to opt-in to participate in the program to round up their utility bills to the next highest dollar amount. The difference between the actual utility bill and the round-up amount would be earmarked to the Residential Utility Assistance Round-Up Fund to assist low-income households within the City limits with one-time financial assistance in a 12-month, period.

Additional private donations could be made on a voluntary basis to the Fund to increase the number of low-income households receiving assistance. Utility customers or anyone may

choose to make private donations to the Program in any amount. The donation will be restricted and earmarked to the Residential Utility Assistance Round-Up Fund.

The Program shall not make cash payments to utility customers. The program is intended to only provide a credit to the utility bill based on the recommendation from a third-party program eligibility administrator.

SECTION 3. Creation of the Residential Utilities Round-Up Fund.
The Residential Utility Assistance Round-Up Program Fund ("Fund") is hereby created as a separate fund to account for private donations resulting from voluntary enrollment of the City's utility customers on the Residential Utilities Round-Up Program and/or from other private donations. The Round-Up Fund is exclusively created to account for the receipt of those funds and all respective administrative cost and financial assistance appropriations as approved by City Council during the annual budget process. Funds shall be maintained in a separate bank account and not comingled with other City revenues. Earned interest on that account shall be used to further fulfill the purpose of the Program.

The City will provide $10,000 as seed funds for the Program from the FY 2023 budgeted Public Assistance Program. City Council shall appropriate funds each fiscal year based on the previous fiscal year's fund balance of the Residential Utilities Round-Up Fund to alleviate the financial burden of eligible and qualified utility customers within the City limits to receive assistance under the Program. Funds would be available on a first-come, first-served basis until the annual appropriation is exhausted or until there are no approved applications from eligible, qualified applicants, whichever comes first.

Unspent appropriations at the end of each fiscal year shall return to the Fund and be available for appropriation the following fiscal year. A maximum of $200.00 shall be maintained as fund balance in order to achieve the purpose of the Fund so that no funds are accumulated.

SECTION 4. Residential Utilities Round-Up Program Eligibility.
To be eligible for the program, a customer must:

(1) Be a residential customer of the City utility services and live within the City limits. Commercial customers are not eligible.
(2) Be under threat of disconnection of utility services due to non-payment.
(3) Agree to go on a payment plan of up to six months for the remaining balance of the past due amount, and adhere to that plan. Failure to adhere to the plan may result in ineligibility for future assistance from the Program. This requirement shall be waived if written documentation prohibiting participation in a payment plan is provided by a landlord.
(4) A maximum award of $400 per customer is permitted in a 12-month period.
(5) Must not have received assistance from the Utility Round Up Program within the last twelve (12) months.
(6) Applications must be received by the third-party program eligibility administrator no later than noon on the 20th day of each month to ensure consideration for that month.

SECTION 5. Residential Utilities Round-Up Program Administration.

The City Administrator and the Finance Director are authorized to develop the Program's Rules and Procedures based on the Federal Poverty Guidelines in collaboration with the third-party program eligibility administrator. Such Rules may be revised from time to time by the City Administrator and the Finance Director to comply with the purpose of the Program.

To ensure fair treatment of utility customers, the City Administrator and the Finance Director are authorized to contract with a third-party human services organization located within the City limits to receive, review applications, and qualify applicants for the Program based on Federal Poverty Guidelines. The organization shall provide a list of eligible and qualified utility customers within the City limits to the Finance Director to apply for financial assistance as recommended. The list shall certify that applications have been reviewed and eligible customers comply with Federal Poverty Guidelines. Any administrative fee shall be paid by the Fund.

SECTION 6. Severability
That if any phrase, clause, sentence, paragraph, or section of this Ordinance shall be declared unconstitutional by valid judgment or decree of any Court of competent jurisdiction, such unconstitutionality shall not affect any of the remaining phrases, clauses, sentences, paragraphs, or sections of this Ordinance, which remaining parts shall be considered as severable and shall continue in full force and effect.

SECTION 7. Penalty
Whoever violates or fails to comply with any of the provisions of this chapter is guilty of a minor misdemeanor and shall be fined not more than the maximum amount allowed by law.

ATTEST:

Stephanie Buccione, City Clerk

Carol Jayroe, Mayor

First Reading: 12/15/22

Second Reading: 1/19/23

Approved as to Form:

Elise F. Crosby, City Attorney

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