

**CITY OF LAURINBURG
CITY COUNCIL MEETING
OCTOBER 21, 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, October 21, 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; Amanda Futrell, Deputy City Clerk / Contracts Administrator.

Mayor Willis called the meeting to order at 6:00 p.m. Councilmember Williamson gave the Invocation and led the Pledge of Allegiance.

2. APPROVAL OF AGENDA

The City Manager stated that there were two changes made to the Agenda. He stated that Item 6, a request to rezone 209 Midland Way from Residential-15 to Office/Institutional, was removed per the applicant's withdrawal of their request and Item 7(e), an Update on McKay Street Water Tank, was added.

Councilmember Adams moved to approve the agenda, with a second by Mayor Pro Tem Evans, and the vote was unanimous.

3. RECOGNITION

Mayor James T. Willis recognized the City of Laurinburg Fire Department for two separate instances of heroic service and lifesaving efforts.

- a. Recognition of Laurinburg Fire Department Employees.

Mayor Willis read aloud Resolution No. R-2025-16 recognizing the heroic service and lifesaving efforts of the City of Laurinburg Fire Department and its Firefighters, as follows;

RESOLUTION OF THE CITY OF LAURINBURG RECOGNIZING THE HEROIC SERVICE AND LIFESAVING EFFORTS OF THE CITY OF LAURINBURG FIRE DEPARTMENT AND ITS FIREFIGHTERS

WHEREAS, the Laurinburg Fire Department members bravely and selflessly risk their lives every day to protect families, visitors and businesses in the City of Laurinburg and surrounding areas. They respond without hesitation to emergencies, providing fire suppression, medical care, rescue services and disaster response with courage and compassion; and,

WHEREAS, on the evening of September 13, 2025, around 6:30 p.m. the Laurinburg Fire Department demonstrated exceptional bravery and professionalism directly contributing to the preservation of life and safety of an individual. Engineer Bryant Wright was off duty and traveling home when he received a call for service regarding a motor vehicle accident on Harry Malloy Road near Barnes Bridge Road. Without hesitation, Engineer Wright responded directly to the scene along with members of the Laurinburg Fire Department. Upon arrival Engineer Wright found a single car overturned in a ditch and on fire from the engine compartment. Engineer Wright located a male occupant trapped inside the vehicle. With limited tools, Engineer Wright began working to extricate the victim while awaiting the arrival of additional apparatus. Engineer Chris Suarez soon arrived on scene and immediately assisted with the rescue efforts. Together, they worked tirelessly to free the trapped individual. When the first truck arrived, Assistant Chief David Evans deployed a hose line to suppress the fire, allowing the rescuers to safely remove the victim from the vehicle and transfer him to EMS for care; and,

WHEREAS, their actions reflect the highest standards of integrity, teamwork and dedication to the safety of the community; and,

WHEREAS, the Laurinburg City Council hereby expresses its sincere appreciation and gratitude to the Laurinburg Fire Department and all its members for their heroic efforts, professionalism, and selfless dedication.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, by the City of Laurinburg City Council: That we hereby express sincere appreciation and gratitude to the Laurinburg Fire Department and all its members, with special recognition of Assistant Chief David Evans, Engineer Bryant Wright, and Engineer Chris Suarez, for their heroic efforts, professionalism and selfless dedication.

ADOPTED this the 21st day of October, 2025 in the City of Laurinburg, North Carolina, by Councilmembers Mary Jo Adams, Mary Evans, Rosemary Rainer, Barbara Rogers, and Andrew G. Williamson, Jr.

James T. Willis,
Mayor

Mary Evans,
Mayor Pro Tem

Barbara C. Rogers,
Councilmember-At Large

Rosemary Rainer,
Councilmember
District-One

Mary Jo Adams,
Councilmember
District-Two

Andrew G. Williamson, Jr.,
Councilmember
District-Two

Mayor Willis read aloud Resolution No. R-2025-17 recognizing the heroic service and lifesaving efforts of the City of Laurinburg Fire Department and its Firefighters, as follows;

RESOLUTION OF THE CITY OF LAURINBURG RECOGNIZING THE HEROIC SERVICE AND LIFESAVING EFFORTS OF THE CITY OF LAURINBURG FIRE DEPARTMENT AND ITS FIREFIGHTERS

WHEREAS, the Laurinburg Fire Department and its dedicated firefighters faithfully serve the residents of the City of Laurinburg and surrounding areas, responding to emergencies with professionalism, skill and courage.; and,

WHEREAS, the Laurinburg Fire Department demonstrated bravery and teamwork in responding to a structure fire, resulting in the saving a life and protection of property; and,

WHEREAS, on the morning of October 3, 2025, around 1:55 a.m. the Laurinburg Fire Department received a call to a structure fire with an individual trapped inside. After initiating a search, members of the fire department located an unresponsive male in a bedroom where a mattress was burning, and heavy smoke filled the room. Engineer Grey Martin removed the subject from the home. Engineer Martin was then met by Lieutenant Bradley Strickland and Assistant Chief David Evans, who assisted getting the subject to safety. The fire was quickly extinguished and prevented from spreading further. The individual was assessed by the Scotland County EMS and airlifted to UNC Chapel Hill for further medical evaluation; and,

WHEREAS, the Laurinburg City Council and the community they represent deeply value the selflessness, quick thinking and dedication of our firefighters who embody the highest ideals of public service; and,

WHEREAS, it is fitting that the Laurinburg City Council formally recognizes and commends the Laurinburg Fire Department and its personnel for their outstanding service and commitment to the safety and well-being of our community.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, by the City of Laurinburg City Council: That sincere appreciation and gratitude are hereby extended to the members of the Laurinburg Fire Department, with special recognition of Assistant Chief David Evans, Lieutenant Bradley Strickland, and Engineer Grey Martin, for their heroic actions, exemplary performance, and unwavering dedication to protecting the lives and property of our citizens.

ADOPTED this the 21st day of October, 2025 in the City of Laurinburg, North Carolina by Councilmembers Mary Jo Adams, Mary Evans, Rosemary Rainer, Barbara Rogers, and Andrew G. Williamson, Jr.

James T. Willis,
Mayor

Mary Evans,
Mayor Pro Tem

Barbara C. Rogers,
Councilmember-At Large

Rosemary Rainer,
Councilmember
District-One

Mary Jo Adams,
Councilmember
District-Two

Andrew G. Williamson, Jr.,
Councilmember
District-Two

Councilmember Williamson moved to Approve Resolutions No. R-2025-16 and No. R-2025-17 in Recognition of Laurinburg Fire Department Employees, as presented. Mayor Pro Tem Evans seconded the motion. The vote was as follows:

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

(Copies of Resolutions No. R-2025-16 and No. R-2025-17 on file in the Clerk's office)

4. PUBLIC COMMENT PERIOD

Ms. Audrey Mason, of 10181 Adams Avenue, addressed Council regarding maintenance along the highway and inquired whether she could obtain City water since she resides on a private road. The City Manager stated that he would review the GIS maps to determine whether her address is located within city limits. Mayor Willis explained that City water is available only to properties within city limits. He added that, however, the City provides water to the County, and the County in turn provides water to Scotland County residents. The City Manager asked Ms. Mason to

leave her phone number with the City Clerk so that staff could follow up with her the following day.

5. CONSENT AGENDA

Mayor Willis read aloud the Consent Agenda:

- a. Consider the approval of the draft minutes for the September 16, 2025, Regular Meeting.
- b. Set a public hearing for Tuesday, November 18, 2025, at 6:00 p.m. to consider a request to rezone 218 McGirt's Bridge Road from Residential-6 to General Business.
- c. Set a public hearing for Tuesday, November 18, 2025, at 6:00 p.m. to consider a request to rezone Parcel No. 020306 0100101 on McFarland Road from Residential-20MH to Industrial.
- d. Consider Ordinance No. O-2025-23 to Amend the Fiscal Year 2025-2026 Annual Budget Appropriations Ordinance No. O-2025-17 to appropriate the funds received from the sale of a fixed asset for the ongoing improvements to McDuffie Square.
- e. Consider Ordinance No. O-2025-24 to Amend the Fiscal Year 2025-2026 Annual Budget Appropriations Ordinance No. O-2025-17 to receive the Electricities Downtown Revitalization Grant in the amount of \$10,000 and expend the funds for the McDuffie Square Project.
- f. Consider Ordinance No. O-2025-25 to establish the System Automation Project budget in the Substation Capital Project Fund.
- g. Consider Ordinance No. O-2025-26 to Amend the Fiscal Year 2025-2026 Annual Budget Appropriations Ordinance No. O-2025-17 to transfer funds from the Vehicles and Equipment Capital Project Fund to the General Fund for planned police vehicle purchases.

Councilmember Rogers moved to approve the Consent Agenda, as presented. Councilmember Adams seconded the motion. The vote was as follows:

Ayes — Adams, Evans, Rainer, Rogers, Williamson

Nays — None

(Copies of Ordinances No. O-2025-23, No. O-2025-24, No. O-2025-25, and No. O-2025-26 on file in the Clerk's office)

6. PUBLIC HEARING

- a. Consider a request to rezone 209 Midland Way from Residential-15 to Office/Institutional.

Mayor Willis noted that a Public Hearing was not required, as the applicant had withdrawn their request to rezone 209 Midland Way from Residential-15 to Office/Institutional.

7. CITY MANAGER REPORTS

- a. Community Development Update.

The City Manager invited Community Development Director Walker McCoy to the podium to provide an update on ongoing Community Development projects.

Mr. McCoy reviewed the following projects, noting that several would require Council approval before proceeding.

Sesquicentennial Celebration

Mr. McCoy presented an update regarding the upcoming 2027 Sesquicentennial Anniversary of the City of Laurinburg, noting that the goal is to form a committee to plan and coordinate events throughout the year. He requested Council's approval to establish the committee, along with input on its structure and strategies to ensure a successful celebration. Mr. McCoy stated that the City is seeking individuals with experience in event planning, as well as broad participation and ideas from the community.

Mayor Willis asked if there were any initial ideas for the celebration. Mr. McCoy noted that while Laurinburg's official founding date was in February, discussions have included the possibility of a major event around the Fourth of July to mark the milestone.

Mayor Willis commended Mr. McCoy and his team for taking the initiative to begin organizing efforts for such a significant anniversary, highlighting that Laurinburg is older than Scotland County itself. The City Manager confirmed that

the City's founding date was February 12, 1877, and stated that there would be approximately a year and a half for planning and preparation.

Councilmember Rogers inquired whether Council would need to appoint committee members or simply provide recommendations of candidates. Mr. McCoy responded that Council approval to move forward is needed, and that any suggestions for potential committee members or ideas on how to structure the group would be appreciated. He emphasized that the goal is to showcase Laurinburg's history – both downtown and throughout the City – in alignment with Council's vision for historical celebration and community commemoration.

Councilmember Rogers also suggested that each district could have a representative, or that district representatives could nominate candidates from their respective areas.

Santa Claus at City Hall

Mr. McCoy reported that the Beautification crew has begun installing and adjusting Christmas lights throughout the City, noting that the number of decorations continues to increase each year. He shared that he has discussed with the City Manager the possibility of hosting a "Santa at City Hall" event, featuring holiday decorations in the downstairs foyer. He further explained that the event would allow Laurinburg residents to visit Santa at no cost, with a photographer available to take family photos.

The City Manager noted that such an event could serve as a meaningful, community-centered celebration for families to enjoy. Mr. McCoy stated that he will continue exploring the details and return to Council if further approval or input is needed. He added that he has already contacted a photographer to gauge interest and envisions hosting the event on a Saturday in early December to encourage strong participation from families and children.

127 South Main Street Building Renovations

Mr. McCoy provided an update on the 127 South Main Street building downtown. He explained that portions of the exterior material have been selectively removed by the Electric Department to allow the architect to assess the underlying structure. He added that this removal revealed exposed brick, and the goal is to remove the remaining concrete to uncover and restore the original brick façade, which may require a protective coating. Mr. McCoy noted that the project is currently out to bid and that selective demolition has also been conducted inside the building, based on evaluations by the architect and structural engineer. He concluded that certain sections of the building were

exposed for inspection purposes, while other nonessential areas identified during the review are being cleared and properly disposed of.

McDuffie Square Stage Project

Mr. McCoy reported that the McDuffie Square sign has been installed and is now visible to the public. He noted that a formal ribbon-cutting ceremony is still needed and may be scheduled for Spring 2026.

Mr. McCoy presented images to Council showing progress on the McDuffie Square Stage Project and provided a brief overview of the visuals. He explained that the first image depicted the foundation work completed by the City Water Department, showing the area where the boxcar will be placed, including the rebar framework for structural reinforcement. He noted that the second image showed the framework for the concrete railroad ties, followed by additional images displaying ongoing progress at the site. Mr. McCoy explained that the next steps include laying the rails, transporting the boxcar to the location, and positioning it behind the stage with doors that may open for storage use. He further detailed that the stage itself would be constructed in front of the boxcar with a roof that cantilevers over it. He confirmed that all boxcar renovations will occur on-site, once secured in place. Mr. McCoy emphasized that the design goal is for the structure to appear as realistic as possible, as if the boxcar is resting on the railroad tracks.

Mayor Pro Tem Evans asked whether the location of the stage would create any traffic or visibility concerns. The City Manager responded that the size and placement of the boxcar will not obstruct visibility or cause traffic issues. Mr. McCoy concurred, confirming that the structure will not impact driver sightlines.

Councilmember Williamson asked whether the boxcar would be located behind or in front of the rail ties. Mr. McCoy explained that it would sit at the back of the stage. The City Manager clarified that it would rest directly on the railroad ties. Councilmember Williamson then asked when the boxcar would be ready for installation. Mr. McCoy stated that no date has been confirmed, as transportation logistics are still being finalized. The City Manager noted that transporting the boxcar will be a complex and costly process, but the project remains on track for completion by April 2026, coinciding with the Suds and Swine festival. He added that once the final stage design is complete, the project will be put out for bid and that some design adjustments have been made to accommodate a larger, 50-foot boxcar instead of the original 30-foot design, resulting in relocated stairs and ramp placement.

Mayor Willis asked if the depot would be included in the budget next year. The City Manager stated that it would be, if approved by Council.

Councilmember Williamson also noted that the lighting on the McDuffie Square sign does not currently illuminate the lettering as intended. Mr. McCoy responded that his team is addressing the issue by adjusting the light shades to better direct illumination toward the sign rather than the ground.

Monsters on Main Event

Mr. McCoy reminded Council of the Monsters on Main event to take place downtown over the upcoming weekend. He stated that the festivities will include a Farmers Market beginning at 9:00 a.m. on Main Street, a Sip and Shop event from 11:00 a.m. to 1:00 p.m., and Trunk-or-Treating from 11:00 a.m. to 1:00 p.m., during which the Downtown Group will host a tent to hand out candy to attendees.

- b. Consider recommendation to reject all bids for the Bridge Creek Pump Station Bar Screen Replacement Project.

The City Manager reported that three bids were received by the September 9th deadline for the Bridge Creek Pump Station Bar Screen Replacement Project, which is funded through a state direct appropriations. He noted that the lowest bid, at \$1,365,000, exceeded the budgeted amount and was significantly higher than the \$467,000 cost of a comparable project completed on Pump No. 19 in 2021. He explained that, given the substantial difference in bids despite the projects' similarities, it was recommended for Council to reject all bids. He further explained that staff is now evaluating a rehabilitation option for the Bridge Creek Pump Station Bar Screen, which will be presented to Council for consideration.

Councilmember Rainer moved to reject all bids for the Bridge Creek Pump Station Bar Screen Replacement Project, as presented. Mayor Pro Tem Evans seconded the motion. The vote was unanimous.

- c. Consider the proposed Fuel Facility Agreement between Scotland County and the City of Laurinburg.

The City Manager reported that a response had been received from the County regarding the proposed Fuel Facility Agreement between Scotland County and the City of Laurinburg. He noted that the County made several minor revisions, which were reviewed and approved by the City Attorney and City staff. He further explained that, due to these modifications, the agreement must be brought back before Council for approval. The City Manager stated that the City also proposed an additional revision related to the requirement that both parties agree on capital improvements, explaining that the version presented to Council includes language allowing either party to terminate the agreement within 60

days if a consensus on necessary capital projects cannot be reached. He noted that, since the facility is located on City property, it was important to include this provision. The City Attorney confirmed that the agreement is bi-lateral, so the County would have the same rights.

Mayor Willis commented that once this capital expenditure project is completed, no additional major capital investments are expected for some time. The City Manager confirmed that, aside from minor projects, no significant capital improvements will be needed for several years and explained that the tanks included in this project are approximately 30 years old and must be relocated above ground.

Councilmember Adams asked whether the County was opposed to the proposed above-ground storage tanks, estimated at \$700,000, or if the request was still under consideration. The City Manager responded that that estimate represents a conservative projection of the actual cost and explained that the agreement is largely consistent with the original version adopted in 1997. He added that it will be included in the budget process, requiring approval by both City Council and the County Commissioners. He noted that, since the City has added a new provision to the agreement, it will need to be resubmitted to the County for approval.

Mayor Pro Tem Evans inquired about the timeline for them to approve the new edits. The City Manager stated that the County will discuss it at their next meeting on November 3rd, and that enough changes have been made to the agreement that it must be approved again by Council as well.

Councilmember Williamson moved to approve the proposed Fuel Facility Agreement between Scotland County and the City of Laurinburg, as presented. Councilmember Rainer seconded the motion. The vote was unanimous.

d. Update on Water Agreement with Scotland County.

The City Manager provided an update on the Water Agreement with Scotland County, noting that it is set to expire on November 6, 2025. He reported that the County Attorney and County Manager's recommended amendments had been received, along with the City's minor revisions, which were also reviewed by Willis Engineers. The City Manager explained that, since the next Council meeting will occur after the agreement's expiration – and following the next meeting of the County Commissioners – it is recommended that Council grant final approval so the County may act on it at their upcoming meeting and ensure the agreement is finalized before the current one expires.

Councilmember Adams moved to approve the updates to the Water Agreement with Scotland County, as presented. Councilmember Williamson seconded the motion. The vote was unanimous.

e. Update on McKay Street Water Tank.

The City Manager provided an update on the McKay Street Water Tank project and presented a photo of the site for Council's review. He explained that, when the City began work on its elevated storage tanks, the McKay tank proved beneficial as a backup to the Caledonia tank during the removal of lead-based paint. He added that having this backup has been valuable for maintaining service to both the City and County systems.

The City Manager further reported that, although the McKay tank is aged, the lead-based paint previously assumed to be present had already been removed, resulting in significant cost savings. He explained that, as the tank is also featured on the City's historic signage, staff now plans to rehabilitate the structure rather than demolish it once the Caledonia tank project is completed. He noted that Willis Engineers is currently preparing bid plans for the rehabilitation work. He concluded that the nearby Caledonia tank will feature the historic City of Laurinburg logo facing downtown and that all associated costs and bids will be presented to Council for approval.

8. COMMENTS FROM MAYOR AND/OR COUNCILMEMBERS

Mayor Willis recognized Councilmember Adams for receiving the Transportation Committee Award and recognized the City Manager for being awarded City Manager of the Year at the recent Council of Governments meeting. He also stated that free magnets are available at City Hall for the after-hours call center. The City Manager noted that the call center is for any after-hours Public Works issues that are non-emergencies.

Councilmember Adams provided an update regarding the Laurinburg-Maxton Airport. She reported that the underground fuel tanks are scheduled to be removed, and the new terminal will go up in place of them, stating that the goal is to have it completed by Fall 2026. She noted some interesting statistics for the airport over the past seven months, specifically that there have been more than 1,000 operations at the Airport. She highlighted that in September alone, there had been 1,529 total operations, 686 landings, 707 takeoffs, 29 go-arounds, and 107 overflights.

Mayor Pro Tem Evans inquired about the Oyster Roast and the Chamber Dinner at the Airport. Councilmember Adams stated the Chamber Dinner would be in the terminal.

Councilmember Rogers announced that IE Johnson will celebrate its second anniversary on Friday, October 24th, with an all-day event featuring a variety of activities. She noted that the celebration will include a coffee hour from 9:30 a.m. to 10:30 a.m., a line dancing class from 11:00 a.m. to 12:00 p.m., and BINGO from 12:00 p.m. to 2:00 p.m. She added that a ribbon-cutting ceremony will also be held for the new lactation room for nursing mothers, created in partnership with the Health Department for both personal and educational use. Councilmember Rogers concluded that additional activities include a workout class from 3:00 p.m. to 4:00 p.m. and games in the gym for children. She invited everyone to attend and join in the celebration.

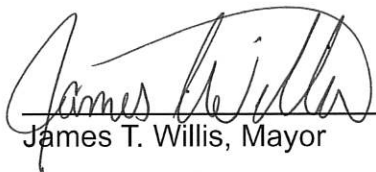
9. CLOSED SESSION (IF NEEDED)

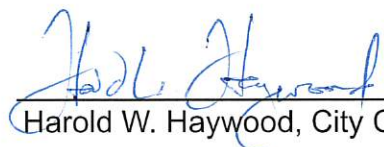
No Closed Session was needed.

10. ADJOURNMENT

Motion was made by Mayor Pro Tem Evans, seconded by Councilmember Williamson, and unanimously carried to adjourn the meeting.

The meeting was adjourned at 6:53 p.m.


James T. Willis, Mayor


Harold W. Haywood, City Clerk