CITY OF LAURINBURG
CITY COUNCIL MEETING
DECEMBER 16, 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, December 16, 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, DeMarco Allen, James McLean, Rosemary Rainer, and Andrew G. Williamson, Jr.

Also present were Charles D. Nichols III, City Manager; William P. Floyd, Jr., City Attorney; Amanda K. Futrell, City Clerk; Brooke Bathie, Deputy City Clerk; Harold W. Haywood, Budget and Management Services Director; Dixon Medlin, Treatment Plants Director.

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

2. APPROVAL OF AGENDA

Mayor Willis welcomed Councilmember Allen and Councilmember McLean to the Laurinburg City Council, thanked them for their willingness to serve, and expressed his enthusiasm for working collaboratively with them.

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

3. PUBLIC COMMENT PERIOD

There was no one present to speak.

4. CONSENT AGENDA

Mayor Willis read aloud the Consent Agenda:

a. Consider the approval of the draft minutes for the November 18, 2025, Regular Meeting.

b. Consider the monthly regular meeting schedule for the 2026 calendar year for the Laurinburg City Council.

c. Consider Fiscal Year 2026-2027 Budget Calendar.

d. Consider Resolution No. R-2025-19, Finding of Facts, for the approved request to rezone Parcel No. 0203060100101 located on McFarland Road from Residential-20MH to Industrial.

Mayor Pro Tem Rainer moved to approve the Consent Agenda. Councilmember Williamson seconded the motion. The vote was as follows:

Ayes — Adams, Allen, McLean, Rainer, Williamson
Nays — None

(Copy of Resolution No. R-2025-19 is on file in the Clerk's office)

Mayor Willis announced the City's new personnel structure, stating that Amanda Futrell is the new City Clerk and Brooke Bathie is the new Deputy City Clerk. He further stated that former City Clerk Harold Haywood has transitioned to the position of Budget and Management Services Director. He commended the City Manager for the completion of the new organizational structure and congratulated each staff member on their new roles.

5. 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 Sundays. He stated that the ordinance was initially presented to Council at the November meeting and received a 3–2 vote; however, ordinances require a two-thirds vote upon initial introduction to Council. He added that, as this is the second reading, only a majority vote is required.

The City Manager stated that, in 2017, the North Carolina General Assembly adopted Senate Bill 155, commonly referred to as the "Brunch Bill," which permits the sale of alcoholic beverages prior to 12:00 p.m. on Sundays, at the state level. He further explained that the legislation requires individual municipalities to adopt a local ordinance in order for the provision to apply within their jurisdictions for

any establishment that sells alcohol, such as restaurants and grocery stores. He noted that this request had not previously been brought before Council and was submitted approximately two months ago by a Laurinburg restaurant that serves brunch.

The City Manager noted that the City Attorney had highlighted the failure to pass the ordinance at the end of the previous meeting, which is why it was brought before Council again at the December meeting. Mayor Willis asked for clarification that the request originated from a local business, which the City Manager confirmed.

Mayor Pro Tem Rainer inquired whether the ordinance could be limited to restaurants only, excluding convenience stores and other retail businesses. The City Manager explained that this would not be possible, as the ordinance changes the permissible timeframe from 12:00 p.m. to 10:00 a.m. for all affected establishments within the municipality.

Mayor Willis recounted the days when Scotland County was a dry County and remarked that things change with the times.

Councilmember Allen inquired about how many restaurants in the City currently offer brunch. The City Manager responded that there is one established downtown with another opening soon, one on the south end of the City, and some Mexican restaurants in town that operate before 12:00 p.m. that may consider hosting brunch. He noted that the requesting restaurant followed the proper procedure, having initially contacted the Scotland County ABC Board, which directed them to the City to begin the process of requesting the necessary ordinance.

Councilmember Adams moved to approve Ordinance No. O-2025-28 allowing for the sale or consumption of alcoholic beverages before noon on Sunday morning, as presented. She noted that the ordinance may benefit the City's tax revenue once beach traffic increases. Councilmember Williamson seconded the motion.

Mayor Willis added that the City is working to recruit more restaurants and potentially a brewery downtown, so this ordinance may supplement those efforts.

The vote was as follows:

Ayes — Adams, Allen, McLean, Rainer, Williamson

Nays — None

(Copy of Ordinance No. O-2025-28 is on file in the Clerk's office)

b. Consider Resolution No. R-2025-18 Awarding Bid for the Leith Creek WWTP Renovations-Electrical Improvements Project.

The City Manager noted that Chuck Willis of Willis Engineers, who oversees the City's water and sewer projects, was in attendance. He added that the City currently has over $60 million of water and sewer capital projects ongoing. He explained that formal bidding commenced for the Leith Creek WWTP Electrical Improvements Project on November 20th at 2:00 p.m. and five bids were received. The City Manager stated that J.T. Yates Electric Service, Inc. was the lowest responsible bidder at $1,823,653 and that the City had previously worked with their company, adding that the Leith Creek WWTP is the main treatment plant for wastewater.

The City Manager noted that funding for the project is entirely from State direct appropriations received in 2023, with approximately $21 million secured through the assistance of Representative Pierce and Senator Britt. He explained that these funds allow the City to complete various projects without increasing water and sewer rates. He added that the electrical improvements project will be fully funded through state grants and noted that the bidder's proposal was under budget. He then requested Council's approval to proceed.

Mayor Pro Tem Rainer moved to approve Resolution No. R-2025-18 Awarding Bid for the Leith Creek WWTP Renovations-Electrical Improvements Project, as presented. Councilmember Allen seconded the motion.

Mayor Willis asked to clarify if the funding was part of a grant or a low interest payment. The City Manager stated it is not a revolving fund but is a direct appropriation fund from the State, meaning there is no pay-back and will go directly to water and sewer capital improvements. Mayor Willis thanked Raleigh for their funding assistance.

The vote was as follows:

Ayes — Adams, Allen, McLean, Rainer, Williamson
Nays — None

(Copy of Resolution No. R-2025-18 is on file in the Clerk's office)

c. Consider Water Agreement with Scotland County.

The City Manager discussed the process of updating the Scotland County Water Agreement, which has come before Council on multiple occasions. He explained that the agreement had been in effect for approximately 30 years, under which the City sells water to the County, bills and collects revenue for the County water system, and maintains and operates the County water system. He noted that the agreement began in November 1995 and expired on November 6, 2025.

The City Manager stated that the County was provided formal notice of the City's intent to amend the agreement in June 2024, more than one year prior to its expiration. He explained that the primary reason for amending the agreement is that the existing cost structure was based on 1995 rates, which no longer reflect inflation or current operating expenses. He added that, under the updated approach, all costs would be captured and analyzed, requiring reimbursement based on actual costs rather than fixed rates.

The City Manager stated that the County Manager and County Attorney have approved the most recent amendments presented to Council, which have been reviewed multiple times by the City Attorney, Mr. Chuck Willis, and City staff. He noted that operational services, which are currently contracted out by the City, were removed from the agreement; as a result, the County will contract directly either with the same provider used by the City or with another third-party service provider. The City Manager added that the goal is for the County to grant final approval of the agreement at its January 2026 meeting.

Mayor Pro Tem Rainer asked whether any price increases would be passed on to City residents. The City Manager stated that they would not, explaining that the County typically bases its rates on out-of-City charges. He added that the goal is to calculate costs based on actual expenses rather than the 1995 rate structure, noting that this approach would benefit the City's water and sewer revenue.

Councilmember Adams asked whether the agreement is for a five-year term. The City Manager confirmed that it is, noting that it includes options for term extensions. He added that annual meetings will be held to review the prior 12 months of costs and determine the rates for the upcoming year.

Mayor Willis stated that the City will continue to oversee customer service duties. The City Manager added that the City will also continue selling water to the County, handling billing and collections, and addressing maintenance issues. He explained, however, that Operator in Responsible Charge (ORC) services are currently contracted out, as the City does not have sufficient staff to manage them directly. The City Manager stated that the City currently contracts out state-required ORC services, such as testing and sampling, with a company called Envirolink. He reiterated that, that under the new agreement, the County will contract with the City for water sales, billing and collections, and maintenance, while the County will contract directly with a company of its choosing for operating ORC services.

Mayor Willis inquired whether the County realizes a profit under the current agreement structure. The City Manager responded that audits over the past several years have shown the County's operations to be in the positive.

Mayor Willis asked whether the County logo could be added to bills sent to County customers. The City Manager stated that while it is possible, doing so could create confusion, explaining that customer inquiries would then be directed to the County, which would then need to be referred back to the City. He noted that not including the logo eliminates this extra step and any potential confusion.

The City Manager stated that such sufficient changes have been made to the agreement that Council's approval of a final, clean copy is required to proceed. He added that the County Attorney has recommended that the County Commissioners approve the agreement at their meeting in the first week of January to officially move forward with its enactment. He emphasized that, since the previous agreement expired on November 6, 2025, it is important to execute the new agreement as soon as possible.

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

6. COMMENTS FROM MAYOR AND/OR COUNCILMEMBERS

Mayor Willis thanked each new Councilmember for their willingness to serve with the City and shared his excitement about the opportunity to work together.

Councilmember Adams congratulated the two new Councilmembers, highlighted the success of the recent groundbreaking event at the Laurinburg-Maxton Airport and noted that the City Manager attended a meeting with the Vice Chairman of the Department of Transportation and the Director of the Division of Aviation to discuss the future of the Airport. She also presented Council with NC League of Municipalities (NCLM) handouts containing resources to further their education in local government and their involvement with the NCLM.

Councilmember McLean thanked everyone for their support in his new position as City Councilmember, highlighting the City Clerk for her assistance in the transition and his excitement about the opportunity to serve.

7. CLOSED SESSION (IF NEEDED)

No Closed Session was needed.

8. ADJOURNMENT

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

The meeting was adjourned at 6:29 p.m.

James T. Willis, Mayor

Amanda K. Futrell, City Clerk