

**CITY OF LAURINBURG
CITY COUNCIL MEETING
JANUARY 16, 2024
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, January, 16, 2024, 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, Mary Evans, Rosemary Rainer, Barbara Rogers, and Andrew G. Williamson, Jr.

Also present were Charles D. Nichols III, City Manager; William P. Floyd, Jr., City Attorney; Harold W. Haywood, Administrative Services Director / City Clerk; Amanda Futrell, Administrative Support Assistant/Deputy City Clerk.

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

2. APPROVAL OF AGENDA

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

3. RECOGNITION

Mayor James T. Willis recognized members of the staff of the City of Laurinburg Police Department.

- a. Recognition of Retiree in the Police Department
Mayor Willis recognized retiree Lisa Barefoot Howell, by reading aloud the wording on the retirement plaque presented to Mrs. Howell as follows:

PRESENTED IN RECOGNITION AND SINCERE APPRECIATION TO

LISA BAREFOOT HOWELL
Administrative Assistant
AUGUST 26, 1996- DECEMBER 31, 2023

In special tribute for over 30 years of dedicated public service as an employee of the City of Laurinburg on 8-26-1996 she was hired as a telecommunicator at the Laurinburg Police Department. In 1999, promoted to Senior Records Clerk, then promoted to Administrative Assistant for the Laurinburg Police Department in 2010 and supervised the telecommunicators until Scotland County 911 center. She was the Captain of the City of Laurinburg Relay for Life Team, Throughout her years of service to the city, she has served on the Safety Committee, Employees Advisory Committee, The Drug & Crime Committee and The Scotland County 911 Committee. The Mayor and the Laurinburg City Council express their sincere appreciation for her commitment to serving the citizens of this community and to make our City a better place to live for all the citizens of Laurinburg.

We wish her many more years of continued success in this next chapter of her life.

Presented this the 16th day of January 2024, by the Mayor and City Council.

Mayor James "Jim" Willis

Mayor Pro Tem Mary Evans

Councilmember Mary Jo Adams

Councilmember Rosemary Rainer

Councilmember Barbara Rogers

Councilmember Drew Williamson

- b. Recognition of Officer Earning Law Enforcement Certificate
Mayor Willis presented the Certificate for Advanced Law Enforcement to Officer Zachary Van Horn. Officer Van Horn has been with the Laurinburg Police Department for almost 12 years. Mayor Willis congratulated Officer Van Horn.

Officer Van Horn thanked the City Council for supporting the police department. He also stated that he is thankful that the officers have opportunities to obtain this type of training by working at the Laurinburg Police Department.

4. PUBLIC COMMENT PERIOD

There was no one present to speak.

5. CONSENT AGENDA

Mayor Willis Read aloud the Consent Agenda:

- a. Consider draft minutes of the December 12, 2023 organizational meeting and the December 12, 2023 regular meeting.
- b. Consider the semi-annual surplus property sold report.
- c. Set a public hearing on Tuesday, February 20, 2024 at 6:00 p.m. to consider a Request to Rezone 308 Everett Street from Office/Institutional to General Business.

Councilmember Adams moved to approve the Consent Agenda. Councilmember Williamson moved to second the motion, and the vote was as follows:

Ayes: Adams, Evans, Rainer, Rogers, Williamson

Nays: None

(Copy of Semi-Annual Surplus Property Sold Report on file in the clerk's office)

6. CITY MANAGER REPORTS

- a. Update on Tax Foreclosure Collections

The City Manager stated that this item under the City Manager Reports is an update on the tax foreclosure collections. He stated that at the beginning of the past fiscal year, the realization was made that some citizens had determined that they would not be facing foreclosure if they stayed within 3 years past due with their county taxes. The City Manager stated that some citizens were further past due than that on their city taxes. He stated that the City of Laurinburg wanted to start their own tax foreclosure process with these individuals. The City Manager stated that they have contracted Zacchaeus Law Firm for the process. He stated that the process has yielded great results with the city collecting a little over \$364,000 in back taxes since July 1, 2023, with no fees paid by the city. He stated that the fees were paid by the property owners.

Councilmember Mary Jo Adams asked the City Manager about the taxes collected report received by the members of the City Council. She wanted to know if the time frame of the report was from the end of November 2023 or the end of December 2023 due to the collected percentage being only 81.14%. The City Manager advised that the report was on track with the normal collection amounts and the report may have been the report from the end of November that came through.

- b. Consider Ordinance No. O-2024-01 Amending the FY 2023-2024 Budget Appropriations Ordinance (Ordinance No. O-2023-08) for Rescue Grant

The City Manager stated that this item is positive news about the Rescue Department receiving a Fire Marshall Matching Grant. He stated that the Rescue Squad is joint funded by Scotland County and the City of Laurinburg. The City Manager stated that the grant received by the Rescue Squad was for a little less than \$25,000 for equipment. He stated that the funds do have to be matched dollar for dollar. He stated that they were going to use the operating budget for the match. He stated that what is before the Council tonight is to make a budget amendment to add the amount, so the funds can be received for the grant and then expended to go towards the additional equipment.

Councilmember Adams motioned to approve Ordinance No. O-2024-01 amending the FY 2023-2024 Budget Appropriations Ordinance (Ordinance No. O-2023-08) in the General Fund for Rescue Grant funding. Councilmember Rogers moved to second, and the vote was as follows:

Ayes - Adams, Evans, Rainer, Rogers, Williamson

Nays - None

(Copy of Ordinance No. O-2024-01 on file in the clerk's office)

c. Update the Personnel Certification List

The City Manager stated that this item is asking the City Council to update the City's personnel certification list. He stated that this is something that is normally done with the passing of the budget in July. The City Manager stated that Chief McQueen was able to secure someone to train the entire fire department during hours to allow to them to receive a Technical Rescue Certification. He stated that since Chief McQueen was able to obtain someone to train the fire department prior to the July budget, they are asking the Council to approve adding the Technical Rescue Certification to the personnel certification list at this time. The City Manager explained that as individuals that work for the City of Laurinburg obtain these certifications, they are submitted to the HR Director for approval. Once approval is received, the individual gets a step increase, which is a 2.5% increase in pay. He stated that this opportunity would allow for the entire staff to have this certification in the next several months. He stated that it would be beneficial to the entire community because it would allow the fire department staff to take both the fire truck and the additional rescue vehicle to the incoming call.

Councilmember Rainer moved to approve the updated Personnel Certification List. Councilmember Adams moved to second, and the vote was unanimous.

Mayor Willis asked if there was any update on the possible use of that organization by the old North Fire Station. The City Manager stated that Chief David Leviner of the Scotland County Rescue Squad is very interested, but we wanted to make sure that the new North Fire Station location is

completed and all the equipment is moved out of the location. He stated that all equipment is currently stored at the City's fire stations, which has resulted in overcrowding. The City Manager stated that they have a separate non-profit that can take over ownership. He stated it will need to be brought back before the Council to see if there is a need to subdivide the parcel. The City Manager stated that the city still has its training facility at the location. He stated that it would be a great opportunity for the Scotland County Rescue Squad to house their equipment at the location. A conversation ensued between Mayor Willis and the City Manager about the ability of the Scotland County Rescue Squad to get the building insured. The City Manager stated that the City of Laurinburg had to insure the building due to the FEMA funding received, and the Rescue Squad would not fall under the same guidelines.

A conversation ensued between the Council and Chief McQueen about ongoing controlled burnings to include the process, permits needed and the requirements. He explained to the Council that old structures and non-occupied buildings such as the former Scotland Inn building are being used for training purposes with the permission of the property owner. A conversation ensued about the cleanup after the controlled burning. The City Manager advised that the City would give the property owners contact information for contractors to assist them with cleaning their property after the controlled burn, since clean up is the responsibility of the property owner.

Chief McQueen thanked the Council for moving forward with updating the personnel certification list. He stated that the requirements for the Technical Rescue Certification were changing next year with more requirements being added. He stated that this opportunity to get the certification now will keep the fire department from having to meet the additional requirements to have the same certification that they are about to obtain.

d. Consider Dates for Citizen Input Session and Budget Retreat

The City Manager stated that this item is to discuss the budget retreat. He stated that what is being proposed tonight is combining the regular City Council meeting for February 20 and a budget retreat by coming in a few hours early on February 20, 2024. He stated that it would be a combined citizens' input session and budget retreat. The City Manager stated that there are a few topics that need to be discussed to include recycling and wanted to know if the schedule would work for members of the Council. Councilmember Adams suggested that the topic of recycling should have a stand-alone meeting with information and a recycling presentation given to the public, since it is a major change being suggested. A conversation ensued about the recycling program, changes, possible sites and citizen input. The consensus among the Council was that they would have a meeting on March 19, 2024, at 4:30 pm prior to the regular City Council meeting to discuss the recycling program.

Mayor Willis called for a motion to have Special Meeting of the City Council for a Citizen Input Session and a Budget Workshop on February 20, 2024, at 4:30 pm.

Councilmember Rogers moved to call for a special meeting of the Laurinburg City Council on February 20, 2024, at 4:30 pm, at the City Council Chamber located at City Hall, 303 W. Church Street, Laurinburg NC for a Citizen Input Session and a Budget Workshop. Councilmember Adams moved to second the motion, and the vote was unanimous.

7. APPOINTMENTS

- a. Mayoral Appointment to the Laurinburg Housing Authority Board
Mayor Willis stated that Pastor Michael Edds, who has served on the Laurinburg Housing Authority board for a number of years, resigned from the board early. He thanked Pastor Edds for his service.
Mayor Willis stated that he appointed Mr. Robert Malloy to fill the vacancy created by Pastor Edd's resignation.

8. COMMENTS FROM MAYOR AND/OR COUNCILMEMBERS

The City Manager advised the Council that the City is transitioning to the use of a new agenda software which will explain the new look of the agenda document received by the Council. He explained some of the features of the software, which includes dual streaming of Council Meetings and the portal that will give individuals access to items such as meeting agendas, meeting minutes and meeting videos.

The City Manager wanted to advise the Council that because of the weather last week, the planning board meeting was postponed. He stated because of this, item C from the consent agenda has not yet come before the planning board. He stated that due to this, the request for a public hearing came prior to the request being addressed by the planning board for additional information to be available. He stated that the meeting is tomorrow night, so the Council will have more information by the time of the public hearing.

A conversation ensued about the storm that took place last week and the minimum amount of impact on the City of Laurinburg.

Councilmember Adams stated that the Southeast Airport Commission will be reorganized at the end of January 2024.

Councilmember Rogers wanted to mention her grandfather, the Bishop of St. John's Holliness Church, passed away at 93 at the beginning of the year. She stated that it's because of his leadership that she is in the seat she's in. She stated that she appreciates everyone's condolences and wanted to remember him.

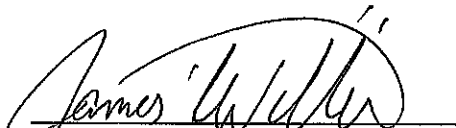
9. CLOSED SESSION (If Needed)

No Closed Session Needed

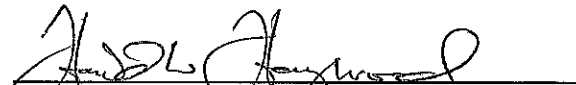
10. ADJOURNMENT

Motion was made by Councilmember Adams, seconded by Councilmember Rogers, and unanimously carried to adjourn the meeting.

The meeting was adjourned at 6:41 p.m.



James T. Willis, Mayor



Harold W. Haywood, City Clerk