



You've Been Elected, Now What?

Newly Elected Officials Orientation

Virtual Session

December 3, 2025

<https://l.masc.sc/NewlyElectedResources>

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Municipal Association
of South Carolina



Welcome and Introduction



Municipal Association
of South Carolina



Getting the Most Out of the Association



Municipal Association
of South Carolina



Education, Training and Technical Assistance

Getting the Most Out of the Association



Municipal Association
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Education, Training and Technical Assistance

- Municipal Elected Officials Institute of Government
- Advanced Municipal Elected Officials Institute
- HLAD and MEO (Jan 20 – 21 Columbia)
- Annual Meeting (July 15 – 19 Greenville)
- Small Cities Summit (August 12 Columbia)
- Affiliate Associations (11)
- Main Street South Carolina
- Publications
- *Handbook for Municipal Officials in SC*

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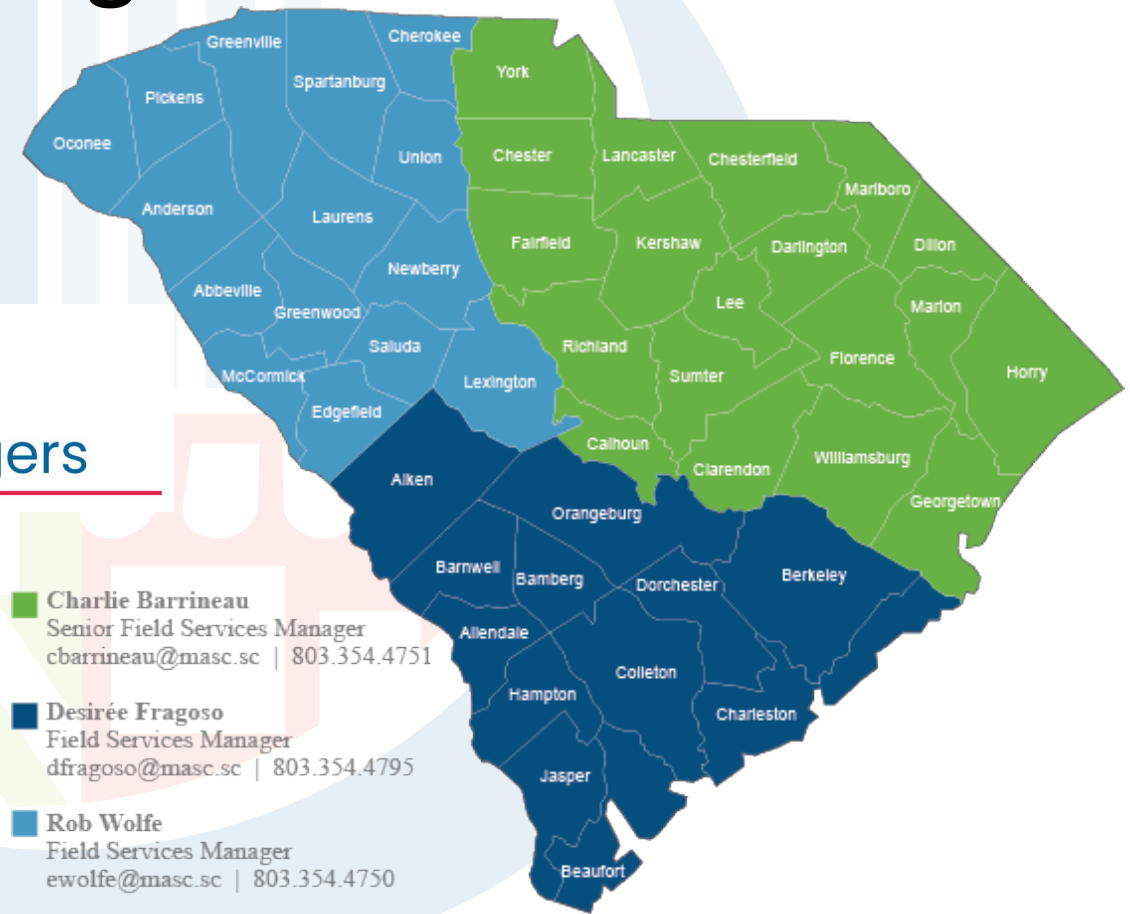
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Education, Training and Technical Assistance



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A Reminder of Your Oath

"I do solemnly swear (or affirm) that I am duly qualified, according to the constitution of this state, to exercise the duties of the office to which I have been elected (appointed), and that I will, to the best of my ability, discharge the duties thereof, and preserve, protect, and defend the constitution of this state and of the United States. So help me God."

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A Reminder of Your Oath

“As mayor (councilmember) of the _____, I will equally, fairly, and impartially, to the best of my ability and skill, exercise the trust reposed in me, and I will use my best endeavors to preserve the peace and carry into effect according to law the purposes for which I have been elected. So help me God.”

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Education, Training and Technical Assistance



Forms and Powers of Municipal Government

An Elected Official's Guide from the
Municipal Association of South Carolina

2024 Comprehensive Planning Guide for Local Governments



How to Conduct Effective Meetings



Model Employee Handbook for South Carolina Municipalities



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Advocacy and Communications


Getting the Most Out of the Association



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Advocacy and Communications

Voices. Knowledge. Solutions. Member Login Q


 **Municipal Association of South Carolina**

[About](#) [Advocacy & Legislation](#) [Education & Events](#) [Risk Management Services](#) [Programs](#) [Resources](#)


Civility. Respect. Solutions.

In 2021, our board of directors decided to make restoring civility an ongoing top priority for the organization. Since then, we have been working to offer our elected officials the resources, workshops and other tools that will help them listen, learn and de-escalate heated situations. We want our cities and towns to exemplify good governance and civil behavior.


[More](#)




From the Dome to Your Home




Annual Meeting




Local Revenue Services Programs



SC Municipal Directory



Risk Management Services



Uptown Newsletter

[Show desktop](#)


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Advocacy and Communications



Legislative Tracking System

[Home](#)

Welcome to the new bill tracking system for the Municipal Association of SC. This tracking system follows bills that directly and indirectly impact cities and towns. This new system gives greater detail on bills and action from subcommittees, committees and debate on the floor and includes searchable features. Pages for each individual bill include summaries, Association staff and a link to the General Assembly website.

Bill Number

Keywords

Sponsor

Is Priority Bill

- Any -

- Any -

Apply

Chamber	Bill Number	Bill Name	Status	Details
House	3030	Federal immigration program participation	Introduced	Bill Activity
House	3034	Enacts Fargo's, Hyco's, Rico's, Coha's	Introduced	Bill

Staff Contact

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Advocacy and Communications

2025-2026 Advocacy Initiatives

Zero millage	Municipal project sales tax
Short-term rentals	Terms of office
Small business liquor liability insurance	Protect municipal elections
Retiree return to work no earnings cap	Funding police equipment/infrastructure
Support mental health services	Flexibility local accommodations tax
Enclave annexation	

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UPTOWN

November 2025

a publication of the Municipal Association of South Carolina

VISITORS CENTERS BOOST TOURISM POTENTIAL

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**Annexation Information Hub Now Available on
Municipal Association Website**

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**Virtual Training for Newly Elected Officials
Offered in December**

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All Special Events Need a Safety Plan

page 13

[View in browser to see the message with images.](#)

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UPTOWN Update

A weekly update from the Municipal Association of SC

New this week

City Quick Connect podcast: Medical cannabis, funding allocations, elections bill

Casey Fields and Scott Slatton talk about the medical cannabis bill, the distribution of the Savannah River Site settlement funds, work on the state allocations for the American Rescue Plan, and a bill that would abolish municipal election commissions. [Listen to the podcast.](#)

From the Dome to Your Home: February 11

The SC General Assembly met in regular session this week. The House of Representatives worked through bills on the calendar, while the Senate approved the SC Compassionate Care Act that legalizes medical cannabis. Read [From the Dome to Your Home](#) for American Rescue Plan Act state allocation progress, Savannah River Site settlement distribution and local governments' role in the Senate version of the medical cannabis bill.

Don't forget

Save the date for SCMIT and SCMIRF Public

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CITY QUICK CONNECT PODCAST

From the Dome to Your Home

A weekly legislative update from the
Municipal Association of South Carolina

June 16, 2023

The Senate and the House of Representatives met on Wednesday to vote on several conference reports including the budget and bond reform. Legislators could return to Columbia next week to vote on the governor's budget vetoes.

Check out this week's report for more information on the budget conference committee report and other bills that were passed on Wednesday.

[Read the weekly report](#)

[Listen to the podcast](#)



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Risk Management Services

Getting the Most Out of the Association



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Risk Management Services

Risk Management Services of the Municipal Association of South Carolina

The Association offers two self-funded insurance programs to South Carolina local governments. Each has a nine-member board of trustees, elected from and by the membership.

SC Municipal Insurance and Risk Financing Fund

Operating since October 1990, SCMIRF provides all lines of property and casualty coverage including tort liability and automobile coverage for its member municipalities. The program emphasizes loss control to minimize each member's cost of risk, resulting in lower contributions for all members.

SC Municipal Insurance Trust

Organized in December 1983, SCMIT provides self-funded workers' compensation protection for local government employees.

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Risk Management Services



Public Officials' Liability Toolkit

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Public Officials' Liability: Know The Risks

The impact of public officials' liability claims can be measured in both direct and indirect costs to the municipality, and *in certain instances*, municipal officials **can be held individually liable** for their actions. The South Carolina Tort Claims Act and the municipality's insurance coverage can provide protection to elected officials while carrying out their official duties.

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Local Revenue Services Programs

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Local Revenue Services Programs

- Brokers Tax Program
- Insurance Tax Program
- Telecommunications Tax Program
- Setoff Debt Program

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Website Tour

Getting the Most Out of the Association



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Leadership, Your City and How It Works

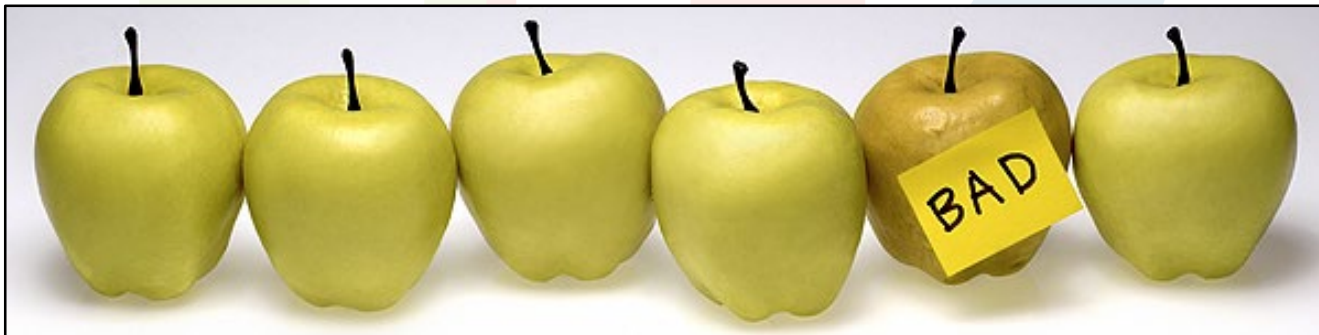
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Council's Leadership Role

- Election versus governing
- The challenge
- Strategic leadership
- Highly effective councils



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Your City and How it Works

- Do your homework
- Ask questions
- Learn your city's form of government
- Stay in your lane

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Know Your Form of Government

Three forms of municipal government

- Mayor-council - [Title 5, Chapter 9](#)
- Council - [Title 5, Chapter 11](#)
- Council-manager - [Title 5, Chapter 13](#)



Forms and Powers of Municipal Government

An Elected Official's Guide from the
Municipal Association of South Carolina

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The Basics of Effective Meetings

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Praise in public; criticize in private.

— *Vince Lombardi* —

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The Basics of Effective Meetings

How to Conduct
Effective Meetings



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Municipal Association
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The Basics of Effective Meetings

**PREPARATION FOR
MEETINGS
IS KEY TO SUCCESS**

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Arrive On Time



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Put Away/Silence Cell Phone



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Avoid Side Conversations



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Body Language



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All Members Are Equal

At the end of the day, the body is the ultimate decider of all parliamentary decisions. The chair is the servant of the assembly, not its master.

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Written Agenda

- Now required under FOIA for all meetings
- Provides a guide for issues to be discussed
- Ensures transparency
- 24-hour notice

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Municipal Meetings

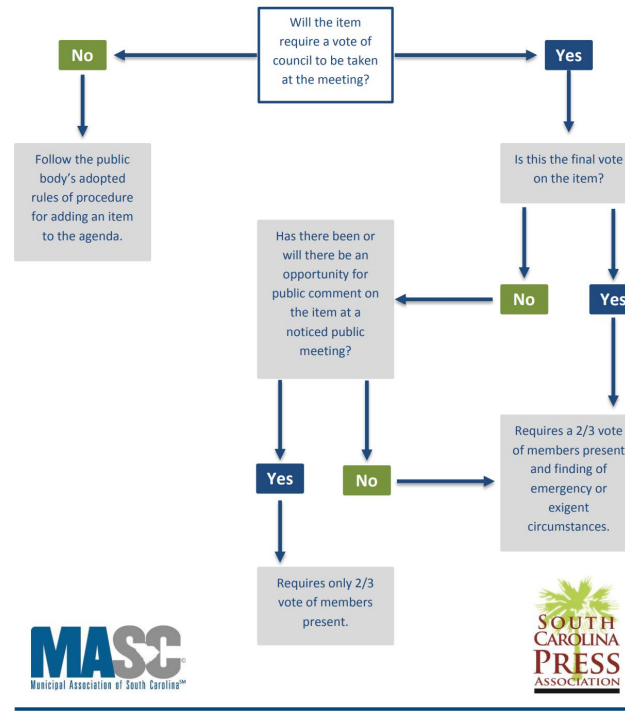
Five Types of Meetings Identified In State Law:

1. Regular council meeting
 2. Special meeting
 3. Emergency meeting
 4. Public hearings
 5. Executive sessions
- Meetings are a vehicle for achieving certain goals.
 - Important that council selects the right type of meeting.
 - Location and environment are important as well.



Amending an Agenda

Procedure to add item to a public meeting agenda within 24 hours of the meeting



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PRESS
ASSOCIATION**

Produced by the Municipal Association of SC and the SC Press Association

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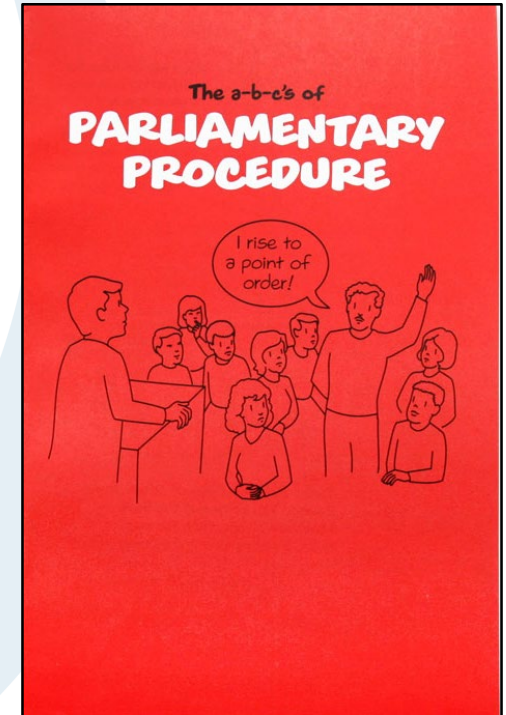
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Rules of Order

- Robert's Rules of Order
- A quorum is a majority of members of Council; any time a quorum (phone, text, email, social media?, etc.) is present it's a meeting



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Maintain Civility



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Civility Campaign



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Pillars of Civility

Be as eager
to listen as to
speak.

Concentrate on
what you have
in common, not
what separates
you.

Act as you
would expect
someone to act
in your home.

Make your case
on merits, not
on what people
want to hear.

Your time is
valuable. So is
everyone else's.
Respect it.

Ask questions
to learn. Answer
questions with
respect.

Concentrate
on facts, not
theories.

Ask "what will
persuade people
in this room?" not
"what will make a
great tweet?"

Make your point
about the issue,
not the person.



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Public Engagement



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Public Engagement

- Not mandated for all meetings
- Council should decide rules for public participation
- Maintain order



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The SC Freedom of Information Act

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FOIA Basics: How to Champion Transparency

- Open meetings
- Open records
- Technology pitfalls

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Open Meetings

- Wherever a quorum is gathered, there the public must be also
 - What constitutes a meeting?
- “It’s dark in here.” When can a meeting be closed?
 - Reasons for an executive session/how to properly enter
- Public meeting, not the public’s meeting
 - The public gets to attend;
 - The public can record;
 - But the public doesn’t get to run the meeting.

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Technology Pitfalls

- Your phone as a transformative device
 - What would your mother say? (The great whisperer)
 - When a text, email or social media thread becomes a meeting
 - Is it worth the risk? You decide.

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Critical Compliance Issues for Municipal Finance and Administration

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Annual Budget and Finance Requirements

- Annual budget adopted by ordinance after a public hearing
- Newspaper notice minimum 15 days in advance of public hearing
- Complete independent financial audit
- Submit annual Local Government Finance Report
- Penalties for non-compliance



South Carolina
Revenue and Fiscal Affairs Office



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General Revenue Limitations

- Increase in millage rate limited to CPI + population growth
 - Limited exceptions
- New service or user fees restrictions
 - Adoption requires positive majority vote (majority of total council membership-not members present)
 - Revenue restricted to pay costs of service or program for which the fee is paid



Special Source Revenue Limitations

- State Accommodations Tax
 - Statutory restrictions
 - State definition of tourism related expenditures
- Local Accommodations and Hospitality Tax
 - Local definition of tourism related expenditures
- Victims Assistance
 - Statutory restrictions
- State definition of victims services



Funds Held in Trust

- State fines, fees and assessments
- Employee payroll deductions
 - Retirement and or deferred compensation
 - Federal and state tax deductions
- Insurance premiums



General Restrictions on Public Funds

- Expenditure of Public Funds – requires public purpose
- Council salary increase limitations
- Council expense reimbursements
 - Council policy determines what is reimbursable
 - State law limits on reimbursements
- Violation may trigger criminal or state ethics enforcement action





The SC Ethics Act

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SC Ethics Act

- Title 8 – Public Officers and Employees
- Chapter 13 – Ethics, Government Accountability and Campaign Reform
- <https://ethics.sc.gov>

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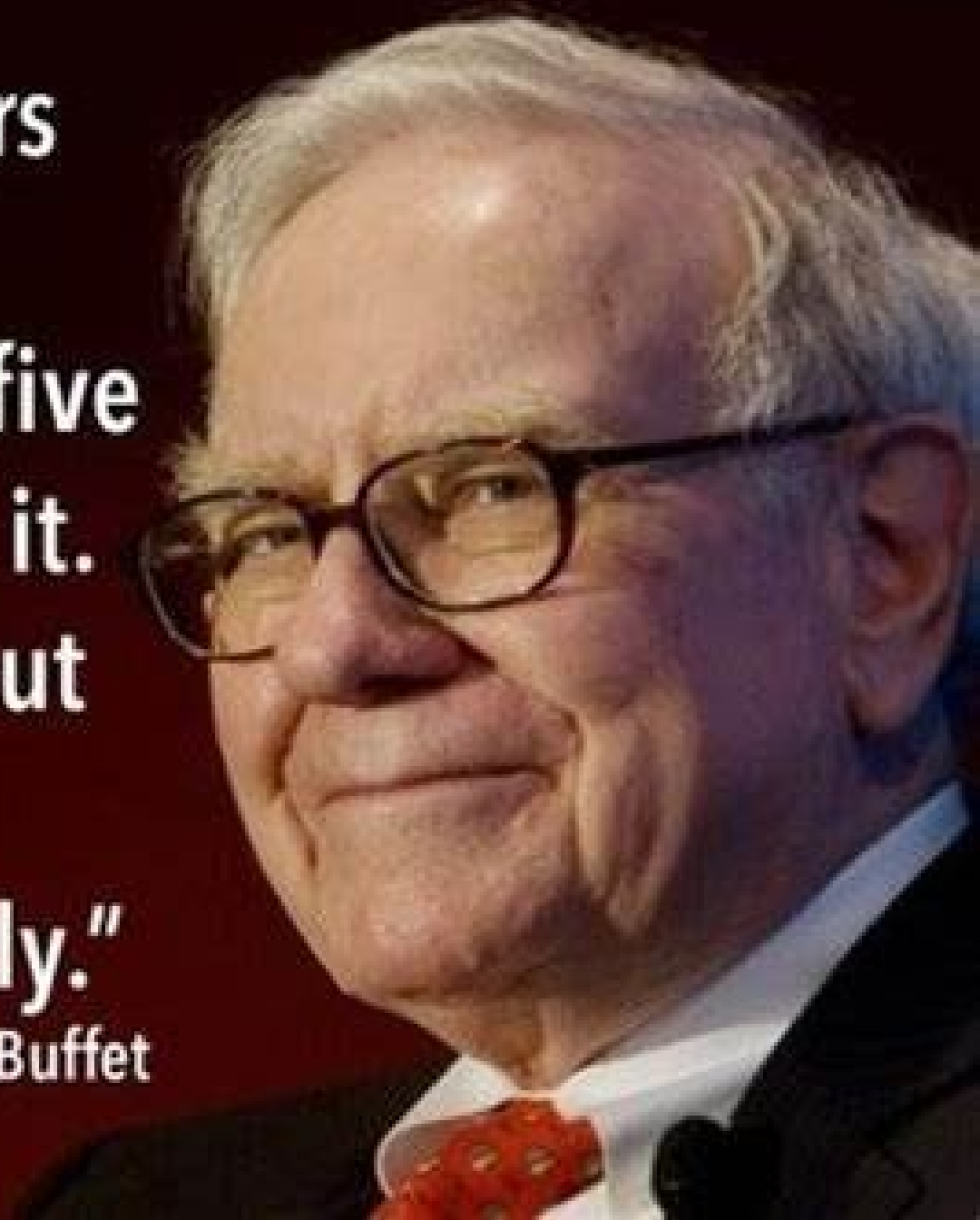
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**"It takes 20 years
to build a
reputation and five
minutes to ruin it.
If you think about
that, you'll do
things differently."**

– Warren Buffet



SC Ethics Act

- Annual Statement of Economic Interest
- File By March 30
- File Online
- Source, type and amount of income from governmental entity by filer or the filer's immediate family

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SC Ethics Act

RECUSAL STATEMENT

Member Name: _____

Meeting Date: _____

Agenda Item: **Section** _____ **Number:** _____

Topic: _____

The Ethics Act, SC Code §8-13-700, provides that no public official may knowingly use his office to obtain an economic interest for himself, a family member of his immediate family, an individual with whom he is associated, or a business with which he is associated. No public official may make, participate in making, or influence a governmental decision in which he or any such person or business has an economic interest. Failure to recuse oneself from an issue in which there is or may be conflict of interest is the sole responsibility of the council member (1991 Op. Atty. Gen. No. 91-37.) A written statement describing the matter requiring action and the nature of the potential conflict of interest is required.

Justification to Recuse:

_____ **Professionally employed by or under contract with principal**

_____ **Owns or has vested interest in principal or property**

_____ **Other:** _____

Date: _____

Member

Approved by Parliamentarian: _____

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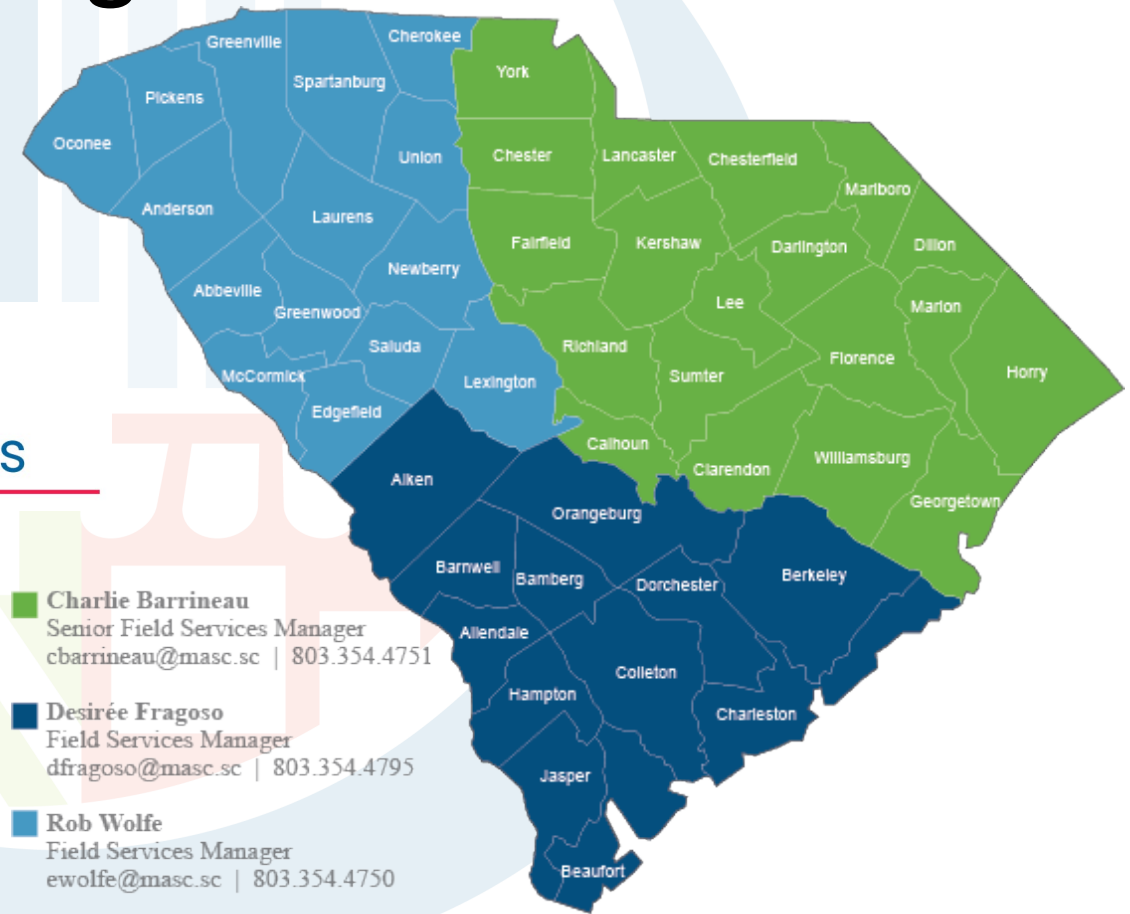


Questions

Education, Training and Technical Assistance



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