

**CITY OF LAURINBURG
CITY COUNCIL MEETING
AUGUST 24, 2021
CITY HALL AND POLICE DEPARTMENT
303 WEST CHURCH ST.
7:00 p.m.**

Minutes

The City Council of the City of Laurinburg held its regular meeting on Tuesday, August 24, 2021 in the Council Chambers of the City Hall and Police Department at 7:00 p.m. with the Honorable James T. Willis, Mayor, presiding and physically present. The following Councilmembers were physically present: Mary Jo Adams, Mary Evans, James J. Garby, Jr., Donald Rainer, and Andrew G. Williamson, Jr.

Also present were Charles D. Nichols III, City Manager; Jennifer A. Tippet City Clerk; and William P. Floyd, Jr., City Attorney.

Mayor Willis called the meeting to order at 7:00 p.m.

Councilmember Williamson gave the Invocation and led the Pledge of Allegiance.

APPROVAL OF AGENDA

Mayor Willis requested that a discussion concerning Scotland County's mask mandate be added to the agenda.

Motion was made by Councilmember Garby to approve the agenda with the requested amendment. The motion was seconded by Councilmember Adams, and the vote was as follows:

Ayes: Garby, Adams, Williamson, Rainer, Evans
Nays: None

PUBLIC COMMENT PERIOD

Ms. Johnisha Leak of 11140 Purcell Road expressed concern that the north side of Laurinburg has been neglected. She requested that Council assist with the restoration of I. Ellis Johnson School.

CONSENT AGENDA

Mayor Willis reviewed the Consent Agenda:

- a) Consider minutes of May 18, 2021 special meeting and May 18, 2021 regular meeting
- b) Consider authorizing the Mayor to execute Lease to Harvey Edge Farming for an annual amount of \$2,070 per year

Councilmember Evans moved to approve the Consent Agenda. The motion was seconded by Councilmember Garby, and the vote was as follows:

Ayes: Evans, Garby, Rainer, Adams, Williamson

Nays: None

DELEGATION

DR. MELBA MCCALLUM – PARTNERS IN MINISTRY

Dr. Melba McCallum, Executive Director of Partners in Ministry Resource and Referral Center, thanked Council for allowing her to come before Council. She presented a PowerPoint with highlights as follows:

- Provides a safe environment and diverse learning opportunities to:
 - Strengthen our children, youth, and families
 - Increase fair and just opportunities for everyone to receive a hands-up.... to live the healthiest life possible.... And
 - To assume greater responsibility for their future.
- Over the last 14 years
 - Built and sustained a One-stop Resource and Referral Center
 - Serving 450 youth & children yearly
 - Over 3,800 families
 - With an operating budget of over \$2M per year in programming
 - These dollars are spent in the county
- Support over 65 full-time and part-time dedicated staff members and over 114,000 volunteer hours
- Extends learning opportunities to help close achievement gaps
- Prepare youth for the 21st Century Workforce, focusing on STEM (science, technology, engineering and math)
- Workforce preparedness
 - Focus on career readiness
 - Students graduate on-time
 - Youth move from paid work experience, internships to college and/or unsubsidized employment while contributing to community, economic growth and labor force needs.
- Partners in Ministry assists with job placements, transportation for youth to get them to the center.
- Rehab and Outreach Recovery (ROAR) Housing and Support
 - Address housing concerns
 - Provide urgent repairs to keep families from being displaced
- The Resource and Reference Center interconnects and integrates all of its programs and services
- Sponsors Food Pantry
- Provides a safe environment and diverse learning opportunities to:

- Strengthen our children, youth, and families
 - Increase fair and just opportunities for everyone to receive a hands-up.... to live the healthiest life possible.... And
 - To assume greater responsibility for their future.
- Partners in Ministry has over 100 partners
- Current facility houses:
 - Community garden
 - Thrift store
 - Community center
 - Emergency food assistance
 - Weekly food pantry
 - Commodity boxes for seniors
 - Two computer labs/STEM labs
 - Maker space lab
 - Recording studio
 - Partner/referral services-low income energy assistance support
- Partners in Ministry has outgrown its facility and has plans for a new campus which will be called the State Employees' Credit Union Community Education Center
 - Begun initial phase of construction. Plans are complete, contractor hired and now finishing construction details.
 - Proposed groundbreaking October 2021 with 18 month construction time
- Capital Campaign is \$3.5 million with pledges and donors at \$2.4 million
- Opportunities for potential pledgers:
 - Requesting commitments/pledges of at least 70% of the project budget
 - Local government's investment and interest in meeting the unmet needs of the county
 - A \$450,000 commitment will help Partners In Ministry reach the percentage of projected budget over the next 18-24 months
 - Commitment requested before ground breaking in October

Councilmember Rainer explained that Partners in Ministry had assisted his brother with housing repairs when his brother was extremely ill.

Councilmember Evans explained that Partners in Ministry operates one of the most successful after-school programs for youth. She added that Partners in Ministry has been a vital part of the community, and she hoped that the City could provide some kind of assistance.

Councilmember Garby explained that he was impressed with the facility and all of the services offered by Partners in Ministry.

SCOTLAND COUNTY MASK MANDATE

Mayor Willis discussed the recent uptick in COVID-19 cases in the community. The Chairman of the Scotland Board of Commissioners recently passed a proclamation requiring that masks be worn while inside public spaces, and he wanted to see if Council wanted him to

issue a similar type proclamation for the City. He added that the County's mandate covers inside the City as well.

Upon question by Councilmember Adams, the City Attorney explained that the proclamation from the County covers the City.

Discussion ensued whether the Mayor should issue proclamation with a mask mandate for the City or whether to show support of the County's mandate.

Councilmember Williamson moved to support the proclamation issued by the Chairman of the Scotland County Board of Commissioners to require masks inside public spaces. The motion was seconded by Councilmember Adams, and the vote was as follows:

Ayes: Williamson, Adams, Evans, Garby, Rainer

Nays: None

CITY MANAGER REPORTS

DISCUSSION CONCERNING SENATE BILL 145 AND UPDATE ON \$100,000 FUNDING FROM SCOTLAND COUNTY TO THE SCOTLAND COUNTY ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT CORPORATION FOR SMALL GRANTS TO LOCALLY-OWNED SMALL BUSINESSES THAT SUFFERED A REVENUE LOSS IN 2020 COMPARED TO 2019 - MARK WARD

Mr. Mark Ward, Scotland County Economic Development Corporation (EDC) Director, explained that businesses and private citizens have struggled during the pandemic. The EDC received \$100,000 in funding at the beginning of the pandemic which was granted to small businesses to provide personal protective equipment (PPE) for employees. Under the American Recovery Protection Act (APRA) local governments were provided funds. The Scotland County Board of Commissioners has pledged \$100,000 of ARPA funds to go to directly to small businesses in the County that have shown a loss of revenue from 2019 to 2020. The Scotland County Board of Commissioners define a small business as: 1) less than 20 employees; 2) the owner lives and resides in Scotland County; 3) the business is in Scotland County; and 4) the business owner can prove that there was a loss of revenue between 2019 to 2020 which was likely attributed to COVID-19. Exact details of the funding to be provided to small businesses that qualify are still being determined. The finance director for the City, the finance director for the County, and Mr. Ward will be the only ones reviewing applications for assistance from small businesses. The names of businesses and the amount of funding provided will be public.

Mr. Ward discussed Senate Bill 145 which allows the City of Winston-Salem to donate any City property to a contractor to construct low- to moderate-income housing at a predetermined price to ensure that the housing is affordable. He suggested that the City and County partner to tear down certain abandoned and dilapidated houses down. The County will waive the tipping fees, and give to a contractor to build a house that would be affordable to a low- to moderate-income family or individual similar to the homes that Habitat for

Humanity builds. He added that if the City and County worked together to demolish dilapidated homes, there would only be man-hours involved, and a property provide income from taxes and utilities. He further added that there might be grants that the EDC could obtain to assist with this endeavor.

Discussion ensued concerning the process and the possible benefits of demolishing houses and giving the land to a contractor to build a low- to moderate-income home.

The City Attorney explained that Mr. Mac McInnis had been working very hard to demolish many dilapidated houses in Laurinburg; however, many of them are owned by third generation out-of-town heirs who are impossible to track down. He briefly reviewed the process that Mr. McInnis follows with regard to dilapidated homes. He added that the City owns a lot of vacant homes, but as a general rule, the City cannot just give property away.

Following discussion, Councilmembers Williamson and Adams expressed interest in Mr. Ward exploring this housing idea further. However, there was no consensus of Council.

UPDATE ON NORTH FIRE STATION

The City Manager provided an update on the North Fire Station damaged in Hurricane Florence in 2018. He presented a PowerPoint with highlights as follows:

- Funding
 - GoldenLeaf Grant (12/20/2019) \$1,250,000
 - FEMA (11/2020) \$ 135,898
 - GoldenLeaf Additional Request \$ 920,000
 - State Budget Request \$ 920,000

The City Manager explained that initially staff believed that the fire station could be built for approximately \$1.45 million. Once the staff had completed all of the FEMA requirements, a cost estimator was hired, and it was discovered that the City was approximately \$920,000 short in funding to build the North Fire Station. Staff has tried to find any funding possible. The GoldenLeaf will reassess the additional funding request from the City on October, and he and Councilmember Adams met with Speaker of the House Tim Moore to request that funding be included in the state budget. The North Carolina Senate rejected the House's budget and they are engaged in negotiations, so until the state budget is finalized, it will not be known if the budget will include \$920,000 for the North Fire Station.

He discussed several different plans for the fire station. Staff does not want to wait until the state budget and GoldenLeaf have determined, so staff would like to do a base bid based on what funding is secured. The current available funding would pay for a 9,253 square feet three-bay fire station which would not house all of the fire equipment and could affect homeowners' insurance for residents in north fire district. Another plan would be to build the same facility with the addition of 3,115 square feet that would not have walls and would not be controlled environment. The desired fire station is a five-bay station with 12,568 square feet and fully built out.

The cost for the 3,115 square feet basic fire station is approximately \$1,307,576. The cost for the base fire station with the additional 3,115 square feet unfinished would be approximately \$2,408,412, and the desired full build-out fire station that is needed would be approximately \$2,347,312.

Discussion ensued concerning the three (3) options for the North Fire Station. The City Manager explained that having the plans and cost estimates were of great value when talking with Speaker Moore.

The City Manager explained that staff wanted to go out for bid with the base building and include the other two (2) options that would be bid separately in order to prevent having to negotiate.

The schedule is as follows:

TASK	START	FINISH
Schematic Design	1/12/21	4/6/21
Construction Documents	4/7/21	9/15/21
Bidding/Permitting	9/16/21	10/26/21
Construction	11/17/21	7/31/22

The goal is to have the bids presented to Council at the November 16, 2021 meeting so that construction can begin. The City Manager added that hopefully by that time, staff would have heard from GoldenLeaf and possibly from the state budget.

CONSIDER PROPOSAL FROM NC DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION CONCERNING FORD DRIVE

The City Manager explained that Mr. Matt Kitchen from NC Department of Transportation (DOT) has asked for Council's support for changing the intersection on Ford Drive due to accidents at that intersection. One (1) property owner, Mr. Ron Riggins, had some concerns about the proposed change because the median would restrict traffic to Scotland Inn and Hampton Inn. He requested that a caution light be added instead of the median.

Mr. Kitchen explained that the proposed changes were driven by accidents. The change would not only add the median on Ford Drive, but also offset the left turn lanes on US Highway 401. This would keep traffic moving as quickly and expeditiously as possible.

Following discussion, Councilmember Evans moved to support the proposal from NC Department of Transportation concerning Ford Drive. The motion was seconded by Councilmember Garby, and the vote was as follows:

Ayes: Evans, Garby, Rainer, Adams, Williamson

Nays: None

CONSIDER ORDINANCE AMENDING THE CITY OF LAURINBURG ANNUAL

BUDGET APPROPRIATIONS ORDINANCE

The City Manager explained that this item and the following item are concerning construction of raw water wells 8 and 9. There is a separate capital project fund for Water/Sewer Projects. Willis Engineers assists the City with the evaluation and serving as the City's advisor of the Raw Water Well Improvement Program. Phase I of the program has taken longer than expected and the engineering services budget of \$50,000 has been almost exhausted. The engineer has provided an estimate of additional engineering required of \$25,000.

Councilmember Williamson moved to approve Ordinance No. O-2021-29 amending the City of Laurinburg's Annual Budget Appropriations Ordinance (Ordinance No. O-2021-18) by increasing Appropriated Fund Balance by \$25,000 and increase Expenditures in Capital Projects by \$25,000. The motion was seconded by Councilmember Rainer, and the vote was as follows:

Ayes: Williamson, Rainer, Evans, Adams, Garby

Nays: None

(Ordinance No. O-2021-29 on file in city clerk's office)

CONSIDER ORDINANCE AMENDING THE CITY OF LAURINBURG ANNUAL BUDGET APPROPRIATIONS ORDINANCE

The City Manager explained that this budget amendment increases revenue and expenditures in the Water/Sewer Capital Project Fund.

Councilmember Williamson moved to approve Ordinance No. O-2021-30 amending the City of Laurinburg's Annual Budget Appropriations Ordinance (Ordinance No. O-2021-18) by increasing revenues in the Water Sewer Fund by \$25,000 and increase Expenditures in Engineering by \$25,000. The motion was seconded by Councilmember Rainer, and the vote was as follows:

Ayes: Williamson, Rainer, Garby, Adams, Evans

Nays: None

(Ordinance No. O-2021-30 on file in city clerk's office)

NORTH CAROLINA DEPARTMENT OF ENVIRONMENTAL QUALITY STATE REVOLVING LOAN IN THE AMOUNT OF \$4,515,000 FOR DISTRIBUTION SYTEM IMPROVEMENTS

The City Manager that this and the next three (3) items involve grants from North Carolina Department of Environmental Quality (DEQ) low interest loans for water/sewer infrastructure projects. For the three (3) items there will be a resolution accepting the loan and an ordinance creating the capital project fund for each. First is a low interest loan for \$4,515,000 for Water Distribution System Improvements Phase 2. This is a 20-year note with 1.13% interest. The City will not be required to pay on the loan until the project is completed.

Councilmember Adams moved to approve Resolution No. R-2021-12 accepting the North Carolina Department of Environmental Quality State Revolving Loan in the amount of \$4,515,000 for the Distribution System Improvement Phase 2 Project. The motion was seconded by Councilmember Garby, and the vote was as follows:

Ayes: Adams, Garby, Evans, Rainer, Williamson

Nays: None

(Resolution No. R-2021-12 on file in city clerk's office)

Councilmember Adams moved to approve Ordinance No. O-2021-31 amending the City of Laurinburg's Annual Budget Appropriations Ordinance (Ordinance No. O-2021-18) by increasing revenues in the in the Water/Sewer Capital Project Fund by \$4,515,000 and increasing expenditures by \$850,000 for Engineering and \$3,665,000 for Construction for a total of \$4,515,000. The motion was seconded by Councilmember Garby, and the vote was as follows:

Ayes: Adams, Garby, Evans, Rainer, Williamson

Nays:

(Copy of Ordinance No. O-2021-31 on file in city clerk's office)

**NORTH CAROLINA DEPARTMENT OF ENVIRONMENTAL QUALITY STATE
REVOLVING LOAN IN THE AMOUNT OF \$8,951,000 FOR THE BRIDGE CREEK
AND COLLEGE PARK SANITARY SEWER REHABILITATION**

The City Manager explained that this loan is for \$8,951,000 for Bridge Creek and College Park Sanitary Sewer Rehabilitation, a much needed project to reduce the inflow and infiltration (I&I) into the system. The loan is for 20 years at 0.13% interest. The City will not be required to pay on the loan until the project is completed.

Councilmember Rainer moved to approve Resolution No. R-2021-13 accepting the North Carolina Department of Environmental Quality State Revolving Loan in the amount of \$8,951,000 for the Bridge Creek and College Park Sanitary Sewer Rehabilitation. The motion was seconded by Councilmember Garby, and the vote was as follows:

Ayes: Rainer, Garby, Evans, Adams, Williamson

Nays: None

(Copy of Resolution No. R-2021-13 on file in city clerk's office)

Councilmember Rainer moved to approve Ordinance No. O-2021-32 amending the City of Laurinburg's FY 21-22 Annual Budget Appropriations Ordinance (Ordinance No. O-2021-18) by increasing revenues in the Water/Sewer Capital Project Fund by \$8,951,000 and increasing expenditures by \$8,951,000 for construction. Councilmember Williamson seconded the motion, and the vote was as follows:

Ayes: Rainer, Williamson, Garby, Evans, Adams

Nays: None

(Copy of Ordinance No. 2021-33 on file in city clerk's office)

**NORTH CAROLINA DEPARTMENT OF ENVIRONMENTAL QUALITY STATE
REVOLVING LOAN IN THE AMOUNT OF \$7,060,000 FOR LEITH CREEK
WASTEWATER TREATMENT PLANT INFLUENT PUMP STATION**

The City Manager explained that this loan is for the Leith Creek Wastewater Influent Treatment Plant on Hall Street in the amount of \$7,060,000. The loan is for 20 years at a 1.02% interest rate.

Councilmember Williamson moved to approve Resolution No. R-2021-14 accepting the North Carolina Department of Environmental Quality State Revolving Loan in the amount of \$7,060,000 for Leith Creek Wastewater Treatment Plant Influent Pump Station. Councilmember Garby seconded the motion, and the vote was as follows:

Ayes: Williamson, Garby, Adams, Evans, Rainer

Nays: None

(Copy of Resolution No. R-2021-14 on file in city clerk's office)

Councilmember Williamson moved to approved Ordinance No. O-2021-33 amending the City of Laurinburg's Annual Budget Appropriations Ordinance (Ordinance No. O-2021-18) by increasing revenues in the in the Water/Sewer Capital Project Fund by \$7,060,000 and increasing expenditures by \$7,060,000 for construction. Councilmember Garby seconded the motion, and the vote was as follows:

Ayes: Williamson, Garby, Rainer, Adams, Evans

Nays: None

(Copy of Ordinance No. O-2021-33 on file in city clerk's office)

**CONSIDER RESOLUTION TO APPLY FOR FUNDS FOR
MERGER/REGIONALIZATION STUDY**

The City Manager explained that this resolution was to apply for grant funding for a merger/regionalization study of water systems. The City operates a water system and operates and maintains the Scotland County water system, and Southeastern Regional Airport Authority also has its separate water system. If the grant is approved, all three (3) systems will be reviewed to see if there are any efficiencies that could be realized by merging all three (3).

Councilmember Evans moved to approve Resolution No. R-2021-15 to apply for funds for a merger/regionalization study for consolidation of the City of Laurinburg and Scotland County existing water system. The motion was seconded by Councilmember Williamson, and the vote was as follows:

Ayes: Evans, Williamson, Rainer, Adams, Garby

Nays: None

(Copy of Resolution No. R-2021-15 on file in city clerk's office)

CONSIDER ORDINANCE AMENDING THE CITY OF LAURINBURG BUDGET APPROPRIATIONS ORDINANCE

The City Manager explained that because of the long lead times in purchasing equipment, staff was requesting a budget amendment so that a bucket truck for the Electric Department could be ordered so that it would arrive next year, when it was scheduled in the Capital Improvement Plan. The lead time for getting a bucket truck is approximately 650-720 days. A purchase order cannot be completed until the funds are appropriated in the budget.

Councilmember Adams moved to approve Ordinance No. O-2021-34 amending the City of Laurinburg's Annual Budget Appropriations Ordinance (Ordinance No. O-2021-18) by increasing revenues in the Electric Fund Balance Appropriated by \$255,386, and increasing expenditures to Equipment by \$255,386. Councilmember Garby seconded the motion, and the vote was as follows:

Ayes: Adams, Garby, Evans, Rainer, Williamson

Nays: None

(Copy of Ordinance No. O-2021-34 on file in city clerk's office)

CONSIDER RESOLUTION AUTHORIZING THE FILING OF AN APPLICATION FOR FINANCING AGREEMENT

The City Manager explained that this resolution is necessary for financing the air curtain burner and new roll-out garbage carts. Any financing greater than \$500,000 must be approved by the Local Government Commission, and this resolution is one of the requirements. The interest rate is 1.61% for 10 years.

Councilmember Williamson moved to approve Resolution No. R-2021-16 authorizing filing of an application for financing agreement for the air curtain burner (incinerator) and solid waste carts. The motion was seconded by Councilmember Adams, and the vote was as follows:

Ayes: Williamson, Adams, Rainer, Evans, Garby

Nays: None

(Copy of Resolution No. R-2021-16 on file in city clerk's office)

COMMENTS FROM MAYOR AND/OR COUNCIL

Councilmember Adams explained that there was funding available through the Lumber River Council of Governments Division of Aging for supplemental supplies for caregivers. The funding is available through September 30, 2021. She suggested that if anyone knows a caregiver to contact the Lumber River Council of Governments.

Councilmember Garby explained that the I. Ellis Johnson Restoration Committee meeting went well. The committee is waiting for Scotland County to gather costs to renovate. He added that he would like to let the committee know that the City will support the effort financially however it can. The meeting went well.

Councilmember Rainer explained that he spoke with Commissioner John Alford who said that it would be two (2) to three (3) months before the costs for restoration would be available.

Councilmember Garby explained that he stressed the importance of getting the gym open and running, and that this should not take two (2) to three (3) months. He added that the County wanted to get all of the costs at once. The next meeting of the committee has not been scheduled.

Councilmember Rainer asked when Council would discuss what financial assistance the City could give Partners in Ministry.

Councilmember Garby stated that he thought that Partners in Ministry was a great program was an important topic to discuss, and that he believed that the City should support it.

Councilmember Adams stated that she had worked with Partners in Ministry and it has a proven track record. She added that Council needed to be cautious because the North Fire Station should be the top priority for Council. She added that Council should also keep in mind that Partners in Ministry is not located within the City limits and if Council donated to Partners in Ministry, it would be with City taxpayers' dollars.

Councilmember Rainer explained that Partners in Ministry had programs for children, including both City and County children. He added that Partners in Ministry also has programs that have helped with housing repairs for Laurinburg citizens. He added that he knows that the City cannot give the requested \$450,000. He suggested that the City could pledge to do something and donate over two (2) to three (3) years.

Councilmember Evans stated that supporting Partners in Ministry shows the children in the City that Council supports them. She added that her grandson attended Partners In Ministry programs, graduated and received a scholarship from Griffin Toyota at a Toyota school, and that because of the program, he would have not just a job, but a career.

Councilmember Williamson explained that Council has gone through a process in the past to justify donating to non-profits by determining if the non-profit provided services that help the City. The home repairs that Councilmember Rainer mentioned might be a way to justify donating specifically to the home repairs program. He cautioned Council to be careful otherwise every non-profit would come to Council for funds.

Councilmember Adams suggested that Partners in Ministry could provide an accounting for the number of City children that are served in its programs.

Following further discussion, the City Manager explained that at the September 19, 2021 Council meeting, he would provide a review of the General Fund balances and fund balance requirements.

CLOSED SESSION

At 8:39 p.m. Councilmember Garby moved to go into closed session in order to consult with the attorney. The motion was seconded by Councilmember Williamson, and the vote was as follows:

Ayes: Garby, Williamson, Adams, Evans, Rainer

Nays: None

At 8:46 p.m. Councilmember Evans moved to adjourn the closed session and resume the regular meeting. The motion was seconded by Councilmember Garby, and the vote was as follows:

Ayes: Evans, Garby, Rainer, Adams, Williamson

Nays: None

ADJOURNMENT

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

The meeting adjourned at 8:47 p.m.

James T. Willis, Mayor

Jennifer A. Tippet, City Clerk