

**CITY OF LAURINBURG
CITY COUNCIL MEETING
MAY 24, 2022
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, May 24, 2022 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., and Rosemary Rainer. Councilmember Andrew G. Williamson, Jr. was absent.

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 Adams gave the Invocation and led the Pledge of Allegiance.

APPROVAL OF AGENDA

The City Manager requested that an item be added to the agenda as Item 18. Railroad Bar & Grill has requested permission to close Railroad Street, from Church Street to Biggs Street, on certain days.

Motion was made by Councilmember Garby to approve the agenda with the requested change. The motion was seconded by Councilmember Adams, and the vote was unanimous.

PUBLIC COMMENT PERIOD

There was no one present to speak.

CONSENT AGENDA

Mayor Willis reviewed the Consent Agenda:

- a) Consider minutes of April 19, 2022 special meeting and April 19, 2022 regular meeting
- b) Consider setting public hearing to be held on June 21, 2022 at 7:00 p.m. to consider a request to rezone from Industrial to Residential-20 property located at 11240 Academy Road
- c) Set public hearing on the FY 2022-2023 Budget to be held on June 21, 2022 at 7:00 p.m.

- d) Consider Ordinance No. O-2022-12 amending FY 2021-2022 Budget Ordinance (Ordinance No. O-2021-18) receiving insurance proceeds from wrecked Fire Department vehicle in the amount of \$40,262.00.

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

Ayes: Evans, Garby, Adams, Rainer

Nays: None

CITY MANAGER REPORTS

UPDATE AND BUDGET REQUEST – TIS THE SEASON

Mrs. Terry Parker explained that Tis the Season wanted to expand its activities and decorations for the Christmas Season of 2022. Therefore, the group was requesting an additional \$5,000 from the City for the new initiatives.

Mrs. Jeannie Pope explained that 2022 was the fifth year of Tis the Season a non-profit and volunteer organization. All profits from the Tis the Season store go back into downtown. She added that Tis the Season wants to make Laurinburg a Christmas destination drawing people from surrounding counties and states, encouraging visitors to spend money in Scotland County, and to encourage Scotland County residents to keep spend their money in Scotland County. She presented a PowerPoint highlighting the new initiatives for 2022 as follows:

- Community-Led Live Nativity
 - One grant has been obtained for this initiative, but more funding is needed.
 - The Live Nativity would occur downtown from December 16, 2022 until December 18, 2022.
 - Would be held on Railroad Street.
 - Numerous community churches are involved.
- SantaLand Experience
 - Walk from the Sandhills to the North Pole to visit Santa
 - Tis the Season is partnering is Scotland High School:
 - Beta Club for scene design, building layout and setup
 - Industrial Sciences designing and producing Christmas ornaments.
- Add more decorations and events downtown to keep everyone entertained:
 - New experiential and social media worthy decorations.
 - Arctic Ice Rink in A. B. Gibson parking lot – need partnering organizations.
 - Weekend projected movies.
 - Festive area with food trucks, tables and chairs.
 - Outdoor Christmas Market.
- Another initiative that has been put on hold is a trolley service.
 - Uptown Trolley for year-round use. Holidays Christmas Light and Nativity drives, wedding rentals, shuttle for St. Andrews students, weekend hotel visitors to local wineries and historic sites like John Blue House.

- Use of wooden penguins to direct traffic around town to the various Christmas events.
 - Need volunteers to cut, shape and paint penguins.
 - The billboard outside of Laurel Hill will include an ad to “Follow the Penguins”.
- Decorate Dogwood Mile at St. Andrews for a Holiday Light Drive.
 - Begin display at Thanksgiving.
 - Dogwood Mile would be one-way only with the entrance at McColl Road.
 - Displays would include cartoon characters, lights in trees, with the hope of having 50 vignettes along Dogwood Mile.
 - Have Christmas music that can be downloaded while driving through the display.
- Tis the Season needs community involvement to make all of this happen.
 - Need volunteers to build things.
 - Need volunteers to man events such as the skating rink.
 - Need fundraising events and donations.

Upon questions by Mayor Willis, Mrs. Parker explained that Tis the Season is working on storage of displays. She added that it would take approximately \$50,000 to fund the Holiday Light Display along Dogwood Mile.

Following discussion, motion was made by Councilmember Rainer, seconded by Councilmember Evans, and unanimously carried to increase the FY 2022-2023 budget for Tis the Season by \$5,000.

The City Manager explained that the current budget has \$7,500 for Tis the Season, so the budget will be increased for Tis the Season to \$12,500 for FY 2022-2023.

CONSIDER RESOLUTION ACCEPTING STATE REVOLVING LOAN IN THE AMOUNT OF \$4,515,000 FOR THE DISTRIBUTION SYSTEM IMPROVEMENT PHASE 2 PROJECT

The City Manager explained that Council adopted a resolution in August, 2021 accepting this loan. Willis Engineers recommended that Council adopt a more recent resolution for this loan for the Distribution System Improvement Phase 2 Project. This is for a low interest loan; however, an application has been submitted for a grant for this project.

Councilmember Adams moved to approve Resolution No. R-2022-12 accepting State revolving loan in the amount of \$4,515,000 for the Distribution System Improvement Phase 2 Project. Councilmember Garby seconded the motion and the vote was as follows:

Ayes: Adams, Garby, Rainer, Evans

Nays: None

(copy of Resolution No. R-2022-12 on file in city clerk’s office)

CONSIDER RESOLUTION ACCEPTING STATE REVOLVING LOAN IN THE AMOUNT OF \$7,766,000 FOR CONSTRUCTION OF LEITH CREEK

WASTEWATER TREATMENT PLANT INFLUENT PUMP

The City Manager explained that the City originally received a low interest loan in the amount of \$7,066,000 for construction of the Leith Creep Wastewater Treatment Plant Influent Pump. However, once bids were opened, they were significantly higher than anticipated, so the City could request, without reconsideration by the Local Government Commission (LGC) a 10% increase in the loan amount. The State approved the increase so that the loan would be for \$7,766,000.

Councilmember Rainer moved to approved Resolution No. R-2022-13 Accepting North Carolina Department of Environmental Quality State Revolving Loan in the amount of \$7,766,000 for the construction of the Leith Creek WWTP Influent Pump Station. The motion was seconded by Councilmember Garby, and the vote was as follows:

Ayes: Rainer, Garby, Evans, Adams

Nays: None

(copy of Resolution No. 2022-13 on file in city clerk's office)

CONSIDER ORDINANCE AMENDING THE FY 2021-2022 BUDGET ORDINANCE

The City Manager explained that the loan amount for the influent pump station was increased by \$706,000, and this budget amendment reflects that increase in funding.

Councilmember Evans moved to approve Ordinance No. O-2022-13 Amending the FY 2021-2022 Budget Ordinance (Ordinance No. O-2021-18) by increasing revenue in State Revolving Loan by \$706,000 and increase expenditures by \$706,000 for construction of the Influent Pump Station Improvements. The motion was seconded by Councilmember Garby, and the vote was as follows:

Ayes: Evans, Garby, Adams, Rainer

Nays: None

(copy of Ordinance No. O-2022-13 on file in city clerk's office)

The City Manager explained that staff would continue seeking grant funding for this project.

CONSIDER RESOLUTION AWARDING CONTRACT TO DELLINGER, INC. FOR INFLUENT PUMP STATION IMPROVEMENTS

City Manager explained that the contract for the influent pump station was bid, and the low bid was from Dellinger, Inc. at \$9,700,000. Willis Engineering worked with Dellinger, Inc. with value engineering to bring the project cost down. Applications for additional funding have been submitted to the State, and American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) funds will be used for this project.

Councilmember Adams moved to approve Resolution No. R-2022-14 awarding contract to Dellinger, Inc. for influent pump station improvements not to exceed \$9,700,000. The motion

was seconded by Councilmember Garby, and the vote was as follows:

Ayes: Adams, Garby, Rainer, Evans

Nays: None

(copy of Resolution No. R-2022-14 on file in city clerk's office)

**CONSIDER RESOLUTION ACCEPTING STATE RESERVE GRANT TO
PERFORM A MERGER/REGIONALIZATION FEASIBILITY STUDY**

The City Manager explained that the City was awarded a grant in the amount of \$50,000 to perform a merger/regionalization feasibility study. The funding will also update the Asset Inventory Assessments conducted several years ago. In addition to the City having its water and sewer system, Scotland County has a water system whereby the City bills for it and performs all maintenance. Laurinburg-Maxton Airport also has a water and sewer system. The study will determine if it would be better to consolidate the various systems.

Councilmember Evans moved to approve Resolution No. R-2022-15 Accepting North Carolina Department of Environmental Quality State Reserve Grant in the Amount of \$50,000 to Perform a Merger/Regionalization Feasibility Study and authorize the City Manager to execute agreement. The motion was seconded by Councilmember Garby, and the vote was as follows:

Ayes: Evans, Garby, Rainer, Adams

Nays: None

(copy of Resolution No. R-2022-15 on file in city clerk's office)

CONSIDER ORDINANCE AMENDING THE FY 2021-2022 BUDGET ORDINANCE

The City Manager explained that this budget amendment receives the grant from the NC Department of Environmental Quality for the Merger/Regionalization Feasibility Study, and adds the funding to the Water/Sewer Capital Projects Fund.

Councilmember Evans moved to approve Ordinance No. O-2022-14 Amending the FY 2021-2022 Budget Ordinance (O-2021-18) by increasing revenues in the Water Sewer Capital Projects Fund by \$50,000 for receipt of State Grant and increasing expenditures by \$50,000 for engineering. Councilmember Garby seconded the motion, and the vote was as follows:

Ayes: Evans, Garby, Adams, Rainer

Nays: None

(copy of Ordinance No. O-2022-14 on file in city clerk's office)

CONSIDER ORDINANCE AMENDING THE FY 2021-2022 BUDGET ORDINANCE

The City Manager explained that additional funding is needed to continue to pay for operations in the Sanitation Department for the remainder of the current fiscal year. The Sanitation Department has taken yard waste collections to Scotland County Yard Waste Facility and Edge Grading & Hauling Disposal Site since July, 2021 and will continue to do so at least until June,

2022. This will cause expenditures for tipping fees to go over the budgeted amount by an estimated \$150,000. This departmental budget has been able to absorb some of that additional expense, but will need additional revenues to pay for the remainder of the overage. The Sanitation Dept. has received the Air Curtain Burner and will finalize installation and training to begin using for limbs incineration in June, 2022. The Sanitation Department is awaiting final approval from NC Department of Environmental Quality to begin using the compost site for leaves composting in June, 2022 as well.

Councilmember Adams moved to approve Ordinance No. O-2022-15 Amending FY2021-2022 Budget Ordinance (Ordinance No. O-2021-18) by increasing revenues by \$72,000 from sale of fixed assets, sale of recycling material and Fund Balance Appropriated and increase expenditures by \$72,000 for tipping fees. Councilmember Garby seconded the motion, and the vote was as follows:

Ayes: Adams, Garby, Rainer, Evans

Nays: None

(copy of Ordinance No. O-2022-15 on file in city clerk's office)

**CONSIDER RESOLUTION CONCERNING COMPENSATION FOR AN
EMPLOYEE ELECTED TO NORTH CAROLINA EASTERN MUNICIPAL POWER
AGENCY AND/OR ELECTRICITIES BOARD OF DIRECTORS**

The City Manager explained that at the April North Carolina Eastern Municipal Power Agency (NCEMPA) meeting, the board of directors passed a resolution to provide compensation for a member employee to be compensated as the North Carolina western members. This applies to employee members of ElectriCities Board of Directors.

Upon question by Councilmember Evans, the City Manager explained that the compensation would be \$1,000 per month.

Councilmember Adams moved to approve Resolution No. R-2022-16 Concerning Compensation for an Employee elected to NCEMPA and/or ElectriCities Board of Directors. The motion was seconded by Councilmember Evans, and the vote was as follows:

Ayes: Adams, Evans, Rainer, Garby

Nays: None

(copy of Resolution No. R-2022-16 on file in city clerk's office)

**CONSIDER AUTHORIZING THE CITY MANAGER TO EXECUTE GRANTEE
ACKNOWLEDGMENT AND AGREEMENT WITH THE GOLDEN LEAF
FOUNDATION FOR PROJECT GRANITE IN THE AMOUNT OF \$475,000**

The City Manager explained that he was requesting authorization to sign the Acknowledgment and Agreement with the Golden LEAF Foundation for Project Granite (Champion Homes). The City had a pump station running to this property when it was owned by Manis Custom Homes. However, once Manis Custom Homes reduced the number of

employees, the pump station was abandoned and Manis went back to a septic tank. With Champion Homes purchasing the property and increasing the number of employees, the pump station is necessary. The Golden LEAF Foundation Grant will allow the City to bring the pump station back on line.

Councilmember Rainer moved to authorize the City Manager to execute Grantee Acknowledgment and Agreement with The Golden LEAF Foundation for Project Granite in the amount of \$475,000. Councilmember Garby seconded the motion, and the vote was unanimous.

CONSIDER ORDINANCE AMENDING THE FY 2021-2022 BUDGET ORDINANCE

The City Manager explained that this budget amendment accepts and allocates the \$475,000 grant from the Golden LEAF Foundation.

Councilmember Evans moved to approve Ordinance No. 2022-16 amending the FY 2021-2022 Budget Ordinance (No. O-2021-18) by increasing revenues in the Water Sewer Capital Projects fund by \$475,000 and increasing expenditures by \$475,000 for engineering and construction. The motion was seconded by Councilmember Garby, and the vote was as follows:

Ayes: Evans, Garby, Adams, Rainer

Nays: None

(copy of Ordinance No. O-2022-16 on file in city clerk's office)

PRESENTATION OF FISCAL YEAR 2022-2023 BUDGET

The City Manager explained that he had emailed Representative Pierce, Senator McInnis and Senator Britt several requests for state appropriations since there was a \$6 billion surplus at the state level. He added that there was a possibility for staff and elected officials to go visit the legislators in Raleigh to discuss the funding requests. He added that the public hearing on the budget would be held on June 21, 2022.

The City Manager discussed highlights presented in the updated Budget Message, as follows:

- No property tax rate increase.
- No water/sewer or electric rate increases.
- No solid waste rate increase.
- Employees, as the City's most valuable asset, will receive a five percent (5%) Cost of Living Adjustment.
- The Budget also includes funding another pay and classification plan which would be implemented in Fiscal Year 2023-2024.
- Expect to receive the second round of American Rescue Plan Act funds at just under \$2.4 million.
- All capital needs are addressed for this year.
- Leasing three (3) additional tsunami cameras for a total of 18. New Police Chief

Mitch Johnson is excited about the additional tsunami cameras.

- Increased funding for storm water repairs from \$25,000 to \$50,000.
- Fuel costs throughout the departments is a difficult figure to pinpoint.
- Health insurance is currently at a 6.8% increase in premiums from the previous year. Staff continues to work on lowering the premiums.
- Staff is waiting on final word from Scotland County concerning an increase in tipping fees. An increase in tipping fees would greatly impact the Solid Waste Fund.

Mayor Willis expressed appreciation for the excellent executive summary of the budget.

Councilmember Evans explained that she had been approached about the City making a contribution to help support Partners in Ministry (PIM) because the organization has not met the funding level needed for construction of its new building. She discussed the impact of PIM in the community, and the impact of the pandemic on the students.

The City Manager explained that the ARPA money had to be spent on a governmental activity, and that the remainder of the ARPA money would go into the Water/Sewer Capital Project.

Mayor Willis explained that PIM is not in the city limits of Laurinburg. He added that the I. Ellis Johnson project was coming to fruition, and there would be tutoring at I. Ellis Johnson.

Further discussion ensued concerning the potential funding for PIM and that the organization did not want to move to IEJ.

The City Manager explained that the City had pledged to provide \$50,000 per year for utilities at IEJ.

Upon question by Councilmember Adams, the City Manager explained that due to the possibility of increased tipping fees, staff had been researching options for solid waste disposal. He added that in the new fiscal year, staff wanted to form a solid waste committee to review the City's solid waste and recycling programs.

DISCUSSION CONCERNING ORGANIZATIONAL MEETING

Following a brief discussion, it was consensus of County to swear in new/re-elected council members at the beginning of the June 21, 2022 council meeting.

CLOSE STREET

The City Manager explained that Railroad Bar & Grill had requested to close Railroad Street from Main Street to Biggs Street on the fourth Thursday of every month from June to October, from 6:00 p.m. to 9:00 p.m. The restaurant wants to have a series of motorcycle events, and closing off this portion of Railroad Street would allow safe parking for motorcycles.

Councilmember Garby moved to close Railroad Street from Main Street to Biggs Street the fourth Thursday of every month from June to October from 6:00 p.m. to 9:00 p.m. The motion was seconded by Councilmember Adams, and the vote was unanimous.

COMMENTS

Mayor Willis thanked Councilmember Garby for his four (4) years of service on Council. He stated that the ceremony for the new police chief was impressive. The City Manager explained that Chief Duke Williams would be working with the new police chief through the end of May.

Councilmember Evans stated that several on Council attend the North Carolina League of Municipalities CityVision Conference last month, and that it was very informative.

ADJOURNMENT

Motion was made by Councilmember Evans, seconded by Councilmember Garby, and unanimously carried to adjourn the meeting. The meeting adjourned at 8:16 p.m.

James T. Willis, Mayor

Jennifer A. Tippet, City Clerk