



# NEWS RELEASE

**For immediate release**

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## **Beaufort streamlines business licensing for group events, sets umbrella rate**

No longer will individual food truck vendors or other small businesses need a City of Beaufort business license to sell wares at public events and festivals – the Beaufort City Council approved a “group event business license” to streamline the process.

The new rule allows an event organizer to buy an umbrella business license to cover all the participating vendors. For instance, if someone plans a fundraiser within the Beaufort City limits and invites 10 different food trucks to sell their items, the organizer can apply for one group event business license to cover all the food trucks.

“Our goal, and the goal of City Council, was to streamline the process and make it easier for organizers and participants to secure the proper business licenses,” said Kathy Todd, finance director for the City of Beaufort.

The new requirement applies to all events open to the public within the Beaufort City limits, whether on private, commercial or public property.

The primary benefit is clearing up confusion about requirements for business licenses at large events. The amended ordinance exempts public market and short-term vendors – such as the Farmers’ Market. Also exempted from the group event business license requirement are the annual Beaufort Water Festival, Gullah Festival, Taste of Beaufort and Shrimp Festival based on their existing management structure at the time the ordinance changed Feb. 9.

Also, professional conferences and trade shows to which the public isn’t invited aren’t required to obtain a group event business license.

Public shows, festivals and events where admission is open and where exhibitors present goods, wares, merchandise or services for sale, rent or promotional purposes, are required to get the new group event business license.

“The Group Event business license is also going to save money for the businesses,” Todd said. The group event business license fee is based on the anticipated number of participating merchants/vendors:

<u>Event participants</u>	<u>Business license fee</u>
From 1-5 merchants	\$200
From 6-10 merchants	\$400
From 11-15 merchants	\$600
More than 15 merchants	\$1,000

“The other important thing is that if a participating vendor already has a City of Beaufort business license, such as a restaurant that will be part of a festival, then that vendor isn’t included in the count for the group license,” Todd said. “So, if an event has six merchants, but one of them holds a current city business license, the event organizer would need to pay only for the \$200 group event license.”

The amended ordinance took effect upon City Council’s second reading on Feb. 9. Information about the new license rate and requirements is being shared with local business organizations and to the public through traditional and social media.

“City Council believes that vendors and other small businesses add to the excitement of festivals and group events here in Beaufort, and it’s in the best interests of the city to support and promote these events,” Beaufort City Manager Bill Prokop said. “Setting up the group event business license is one way we can make it easier to do business with Beaufort.”

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