CITY OF LAURINBURG
CITY COUNCIL MEETING
JULY 20, 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, July 20, 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. Tippett City Clerk; and William P. Floyd, Jr., City Attorney.

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

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

APPROVAL OF AGENDA

Councilmember Evans requested that Item g) Consider Ordinance No. O-2021-22 amending Chapter 1 Administration Article IV Boards and Commissions Division 2 Airport Commission, be removed from the Consent Agenda.

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

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

PUBLIC COMMENT PERIOD

There was no one present to provide public comments.

CONSENT AGENDA

Mayor Willis reviewed the Consent Agenda:

a) Consider minutes of April 14, 2021 reconvened special meeting; and April 21, 2021 regular meeting
b) Consider Semi-Annual Surplus Sale Report
c) Authorize the City Manager to sign any documents related to the American Rescue

Plan Act
d) Authorize Mayor to Execute Order to Collect Taxes
e) Consider request to close Cronly, Roper, Fairly and Railroad Streets for Downtown Event on August 28, 2021
f) Consider Resolution No. R-2021-09 pertaining to the conditional use permit request for the operation of a yard waste incinerator
g) *Removed*
h) Consider Ordinance No. O-2021-23 Amending FY 21-22 Budget Appropriations Ordinance (Ordinance No. 2021-18) by increasing a special revenue fund for ARPA Funds-State Government Grants by $2,390,550 and increase Capital Outlay by $2,390,550

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

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

CONSIDER ORDINANCE NO. O-2021-22 AMENDING CHAPTER 1 ADMINISTRATION ARTICLE IV BOARDS AND COMMISSIONS DIVISION 2 AIRPORT COMMISSION OF THE CITY CODE

Councilmember Evans expressed concern about the proposed change in the manner of appointment to the Board of the Laurinburg-Maxton Airport Commissioner, taking that power away from Council and giving it to the Mayor.

The City Manager explained that Senate Bill 795 changed several things about the Laurinburg-Maxton Airport Commission including changing the name to the Southeastern Regional Airport Authority. The proposed ordinance reflects the items the state law changed.

The City Attorney explained that Senate Bill 795 was passed by the legislature and that all of the provisions in the proposed ordinance were in Senate Bill 795 so that there would be no confusion about rules and regulations were with respect to the Airport Authority. He added that whether the changes are included in the City Code, the law regarding the Airport Authority is contained in Senate Bill 795 because that is what the legislature has passed.

A lengthy discussion ensued concerning the changes mandated by Senate Bill 795 concerning the appointment of membership on the Southeastern Regional Airport Authority.

Councilmember Adams moved to approve Ordinance No. O-2021-22 amending Chapter 1 Administration Article IV Boards and Commissions Division 2 Airport Commission of the City Code. The motion as seconded by Councilmember Williamson, and the vote was as follows:

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

(Ordinance No. O-2021-22 on file in city clerk's office)

PUBLIC HEARINGS

REQUEST TO REZONE FROM OFFICE/INSTITUTIONAL TO GENERAL BUSINESS LOT 81 ON COMMONWEALTH DRIVE

Mayor Willis opened the public hearing to consider a request to rezone from Office/Institutional to General Business Lot 81 on Commonwealth Avenue.

Mr. Mac McInnis, City Planner/Code Enforcement Officer, explained that the request to rezone from Office/Institutional to General Business Lot 81 on Commonwealth Avenue was made by Mr. and Mrs. Christoval. The property consists of approximately 11 acres, with only half of it useable as the other half was in a flood zone. Mrs. Christoval has mentioned having arts and crafts festivals, food festivals, weddings and other events on the property, which would not be allowed in the current zoning. If festival events are held, Mrs. Christoval was aware that permits would need to be obtained for each event. Planning Board heard the request on June 8, 2021, and unanimously recommended approval.

Mr. Christoval explained that he and his wife would like to have the property rezoned from Office/Institutional to General Business in order to conduct business. He added that he advised his wife to be as broad as possible in the initial request; however, after reviewing financial issues, there were two (2) to three (3) directions in which they would take to conduct business on the property.

There being no one to speak in opposition, Mayor Willis closed the public hearing.

Motion was made by Councilmember Evans to approve Ordinance No. O-2021-24 rezoning from Office/Institutional to General Business Lot 81 (PIN # 01005307081) on Commonwealth Avenue.

The City Attorney requested that the motion to approve Ordinance No. O-2021-24 included the following verbiage:

The rezoning advances the public health, safety and welfare, and based upon the following:

The rezoning of Scotland County Land Parcel number 01005307081 from Office Institutional to General Business is consistent with an adopted comprehensive plan and any other officially adopted plan that is applicable because:

1) The General Business zoning district is established to accommodate commercial service and retail businesses which generally have as their market the entire city and surrounding area.
2) The Comprehensive Plan 2035 indicates some mixed use zoning in the area in close proximity to this parcel.
3) There are already some General Business, Office Institutional, and Light

Industrial zonings in the area along with residential zonings. Mixed Use areas are used to stimulate compact development, to provide flexible development options, and to utilize existing infrastructure.

Reasonableness

1) The Rezoning to GB will allow uses consistent with other existing area uses. Rezoning to GB will help to maintain the present character of the City while promoting diversity and future growth;
2) The rezoning to GB will have no detrimental impact to the property values of surrounding land owners and;
3) The rezoning to GB will require no infrastructure improvements by the City of Laurinburg.

The motion was seconded by Councilmember Rainer, and the vote was as follows:

Ayes: Evans, Rainer, Adams, Garby, Williamson
Nays: None
(copy of Ordinance No. O-2021-24 on file in city clerk's office)

CONSIDER AMENDING THE ELECTRIC RATE SCHEDULE AND SERVICE REGULATIONS (ORDINANCE O-2017-14)

Mayor Willis explained this is to consider ordinance amending the Electric Rate Schedule and Service Regulations, Residential Service Rider Renewal Energy Generation Rider (Experimental).

The City Manager introduced Mr. Mike Dawson of Progressive Engineering, the City's electrical engineer, was present to explain the changes.

Mr. Mike Dawson explained that the previous experimental solar rider was something council brought into play for solar in the City's grid, and it encompassed residential and commercial. Requests for the solar rate have primarily been from residential customers.

Upon question by Councilmember Evans, Mr. Dawson explained that the items changing in the solar rate included:

- Initially the request could be for up to 20 kW, proposing for it to be up to 10 kW.
- Change the renewal rate, the credit rate of .0159 per kW.
- There is a more detailed application process to ensure that the installation is done correctly.
- A drawing showing the installation requirements was added.

There being no one present to speak in favor or against the amendment, Mayor Willis closed the public hearing.

Councilmember Adams moved to approve Ordinance No. O-2021-25 amending Ordinance No. O-2017-14 Electric Rate Schedule and Service Regulations, Residential Service Rider Renewable Energy General Rider (Experimental). The motion was seconded by Garby, and the vote was as follows:

Ayes: Adams, Garby, Evans, Williamson, Rainer
Nays: None
(Ordinance No. O-2021-25 on file in city clerk's office)

A discussion ensued concerning liability if there was damage caused by installation of solar panels. The City Manager explained that the City advices customers to use caution in selecting contractors.

CITY MANAGER REPORTS

UPDATE AND PRESENTATION ON WATER/SEWER CAPITAL PROJECTS AND FINALIZED FUNDING INFORMATION – CHUCK WILLIS

Mr. Chuck Willis, Willis Engineering, Inc., explained that there are several projects underway in the Water/Sewer Fund, and there are other projects coming up, including new funding. He presented a PowerPoint with highlights as follows:

- Current projects underway include Distribution System Improvements – Phase 1, Raw Water Well Program and Leith Creek Wastewater Treatment Plant Influent Pump Station
- Distribution System Improvements – Phase I
  - Construction is underway with two (2) crews)
  - Project is halfway completed
- Raw Water Well Program
  - Wells 8 and 9 have received approval from the state for replacement
  - Well 6 will be renovated
  - Investigating new well of Stewartsville Road
  - Annual testing of wells and maintenance completed in June 2021
- Leith Creek Wastewater Treatment Plant Influent Pump Station
  - Design is complete and under State review
  - Loan Increase approved by State (Department of Water Infrastructure and Local Government Commission)
  - Well ahead of schedule
- Completed projects
  - Pump Station 19 improvements
    - Completed in April 2021, on time and under budget
  - Pump Station renovations (Pump Stations 8, 12 and 13) on southwest side of the City
    - Replaced mechanical equipment, refurnished the concrete wet well, installed new electrical, and installed generators
    - Completed in May 2021

        - Completed under budget
        - Behind schedule by 5 months due to staffing and equipment lead times. Supplies were ordered, but took a long time to receive.
        - There will be pump station improvements every year due to the large number of pumps that were added in 1994 when the City annexed a large area.
    - Sanitary Sewer evaluation
        - Constantly looking for sources of extraneous water that comes into the sewer system. This is called Infiltration and Inflow (I&I). Very difficult to pinpoint.
        - One of the techniques that is used is to pump non-toxic smoke into the sewer system, also called smoke testing. Also used flow monitoring and closed circuit camera.
        - Project completed on schedule and under budget
        - Developed recommendations for future repairs
- Upcoming Projects
    - Distribution System Improvements – Phase 2
        - Takes the water line to all the way to the water tank on Caledonia Road
        - Application for funding through The State Water Infrastructure Authority Approved on July 14. Don't have to start paying back until after construction.
        - Loan approval for 100% of the project (Design & Construction)
        - 10,700 linear feet of 20-inch pipe
        - Budget $4,515,000
    - Raw Water Well Expansion Program
        - Potential sites for new wells have been identified, but still looking for sites. Sites must be spread out and be in the correct geological formation.
        - City contacting land owners
        - Sample drilling to confirm adequate well site
        - Budget $1,000,000

Upon questions by Mayor Willis, Mr. Willis explained that the wells are so old that they yield is much lower than when the wells were dug and they are over-pumped. At times a new well can be dug close to an existing well that is closed, but generally the City needs to look for new well sites, particularly to the southeast of the City. Most of the City's wells run 180-220 feet down in the Black Creek Aquifer.

The City Manager added that the City finds higher water yields south, southeast of the Water Treatment Plant, along Johns Road.

Upon question by Councilmember Williamson, Mr. Williamson explained that there is a procedure for closing a well, including permission from the state to do so. The closing has to be done by a company certified to close wells.

The City Manager explained that the Cape Fear Aquifer is also available in the area; however, it is located 400-500 feet deep.

Mr. Willis discussed the cooperation among local regional municipalities with regard to water, and the lead taken by the Lumber River Council of Governments to properly manage the Black Creek Aquifer region. By working together, it prevents the state from putting restrictions on wells such as the state did in the Castle Hayne area.

- Water Treatment Plant – Chemical Systems Improvements
  - Project Identified in Water Asset Inventory Analysis (AIA) Report
  - New mechanical flash mixer
  - New Chemical Process Piping
  - New Aerator
  - Budget $350,000
- Pump Station Renovations
  - Project Identified in Wastewater AIA Report
  - Continue Program of Routine Pump Station Rehabilitations three (3) per year
  - Similar to work done on Pump Stations 8, 12, 13
  - Working with City Staff to Identify Next three (3) Pump Stations
  - Budget $750,000 ($250,000 per pump station)

The City Manager explained that when the City annexed areas in 1994, 18 pump stations were installed, and they are aging and need renovations. So this will be an ongoing project.

Mr. Willis explained that the goal is to standardize the equipment so that there will be replacement units to keep things in rotation to avoid replacing everything at once.

Mr. Willis explained that the two (2) biggest sources of I&I into the City's sewer system was from the Bridge Creek and College Park Pump Stations. Those two (2) areas contribute over one-half (1/2) of the water that enters the City's system, and there are significant spills due to groundwater, and are the older part of the City's system. Both Bridge Creek and College Park pump stations have been renovated, but the problems, including significant spills at the Wastewater Treatment Plant, continue to persist.

- Bridge Creek and College Park Sewer Rehabilitation
  - Budget of $8,951,000 to rehab both stations
  - Funding through the State Water Infrastructure Authority to work on I&I issues was approved on July 14
  - Low Interest Loan of $8,451,000 with $500,000 principal forgiveness

Mr. Willis explained that the City does not qualify for grant funding because the water/sewer rates are so low.

The City Manager stated that it was wonderful that the City received the low interest loan; however, it would be much better to receive a grant. He added that in the future Council will need to take a serious look at the water/sewer rates because the rates are below where they should be, making the City ineligible for grants.

Upon question by Mayor Willis, Mr. Willis explained that when there is a lot of impermeable surface and paved areas, smoke testing is conducted to see if pipes can be found that have cracked allowing water from the impermeable surface is getting into the system. The paved surfaces do not seem to be the problem in College Park and Bridge Creek. The more prevalent case is the ground water in those two (2) areas is extremely shallow. In the College Park basin, the first thousand feet of the pipe, one cannot walk along the pipeline because the ground water is right at ground level, so it stays either flooded or marshy almost all of the time. The pipe is located in the wet soil, and little leaks have been discovered that allow water to get into the system all of the time.

REPORT AND APPROVE BUDGET FROM SOUTHEASTERN REGIONAL AIRPORT AUTHORITY

Mr. Guy McCook, Chairman of the Southeastern Regional Airport Authority, explained that the Airport Authority is excited about the direction of the airport and the Authority. He added that the Authority met beginning in January, 2021, and began with an evaluation of the facilities. The Authority is committed to becoming the best it can be and to become a better contribution to economic growth and sustainability of the community. The Authority and staff have begun a process with the Department of Commerce Aviation Division to develop a plan for moving into the future. He introduced Mr. Seth Hatchell, Assistant Airport Director.

Mr. Hatchell explained that the Laurinburg-Maxton Airport is now governed by the Southeastern Regional Airport Authority. It has two (2) water treatment facilities and two (2) wastewater treatment facilities. The Fiscal Year 2021-2022 budget was approved by the Authority at its June 24, 2021 meeting. The budget totals, $1,646,724.00, an increase in $29,024.00 from the previous year. This increase is largely attributed to two (2) new leases this year. One with UNC Pembroke is to rent a warehouse for furniture storage. Another lease agreement with Strategic Materials which stores sand for NSG, the glass company. There was also an increase in wastewater treated, so all of those factors culminated in increase in the budget.

He discussed the current projects as follows:

- Runway extension. The runway is currently 6,500 feet long which allows general aviation, but no commercial aircraft. Extension proposed is 2,000 feet. This would make LMA having the 8^{th} longest runway in the state, and the 5^{th} airport in the state with a runway that size.
- Strategic Planning Process with Southeastern Regional Airport Authority, partnering with the Department of Commerce and Division of Aviation.
- Working on new logo design.

Upon question by Councilmember Williamson, Mr. Hatchell explained that there will be discussion at the next board meeting about a new terminal. The airport is working with engineering firm of W.K. Dickson who brought in an architect from Charlotte who developed a conceptual design that will be discussed at the next board meeting on Thursday. There has been a trend in more rural regions to get new terminal buildings. Lumberton Regional Airport has a new building, 8,000 square feet, and Richmond County has a fairly new terminal building, and San-Lee Airport which is now Raleigh Executive Jetport where a new terminal was just built. The Airport's current terminal was built in 1976.

Upon question by Councilmember Evans, Mr. Hatchell explained that the ongoing strategic planning was trying to determine the main focus of the airport. He added that the airport would love to have distribution at the airport.

Councilmember Williamson moved to approve the FY 21-22 budget for Southeastern Regional Airport Authority. The motion was seconded by Councilmember Garby, and the vote was as follows:

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

COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT UPDATE

Mr. Michael Mandeville, Community Development Director, presented a PowerPoint with highlights as follows:

- Beautification
    - Baskets are hung downtown with flowers planted in them. Growing and looking good.
    - Along David Stone's property along Gill Street and in the McDuffie Square parking lot the Master Gardeners have planted plants.
    - Staff will begin working on the green space in McDuffie Square as soon as the mowing season has slowed down enough to allow such.
    - Materials for irrigation system have been delivered.
- Getting bids on the dog park to clear out the property. Have three (3) and waiting on one (1) more bid. John McLean has begun setting the corners. One all bids received for clearing, contract will be awarded. Then bids will be sought for fencing.
- New sculptures have been erected in the Art Garden.
- Fiscal Year 20-21 Grants awarded:
    - NCDOT Bicycle Planning Grant.
        - $48,000 with a 20% match from the City of Laurinburg.
    - NCDOT Bicycle Helmet Initiative.
        - 68 helmets for a value of $564.60.
    - Electric Vehicle Chargers that have been ordered.
        - One level 2 EV charger from the NCDEQ- $7,606.
        - One DC Fast Charge EV charger from the NCDEQ- $44,169.76.
    - ElectriCities Grant.
        - McDuffie Square- $5,000.
    - Total for FY 20/21- $105,341.36.
- Downtown/Main Street Program.
    - NCDDA - Downtown Development Director, Daniel Walters, was elected the Southeast Regional Director of the NCDDA (North Carolina Downtown

Development Association).
- Downtown website.
    - Working on adding available properties to the website.
    - Working with downtown businesses that aren't on the website to add them.
- Events
    - Christmas in July- ongoing.
    - August Fun Fest- August 28th.
    - October 30th Fall Festival.
- Over $1 million in public and private investment in FY 20/21.
- Updated speakers downtown- have been ordered and hope to be in by September.
- Met National Main Street accreditation again.
- Wi-Fi has been added to McDuffie Square.
- Four (4) Façade Grants currently in the process.

Councilmember Williamson explained that he was happy to see that four (4) Façade Grants are in the process currently as it seems not many merchants have taken advantage of that program.

Mr. Mandeville explained that every new tenant and/or property owner downtown is provided that Façade Grant package.

The City Manager added that Mr. Daniel Walters maintains an email list, and periodically he sends information to the tenants and owners downtown, and one of the items included is the Façade Grant information.

At request of Councilmember Adams, Mr. Mandeville explained that the last meeting of the Bicycle Planning Grant Committee would be held in June. An open house was held and the public surveys are ongoing to gather information to design a bicycle plan. The survey can be found at bikelaurinburg.com. Mr. Mandeville will re-advertise the survey on social media.

CONSIDER AMENDING THE FY 21-22 FEE SCHEDULE ADDING A RESIDENTIAL SOLAR APPLICATION FEE

The City Manager explained that an amendment was requested to the Fee Schedule in order to add the Residential Solar Application Fee of $100.

Councilmember Adams moved to amend the FY 21-22 Fee Schedule adding a Residential Solar Application Fee of $100. The motion was seconded by Councilmember Rainer, and the vote was as follows:

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

CONSIDER RESOLUTION AUTHORIZING EASEMENTS TO LAURINBURG

HOUSING AUTHORITY

The City Manager explained that Laurinburg Housing Authority (LHA) requested easements across two (2) lots the City owns, one on Willow Drive and the other on Pitt Street in order to place dumpsters for its residents. The LHA has been transitioning from roll out carts to dumpsters for its residents. There are abandoned wells on both lots; however, the only concern on the Pitt Street lot is a water line. The City Attorney prepared the resolution and easements.

Councilmember Adams explained that several months ago, a senior citizen living in McIntosh Apartments told her that she was having difficulty walking to the dumpster. Upon talking with the City Manager, she was told that if a resident of LHA cannot walk to the dumpster, the resident should contact LHA for assistance.

Councilmember Evans moved to approve Resolution No. R-2021-10 authorizing easements to the Housing Authority of the Town of Laurinburg. Councilmember Garby seconded the motion, and the vote was as follows:

Ayes: Evans, Garby, Adams, Rainer, Williamson
Nays: None
(Resolution No. R-2021-10 on file in city clerk's office)

CONSIDER ORDINANCE NO. O-2021-26 AMENDING FY 21-22 BUDGET APPROPRIATIONS ORDINANCE (ORDINANCE NO. O-2021-18)

The City Manager explained this ordinance and the following ordinance are tied together and concern the work Willis Engineering is doing with the influent pump station at Leith Creek Influent Pump Station at the Wastewater Treatment Plant. This budget amendment amends the City's Budget Appropriations Ordinance to increase Appropriated Fund Balance to transfer it Water/Sewer Capital Project Fund.

Councilmember Williamson moved to approve Ordinance No. O-2021-26 amending FY 21-22 Budget Appropriations Ordinance (Ordinance No. O-2021-18) to increase Appropriated Fund Balance in the Water/Sewer Fund by $75,000 and increase expenditures in the Water/Sewer Fund Transfer to Capital Projects. The motion was seconded by Councilmember Adams, and the vote was as follows:

Ayes: Williamson, Adams, Garby, Evans and Rainer
Nays: None
(copy of Ordinance No. O-2021-26 on file in city clerk's office)

CONSIDER ORDINANCE NO. O-2021-27 AMENDING THE WATER/SEWER PROJECT ORDINANCE (ORDINANCE NO. O-2019-13) TO INCREASE REVENUE AND EXPENDITURES BY $75,000

The City Manager explained that this ordinance is to amend the project ordinance to increase it by $75,000 in order to continue efforts with the influent pump station.

Councilmember Williamson moved to approve Ordinance No. O-2021-27 amending the Water/Sewer Project Ordinance (Ordinance No. O-2019-13) to increase revenue by $75,000 and increase expenditures by $75,000.

Ayes: Williamson, Rainer, Evans, Adams, Garby
Nays: None
(Ordinance No. O-2021-27 on file in city clerk's office)

CONSIDER ORDINANCE AMENDING THE FY 21-22 BUDGET APPROPRIATIONS ORDINANCE (ORDINANCE NO. O-2021-18) BY ALLOCATING IN THE SOLID WASTE FUND

The City Manager explained that this budget amendment deals with two (2) major projects in the Solid Waste Fund which will be financed. One (1) is the $180,000 air curtain burner and the other is $395,000 to purchase City-wide new green garbage roll outs. This ordinance amends the Budget Appropriations Ordinance for a total of $575,000.

Upon questions by Councilmember Garby, the City Manager explained that the Solid Waste Fund is self-sufficient; however, usually at a zero cash amount. Since capital is generally so expensive, capital is generally financed, especially in times like this when interest rates are so low. The carts are getting old and showing wear. All of the green garbage roll out carts will be replaced.

Mr. Harold Haywood, General Services Director, explained that the City will be purchasing 5,600 of the green roll out garbage carts. The vendor will deliver the new carts and pick up the old ones, so the replacement will be on a schedule garbage pickup-up day.

Following further discussion, Councilmember Rainer moved to approve Ordinance No. O-2021-28 amending the FY 21-22 Budget Appropriations Ordinance (O-2021-18) by allocating in the Solid Waste Fund $575,000 to increase Other Financing Sources and allocating $395,000 to Sanitation Equipment Replacement and $180,000 to increase Sanitation Equipment. The motion was seconded by Councilmember Garby, and the vote was as follows:

Ayes: Rainer, Garby, Evans, Adams, Williamson,
Nays: None
(Ordinance No. O-2021-28 on file in city clerk's office)

CONSIDER RESOLUTION APPROVING FINANCE TERMS FOR SANITATION EQUIPMENT

The City Manager explained that the FY 2021-2022 budget provides for capital equipment financing for the purchase of an Air Curtain Burner for yard waste disposal and the replacement of garbage roll-out carts for all City residents. The City issued a Request for

Proposals for Installment Financing on June 23, 2021. This RFP was posted on the City's website and emailed to banking/financial institutions as requested. The proposals were due by Thursday, July 8th, 2021. The City received one (1) proposal with a fixed interest rate of 1.61% for a 10-year term with no loan fees or closing costs and no prepayment penalties. In order to finance, the Local Government Commission (LGC) requires a resolution approving the financing terms.

Motion was made by Councilmember Rainer to approve Resolution No. R-2021-11 approving finance terms for sanitation equipment. The motion was seconded by Councilmember Williamson, and the vote was as follows:

Ayes: Rainer, Williamson, Evans, Adams, Garby
Nays: None
(Resolution No. R-2021-11 on file in city clerk's office)

DISCUSSION CONCERNING POLICE OFFICER PAY

The City Manager explained he had been requested to review law enforcement starting pay for the City. The Human Resources Director reviewed the Springstead Classification and Pay Plan completed several years ago, included the Cost of Living Allowances provided over the last several years, and obtained starting salaries from several law enforcement agencies. The agencies that the City starting law enforcement salaries were compared to were: Scotland County, Aberdeen, Pinehurst, Lumberton, Monroe, Wake Forest, New Bern, Raeford, Hoke County, Robeson County, Kings Mountain, and Salisbury. Starting salaries were higher in Pinehurst, Wake Forest, Raeford and Hoke County, with Raeford and Hoke County being only slightly higher than Laurinburg. He concluded by explaining that he believed the City was in a good position concerning law enforcement starting salaries, particularly with the City's excellent benefits.

Discussion ensued concerning the perspective that the information provided on police officer starting salaries, and that the City was in-line with other communities.

Upon question by Councilmember Garby, the City Manager explained that law enforcement tends to have higher turnover rate than some other fields. Historically the City has hired officers from other places because of the rich benefit package offered by the City.

UPDATE AND DISCUSSION ON I. ELLIS JOHNSON SCHOOL (IEJ) RESTORATION COMMITTEE

The City Manager explained that the I. Ellis Johnson School (IEJ) Restoration Committee has had one meeting since the June 15, 2021 Council meeting, and there is another one scheduled tomorrow, July 21, 2021.

Councilmember Adams explained that she attended the meeting held on June 28, 2021; however Councilmember Rainer could not attend due to a health issue. Other committee members present were Commissioner Whit Gibson, Commissioner Tim Ivey, School Board members Herman Tyson, Dr. Carolyn Banks and Dr. Summer Woodside. The Scotland County Clerk to the Board was also present and was asked to send the minutes of the meeting to the city clerk. There were lots of ideas talked about for the property. Near the end of the meeting, the members were asked to state whether the different boards would be interested in helping to maintain the school property if the school system gave it to the County. She explained that she could not could not speak for City Council; however, the City might could assist with some possible infrastructure needs. She added that City Council wanted a recreation center in Laurinburg. The Committee determined number of $100,000 annually for maintaining the building and the property. Discussion was held concerning the condition of the building; however no documentation nor a plan for the site had been completed. County Commissioners Gibson and Ivey requested that the committee members talk with their respective boards about ideas for the facility and support for the restoration project. The next meeting was scheduled for July 21, 2021, at 4:00 p.m., with the primary purpose to discuss the ideas for the facility.

The City Manager explained that he had emailed Council an email from the County Manager inviting elected officials to attend a meeting on July 21, 2021 with Speaker of the House Tim Moore and Representative Garland Pierce to discuss surplus state funds. The City has a fair share of capital projects that could possibly be funded. The County officials will talk about the Laurel Hill Community Center and IEJ restoration project. The City Manager stated that he would talk about the North Fire Station and the shortfall in funds, approximately $920,000.

Councilmember Adams explained that she had told the County Manager that she wanted to attend the meeting.

Councilmember Garby expressed concern that he thought that the purpose of the committee was to brainstorm and develop uses for the building, and not to just listen. He added that he would like to replace Councilmember Adams on the committee.

A lengthy discussion ensued concerning the IEJ Restoration Committee, the purpose of the committee and developing plans for the property including each organization’s contribution to the effort. Councilmember Williamson explained that without plans for the facility, he did not know how Council could make a commitment. There needs to be a vision and hard costs presented.

Councilmember Garby explained that hard costs were not available at this time, but he believed that the Committee wanted to know if all of the organizations participating on the committee would support the project financially.

Councilmember Rainer explained that previously he had talked with Commissioner Ivey, and that the idea at that time was that six (6) employees would be needed to manage the property, with the city paying for two (2) employees, the County paying for two (2) employees, and the School System paying for two (2) employees. He added that he had presented that proposal to Council and that Council agreed that the City could pay for two (2) employees. He further added that this idea of paying for employees was dropped because there was so much concern about the upkeep of the building. He explained that he would like a recreation center to be located at IEJ, not just a gym, perhaps a homework center, an SAT test assistance area, things that would help the entire community.

Councilmember Williamson explained that he would like to know what the plans are for IEJ, and after reading the minutes, he did not believe that Council could make a commitment not knowing the plans or the costs of restoration.

Councilmember Garby explained that he felt that the committee needed to know that Council would support the project financially and he did not believe the members had that feeling from the committee meeting.

Discussion ensued concerning the need to have definitive plans for IEJ and restoration costs before Council could agree to provide funding.

Discussion ensued concerning membership on the committee.

Discussion ensued concerning funding for the IEJ restoration project. Councilmember Garby explained that the City could possibly get money from the state.

Councilmember Adams explained that she believed if the City was going to get money from the state that the construction of the North Fire Station should be the priority for the City.

Councilmember Williamson expressed belief that Scotland County should be leading the effort on IEJ restoration.

Councilmember Rainer explained that he thought that Council should sit back and listen to the committee and Scotland County's plan for IEJ in order to make a decision.

Councilmember Evans expressed that she believed that the elected officials for District 1 should be on the committee. She added that Councilmember Rainer was on the committee, and that she believed that Councilmember Garby should be on the committee because he was elected as the at-large council member and represents the entire City.

Mayor Willis explained that there had been good discussion about the IEJ Restoration project, and he wondered if the city clerk could find out from if the City would be able to send a councilmember to the meeting in the event that one of the appointed members could not attend.

Councilmember Adams stated that it was find for Councilmember Garby to take her spot on the committee. She added that she was trying to do what she thought was best for all citizens in the City of Laurinburg.
Councilmember Adams moved to relinquish her seat on the I. Ellis Johnson Restoration Committee to Councilmember Garby. The motion was seconded by Councilmember Garby. The vote was as follows:

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

CONSIDER CHANGING DATE FOR AUGUST 2021 REGULAR COUNCIL MEETING

The City Manager explained that he would be attending the ElectriCities Annual Conference the week of August 16, 2021. He requested that Council change the date for the regular meeting to August 24, 2021.

Motion was made by Councilmember Rainer to change the date for the regular Council meeting to August 24, 2021. The motion was seconded by Councilmember Williamson, and the vote was as follows:

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

AMERICAN RESCUE PLAN ACT

The City Manager explained that he, Mr. Harold Haywood and Mrs. Carrie Neal have been in numerous webinars concerning the American Rescue Plan Act funds. The Special Revenue Fund has been set up in the amount of $2,390,550; however, none of it will be spent or obligated pending clarity on how the funds can be spent, and without Council's approval. He added that staff will come back to inform Council on avenues in which the funds can be spent. Next year the second round of funds will come in.

APPOINTMENT

LAURINBURG HOUSING AUTHORITY

Mayor Willis reported that he reappointed and administered the oath of office to Rembert DeBerry for a five-year term on the Laurinburg Housing Authority Board of Directors, and that he appointed and administered the oath of office to Jennetta Rainer for a five-year term on the Laurinburg Housing Authority Board of Directors.

COMMENTS FROM MAYOR AND/OR COUNCILMEMBERS

Mayor Willis thanked Mayor Pro Tem Evans for standing in for him at the Ribbon Cutting for Biscuitville. Biscuitville donated $10,000 to Scotland Free Clinic.

ADJOURNMENT

Councilmember Rainer moved to adjourn the meeting. The motion was seconded by Councilmember Williamson, and the vote was as follows:

Ayes: Rainer, Williamson, Evans, Adams, Garby.

Nays: None

The meeting adjourned at 9:13 p.m.

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James T. Willis, Mayor

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Jennifer A. Tippett, City Clerk