CITY OF LAURINBURG
CITY COUNCIL MEETING
APRIL 21, 2026
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, April 21, 2026, 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 & Management Services Director; Mitchell "Mitch" Johnson, Police Chief; Mac McInnis, Zoning Officer; Walker McCoy, Community Development Director; Jennifer McGirt, Finance Director; Betty Galloway, Human Resources Director.

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

2. APPROVAL OF AGENDA

The City Manager explained that Item 7(a), to discuss the Sky High Aerospace Expo 2026 Airshow with speakers Mr. Seth Hatchell of the Southeastern Regional Airport Authority and Mr. Trey Brown, Sky High President, was removed. He explained that Item 7(a) was removed due to the absence of Mr. Trey Brown and that it will come back to Council at the May meeting when both individuals are present to discuss event updates. He also stated that, per the recent budget meeting discussion, Item 5(i) to call for a Special Meeting on May 19, 2026 at 4:00 p.m. to discuss the budget must be added to the Consent Agenda.

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

3. RECOGNITION

a. Oaths of Office Administered to New Police Officers.

Mayor Willis stated that one of the most solemn duties he has as Mayor is swearing in new police officers, and it is an honor to be able to do so. He noted that the very core of municipal government is public safety, including the Police Department and Fire Department. He referenced the City's budget meeting prior in the day, stating that Public Safety receives 55% of the City's budget, adding that it is an indicator of how important that asset is to the City and to the community. Mayor Willis stated that he applauds the City's Police Department and Police Chief Johnson on the progress being made to recruit new officers.

Mayor Willis then called upon Police Officer Jatique Barnes and Police Officer Jaden Williams to be recognized and administer their Oaths of Office. He handed each new officer a bible, invited a witness to stand with them, and administered their oaths simultaneously.

Police Chief Johnson expressed that the job of being a Police Officer requires a unique desire to protect and serve the community and put one's life on the line. He stated that many people would not commit to that line of duty and that the two gentlemen present today are now part of a family. Chief Johnson explained that moral character would guide each officer and that they would always be supported to be the best versions of themselves. He then presented each new officer with their badge and explained that the badge represents the honors they would uphold, traveling with them everywhere they go.

4. PUBLIC COMMENT PERIOD

Mr. Jason McQueen, of Montrose Lane in the Balmoral Subdivision, addressed Council regarding a noise issue related to his neighbor's dogs that are kept in a kennel in the backyard and are not walked or taken out of the kennel. He stated that they are beagles and that that breed typically has a loud bark, adding that the aforementioned dogs bark consistently throughout both day and night. He explained that their barking impairs his quality of life and that he has considered moving from his home due to the noise, noting that the people that lived there previously moved because of the noise the barking dogs produce. Mr. McQueen stated that this issue has been prevalent for years, per other resident experiences, and that there is a petition signed by residents in the neighborhood to take action on the matter. He referenced his various attempted communications with animal control, to which he has never received a call back, and stated that he was instructed to call 911 when the noise occurred. He explained that 911 officers arrived to speak with the neighbor and were told that the neighbor had no intention of training the dogs with an electronic collar. Mr. McQueen also stated that he had spoken with the neighbor personally, which started out as civil interactions but is now contentious. He referenced audio and decibel recordings, which he stated would not be acceptable noise levels per the City ordinances. He concluded that he would like Council assistance to resolve the issue through the right channels and added that there are four dogs involved.

Mr. Marvin Womble, of Montrose Lane, addressed Council regarding the animal noise issue and played a recording of the dogs from his cell phone. He stated that he has listened to their barking for more than three years, explaining that, when animal control eventually visited the property, he was instructed to obtain recordings. Mr. Womble noted that when he spoke with 911 regarding the issue, he was told that there was not much that could be done to resolve it. He concluded that he brought letters of complaints and recordings with him and that every citizen has a right to sit in their house or backyard in peace and quiet, adding that someone must hold neighbors accountable for their pets.

The City Attorney asked if anyone had explored the restrictive covenants for the neighborhood to discover a private remedy for nuisance. Various members of the group in the audience stated they had not. The City Attorney stated the covenant would say no obnoxious or offensive activity, which would provide a remedy to neighbors for private enforcement action. He noted that they could seek an injunction based on violation of the restrictive covenants, adding that there are also remedies available for common law nuisance abatement. The City Attorney stated that he could speak with Brenda regarding the issue. Inaudible comments were made by someone in the audience regarding the issue. Mayor Willis asked the City Attorney if he was going to address this issue with Sherbrooke. The City Attorney stated that he would discuss, if preferred by the residents, and would review the covenants.

Councilmember Williamson stated that, rather than requiring the residents to hire legal counsel to go to court, Council could explore the City ordinances and noise ordinances to assess any enforcement remedies the City has available to City residents, both for this noise issue and for any others that may arise.

Councilmember Adams asked if there was an ordinance limiting the number of dogs you can have within the city limits. The City Manager stated that there was not. Mayor Willis thanked everyone for attending and stated that the City's Legal Counsel and City Council would address this issue.

Ms. Shahiree Covington, of Wiley Circle, addressed Council with questions regarding disconnection fees being charged to citizens when the lights are not being turned off and asked if the City was going to have another rate increase. She stated that she has paid $1,000 in light bills since moving into the home in September 2025. Ms. Covington asked what actions Council could take to assist citizens.

Ms. Shuretta Steele, of Sunset Drive, addressed Council regarding the 22,000 gallons of water used at her residence in the past month. She stated that he has lived at her residence for 25 years and that the City of Laurinburg worked on the road in the front of her property in November 2025 and again recently. She explained that some damage must have occurred during that roadwork, which she believes she has been penalized for.

Councilmember Adams asked the City Manager to explain to the audience about individual audits that can be performed at one's residence. The City Manager explained that anyone using the City's electricity can call consumer billing and request an energy audit to examine the property for any usage issues or discrepancies. Mayor Pro Tem Rainer asked Ms. Steele if she had anyone assess her home for a water leak. Ms. Steele stated that there were no leaks. The City Attorney asked how long it had been occurring. Ms. Steele stated that prior to the last bill, her usage was a lot less than 22,000 gallons. The City Attorney asked the City Manager to clarify that there is an adjustment for a leak, to which Mayor Pro Tem Rainer confirmed there was. The City Manager stated that every citizen has a right to adjust it during the appropriate timeframe to what the average usage was. Ms. Covington asked if there was a way that information could be advertised better for residents that may not be aware of the option for an individual audit, adding that she has heard rumors of another increase.

5. CONSENT AGENDA

Mayor Willis read aloud the Consent Agenda:

a. Consider the approval of the draft minutes for the March 17, 2026, Regular Meeting.

b. Consider Resolution No. R-2026-07, Finding of Facts, for the approved request for a Special Use Permit for the development of Multifamily Duplex Units on Dundee Drive on Parcel No. 01006707001.

c. Consider the application to use the facilities at McDuffie Square by Scotland County Highland Games for The Friday Highland Fling Free Community Concert on October 2, 2026, from 9:00 a.m. until 10:00 p.m.

d. Consider the application to use the shelter facility at Hammond Park by an individual for a private event on October 17, 2026, from 8:00 a.m. until 6:00 p.m.

e. Consider the application to use the shelter facility at Hammond Park by Youth Against Gun Violence/GEMS for movie night on May 1, 2026, from 6:00 p.m. until 8:00 p.m.

f. Consider the application to use the shelter facility at Hammond Park by Just US 72 for a group picnic on May 30, 2026, from 11:00 a.m. until 5:00 p.m.

g. Consider the application to use the shelter facility at Hammond Park by an individual for a private event on September 5, 2026, from 9:00 a.m. until 8:00 p.m.

h. Consider Ordinance No. O-2026-07 to Amend the Fiscal Year 2025-2026 Annual Budget Appropriations Ordinance No. O-2025-17 to appropriate additional funding in the Consumer Billing Department.

Mayor Willis added Item 5(i), to set a date for a Special Meeting on May 19, 2026 at 4:00 p.m. for a budget session, to the Consent Agenda for Council approval.

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

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

(Copies of Resolution No. R-2026-07 and Ordinance No. O-2026-07 are on file in the Clerk's office)

6. PUBLIC HEARING

a. Consider Ordinance No. O-2026-06 amending Article 7 Supplemental Regulations, Section 7.47 Substance Abuse Treatment Center/Office, Subsection 7.47.2 of the City of Laurinburg Unified Development Ordinance.

Mayor Willis opened the Public Hearing.

Zoning Officer Mac McInnis explained that Ordinance No. O-2026-06 pertains to a text amendment, initiated by City staff, to Section 7.47 relating to substance abuse treatment center offices. He stated that subsection 7.47.2 currently requires facilities related to substance abuse treatment to be located no closer than one-half mile from one another. He explained that the proposed amendment would allow substance abuse counseling as part of mental health or behavioral counseling services, provided no medical prescriptions are issued, without being subject to the one-half mile separation requirement.

Mr. McInnis noted that the amendment would permit licensed mental health counselors to provide counseling services related to substance abuse, so long as no medication is prescribed for treatment. He further explained that the one-half mile separation requirement would remain in effect for facilities that provide medication-assisted treatment or other medication-based substance abuse treatment services. Mr. McInnis added that the amendment would revise the existing ordinance language to clarify that the distance restriction applies only to facilities offering medication-assisted treatment or other medication-based services. He concluded by stating that the amendment was presented to the Planning Board in March, and the Board unanimously recommended approval.

Councilmember Adams asked if it only applied to outpatients. Mr. McInnis stated that it is all outpatient.

<u>In favor of the ordinance amendment</u>

There were none.

<u>In opposition to the ordinance amendment</u>

There were none.

Mayor Pro Tem Rainer moved to Approve Ordinance No. O-2026-06 amending Article 7 Supplemental Regulations, Section 7.47 Substance Abuse Treatment Center/Office, Sub-section 7.47.2 of the City of Laurinburg Unified Development Ordinance, as presented. Councilmember McLean seconded the motion.

Mayor Willis closed the Public Hearing.

The vote was as follows:

Ayes - Adams, Allen, McLean, Rainer, Williamson
Nays - None.

(Copy of Ordinance No. O-2026-06 is on file in the Clerk's office)

7. CITY MANAGER REPORTS

a. Sky High Aerospace Expo 2026 Airshow - Seth Hatchell, Southeastern Regional Airport Authority; Trey Brown, Sky High President.

The City Manager reiterated that Item 7(a), to discuss the Sky High Aerospace Expo 2026 Airshow was tabled until further notice until both Seth Hatchell and Trey Brown were able to be present.

b. Consider the bids to award the contract for the Aberdeen Road Pump Station Renovation Project.

The City Manager stated that the City opened sealed bids on April 9, 2026, and received six bids. He stated that in front of Council is a request to award Step Construction, Inc. as the lowest responsible bidder in the amount of $683,000. He noted that all funding for this project are State ARPA Funds, so there is no cost to the City.

Councilmember Adams moved to approve Resolution No. R-2026-08 to award the contract for the Aberdeen Road Pump Station Renovation Project to Step Construction, Inc. in the amount of $683,00. Mayor Pro Tem Rainer seconded the motion. The vote was as follows:

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

(Copy of Resolution No. R-2026-08 on file in the Clerk's office)

c. Consider the bids to award the contract for the McColl Road Water Line Replacement — Phase II Project.

The City Manager stated that Phase I of the project is ongoing and that the City accepted bids on April 9, 2026, receiving 13 bids. He noted that the project is funded through state direct appropriations that Representative Pierce and Senator Britt assisted the City in acquiring over the course of two years. The City Manager stated that the request is for Council to award

Burnette Enterprises of Wilmington, Inc. as the lowest responsible bidder in the amount of $648,046.39.

Councilmember Williamson moved to approve Resolution No. R-2026-09 to award the contract for the McColl Road Water Line Replacement — Phase II Project to Burnette Enterprises of Wilmington, Inc. in the amount of $648,046.39. Councilmember Allen seconded the motion.

Councilmember Adams asked what the minor math irregularity was in the award letter. The City Manager stated that the value was reviewed, and the company was still the lowest responsible bidder.

The vote was as follows:

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

(Copy of Resolution No. R-2026-09 on file in the Clerk's office)

d. Consider the logo for the McKay Street Water Tank.

The City Manager referenced the elevated storage tank projects that were rehabbed and repainted, located on 401 North and 401 South. He stated that the City had excess funds to demolish and rehab the McKay Tank, adding that it was also beneficial to have a back-up tank during the Caledonia Tank rehab. He noted that, due to the excess grant funding, the City decided to proceed with the McKay Tank rehab. The City Manager explained that the McKay Tank is included in the skyline of Historic Downtown Laurinburg, so it is requested that Council approve the downtown logo on the tank instead of the City of Laurinburg logo. He noted that the logo would point directly toward the Roper Street and Main Street corner, where the clock is located downtown, so that the historic logo is facing the historic downtown.

Mayor Pro Tem Rainer asked to clarify that the project was executed with excess funds. The City Manager confirmed that it was.

Mayor Pro Tem Rainer moved to approve the logo for the McKay Street Water Tank, as presented. Councilmember Adams seconded the motion. The vote was unanimous.

e. Consider Resolution No. R-2026-10 to request the naming of a bridge for former Police Chief Robert Lee Malloy.

The City Manager stated that the application for the naming of a bridge for former Police Chief Robert Lee Malloy was previously submitted to the North Carolina Department of Transportation (NCDOT), and that current Police Chief Johnson has been heavily involved in the process. He explained that the initial application included the incorrect bridge number and has since been updated to reflect the correct bridge number, adding that the new application must be submitted to the NCDOT with the correct information reflected in Resolution No. R-2026-10, which must be approved by Council.

Mayor Willis read aloud Resolution No. R-2026-10.

Councilmember Allen moved to approve Resolution No. R-2026-10 to request the naming of a bridge for former Police Chief Robert Lee Malloy, as presented. Councilmember McLean seconded the motion.

The vote was as follows:

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

Mayor Willis provided the opportunity for public input.

News Reporter Sandy Callan provided an anecdotal story regarding former Police Chief Robert Lee Malloy. Mayor Pro Tem Rainer asked to clarify where the bridge was located. Mayor Willis confirmed it is located next to the Scotland Motors business.

The motion to approve Resolution R-2026-10 was passed unanimously.

(Copy of Resolution No. R-2026-10 is on file in the Clerk's office)

f. Consider Resolution No. R-2026-11 authorizing the sale of surplus real property in conjunction with Scotland County.

The City Manager stated that in front of Council is a list of properties that are jointly owned by the City and County, which were acquired through the property tax foreclosure process. He stated that Resolution No. R-2026-11 must be approved so that the properties could move through the process to be auctioned off and eventually return to private ownership.

Councilmember Adams asked if the dollar amounts on the list presented to Council would be the base auction values for each property. The City

Manager stated that the County typically leads the auctions, using either Iron Horse Auctions or GovDeals but could use a different entity. He stated that the City typically receives the percentage of delinquent property tax, which is a proportionate percentage to what the County receives. He added that, with the county tax rate being higher, the County typically receives a larger amount. The City Manager noted that Zacchaeus Legal Services typically executes the process.

The City Manager explained that a resolution must be passed to deem each property surplus and allow them to be sold. Mayor Willis asked to clarify that these properties could be empty lots with no construction on them. The City Manager confirmed this and added that each plot could be used for potential City use, such as utilizing an empty lot beside a pump station that may need to be rehabbed in the future.

Councilmember Adams moved to approve Resolution No. R-2026-11 declaring certain property to be surplus property and authorizing the sale of the surplus real property in conjunction with Scotland County, as presented. Mayor Pro Tem Rainer seconded the motion. The vote was as follows:

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

(Copy of Resolution No. R-2026-11 is on file in the Clerk's office)

g. Consider authorizing the Mayor to execute the Naming Rights Agreement with Scotland Memorial Hospital, Inc, allowing sponsorship and naming of the stage facility at McDuffie Square.

The City Manager stated that the City had a very successful Laurinburg After 5 and Suds and Swine event over the weekend. He commended the City staff and other partners on last-minute preparations to ensure the events ran smoothly and the McDuffie Square stage was functioning. The City Manager noted that the contract with PCI to construct the stage was executed on February 6, 2026, and provided recognition to PCI's contracting services, Jim Blackwell, and Lawrence Williams' steel work in Laurel Hill. He recognized the City staff, particularly Community Development Director Walker McCoy, and each department for their efficient collaboration and diligence to complete the project within the limited timeframe.

The City Manager explained that he had begun discussions with Scotland Memorial Hospital regarding naming rights for the stage, with the City Attorney's assistance, and determined that they want to hold the naming rights to the stage for three years. He stated that Council is now asked to authorize the Mayor to execute the naming rights agreement with Scotland Memorial Hospital, Inc., as they would like the stage to be named "Scotland Health," with their logo visible on the front side. He noted that the lettering has been confirmed and approved by Scotland Memorial Hospital, Inc. and the estimated installation is in three weeks.

Councilmember Allen moved to approve authorizing the Mayor to execute the Naming Rights Agreement with Scotland Memorial Hospital, Inc., allowing sponsorship and naming of the stage facility at McDuffie Square, as presented. Councilmember Williamson seconded the motion. The vote was unanimous.

8. COMMENTS FROM MAYOR AND/OR COUNCILMEMBERS

Mayor Willis stated that the weekend events were a great success and a wonderful kick-off for summer. He also mentioned an inquiry from the public about the potential depot to be constructed in downtown Laurinburg. The City Manager stated that the depot was in the General Fund in the budget.

Councilmember Williamson stated that, as a member of the Rotary Club which is a primary sponsor of the Suds and Swine event, he received wonderful comments from everyone regarding the weekend events and about the Blue Blazers' participation.

9. CLOSED SESSION (IF NEEDED)

No Closed Session was needed.

10. ADJOURNMENT

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

The meeting was adjourned at 6:58 p.m.

James W. Willis

James T. Willis, Mayor

Amanda K. Futrell

Amanda K. Futrell, City Clerk