

**CITY OF LAURINBURG
CITY COUNCIL MEETING
OCTOBER 15, 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, October 15, 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 Andrew Williamson gave the Invocation and led the Pledge of Allegiance.

2. APPROVAL OF AGENDA

The City Manager stated that there is one addition that needs to be added to the agenda. He stated that an item (i) needed to be added to the consent agenda. He stated that this item was added due to a discrepancy in the Easement Agreement that was made for Hobby Lobby and the plat that was recorded. He stated that this item is an amendment to the Easement Agreement to ensure that the Easement Agreement correctly identifies the plat that was recorded.

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

3. RECOGNITION

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

- a. Recognition of retirees from the Sanitation Department - Mr. Benny Lowery and Mr. Gary Moody.

Mayor Willis recognized retiree Benny Ray Lowery by reading aloud the wording on the retirement plaque presented to Mr. Lowery as follows:

**PRESENTED IN RECOGNITION AND SINCERE APPRECIATION TO
BENNY RAY LOWERY SANITATION EQUIPMENT
OPERATOR II JUNE 1994 – SEPTEMBER 2024**

In special tribute for 30 years of dedicated public service as an employee of the City of Laurinburg. Hired first on June 27, 1994 as a Street Worker on the Street Department; then transferred to the Sanitation Department as a Sanitation Worker March 7, 1996. September 4, 1997, he was promoted to Sanitation Equipment Operator I, then on April 1, 1999, he was promoted again as a Sanitation Equipment Operator II where he remained until his retirement, effective September 1, 2024. Benny played a key role in the Sanitation Department's conversion to fully automated collection services that are now being offered to the citizens of Laurinburg to improve the efficiencies of the solid waste services. He has been an asset to the City and will certainly be missed as he enters a well-deserved retirement. We wish him many more years of continued success.

The Mayor and the Laurinburg City Council express their sincere appreciation for his professional service to the citizens of Laurinburg and this community. His tenacity, strong work ethic, intense dedication, and attention to detail ensured that the citizens of Laurinburg received the best possible Public Works services offered by the City. He worked tirelessly and effectively to serve the citizens of this community and to make our City a better place to live for all the citizens of Laurinburg.

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

Presented this the 15th day of October, 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

Mayor Willis also recognized retiree Gary R. Moody by reading aloud the wording on the retirement plaque presented to Mr. Moody as follows:

**PRESENTED IN RECOGNITION AND SINCERE APPRECIATION
TO GARY R. MOODY SANITATION EQUIPMENT
OPERATOR II AUGUST 2003 – AUGUST 2024**

In special tribute for 21 years of dedicated public service as an employee of the City of Laurinburg for the Sanitation Department. Gary R. Moody was hired on August 14, 2003, as a temporary labor pool worker. On November 3, 2003, he was hired permanently as a Sanitation Equipment Operator I. On August 9, 2007, he was promoted to Sanitation Equipment Operator II where he remained until his retirement, effective August 1, 2024. During his time with the Sanitation Department, Gary played a key role in the Sanitation Department's conversion to fully automated collection services that are now being offered to the citizens of Laurinburg to improve the efficiencies of the solid waste services. Gary especially took pride in keeping his trucks and equipment well maintained and clean. He has been an asset to the City and will certainly be missed as he enters his retirement. We wish him many more years of continued success.

The Mayor and the Laurinburg City Council express their sincere appreciation for his unselfish professional service to the citizens of Laurinburg and this community. His tenacity, strong work ethic, intense dedication, and attention to detail ensured that the citizens of Laurinburg received the best possible solid waste services offered by the City. He worked tirelessly and effectively to serve the citizens of this community and to make our City a better place to live for all the citizens of Laurinburg.

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

Presented this the 15th day of October, 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

4. PUBLIC COMMENT PERIOD

There was no one present to speak.

5. CONSENT AGENDA

Mayor Willis Read aloud the Consent Agenda:

- a. Consider the approval of the draft minutes for the September 17, 2024, Regular Meeting.
- b. Set a public hearing to be held on Tuesday, November 19, 2024, at 6:00 p.m. to consider a Request to Rezone Parcel # 020305 0106005 from Residential-20MH to Industrial.
- c. Set a public hearing to be held on Tuesday, November 19, 2024, at 6:00 p.m. to consider a Request for a Special Use Permit on Parcel # 010067 07001 on Dundee Drive.
- d. Consider Resolution No. R-2024-22, Finding of Facts, for a request to rezone Parcel No. 01003301019 located at 1216 N. Main Street from General Business to Residential-6 that was approved at the September 17, 2024 regular meeting.
- e. Consider Resolution No. R-2024-23 to designate the Deputy Finance Director as the alternate officer for such purposes as to act during the absence or disability of the finance officer or during a vacancy in the office of finance officer.
- f. Consider the approval of the closure of Main Street, from Roper Street to Cronly Street, for the Farmer's Market event on October 26, 2024, from 9:00 a.m. to 3:00 p.m.
- g. Consider the approval of the closure of Main Street, between Church Street and Railroad Street, and the closure of Cronly Street, from Atkinson Street to Biggs Street, for the Christmas Sip and Shop event on December 5, 2024, from 5:00 p.m. to 8:00 p.m.
- h. Consider the approval of the use of McDuffie Square for the Kings & Queens Car Club's Fall Festival on November 9, 2024, from 8:00 a.m. until 5:00 p.m.
- i. Consider the First Amendment to Access Easement and Restriction Agreement between NC Laurinburg Scotland, LLC and the City of Laurinburg concerning the Hobby Lobby parcel.

Councilmember Evans moved to approve the Consent Agenda.

Councilmember Rogers moved to second the motion, and the vote was as follows:

Ayes - Evans, Rogers, Adams, Rainer, Williamson

Nays - None

(Copy of Resolution No. R-2024-22 and Resolution No. R-2024-23 on file in the clerk's office)

6. PUBLIC HEARING

- a. Consider amendments to Schedule AL (Area Lights) of the Electric Rate Schedule and Service Regulations.

Mayor Willis opened the public hearing to discuss amendments to the Schedule AL (Area Lights) of the Electric Rate Schedule and Service Regulations. There wasn't anyone in attendance that wanted to speak regarding the amendments.

The City Manager explained that the City of Laurinburg's Electric Rate Schedule still mentions lights that the City no longer uses. He stated that 90% of streetlights and area lights have been upgraded to LED lights. He stated that the Electric Rate Schedule needed to be updated so that it reflects the LED option offered and removes the old type of bulbs that are no longer offered. A conversation ensued among the City Council regarding the efficiency of the new lights used.

Councilmember Adams moved to approve Ordinance No. O-2024-33 amending the Schedule AL (Area Lights) of the Electric Rate Schedule and Service Regulations. Councilmember Rogers moved to second the motion, and the vote was as follows:

Ayes - Adams, Rogers, Evans, Rainer, Williamson

Nays - None

(Copy of Ordinance No. O-2024-33 on file in the clerk's office)

7. CITY MANAGER REPORTS

- a. Community Development Update.

The City Manager stated that Mr. Walker McCoy, the Community Development Director, will be giving an update on things that are taking place in the Community Development Department.

Mr. McCoy gave highlights of activities that are taking place in the Community Development Department. He discussed the annual tree giveaway and the types

of trees that will be given to citizens. Mr. McCoy also discussed the flowers around town being switched to flowers that can flourish during the winter. He advised the Council that the Community Development Department is currently gearing up for Christmas decorations as well. Mr. McCoy stated that they are still looking for new entrance signs for the City. He stated, in the meantime, he had found someone that would do a soft wash on the signs. He stated that they had already worked on a couple of entrance signs, and they turned out really well. He also discussed the cemetery and efforts that are taking place to include beautification efforts, adding a new section, and adding a new road. Mr. McCoy discussed the Brownfields Grant received by the City of Laurinburg. He stated that they have performed assessments on 9 properties so far. He stated that some of the properties are going into phase 2. Mr. McCoy stated that at the end of the Brownfields Grant, the City should have a plan for Downtown Laurinburg. He also discussed upcoming activities in Downtown Laurinburg, which include Spooky Fest, Christmas on Main and the Sip and Shop event. Mr. McCoy also discussed the vacant building ordinance that is in effect in Downtown Laurinburg. He advised the Council that Downtown Laurinburg was awarded national accreditation through the Main Street Program again this year. Mr. McCoy discussed the merchant meetings that take place with merchants downtown to allow them to interact and discuss things. He discussed the 127 South Main Street Project. He stated that the building had been assessed for asbestos, and they found less than they expected. He stated that they would soon begin working with an architecture firm to begin the final design process. Mr. McCoy discussed the amount of zoning permits issued by the City. He also discussed removal of dilapidated structures in the City of Laurinburg. He gave the Council the addresses of 8 structures that are going to be removed after asbestos assessments. A conversation ensued about other structures that were dilapidated. Mr. McCoy advised the Council that they have a list, and they are prioritizing certain structures. He discussed McDuffie Square, including the work that was done there and work that will be done there in the future. He discussed events that took place in McDuffie Square. He stated that they plan to have a grand opening or an official dedication of McDuffie Square. Mr. McCoy discussed retail growth taking place in the City of Laurinburg. He also discussed the City's plan to look for ways to partner with the Laurinburg Housing Authority in housing efforts.

The City Manager asked the Council if they would like to have a grand opening or dedication event in early spring for McDuffie Square. He stated that the additional work that will be done at McDuffie Square should be completed by then. The consensus of the Council was to have a grand opening or dedication event in early spring for McDuffie Square.

- b. Consider the selection of an architectural design firm to provide design services for the 127 Main Street Restoration Project.

The City Manager stated that this item is for the City Council to consider the selection of an architectural design firm to provide design services for the 127 Main Street Restoration Project. He stated that they made a Request for Qualifications for a month and that 6 firms applied. He stated that they narrowed it down to 2 firms and the firms were then interviewed. He stated that one firm stood out, and they have worked with a lot of communities. He stated that the firm has even helped communities apply for grants to get funding for projects. The City Manager stated that the City needs to start spending some of the funding that has been received. He stated that selecting an architectural design firm would help develop a vision for the 127 Main Street Project. The City Manager stated the City Council is being asked to approve the selection of Maurer Architecture as the best qualified firm to provide design services for the 127 Main Street Restoration Project.

Councilmember Adams moved to select Maurer Architecture as the best qualified firm to provide design services for the 127 Main Street Restoration Project and authorize the City Manager to negotiate and execute a contract for services. Councilmember Evans moved to second the motion, and the vote was unanimous.

- c. Discussion of Hammond Park.

The City Manager stated that the City received written notification that Scotland County was giving a 1-month notification that the County wanted to terminate the lease of Hammond Park. He stated that as of November 19, 2024, the City of Laurinburg will be responsible for the upkeep and the maintenance of Hammond Park. The City Manager stated that the City will have to purchase some larger equipment to help with maintaining the park. He stated that the trees and limbs would be cleaned and maintained. He advised the Council that the goal would be to have the park as safe and well-kept as possible. The City Manager stated that the trees would also be checked for dead limbs and those limbs would be removed. A conversation ensued about the exercise equipment and the restrooms in the park.

The City Manager stated that on October 21, 2024, at 10:30 a.m. at the Cole Auditorium, Richmond Community College would be introducing its 8th President.

The City Manager stated that on October 30, 2024, from 4 p.m. to 6 p.m., the North Fire station Grand Opening will be taking place.

8. COMMENTS FROM MAYOR AND/OR COUNCILMEMBERS

Mayor Willis stated that he delivered a proclamation at the First Capital Bank's 25th Anniversary Celebration event held at 5:30 this afternoon. He gave a brief history of the bank. Mayor Willis stated that the City of Laurinburg is lucky to have a locally owned bank here.

Councilmember Evans stated that she and Councilmember Rainer attended the retirement event for the Richmond Community College President, Mr. Dale McInnis, earlier in the day. She stated that the City of Laurinburg was recognized.

Councilmember Rogers stated that the I. Ellis Johnson Community Center will be open for 1 year on October 24, 2024. She stated that they will be doing a small recognition event on October 26, 2024.

Councilmember Adams wanted to remind the City Council of the Lumber River Council of Government dinner taking place on October 17, 2024. She also discussed the viewing of Top Gun Maverick at the Laurinburg-Maxton Airport on November 16, 2024. Councilmember Adams also discussed the Chamber of Commerce event for elected officials on October 22, 2024, at the Southern Dream Venue.

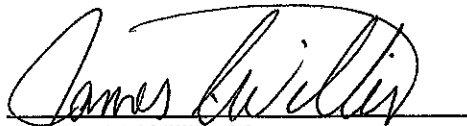
9. CLOSED SESSION (IF NEEDED)

No closed session needed.

10. ADJOURNMENT

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

The meeting was adjourned at 7:01 p.m.


James T. Willis, Mayor


Harold W. Haywood, City Clerk