CITY OF LAURINBURG
CITY COUNCIL MEETING
MARCH 19, 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, March,19, 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. Mayor Willis gave the Invocation and led the Pledge of Allegiance.

2. APPROVAL OF AGENDA

The City Manager advised that there are two additions that need to be made to the agenda. He asked the Council to add item h) to the City Manager's Reports. He stated that item h) is to amend the fee schedule, based on the Council's recommendation, for the recycling contamination fee. He also stated that an item i) needed to be added to the City Manager's Reports. He stated that item i) is for a resolution that is needed to apply for a Rural Downtown Economic Development Grant that is up to $850,000.

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

3. RECOGNITION

Mayor James T. Willis recognized an employee of the City of Laurinburg Police Department.

a. Presentation of Advanced Law Enforcement Certificate to Police Department employee.

   Mayor Willis presented the Advanced Law Enforcement Certificate to Officer Phillip Shane Butler. Mayor Willis congratulated Officer Butler.

   Chief Mitchell Johnson stated that the Advanced Law Enforcement Certification not only gives officers the opportunity to excel, but also helps to build younger officers. He stated that the officers receiving this certificate achieve high levels of learning and training, and it gives them best practices in reference to where the City of Laurinburg Police Department is going. He stated that Officer Butler is an example of the officers that the Laurinburg Police Department needs in the community. Chief Johnson stated that these officers are not only excelling at doing the work that they are doing, but they are also reaching the highest levels. He commended Officer Butler for his work.

4. PUBLIC COMMENT PERIOD

Mayor Willis asked if there was anyone in attendance that wanted to address the Council.

Mr. Thomas Willis, of Everette Street in Laurinburg, NC, spoke before the Council. Mr. Thomas Willis stated that he thinks that the decision that the Council made last month, regarding the rezoning of 308 Everett Street, was a bad decision for the neighborhood, the citizens, and the residents on the street. He stated that in November, the Council voted on a similar thing for someone wanting a storage unit facility next to an apartment complex. He stated that the zoning board voted 3 to 3 in a split decision on that rezoning request. Mr. Thomas Willis stated that the zoning board voted 5 to 1 in opposition to the rezoning of the parcel across the street from his house, which is located on Everett Street. He stated that the Council voted to approve the rezoning across the street from his house but denied the other rezoning that was where the apartments are located. Mr. Thomas Willis asked the Council, "why have a zoning board if you are not going to listen to what they have to say?". He stated that he thinks the Council made the wrong decision. He asked the Council what his neighbors would do when they no longer had places to park, and they had to walk a block to get their groceries inside. Mr. Thomas Willis went on to discuss his additional concerns such as trash thrown out and noise late at night because of the rezoning. He stated that there aren't any parcels zoned for General Business around his neighborhood. He stated that the only thing close was Danny's 66 on Atkinson and Church streets. Mr. Thomas

Willis reiterated that he thinks that the decision made by the Council was very wrong.

Mrs. Judy Lisenby, of West Church Street in Laurinburg, NC, also spoke before the Council. She stated that she was located right on the corner of Everett Street. Mrs. Lisenby stated that she does not like the idea of a lot of people parking in their neighborhood because there already isn't anywhere to park. She stated that, even now, people will park in their yard. She stated that they have a SCATS bus there as well. Mrs. Lisenby stated that they have a lot of incoming people and the addition of a business in the area would result in residents not having anywhere to park, and they will no longer have the quiet neighborhood they currently have.

5. CONSENT AGENDA

Mayor Willis Read aloud the Consent Agenda:

a. Consider the approval of the draft Minutes of the February 20, 2024, special meeting and February 20, 2024, regular meeting.

b. Consider Resolution No. R-2024-03, Findings of Facts, for rezoning request for 308 Everett Street approved at the February 20, 2024, regular meeting.

c. Consider the approval of the Financial Performance Indicators of Concern (FPIC) Additional Required Responses to the Local Government Commission for the Fiscal Year 2023 Audit.

d. Consider the approval of an update to the Personnel Certification List.

e. Consider setting a Public Hearing on Tuesday, April 16, 2024, at 6:00 p.m. to consider amendments to the Electric Rate schedules.

f. Set a public hearing on Tuesday, April 16, 2024, at 6:00 p.m. to consider a request for a Special Use Permit for the development of a 48-unit apartment complex on Plaza Road.

g. Set a public hearing on Tuesday, April 16, 2024, at 6:00 p.m. to consider a request to rezone the property located at 803 North Main Street from Residential-15 to Residential-6.

h. Consider the road closures and the application to use McDuffie Square for the 2nd Annual Suds & Swine BBQ Festival, from 3:00 p.m. April 12th to 7:00 p.m. April 13th.

i. Consider the application to use McDuffie Square by the Scotland County Highland Games for the Highland Fling Event on October 4, 2024, from 8:00 a.m. to 9:30 p.m.

j. Consider the application to use McDuffie Square by the Storytelling Arts Center for a concert on June 14, 2024, from 3:00 p.m. to 9:00 p.m.

k. Consider the application to use McDuffie Square by the Chamber of Commerce for the 2024 Laurinburg After Five Concert Series from 1:00 p.m. to 10:00 p.m. on May 10, June 7, July 12, August 8, September 12, and October 18.

l. Consider designating the City Manager as the Voting Delegate for the North Carolina League of Municipalities Board of Directors electronic election process.

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

Ayes: Adams, Evans, Rainer, Rogers, Williamson
Nays: None
(Copy of Resolution No. R-2024-03 on file in the clerk's office)

6. CITY MANAGER REPORTS

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

The City Manager stated that Mr. Seth Hatchell, the Director of the Southeast Regional Airport Authority, and Mr. Trey Brown of Sky High are here to give a presentation about the Sky High Aerospace Expo that will take place next year.

Mr. Seth Hatchell thanked everyone for allowing them to present before them tonight. He stated that back in December, he came before the Council and advised them of vast changes taking place at the airport that they had been excited about for over the past year. He stated that he addressed the Sky High

Airshow. Mr. Hatchell stated that Mr. Trey Brown, the President, and CEO of the Sky High Aerospace Expo, wanted to come before the Council and speak about the upcoming airshow and what the event would look like.

Mr. Trey Brown thanked everyone for allowing him to present tonight. He stated that the Sky High Aerospace Expo is a new event that looks to call Laurinburg home. He stated that the expo would be an annual event that would include an airshow, a fly-in and an expo that would include businesses, job fairs, careers, and education. Mr. Brown stated that the biggest thing that the event would do is boost local businesses and the economy. He stated that the national average is that about 12 million people attend airshows each year. He stated that the 2 other events that are structured like this event bring in an average of $200 million in economic impact in just a 7-day span for its communities. He stated that the events did not start out with that kind of impact, but they have built up to that type of impact. Mr. Brown stated that the airshow will have a lot of community involvement. He stated that he wants to get local businesses and local vendors involved. Mr. Brown stated that he is often asked why he chose to come to Laurinburg. He stated that not only does Laurinburg have one of the largest airports on the East Coast, but half of the town does not know that it exists. He stated that he wanted to look for a place to have the airshow that did not have anything similar and would also allow him to stay in the location and grow. He stated that the hope is to turn the airshow at the Laurinburg-Maxton Airport into the world's largest expo. Mr. Brown stated that some of the things that he had coming to the expo were jet trucks, a Pearl Harbor reenactment team and other performers. He then described the activities that take place with a fly-in. He stated that the fly-in allows the general aviation community to fly their personal aircraft into the airport to see who we are, see what we are doing, and see what we are about. Mr. Brown stated that to advertise to the aircraft owners, they are offering half-price admission to individuals that fly into the airport in their aircraft. He stated that the more aircraft that they get on the ground, the more the federal government starts looking. He stated that this would open doors for the Laurinburg-Maxton Airport to apply for federal funding. Mr. Brown discussed the logistics of the FAA and how the airspace will be shut down. He stated that the airspaces would be shut down in a coordinated way, but it would also allow the airspace to stay open for an extended amount of time that pilots aren't used to during an airshow. He stated that there are future plans to allow pilots to do planeside camping. Mr. Brown explained highlights of the expo, which would include businesses selling aircraft parts, aircraft rides, and a kid zone. He stated that his drone idea is a new piece being brought into the event to reach new customers.

Mayor Willis said that the Laurinburg-Maxton Airport is a hidden gem and has come a long way in the past couple of years. He stated that it also has a lot of good plans for the future. He recognized the hard work of the director, the board and the staff of the airport. He also stated that we appreciate the support for funding that we got from Senator Tom McInnis. Mayor Willis advised Mr. Trey Brown that we appreciate him and Mr. Hatchell working to bring his expo to Laurinburg and the City will offer support he may need for the project. Mr. Brown stated that he looks forward to working with everyone to make this event as big as it possibly can be. Councilmember Evans expressed her excitement about the airshow.

b. Consider Resolution No. R-2024-04 for the Sale of Surplus Property (Firearms) to Police Department Employees

The City Manager stated that this is a resolution in front of the Council for the sale of surplus property to the City of Laurinburg Police Department employees. He stated that we are purchasing new weapons for some outdated weapons. He stated that this resolution would allow the police department employees to purchase these weapons as their own personal property at a fair market value. He stated that the funds that are generated from the sale of this surplus property will go back to the police department's budget to assist with the purchasing of the new updated weapons that the Chief is working on. A conversation ensued about what happens to weapons that are confiscated. Chief Johnson advised the Council that weapons that are provided by a disposition from the courts, that are not required to be destroyed, are negotiated with vendors as fair market value trade-ins for new weapons being acquired by the police department.

Councilmember Rogers motioned to approve Resolution No. R-2024-04 for the Sale of Surplus Property (Firearms) to Police Department Employees. Councilmember Rainer moved to second, and the vote was as follows:

Ayes: Adams, Evans, Rainer, Rogers, Williamson
Nays: None
(Copy of Resolution No. R-2024-04 on file in the clerk's office)

c. Consider Resolution No. R-2024-05 to Award Bid for the Bridge Creek & College Park Sanitary Sewer Rehabilitation CCTV Project

The City Manager gave a background on this item. He stated that the City of Laurinburg received a little over $8.9 million in the State Revolving Loan Funding years back. He stated that this project is the Bridge Creek & College

Park Sanitary Sewer Rehab Project. The City Manager stated that we know our inflow and infiltration issues and how much water we are treating compared to how much wastewater that we are treating. He stated that we have been able to contain the inflow and infiltration issues and feel like the majority of it is in two areas. The City Manager stated that we received the State Revolving Loan Fund and went out for bid for the project with the company doing repairs as they locate issues. He stated that due to the uncertainty of what may be found, the bids have come back above the $8.9 million amount. He stated that due to this, they took a few steps back and went out for bids to have CCTV processes done on the two systems. He stated that this will allow the City to know how many repairs are needed. The City Manager stated that after this process, the City can put out an RFP (Request for Proposal) for the actual construction and repairs needed on the systems. He stated that the plan is to find out how many repairs are needed beforehand to try to maximize the $8.9 million loan fund amount.

Councilmember Williamson motioned to approve Resolution No. R-2024-05 to Award Bid for the Bridge Creek & College Park Sanitary Sewer CCTV Project to KRG Utility in the amount of $628,375.00. Councilmember Rainer moved to second, and the vote was as follows:

Ayes: Adams, Evans, Rainer, Rogers, Williamson
Nays: None
(Copy of Resolution No. R-2024-05 on file in the clerk's office)

d. Consider Resolution No. R-2024-06 for the Approval of Design-Build Criteria

The City Manager stated that items d. and e. are tied together. He stated that when there is a design-build, there are certain criteria that must be put in a resolution. He stated that this process could allow the company to both design and construct the project. He stated that this item is before the Council to approve the resolution that lays out the criteria for the design-build.

Councilmember Adams motioned to approve Resolution No. R-2024-06 to establish the criteria for the appropriateness of the design-build method of construction. Councilmember Evans moved to second, and the vote was as follows:

Ayes: Williamson, Rogers, Rainer, Evans, Adams
Nays: None
(Copy of Resolution No. R-2024-06 on file in the clerk's office)

e. Consider Approving Charles R. Underwood, Inc. as the best qualified firm for the Design Build of the Raw Water Wells Capital Project

The City Manager stated that because of that item, we went out for bid for these services. He stated that it would start with two new wells and one of the existing wells would be replaced. He stated that one bid was received, and it was from Charles R. Underwood, Inc. The City Manager stated that this item is asking for the Council to approve Charles R. Underwood, Inc as the most qualified firm for the design-build of the Raw Water Wells Capital Project.

Councilmember Evans motioned to approve Charles R. Underwood, Inc as the best qualified firm for the Design Build Raw Water Wells Project and authorize the City Manager to negotiate and execute the contract pending City Attorney approval, in accordance with the bid documents. Councilmember Williamson moved to second, and the vote was unanimous.

f. Consider Ordinance No. O-2024-08 to amend the Fiscal Year 2023-2024 Annual Budget Appropriations Ordinance (No. O-2023-08)

The City Manager stated that this item is requesting to amend the FY 2023-2024 Budget dealing with the Fire Department. He stated that it came from a few change orders that had been received regarding the North Fire Station Project. He stated that we still have not received full clarification on these change orders and hope to have them removed. He stated that due to various circumstances, including a delay in the schedule for the project, we did not want to slow the process down due to the change orders. The City Manager stated that the two change orders were for the addition of fire dampers that would be needed and RCP tiles for the driveways. He stated that the county building inspection pointed out that the fire dampers were needed, but the City's architect and design person had a call with the county building inspectors and determined there may be some room for negotiation on some of the fire dampers. He also stated that the NCDOT has proposed that they come in and replace the RCP tile at the elevation change needed at no charge to the City. He stated that this may result in both change orders going away. He stated that since the Council does not meet again until April, the ordinance is being brought before the Council tonight, to prevent slowing the process. A conversation ensued about the change orders and when the City would know if the change orders had been removed. The City Manager advised that they should know by the next City Council meeting and that if the change order for the RCP tiles is not removed, then the amount would be added to what the City would be asking for reimbursement from the NCDOT.

Councilmember Rainer motioned to approve Ordinance No. O-2024-08 amending the FY 2023-2024 Budget Appropriations Ordinance (O-2023-08) in the General Fund by increasing revenues by $32,000 from Fund Balance Appropriated (line item 10-439900) and increasing expenditures by $32,000 for Operating Transfer-Fire Dept. (line item 530-509200). Councilmember Rogers moved to second, and the vote was as follows:

Ayes: Adams, Evans, Rainer, Rogers, Williamson
Nays: None
(Copy of Ordinance No. O-2024-08 on file in the clerk's office)

g. Consider Ordinance No. O-2024-09 to amend the North Fire Station Capital Project Ordinance

The City Manager stated that item f. was taking funds for the North Fire Station Project from the General Fund balance. He stated that for this item, an ordinance is needed to transfer those funds from the General Fund balance to the Capital Project Ordinance that is set up for the North Fire Station construction.

Councilmember Rogers motioned to approve Ordinance No. O-2024-09 amending the North Fire Station Capital Project Ordinance by increasing revenues by $32,000 in Operating Transfer from Fire Dept. (line item 77-439729) and increasing expenditures by $32,000 in Construction (line item 707-707200). Councilmember Evans moved to second, and the vote was as follows:

Ayes: Adams, Evans, Rainer, Rogers, Williamson
Nays: None
(Copy of Ordinance No. O-2024-09 on file in the clerk's office)

h. Consider the revised Schedule of Fees to increase Recycling Contamination Fee.

The City Manager stated that this item was an amended Schedule of Fees increasing the recycling contamination fee. He stated that there would now be only two offenses. He stated that the first offense would result in the recycling cart being removed with a $350 contamination fee and the returning of the cart. He stated that the second offense would result in permanent removal of the cart and a $350 contamination fee. A conversation ensued about when the new fee schedule would be started, and the current fee amounts of $50.00 for the first offense. The City Manager stated that it would not go into effect until the new process was started at the beginning of May.

Councilmember Evans moved to approve the revised Schedule of Fees to increase the Recycling Contamination Fee. Councilmember Williamson moved to second and the vote was unanimous.
(Revised fee schedule on file in the clerk's office)

i. Consider Resolution No. R-2024-07 to approve the application for the NC Rural Downtown Economic Development Grant.

The City Manager stated that this resolution is in front of the Council tonight in support of the application that will be submitted by April 1st for a Rural Downtown Economic Development Grant that is up to $850,000. He stated that the grant is based on jobs, but jobs surrounding the site can be considered. The grant would be used to assist in the work being done at the 127 South Main Street location. The City Manager advised that the grant does have a 5% match if received. He stated that if the full $850,000 is approved, the City's match would be $42,500. He stated that the Community Development group has been working on the application and recently found that a resolution was needed. He asked the Council to support the resolution tonight to allow the application to be submitted.

Councilmember Williamson motioned to approve Resolution No. R-2024-07 to approve the application for the NC Rural Downtown Economic Development Grant. Councilmember Adams moved to second, and the vote was as follows:

Ayes: Adams, Evans, Rainer, Rogers, Williamson
Nays: None
(Copy of Resolution No. R-2024-07 on file in the clerk's office)

7. COMMENTS FROM MAYOR AND/OR COUNCILMEMBERS

Mayor Willis stated that everyone that has not seen the mural in McDuffie Square needed to go and see the mural. He stated it came out wonderful, and the artist is very talented. He stated that the artist would be back in a couple of weeks to do another mural on the old Firestone Building. A conversation ensued about work the artist had done prior.

A conversation ensued about the comments made at a prior public hearing regarding decorations that could be used year-round downtown. The City Manager stated that the Community Development group is looking into options for these types of decorations.

A conversation ensued about possibly having someone consult or creating a task force to assist with any processes that could help with dilapidated houses.

A conversation ensued about individuals that do not live in Laurinburg, showing interest in and buying properties in Laurinburg.

A conversation ensued about the possibility of having Juneteenth as a paid holiday as talked about in a prior meeting.

A conversation ensued about ways that the City could show appreciation to Representative Garland Pierce.

8. CLOSED SESSION (If Needed)

No closed session needed.

9. ADJOURNMENT

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

The meeting was adjourned at 6:59 p.m.

James T. Willis, Mayor

Harold W. Haywood, City Clerk