

**CITY OF LAURINBURG  
CITY COUNCIL MEETING  
NOVEMBER 18, 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, November 18, 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 Adams gave the Invocation and led the Pledge of Allegiance.

**2. APPROVAL OF AGENDA**

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

**3. RECOGNITION**

- a. Recognition of outgoing board members Mary Evans and Barbara Rogers.

Mayor Willis recognized Mayor Pro Tem Evans and Councilmember Rogers for their service on the Laurinburg City Council. He expressed his utmost respect for anyone willing to serve in public office, noting the personal exposure to public scrutiny that comes with such a role. He stated that their sense of duty outweighed any hesitation and applauded both members for their dedication to bettering their community. Mayor Willis further noted that, even when disagreements occurred, all members of Council maintained cordial decorum in handling City matters, and he personally thanked them for

their service to the City. Mayor Willis then welcomed Representative Garland Pierce to the podium.

Representative Pierce thanked Council for their work and patience during the development of the proposed budget, which he hopes will soon be finalized to assist with City projects. He also expressed his appreciation to Mayor Pro Tem Evans and Councilmember Rogers for their service on the Laurinburg City Council.

Mayor Willis read aloud the official Certificate of Appreciation for Councilmember Barbara Rogers:

*Certificate of Appreciation to*

**Barbara Rogers**

Councilmember

June 2022 - November 2025

This special tribute to Councilmember Barbara Rogers is to recognize her unwavering dedication, diligent leadership and continuous advocacy for the citizens of the City of Laurinburg. She has served this community well for 3 1/2 years in the capacity of Councilmember of the City of Laurinburg.

Councilmember Barbara Rogers has listened to the needs of the citizens of the City of Laurinburg and fostered community engagement. She has lead with compassion, empathy and a steadfast commitment to improve the quality of life for all residents. Councilmember Barbara Rogers championed for resources such as affordable housing, small business support, and community development. Her dedication to the community's progress and her passion for public service has made a meaningful difference to the City of Laurinburg.

*Presented this the 18th day of November, 2025*

James T. Willis

Mayor

Mary Jo Adams  
Councilmember

Rosemary Rainer  
Councilmember

Mary Evans  
Councilmember

Andrew G. Williamson, Jr.  
Councilmember

Representative Pierce presented Councilmember Rogers with her Certificate of Appreciation.

Mayor Willis read aloud the official Certificate of Appreciation for Mayor Pro Tem Mary Evans:

*Certificate of Appreciation to*

**Mary Evans**

Councilmember

December 2017 - November 2025

This special tribute to Councilmember Mary Evans is to recognize outstanding service, diligent leadership and constant devotion to the City of Laurinburg and its citizens. She has served this community well for 8 years in the capacity of Councilmember for the City of Laurinburg, while also being appointed by the Council to serve as Mayor Pro Tempore for the past 6 years. Councilmember Mary Evans' dedication, compassion for citizens and willingness to listen to the concerns of residents has contributed to the success of the City of Laurinburg. Councilmember Mary Evans has ensured that the best interests of citizens were protected and championed. Her dedicated efforts to provide a better quality of life for everyone throughout this community have made her a valuable public servant and have helped to make the City of Laurinburg a better place for all of its citizens.

*Presented this the 18th day of November, 2025*

James T. Willis  
Mayor

Mary Jo Adams  
Councilmember

Rosemary Rainer  
Councilmember

Barbara Rogers  
Councilmember

Andrew G. Williamson, Jr.  
Councilmember

Representative Pierce presented Mayor Pro Tem Evans with her Certificate of Appreciation.

Mayor Pro Tem Evans thanked everyone in attendance for coming out to support her and Councilmember Rogers as they concluded their service on the Laurinburg City Council. Mayor Willis also expressed his appreciation for Mayor Pro Tem Evans' service in the armed forces, noting that she is a Vietnam Veteran.

#### **4. PUBLIC COMMENT PERIOD**

Mr. Walter Rogers congratulated Mayor Pro Tem Evans and Councilmember Rogers on their service with the City Council.

Mr. Bishop McDuffie, of the Laurinburg Institute, thanked the work of the Council, and also congratulated Mayor Pro Tem Evans and Councilmember Rogers for the significant impact their work has made on the community over the years.

Ms. Hazel Rogers commended Mayor Pro Tem Evans for her relatable and welcoming spirit while on the Council and congratulated her daughter, Councilmember Rogers, who she is very proud of.

Brother Willy congratulated Mayor Pro Tem Evans and Councilmember Rogers for their dedication to the City and applauded Laurinburg for being a welcoming community.

## **5. CONSENT AGENDA**

Mayor Willis read aloud the Consent Agenda:

- a. Consider the approval of the draft minutes for the October 21, 2025, Regular Meeting.
- b. Consider Ordinance No. O-2025-27 to appropriate funds in the Cemetery Perpetual Care Fund.

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

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

(Copy of Ordinance No. O-2025-27 is on file in the Clerk's office)

## **6. PUBLIC HEARINGS**

- a. Consider a request to rezone Parcel No. 020306 0100101 on McFarland Road from Residential-20MH to Industrial.

Mayor Willis opened the Public Hearing to consider a request to rezone Parcel No. 020306 0100101 on McFarland Road from Residential-20MH to Industrial and asked Planning and Zoning Officer Mac McInnis to summarize the request.

Planning and Zoning Officer Mac McInnis reported that the parcel, owned by the Scotland County Economic Development Corporation (SCEDC), is located within the Industrial Park but has not previously been rezoned to match the surrounding industrial properties. The request, submitted by Mr. Jeff McKay, President of the SCEDC, seeks to rezone the property from Residential-20 Mobile Home to Industrial to allow its use as part of the incubator park. Mr. McInnis noted that the Planning Board met on October 15th and unanimously recommended approval of the rezoning.

#### Comments in Favor of the Rezoning

Mr. Jeff McKay spoke in favor of the rezoning. He stated that the SCEDC has had the opportunity to bid on an industry that may potentially locate on this site, stating that this is an area that may have been overlooked when surrounding parcels were previously rezoned to Industrial.

Mayor Willis asked Mr. McKay whether the R-20 parcels inside Wallace Way had already been rezoned. Mr. McKay responded that they had been, and the City Attorney confirmed this. Mayor Willis commented that rezoning this parcel to Industrial would be appropriate to support the economic development efforts of the City of Laurinburg.

Mayor Pro Tem Evans asked Mayor Willis to describe the exact location of the parcel for clarification. Mayor Willis explained that the EDC's Industrial Park runs along Highway 401, extending from McFarland Road to the railroad track.

#### Comments in Opposition to the Rezoning

There were no comments in opposition to the rezoning request.

Mayor Willis closed the Public Hearing on the request to rezone Parcel No. 020306 0100101 on McFarland Road from Residential-20MH to Industrial.

Councilmember Rainer moved to approve Ordinance No. O-2025-29 rezoning from Residential-20MH to Industrial the property located on McFarland Road and identified as Scotland County Parcel Number 0203060100101 because it advances the public health, safety, and welfare, and based upon the following:

The rezoning of Scotland County Land Parcel number 0203060100101 on McFarland Road from Residential-20MH to Industrial is consistent with an adopted comprehensive plan and any other officially adopted plan that is applicable because:

- 1) This parcel is part of the Industrial Park along Highway 401/Wagram Rd behind the County Economic Development Office, which is dedicated to bringing new industry to the area.
- 2) The parcel abuts the already existing Industrial Zoning in the County owned Industrial Park.
- 3) Future land use in this area will be for the Industrial operations and distribution of products at wholesale.

And it is reasonable because of the following:

- 1) Industrial zoning should have excellent transportation access and available infrastructure, which this area does.
- 2) Adjacent parcels are zoned Industrial and all current uses are Industrial.
- 3) Rezoning to Industrial allows uses that are consistent with existing uses.

Councilmember Williamson seconded the motion. The vote was as follows:

Ayes - Adams, Evans, Rainer, Rogers, Williamson

Nays - None

(Copy of Ordinance No. O-2025-29 is on file in the Clerk's office)

- b. Consider a request to rezone 218 McGirt's Bridge Road from Residential-6 to General Business.

Mayor Willis opened the Public Hearing to rezone 218 McGirts Bridge Road from Residential-6 to General Business and asked Planning and Zoning Officer Mac McInnis to summarize the request.

Planning and Zoning Officer Mac McInnis explained that the purpose of the Public Hearing was to consider a rezoning request submitted by Mr. Bobby Campbell and Ms. Tawanda Leak of The Chicken Shack for the property located at 218 McGirts Bridge Road, an approximately 0.2 acre parcel of land. He stated that the request seeks to rezone the parcel from Residential-6 (R-6) to General Business (GB). Mr. McInnis noted that the McGirts Bridge Road area is predominantly zoned Residential, with a limited number of Office-Institutional (O-I) parcels dispersed throughout. He reviewed the intent of the O-I zoning district, stating that it is designed to be compatible with residential uses and to serve as a transitional buffer between more intensive commercial zoning and residential neighborhoods, while still permitting certain residential uses. He further stated that the applicants' request would introduce a commercial zoning district in the middle of an established residential area. Mr. McInnis reported that the Planning Board considered the request at its

October 15th meeting and voted unanimously not to recommend approval of the rezoning request to the City Council.

Councilmember Rainer requested additional clarification regarding the Office-Institutional (O-I) zoning district. Mr. McInnis explained that O-I zoning allows certain medium-density residential development as well as institutional uses such as schools and churches that are generally compatible with surrounding residential areas. He noted that O-I zoning is often utilized as a transitional buffer to separate more intensive commercial or retail uses from residential neighborhoods.

Councilmember Rogers asked Mr. McInnis to clarify the term "spot zoning." Mr. McInnis stated that spot zoning occurs when a small parcel is rezoned in a manner that is inconsistent with the surrounding area and not compatible with adjacent land uses. Councilmember Rogers further inquired whether any other instances of spot zoning existed within the City. Mr. McInnis responded that, during his tenure with the City, there have been no spot zoning requests.

#### Comments in Favor of the Rezoning

Ms. Tawanda Leak and Mr. Bobby Campbell, Co-Owners of The Chicken Shack, addressed Council regarding the rezoning request. Ms. Leak explained that their original intent was to park their two food trucks on the property to serve the community, and after learning of designated food truck locations within the City – which have proven successful – they began exploring alternative uses for the property. She stated that one potential use is a commissary kitchen to serve as a commissary, providing easier access and greater flexibility for preparing meals for their food trucks.

Mayor Willis pointed out that The Chicken Shack food truck is parked on Railroad Street in McDuffie Square and there are several other locations available for food trucks in downtown Laurinburg.

Councilmember Adams asked Mr. McInnis whether the proposed change in the intended use of the property would still necessitate rezoning to General Business. Mr. McInnis responded that the Health Department may need to review the property for certain uses; however, utilizing the parcel as a commissary kitchen would not require rezoning from Residential-6 to General Business. He emphasized that, regardless of the intended use, the matter before Council is the rezoning of the specific parcel.

Councilmember Rainer asked Mr. McInnis to confirm that if the Health Department approves the proposed commissary kitchen, no rezoning of the parcel would be required. Mr. McInnis confirmed that this is correct.

Ms. Leak explained that Health Department approval would require an inspection to ensure the presence of proper commercial equipment and compliance with applicable regulations. Mr. McInnis added that, in some circumstances, a commissary kitchen may be permitted in a residential kitchen, and therefore rezoning the parcel solely for that purpose is not something he would recommend.

Mr. Campbell clarified that the commissary kitchen they intend to establish would be located on the parcel at 218 McGirts Bridge Road, not in their current residence, noting that they purchased the property specifically for future development.

Councilmember Rogers asked whether a brick-and-mortar commercial kitchen could be constructed on the parcel without requiring rezoning. Mr. McInnis stated that further research would be necessary to determine that.

Councilmember Rainer asked for confirmation that the matter could be tabled until additional information is provided to Council. Mr. McInnis reiterated that the rezoning request is separate from the applicants' intended use of the property.

Mr. Campbell stated that their intent is to utilize the property for their personal business. Councilmember Rainer noted that, if that is the sole intention, the matter is no longer a topic for Council discussion. Councilmember Rogers agreed, emphasizing that clarification on this point was necessary.

The City Attorney stated that the table of uses will need to be reviewed in conjunction with the applicants' intended use of the parcel, adding that, if it is determined that a General Business designation is required, the matter would need to return to Council for consideration. The City Attorney emphasized that the issue currently before Council is whether the parcel is suitable for General Business use and that the applicants' intended use is not a necessary factor in making that determination. He noted that, if the proposed use does not require a General Business designation, no decision on rezoning is necessary at this time and recommended postponing action until additional information is collected. The City Attorney concluded that, should the matter return to Council and a General Business designation be required, the spot zoning concerns would need to be addressed, including the presentation of special findings to justify spot zoning.

Mr. Campbell noted that when they initially purchased the property to support their business, they were unaware of Mr. Bishop McDuffie's concerns regarding the use of the land and subsequently modified their plans to address those concerns. He added that he believes the proposed

development would be an asset to the community and would enhance the appearance of McGirts Bridge Road.

Councilmember Rogers stated that she agrees with Mr. Campbell, noting her personal familiarity with McGirts Bridge Road and The Chicken Shack; however, she emphasized that the potential for increased traffic must be considered. She added that additional information regarding the parameters for establishing a commissary kitchen and whether rezoning is required should be provided to Council before any decision is made.

Mr. McInnis reiterated that the rezoning request is independent of the applicants' intended use of the property. The City Attorney noted that the decision may be moot depending on future findings. Mr. McInnis added that the two parcels could potentially be combined, allowing for a kitchen to be built as an accessory to the residence. He further explained that, regardless of the intended purpose, the current decision before Council must focus solely on whether placing a General Business zone in the middle of a Residential-zoned neighborhood is appropriate.

Councilmember Rogers noted that there are currently no General Business-zoned properties in that area, limiting food options and other services to small corner stores that may monopolize pricing and offerings. She stated that her consideration is focused on what opportunities a General Business designation could create for the area in the future.

Mr. McInnis stated that, according to the City's Strategic Development Plan, this area is not designated for General Business zoning in future development. Councilmember Rogers asked Mr. McInnis to clarify what elements of the plan preclude General Business development. Mr. McInnis explained that formal studies conducted in the area indicate that General Business zoning would be incompatible with the surrounding primarily Residential-zoned properties, and he reiterated that rezoning decisions are not based on an applicant's personal intended use. The City Attorney supported this statement, noting that a General Business designation would allow various commercial uses such as an auto shop or car lot, which is something that a subsequent buyer could establish in the future. He cautioned that Council must consider these potential outcomes and stated that such considerations are only relevant if a rezoning request is being made. He concluded that, based on the discussion, the applicants are not currently pursuing such a request.

Councilmember Williamson asked whether Council should officially defer the item to the next meeting to allow the applicants additional time to explore their options.

Mayor Willis stated that it would be appropriate to allow any other individuals opposed to the request an opportunity to speak.

#### Comments in Opposition to the Rezoning

Mr. Bishop McDuffie, representing the Laurinburg Institute, spoke in opposition to the rezoning request. He stated that the surrounding community wishes to maintain Residential zoning in that area, regardless of how the property may be used. He further noted that the proposed commissary for food truck preparation should not be contingent upon a change in zoning.

Mayor Willis closed the Public Hearing regarding the rezoning of 218 McGirts Bridge Road from Residential-6 to General Business.

The City Attorney recommended deferring the item to the next Council meeting to allow additional information to be gathered regarding whether a decision on rezoning is necessary. He noted that if it is determined that a General Business designation is required, even for an ancillary use on a combined property in a residential area, Council would then need to decide whether to approve such a rezoning.

Councilmember Williamson moved to table the request to rezone 218 McGirts Bridge Road from Residential-6 to General Business, as presented. Councilmember Rainer seconded the motion. The vote was unanimous.

## **7. CITY MANAGER REPORTS**

- a. Consider Ordinance No. 2025-28 Allowing for the Sale or Consumption of Alcoholic Beverages Before Noon on Sunday Morning.

The City Manager provided Council with a summary and background of the proposed Ordinance allowing the sale or consumption of alcoholic beverages before noon on Sunday. He noted that the request was submitted by a restaurant in Laurinburg that serves brunch. He explained that Session Law 2017-87, commonly referred to as the "Brunch Bill," permits alcohol sales before noon statewide; however, municipalities must adopt an ordinance to allow the change within their jurisdiction. The City Manager noted that this issue had not previously come before Council because no request had been made to adopt said ordinance. He added that several restaurants are currently open before noon on Sundays, two of which serve brunch, and one of those two serves brunch before noon.

Mayor Willis clarified that the new start time for Sunday alcohol sales and consumption would be 10:00 a.m., and the City Manager confirmed this. The City Manager further stated that adoption of the ordinance is the required next step to move forward.

Councilmember Adams remarked that there is allegedly another restaurant planning to open in downtown Laurinburg that will offer Sunday brunch, noting that this ordinance may be beneficial to that establishment.

The City Manager added that other restaurants open before noon on Sundays, such as Mi Casita and La Familia. He stated that the requesting restaurant is restricted by Alcohol Law Enforcement (ALE) from serving alcohol before 12:00 p.m. and had first contacted the Scotland County ABC Board, which directed them to the City. He concluded that, after staff research, it was determined that adoption of this ordinance by the Council is required for the request to proceed.

Councilmember Rogers moved to approve Ordinance No. O-2025-28 Allowing for the Sale or Consumption of Alcoholic Beverages Before Noon on Sunday Morning, as presented. Councilmember Adams seconded the motion. The vote was as follows:

Ayes - Adams, Rogers, Williamson  
Nays - Evans, Rainer

- b. Consider the purchase of a historic Fire Truck from Lindo Harvell's family with restrictions.

The City Manager stated that a special guest, Mr. Bob Harvell, was present to address Council regarding the sale of his family's historic Fire Truck. He explained that Mr. Harvell is selling to the City the second-ever City-owned Fire Truck, dating back to approximately 1924. He noted that the truck was originally white and later painted red, and that Mr. Harvell's father, Lindo Harvell — who served as the City's Fire Chief for about 15 years — purchased the truck at auction in 1949 for only \$10. The City Manager added that the Fire Truck is currently housed at the Scotland County museum across from the John Blue House. The City Manager presented a photograph of the Fire Truck to Council and noted that current Fire Chief McQueen believes an appropriate location for display would be the new North Fire Station on Aberdeen Highway, where it would be visible to those traveling into and out of Laurinburg. He added that, once refurbished, the Fire Truck could also be used for parades and other City events.

Mr. Harvell addressed Council and stated that the Fire Truck has been in his family for 76 years. He honorably noted that his father worked for the Fire Department for over 30 years and served as Fire Chief for approximately 15 years. He added that, after his father purchased the Fire Truck, he had it fully restored by 1956. Mr. Harvell also shared an anecdote regarding Charlie Coughenour's attempt to drive the Fire Truck from Laurinburg to Charleston, but it broke down upon reaching Society Hill. He explained that it was extremely heavy, equipped with a 500-gallon-per-minute pump and a hose, which was considered a state-of-the-art design at the time. He continued that, while the Fire Truck was stopped in front of a school in Society Hill, the school caught fire, adding that, with only one Society Hill fire truck available and a distant hydrant, the fire could not be contained. Mr. Harvell remarked that, had the historic truck been operational, it might have helped save the building.

Mr. Harvell stated that he believes the last time the Fire Truck was driven was around the year 2003, adding that it will still run but the emergency brakes have locked due to years of humidity exposure and will need to be loosened. He expressed his hope of having it cleaned and repainted so it can be displayed as a brand-new, 101-year-old fire truck.

Mayor Pro Tem Evans moved to approve the purchase of a historic Fire Truck from Lindo Harvell's family with restrictions, as presented. Councilmember Williamson seconded the motion. The vote was unanimous.

Mr. Harvell presented Fire Chief McQueen and Mayor Willis with the keys to the 101-year-old historic Fire Truck.

Mayor Willis added that the rail car is also making progress. The City Manager confirmed that it is currently on Caledonia Road and will continue being transported to McDuffie Square with an estimated completion timeline of April 2026.

- c. Consider approving Charles R. Underwood, Inc. as the best qualified firm for the Design Build of the Raw Water Wells-Phase II Capital Project.

The City Manager explained that the City issued a Request for Qualifications (RFQ) and received one proposal by the October 16th deadline. He stated that the RFQ was subsequently reissued and reopened on November 12th, at which time one proposal was again received, from Charles R. Underwood, Inc. — a firm that has performed the majority of the City's deep water well work.

Mayor Pro Tem Evans moved to approve Charles R. Underwood, Inc. as the best qualified firm for the Design Build of the Raw Water Wells-Phase II Capital Project, as presented. Councilmember Williamson seconded the motion. The vote was unanimous.

The City Manager reminded everyone of the upcoming Christmas on Main event on Sunday, November 23rd, from 1:00 p.m. to 8:00 p.m. He noted that Walker McCoy and Susan Morrison have done extensive work in preparing and planning for the event, which will feature up to 162 vendors.

The City Attorney corrected the motion result under Item 7(a), an ordinance allowing for the sale or consumption of alcoholic beverages before noon on Sunday morning. He clarified that the previously reported 3-2 vote does not constitute final approval. He explained that, since this was the first time the ordinance had been introduced to Council, and under the voting requirements for an ordinance being considered for the first time — excluding certain zoning ordinances requiring a public hearing — an ordinance cannot be adopted on first reading unless it receives approval from at least two-thirds of the members voting, which in this case requires four affirmative votes. He concluded that, as such, the ordinance did not pass and will need to return to

Council for consideration at the December meeting, at which time a simple majority will be sufficient for approval.

#### **8. COMMENTS FROM MAYOR AND/OR COUNCILMEMBERS**

Councilmember Adams noted that, on December 3rd, there is to be a groundbreaking for the new terminal at Laurinburg-Maxton Airport at 10 a.m. and a COG Legislative Breakfast at 7:30 a.m. for Council members.

Councilmember Rainer announced that Carolina Hearts held a ribbon cutting on November 17th and noted that the organization has been in business for 20 years, representing the City well throughout that time. She further reported that there will be a Town Hall meeting at the Emergency Building on November 19th from 10:00 a.m. to 12:00 p.m. to discuss challenges facing the City's youth and strategies to address them. She added that some Scotland High School students will be in attendance, along with a guest speaker from Raleigh. Councilmember Rainer concluded by noting that the NAACP is hosting a Christmas toy giveaway at I. Ellis Johnson on December 20th.

Councilmember Rogers supplemented Councilmember Rainer's comments regarding the toy giveaway, noting that there will also be a chili cook-off and a coat

drive on Friday at I. Ellis Johnson. She then thanked everyone for their kind words and expressed her appreciation for her time on the City Council.

Mayor Pro Tem Evans quoted Maya Angelou — "Wouldn't take nothing for my journey now" — then thanked everyone for their support and for coming out to celebrate her and Councilmember Rogers' last Council meeting.

**9. CLOSED SESSION (PERSONNEL)**

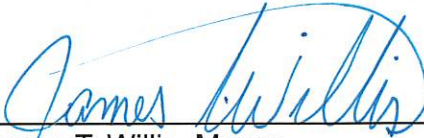
Councilmember Williamson moved to go into Closed Session at 7:00 p.m. pursuant to NCGS 143-318.11(a)(6) for personnel. Councilmember Rainer seconded the motion. The vote was unanimous.

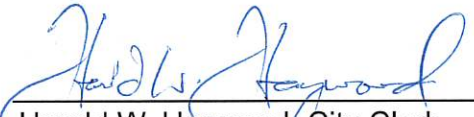
Councilmember Rogers moved to adjourn the closed session at 7:12 p.m. and return to an open meeting. Councilmember Rainer seconded the motion. The vote was unanimous.

**10. ADJOURNMENT**

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

The meeting was adjourned at 7:12 p.m.

  
James T. Willis, Mayor

  
Harold W. Haywood, City Clerk