

Bluffton Today

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Three to run for two Bluffton Town Council seats

Municipal election scheduled for Nov. 4

Shellie Murdaugh
Bluffton Today
USA TODAY NETWORK

There will be three candidates seeking two seats on the Bluffton Town Council during the upcoming Nov. 4 municipal election.

Voters may cast their ballot for two town council seats. The town currently operates under a council-manager form of government, with a mayor and four

additional council members, all of whom are elected at-large.

The town confirmed that two of its current council members, Fred Hamilton, Jr. and Emily Burden, have filed for re-election to their seats. One other candidate, Robert M. Dress, also filed for one of the two available seats, Town of Bluffton Clerk Marcia Hunter said.

Beginning in January of next year, council members will be compensated \$17,000 annually for their service. The mayor will be compensated \$25,000 annually. Council member terms are staggered every two years and each term is four years in length.

Only voters who reside within the town limits of Bluffton are eligible to vote in the Town of Bluffton Municipal Election.

Those wishing to vote in the Nov 4 Bluffton Municipal Election, officials said, must register to vote in person no later than Oct. 3 at 5 p.m., by email, fax or online no later than Oct. 5 by 11:59 p.m. or by mail which must be postmarked by Oct. 6.

The early voting period for the Nov. 4 Bluffton Municipal Election begins Oct. 20 and ends Oct. 31 at an early voting center during the voting period from 8:30 a.m. until 5 p.m., Monday through

Friday (closed on Oct. 25 and 26).

The early voting centers are located at the Beaufort County Voter Registration and Elections Main office at 15 John Gall Road in Beaufort or at the second early voting center at the Bluffton Recreation Center Gymnasium at 61A Ulmer Road in Bluffton.

If a runoff is needed, it will be held Nov. 18.

There are several precincts which will be open Nov. 4 from 7 a.m. until 7 p.m. Those wishing to find out more information about the election can contact the Beaufort County Voter Registration and Elections Office at (843) 255-6900.

SC funding SRO officers in every school



Hampton County Sheriff's Office Deputy Desiree Sumpter, at left, the School Resource Officer assigned to Varnville Elementary School, hands out book bags and lunch bags, courtesy of the HCSO, to H.C. School District staff members during the Sept. 2 Professional Development Day. PROVIDED BY THE HAMPTON COUNTY SCHOOL DISTRICT

What will this mean for the Lowcountry

Michael M. DeWitt, Jr.
Bluffton Today
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South Carolina Lowcountry public school and law enforcement officials are celebrating the recent announcement of additional state funding that will ensure there is a school resource officer (SRO) protecting our children in every public school in the Palmetto State.

On Aug. 27, S.C. Governor Henry McMaster, Department of Public Safety (SCDPS) officials, members of the General Assembly, and other state and local leaders officially announced that final funding had been secured for an armed, certified, full-time SRO in every S.C. public school.

"For years, we have made it our mission to ensure that every student, teacher, and staff member is protected by an armed, certified, full-time school resource officer in every school, in every county, all day, every day – and now we have finished the job," said Gov. McMaster in a statement from his office. "This achievement makes South Carolina a national leader in school safety and provides us all peace of mind knowing our schools are protected."

This funding will make a huge financial and public safety impact on our Lowcountry schools, say local officials such as those in Hampton County.

"Hampton County School District is proud to partner with the Hampton County Sheriff's Office to ensure the safety and well-being of our students and staff," said HCSO Superintendent Dr. Glenda Sheffield. "Our SROs play a

Three students receive Inspiring the Arts Scholarship

Bluffton Today

The arts are central to Palmetto Bluff, and the 20,000-acre community has long been a magnet for creativity drawn to its welcoming people and unspoiled natural beauty. Launched in 2022, The Arts Initiative at Palmetto Bluff was conceived to inspire and enrich lives through art in all its forms. Through hands-on educational experiences for residents and guests of Palmetto Bluff—and neighbors from the greater Bluffton, Hilton Head Island, and Savannah environs—the innovative programming engages and challenges audiences through shared dialogues and the beauty of the Bluff itself.

The Arts Initiative at Palmetto Bluff is thrilled to announce the inaugural winners of the Inspiring the Arts Scholarship, three extraordinary young women pursuing their artistic dreams through higher education. The honorees—Katherine Donahue, Emma Peeples, and Ryleigh Severide—were celebrated at a Rising Artists Celebration on June 20th at FLOW Gallery + Workshop in Palmetto Bluff's Wilson Village, where residents and guests gathered to honor their achievements and bright futures in the arts.

The first scholarship recipient will receive \$5,000, with the Honorable Mentions receiving \$3,000 each, to be put towards their educational endeavors in the arts.

"The Arts Initiative draws upon Palmetto Bluff's unique environment and community to guide the artistic experience and foster lasting connections with this place and its people," said



Katherine Donahue, Emma Peeples, and Ryleigh Severide were scholarship recipients. PROVIDED BY MORGAN STEWART, DIRECTOR, MALLOY AND COMPANY LOS ANGELES

Maggie Hackett, Director of Marketing at Palmetto Bluff. "We are very excited to be able to integrate this unique program into our local community in such a tangible way with the first Inspiring the Arts Scholarship, and especially proud to support and encourage young people as they pursue their creative passions."

Local student Katherine Donahue has been named the first official scholarship recipient, and Emma Peeples and Ryleigh Severide have been recognized with Honorable Mention awards. Their

continued dedication to the arts and inspiring journeys has been made possible in part by the generosity of the Palmetto Bluff and greater Lowcountry community.

Donahue, who will major in architecture at Clemson, plans to work as a historic architectural restorationist, guided by the desire to bring run down, old buildings in towns and cities back to life. In addition to appreciating the art and beauty of the structures themselves, she believes that restoring them

allows for communities to see first-hand how far they have come.

Peeples, who has been interested in the arts for as long as she can remember, has always been eager to use her knowledge to help those around her experience and express themselves through art. She will study studio art at Western Carolina University's Honors College rather than attend an art school with a specific major, with the goal of getting a well-rounded education which will prepare her to teach students regardless of their struggles, medium, or style. Her goal is to get her master's degree so she can teach at the college level, to ensure that those she teaches care about the art that they produce and the messages they convey.

Severide has spent most of her life devoted to understanding art, and how it impacts people's everyday lives, even if they don't notice it. She believes the impact that art has on people's experiences is substantial and she wants to contribute to that, to be an eye opener for people across the world to show them what art is really about. She would like to focus her studies at Savannah College of Art and Design on Illustration and Cartooning as both mediums were formative as she grew up, helping her navigate difficult personal events. During this time, her interest in art and storytelling evolved and she found comfort in the many panels and pages that make up a comic, eventually drafting her own comics, taking her own stories and making them into something new. This major would maximize her current education and open up many more opportunities in the future.