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County Council plans light agenda

By [Jason Spencer](#)
jason.spencer@shj.com

Published: Monday, December 15, 2008 at 3:15 a.m.
Last Modified: Monday, December 15, 2008 at 12:14 a.m.

Spartanburg County Council meets today for the last time in 2008 with a relatively light agenda.

If you go

Spartanburg County Council meeting: Committee meetings, which are where most of the discussion takes place, begin at

3:30 p.m. The regular meeting, which is where the voting occurs, begins at 5:30 p.m. All meetings are in the Council Chambers in the County Administration Building on North Church Street.

A few economic development incentives, an update on this year's reappraisal process and an overview of the November election top the list. Council also will hear a presentation on local farmers' markets, and representatives of Upstate Forever will speak on proposed amendments to the county's Storm Water

Management Ordinance.

Perhaps the most critical information elected officials will receive involves the ongoing economic crunch. Spartanburg County is grappling with an anticipated \$3 million budget deficit and a reserve fund that's lower than administrators like to see.

Council members will be given an update on what progress has been made on that front through internal measures - measures such as voluntary three-day furloughs by all employees who make more than \$50,000 annually, a move Sheriff Chuck Wright has decided to exempt his department from. The county, too, is taking a closer look at fuel consumption and overtime pay.

"By all accounts, those things are having the desired impact," Assistant County Administrator Tom Gates said.

The Herald-Journal reported in November that some county employees are making more than double their base salary because they accumulate a large amount of overtime pay. Some sheriff's deputies, working overtime at the county jail, have been averaging 70- to 80-plus hours a week.

Despite that, administrators say they don't expect anyone to question the sheriff's decision to bypass the furlough request or continue rampant overtime - not today, at least.

"Typically, if somebody's going to ask a question about something like that, I hear about it. But I haven't heard a thing," County Administrator Glenn Breed said.

Breed added that he doesn't anticipate bringing anything before council until he has recommendations for solutions to the overtime situation. That could come as early as January, he said.

On a separate note, Spartanburg County Elections Director Henry Laye said he won't be asking the county for any additional funding for his department today. Laye said he might ask elected officials to support state-level reforms to the South Carolina election process.

Early voting is likely one of the reforms that will be suggested.

Today also marks the end of 12 years of service by County Councilman Rock Adams.

Adams lost his seat by 49 vote in a primary election runoff in June. He will be succeeded by retired nurse Jane Hall.

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