CITY OF LAURINBURG
CITY COUNCIL MEETING
MAY 20, 2025
CITY HALL AND POLICE DEPARTMENT
303 WEST CHURCH ST.
6:00 PM

Minutes

1. CALL TO ORDER

The City Council of the City of Laurinburg held its regular meeting on Tuesday, May 20, 2025, in the Council Chambers of the City Hall and Police Department at 6:00 p.m. with the Honorable James T. Willis, Mayor, presiding. The following Councilmembers were present: Mary Jo Adams, Mary Evans, Rosemary Rainer, Barbara Rogers, and Andrew G. Williamson, Jr.

Also present were Charles D. Nichols III, City Manager; William P. Floyd, Jr., City Attorney; Harold W. Haywood, Administrative Services Director / City Clerk; Brooke Bathie, Administrative Support Assistant.

Mayor Willis called the meeting to order at 6:01 p.m. Councilmember Adams gave the Invocation and led the Pledge of Allegiance.

2. APPROVAL OF AGENDA

Councilmember Adams moved to approve the agenda, with a second by Councilmember Rogers. The vote was unanimous.

3. PUBLIC COMMENT PERIOD

Joyce Macklan, of 1021 Alexander Avenue, addressed the Council regarding her light bill. She stated that she left her property in Laurinburg eight years ago with an outstanding light bill. She stated that she has recently moved back to Laurinburg and the City refuses to turn the lights on, even though she received a letter stating that she had a balance of zero dollars and that the previous unpaid bill was a write-off. She stated that she researched the laws and regulations associated with cases like this and read that Laurinburg has a three-year limit on past due bills. She also stated that she observed people near Wagram Street and Atkinson Street using headlights for children to see to play in the street at night because it is too dark.

Annie F. Reid, Joyce Macklan's sister, stepped up to the podium and stated that she had two $549 light bills a couple months ago.

4. CONSENT AGENDA

Mayor Willis read aloud the consent agenda:

a. Consider the approval of the draft minutes for the April 22, 2025, Regular Meeting.

b. Set a public hearing to be held on June 17, 2025, at 6:00 p.m. to consider the Fiscal Year 2025-2026 Proposed Budget.

c. Consider Resolution No. R-2025-06, Finding of Facts, for the approved request to rezone 928 & 932 S. Main St. from Residential-6 to Office/Institution.

d. Consider Resolution No. R-2025-07, Finding of Facts, for the approved request to rezone 904 S. Main St. from Residential-6 to Office/Institution.

e. Consider Resolution No. R-2025-08, Finding of Facts, for the approved request for a Special Use Permit for the development of a 72-unit apartment complex on Plaza Road on Parcel Nos. 01001060100404 and 010016001005.

f. Consider the application to use McDuffie Square by the African American Heritage Committee for the Juneteenth Celebration event on June 19, 2025, from 1:00 p.m. until 10:00 p.m.

g. Consider the application to use the shelter facility at Hammond Park by the Community Parents Autism Support Group for an event on May 31, 2025, from 12:00 p.m. until 3:00 p.m.

h. Consider the application to use the shelter facility at Hammond Park by an individual for a private event on August 30, 2025, from 1:00 p.m. until 5:00 p.m.

i. Consider the application to use the shelter facility at Hammond Park by an individual for a private event on October 18, 2025, from 8:00 a.m. until 6:00 p.m.

Councilmember Adams moved to approve the agenda, with a second by Councilmember Rainer. The vote was unanimous.

(Copies of Resolution No. R-2025-06, Resolution No. R-2025-07, and Resolution No. R-2025-08 are on file in the clerk's office)

5. CITY MANAGER REPORTS

a. Consider revising the fee for the use of the Downtown Facilities - presented by Corey Hughes, Downtown Advisory Committee.

The City Manager introduced Mr. Corey Hughes, Chairman of the Downtown Advisory Committee. Mr. Hughes addressed Council to request an increase in the rental fees for the facilities downtown from $100 to $250 per day. He stated that such facilities include the Art Garden, McDuffie Square, the parking lot, and any other space utilized for downtown events. He stated that, previously, there was limited infrastructure and amenities for those renting the spaces, and now there is more to maintain, requiring an increase in the price to rent.

Councilmember Rainer proposed that the increase from $100 to $250 is too drastic and recommended increasing the rental fee by $50 this year and an additional $50 next year. Mr. Hughes stated that there had been no complaints about the price when it was initially increased from $0 to $100. Councilmember Rogers asked if there were any specific financial calculations, from the increase in infrastructural maintenance, that helped determine the newly proposed rental fee. Mr. Hughes stated that the new fee is based on current and future improvements to downtown and reflects what other communities are charging for their community rental spaces.

Councilmember Adams motioned to approve the consideration of revising the fee for the use of the Downtown Facilities, presented by Corey Hughes with the Downtown Advisory Committee, to $250. Councilmember Williamson seconded the motion. The motion failed by a vote of two to three, with Councilmembers Evans, Rainer, and Rogers casting the dissenting votes. Council discussed the fee revision further with Mr. Hughes.

Councilmember Rogers asked if Council would consider revisiting the fee revision to discuss a more feasible increase in the cost. Mr. Hughes mentioned that he can request for the fee to increase to $175 instead of $250 at this Council meeting and propose a new price to Council after the upcoming downtown improvements are completed. Councilmember Adams asked Mr. Hughes how the fees are appropriated. Mr. Hughes stated that the rental fees collected go toward further improvements and investments downtown.

Councilmember Evans motioned to approve the consideration of revising the fee for the use of the Downtown Facilities, presented by Corey Hughes with the Downtown Advisory Committee, to $175. Councilmember Rainer seconded the motion. The vote was unanimous.

b. Consider Ordinance No. O-2025-11 Amending the Annual Vehicles & Equipment Capital Project Fund to transfer funds from the Electric Fund to the capital project fund for the purchase of transformers that will not be delivered until the next fiscal year.

The City Manager explained that the Capital Project Fund is for purchases that take over a year to complete, so instead of budgeting for them, they are put into the Capital Project Fund and are rolled over from year to year. He stated that this fund does not impact the annual operating budget because it rolls over every year. The City Manager stated that $212,000 in the fund was allocated to transformers. He stated that the bids were opened on April 8th at 2:00PM and the lowest responsible bidder was $261,000, so the budget amendment proposed is the difference of $49,150.39 for transferring electric fund money in the annual budget to the capital project fund to purchase the full amount.

Councilmember Evans moved to approve Ordinance No. O-2025-11 Amending the Annual Vehicles & Equipment Capital Project Fund to transfer funds from the Electric Fund to the capital project fund for the purchase of transformers that will not be delivered until the next fiscal year. Councilmember Adams seconded the motion. The vote was as follows:

Ayes - Adams, Evans, Rainer, Rogers, Williamson
Nays – None

(Copy of Ordinance No. O-2025-11 is on file in the clerk's office)

c. Consider Ordinance No. O-2025-12 Amending the FY 2024-2025 Budget Appropriations Ordinance (No. O-2024-21) to allocate the additional funding for the Fleet Wash Facility construction project.

The City Manager explained that the fleet wash facility is currently open and on a trial run. He stated that there was some confusion with the electrical engineer regarding the purchasing timeline for the air compressor and hot water heater. He explained that there is a $46,000 increase, split between the Electric fund and the Water and Sewer fund, which accounts for the change order of purchasing both the air compressor and hot water heater at the same time.

Councilmember Rainer moved to approve Ordinance No. O-2025-12 Amending the FY 2024-2025 Budget Appropriations Ordinance (No. O-202421) to allocate the additional funding for the Fleet Wash Facility construction project. Councilmember Williamson seconded the motion. The vote was as follows:

Ayes - Adams, Evans, Rainer, Rogers, Williamson
Nays - None

(Copy of Ordinance No. O-2025-12 is on file in the clerk's office)

d. Consider an Auction Marketing and Real Estate Brokerage Agreement from Iron Horse Auction Co., Inc.

The City Manager explained that the Real Estate Brokerage Agreement is for potential consideration from Council. He explained that the City's ownership of the Sanford Building was inherited from Richmond Community College and served as a temporary City Hall during construction. He explained that he reached out to Iron Horse Auction Company for an estimated value of the potential upcoming expenses needed for the Sanford building. He explained that the City would benefit from securing private-property ownership for the building, by alleviating the City from paying property taxes and bringing a local non-profit, Smart Start, to the community. He stated that the City's top priority is ensuring that the 10-year lease transfers over to the new ownership as well, guaranteeing Smart Start with this lease agreement upon potential sale. The City Manager stated that the agreement entails a minimum value for the property set at $180,000 and an estimated $200,000 to $250,000 profit for the City by putting the building in property taxpayer's hands and taking the liability off taxpayer dollars for a remodel. He added that, since the building has no real historical significance, the benefits of the City relinquishing control of the property far outweigh the disadvantages. He concluded that each decision made about the property and the lease agreement will come back to Council for consideration before moving forward.

Councilmember Williamson moved to approve the consideration of an Auction Marketing and Real Estate Brokerage Agreement from Iron Horse Auction Co., Inc. Councilmember Rainer seconded the motion. The vote was unanimous.

e. Set Candidate Filing Fees for the 2025 Municipal Elections.

The City Manager stated that, historically, the candidate filing fee for municipal elections has been $25.

Councilmember Evans moved to Set the Candidate Filing Fees at $25 for the 2025 Municipal Elections. Councilmember Rainer seconded the motion. The vote was unanimous.

f. Consider the revised City Council Regular Meeting schedule.

The City Manager explained that the next City Council meeting, originally scheduled for August 19th, conflicts with the Annual Clerks Conference, which both the City Clerk and Deputy Clerk are attending. He stated that their attendance at the Council meetings is necessary, so he proposed August 26th as the new date for the Council meeting for mutual accommodation.

Councilmember Williamson moved to approve the revised City Council Regular Meeting schedule, from August 19th to August 26th. Councilmember Adams seconded the motion. The vote was unanimous.

6. COMMENTS FROM MAYOR AND/OR COUNCILMEMBERS

Mayor Willis stated that he sent Council an email inviting everyone to an EDC groundbreaking ceremony on Tuesday, May 27th at 10:00 AM for the next spec building. Mayor Willis also stated that the Laurinburg Highland Hooligans wooden bat baseball team's first game is on June 3rd at 7:00 PM. He stated that he would be throwing the first pitch.

The City Manager stated that there would be a Memorial Day ceremony on May 26th at 5:30 PM at Hillside Memorial Park and invited everyone to attend.

Councilmember Evans stated that she read about Laurinburg's new Quick Pack and Ship Service Center in Scotland Crossing. She stated that the establishment is open to providing some of the same services that UPS offers and encouraged the community to check it out.

Councilmember Adams stated that the airport meets this coming Thursday and that there is a lot going on out there. She stated that a low bid for the terminal was approved and that they are in the process of bidding for new T hangars. She also stated that renderings of what the new terminal will look like will be ready for display soon. Councilmember Adams also stated that Council's recent conference, CityVision, in Greenville was a success and that there was a lot of economic development information provided.

7. CLOSED SESSION (IF NEEDED)

No closed session needed.

8. ADJOURNMENT

Motion was made by Councilmember Rainer, seconded by Councilmember Adams, and unanimously carried to adjourn the meeting.

The meeting was adjourned at 6:39 p.m.

James T. Willis, Mayor

Harold W. Haywood, City Clerk