

**CITY OF LAURINBURG
CITY COUNCIL MEETING
DECEMBER 17, 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, December 17, 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 Evans gave the Invocation. Jay Lighthall, with Boy Scout Troop 420 sponsored by the Laurinburg Presbyterian Church, 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. RECOGNITIONS

Mayor James T. Willis recognized 4 members of the staff of the City of Laurinburg Public Works Department.

- a. Recognition of Retirees from the Public Works Department: Stacey McQuage, Public Works Director; Tyrone M. Smith, Street Maintenance Supervisor; Douglas Whitt, Street Equipment Operator II; and Curlie L. Morrison, Sanitation Equipment Operator II.

Mayor Willis recognized retiree Curlie L. Morrison by reading aloud the wording on the certificate of appreciation as follows:

PRESENTED IN RECOGNITION AND SINCERE APPRECIATION TO

**CURLIE L. MORRISON
SANITATION EQUIPMENT OPERATOR II
OCTOBER 1994 – DECEMBER 2024**

In special tribute for 30 years and 7 months of dedicated public service as an employee of the City of Laurinburg. First hired on October 4, 1994, as a laborer in the Public Works Sanitation Department and promoted to Sanitation Worker on December 1, 1994. On December 21, 1994, he was promoted to Sanitation Equipment Operator I. On March 14, 1996, he was promoted to Sanitation Equipment Operator II. On July 22, 1999, he was promoted to Sanitation Equipment Operator III. On November 1, 2007, the position was reclassified, and all Sanitation Equipment Operator III became Sanitation Equipment Operator II. His title remained Sanitation Equipment Operator II until the time of his retirement effective January 1, 2025. Curlie made immense contributions to the Sanitation Department's conversion to fully automated collections services which are now being offered to the citizens of Laurinburg. These efforts improved the efficiency of the City's solid waste services. During his tenure, he has provided admirable leadership and excellent customer service when working with the citizens of Laurinburg. He has been an asset to the City and will certainly be missed as he enters a well-deserved retirement.

The Mayor and the Laurinburg City Council express their sincere appreciation for his professional service to the citizens of Laurinburg and this community. His strong work ethic, exemplary leadership, longstanding commitment, and profound dedication ensured the citizens of Laurinburg received outstanding Public Works services.

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

Presented this 17th day of December 2024 by the Mayor and City Council.

Mayor James "Jim" Willis
Mayor Pro Tem Mary Evans
Councilmember Rosemary Rainer

Councilmember Mary Jo Adams
Councilmember Barbara Rogers
Councilmember Drew Williamson

Mayor Willis recognized retiree Douglas Whitt by reading aloud the wording on the certificate of appreciation as follows:

PRESENTED IN RECOGNITION AND SINCERE APPRECIATION TO

**DOUGLAS E. WHITT
EQUIPMENT OPERATOR II
AUGUST 2000 – DECEMBER 2024**

In special tribute for 25 years and 2 months of dedicated public service as an employee of the City of Laurinburg. First hired on August 7, 2000, as Equipment Operator I. On September 13, 2000, he was promoted to Equipment Operator II, where he remained until his retirement, effective December 31, 2024. Douglas has played a key role in the City's vision for achieving excellence in street maintenance and public service. During his tenure, he exhibited dedication and proactive leadership to the Public Works Department. He has been an asset to the City and will certainly be missed as he enters a well-deserved retirement.

The Mayor and the Laurinburg City Council express their sincere appreciation for his professional service to the citizens of Laurinburg and this community. His strong work ethic, exemplary leadership, longstanding commitment, and profound dedication have enhanced the safety of the citizens of Laurinburg and ensured that they receive outstanding Public Works services.

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

Presented this 17th day of December 2024 by the Mayor and City Council.

Mayor James "Jim" Willis	Councilmember Mary Jo Adams
Mayor Pro Tem Mary Evans	Councilmember Barbara Rogers
Councilmember Rosemary Rainer	Councilmember Drew Williamson

Mayor Willis recognized retiree Tyrone M. Smith by reading aloud the wording on the certificate of appreciation as follows:

PRESENTED IN RECOGNITION AND SINCERE APPRECIATION TO

**TYRONE M. SMITH
STREET MAINTENANCE SUPERVISOR
JUNE 1994 – DECEMBER 2024**

In special tribute for 30 years and 1 month of dedicated public service as an employee of the City of Laurinburg. First hired on June 23, 1994, as a Street Maintenance Worker. On September 20, 2000, he was promoted to Equipment Operator. On December 14, 2006, he was promoted to Street Signs and Marketing Specialist. On July 11, 2013, he was promoted to the Street Maintenance Supervisor, where he remained until his retirement, effective December 31, 2024. Tyrone has played a key role in the City's vision for achieving excellence in street maintenance and public service. During his tenure, he exhibited dedication and proactive leadership to the Public Works Department. He has been an asset to the City and will certainly be missed as he enters a well-deserved retirement.

The Mayor and the Laurinburg City Council express their sincere appreciation for his professional service to the citizens of Laurinburg and this community. His strong work ethic, exemplary leadership, longstanding commitment, and profound dedication have enhanced the safety of the citizens of Laurinburg and ensured that they receive outstanding Public Works services.

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

Presented this 17th day of December 2024 by the Mayor and City Council.

Mayor James "Jim" Willis

Mayor Pro Tem Mary Evans

Councilmember Rosemary Rainer

Councilmember Mary Jo Adams

Councilmember Barbara Rogers

Councilmember Drew Williamson

Mayor Willis recognized retiree Charles Stacey McQuage by reading aloud the wording on the certificate of appreciation as follows:

PRESENTED IN RECOGNITION AND SINCERE APPRECIATION TO

**CHARLES STACEY MCQUAGE
PUBLIC WORKS DIRECTOR
DECEMBER 1995 – DECEMBER 2024**

In special tribute for 29 years and 9 months of dedicated public service as an employee of the City of Laurinburg. First hired on December 14, 1995, as Treatment Plant Operator I, shortly thereafter he was named the Water and Sewer Distribution Superintendent effective March 6, 1996. On September 2, 1999, the title was changed to add another department with his new title being Water/Sewer/Streets Superintendent. On February 2,

2007, he was promoted to Public Utilities Director upon the retirement of an employee. September of 2022, his title was reclassified to Public Works Director where he remained until his retirement, effective January 1, 2025. Stacey has played a significant role in the success of the Public Works Department and the City of Laurinburg. His hard work and dedication have contributed to improvements in infrastructure and public services that the City is able to provide to citizens. Stacey has been a valuable asset to the City and will certainly be missed as he enters a well-deserved retirement.

The Mayor and the Laurinburg City Council express their sincere appreciation for his professional service to the citizens of Laurinburg and this community. His strong work ethic, extraordinary determination, and constant commitment to the City of Laurinburg ensured that the citizens of Laurinburg receive the best possible Public Works services offered by the City. His contributions during his tenure at the City of Laurinburg make our City a better place to live.

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

Presented this 17th day of December 2024 by the Mayor and City Council.

Mayor James "Jim" Willis

Mayor Pro Tem Mary Evans

Councilmember Rosemary Rainer

Councilmember Mary Jo Adams

Councilmember Barbara Rogers

Councilmember Drew Williamson

- b. Presentation of an award to the City of Laurinburg for the development and approval of the city's Wellhead Protection Program.

The City Manager stated that Mrs. Jordan Jackson, from the NC Rural Water Association, was in attendance to give an award tonight.

Mrs. Jackson presented an award to Mr. Dixon Medlin and the City of Laurinburg for updating and implementing the City's Wellhead Protection Program. She stated that this plan is not required by the state and the NC Rural Water Association commends the City of Laurinburg for doing the work to get the plan approved by the state.

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 November 19, 2024, Regular Meeting.
- b. Consider Resolution No. R-2024-24, Finding of Facts, for a request to rezone Parcel # 020305 0106005 located on Wallace Way from Residential-20MH to Industrial that was approved at the November 19, 2024 regular meeting.
- c. Consider Resolution No. R-2024-25, Finding of Facts, for a request for a Special Use Permit for the development of six (6) multifamily duplex units on Dundee Drive, that was approved at the November 19, 2024 regular meeting.
- d. Consider Resolution No. R-2024-26 for the City to withdraw from the Interlocal Agreement with the Regional Land Use Advisory Commission (RLUAC).
- e. Consider Resolution No. R-2024-27, Resolution of Intent, to close the alley located off the 300 block of Washington Avenue.
- f. Consider Ordinance No. O-2024-36 to amend the FY 2025 Annual Budget Appropriations Ordinance to implement GASB 87 for the new postage meter lease agreement dated 10/31/2024.
- g. Consider Ordinance No. O-2024-38 to amend the FY 2025 Annual Budget Appropriations Ordinance for the Street Resurfacing Project.
- h. Consider approval of the site plan for the Scotland Healthcare Endoscopy Center.
- i. Consider the monthly regular meeting schedule for the 2025 calendar year for the Laurinburg City Council.
- j. Consider Fiscal Year 2025-2026 Budget Calendar.

Councilmember Adams moved to approve the Consent Agenda.

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

Ayes - Adams, Rainer, Evans, Rogers, Williamson

Nays – None

(Copy of Resolution No. R-2024-24, R-2024-25, R-024-26, R-2024-27
and Ordinance No. O-2024-36, O-2024-38 on file in the clerk's office)

6. PUBLIC HEARING

- a. Consider a request to rezone Parcel # 010245 01064 on Harry Malloy Road from Residential-20MH to Industrial.

Mayor Willis opened the public hearing to consider a request to rezone property located on Harry Malloy Road identified as Parcel ID # 010245 01064 from Residential-20MH to Industrial. He asked Mr. Mac McInnis to explain the rezoning request.

Mr. McInnis stated that Mr. Bill Purcell is in attendance to represent Wiley and Geraldine Luther and Helena Agri-Enterprises in their request to rezone parcel # 010245 01064 on Harry Malloy Road from Residential-20MH to Industrial. He stated that this parcel abuts the parcel where Helena Agri-Enterprises is currently located. He stated that the parties are in a contract for Helena Agri-Enterprises to purchase the property dependent upon the parcel being rezoned. Mr. McInnis stated that the purpose of the rezoning is to make the zoning consistent with the current zoning at Helena Agri-Enterprises in order for the company to expand their facilities and storage at the location. He stated that the rezoning request went before the Planning Board on November 12, 2024, and it was unanimously recommended for approval.

Public Comments in Favor of the Rezoning

Mr. Purcell spoke before the Council. He stated that Mr. McInnis gave sufficient information pertaining to the rezoning request. He stated that he isn't aware of any opposition to the rezoning request. Mr. Purcell stated that the manager of Helena Agri-Enterprises, Mr. McColl, is in attendance if anyone wants to ask him any questions. Mayor Willis asked if there were any questions from the Council. There weren't any questions from the Council.

Mayor Willis asked if there was anyone in attendance that wanted to speak in opposition to the rezoning request. There wasn't anyone in attendance that wanted to speak in opposition of the rezoning request. Mayor Willis closed the public hearing.

Councilmember Rainer motioned to approve Ordinance No. O-2024-37 rezoning from Residential-20MH to Industrial the property located on Harry Malloy Road and identified as Scotland County Parcel Number 010245 01064 because it advances the public health, safety and welfare, and based upon the following:

The rezoning of Scotland County Land Parcel number 010245 01064 on Harry Malloy Road from Residential-20MH to Industrial is consistent with an adopted comprehensive plan and any other officially adopted plan that is applicable because:

- 1) This 2.94 acre parcel is part of the 2.95 acre parcel directly adjacent to it which is currently zoned Industrial and will allow an expansion to the current use
- 2) The rezoning in no way changes the long existing use in this area
- 3) There are other Industrial zoned parcels in the immediate area

And it is reasonable because of the following:

- 1) Rezoning to Industrial allows uses that are consistent with existing uses
- 2) The rezoning will have no detrimental impact to surrounding landowners and will require no infrastructure improvements by the City of Laurinburg

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

Ayes - Rainer, Rogers, Adams, Evans, Williamson

Nays - None

(Copy of Ordinance No. O-2024-37 on file in the clerk's office)

7. CITY MANAGER REPORTS

- b. Update from Laurinburg Police Department - Chief of Police Mitchell Johnson.

The City Manager stated the Council requested Laurinburg Chief of Police Mitchell Johnson and the Juvenile Crime Prevention Council to update the Council on crimes being committed by juveniles locally. He explained that Chief Johnson and Mrs. Rogena Deese of the Juvenile Crime Prevention Council have worked together to give the Council an update tonight.

Chief Johnson commended the members of the Laurinburg Police Department. He provided the Council with packets that included statistics about juvenile crimes. He stated that the Laurinburg Police Department is committed to

creating a culture that builds trust and provides safety and well-being to all that are in the City of Laurinburg. Chief Johnson stated that it is the police department's vision to develop partnerships which will work together to develop strategies that will provide the best quality of life in the City of Laurinburg. He stated that since January 1, 2024, until the present time, the Laurinburg Police Department has received 17,765 calls to service. He gave a breakdown of what type of calls were received with the largest amount being traffic intervention calls with 2,190 calls received. He stated that they also received 1,166 responses to burglar alarm calls, 959 disturbance calls, 757 animal complaint calls, 550 wellness check calls and 437 calls addressing shots fired. He stated that in district 16 there are 4,369 cases that deal with youth which are between the ages of 8 and 17. He stated that partnerships are important. He stated that this is why Mrs. Rogena Deese and Mr. Randy Jones with the Juvenile Crime Prevention Council were present to discuss juvenile crime. Chief Johnson discussed the statistics in surrounding counties regarding juvenile crimes. He stated that between 2021 and 2024, the Laurinburg Police Department has closed 15 homicide cases which included arrest and charges brought against 7 juveniles. He stated that some juveniles have been found to be repeat offenders, including a 15-year-old that was a suspect and charged in 8 different cases. Chief Johnson discussed initiatives that they are trying to work towards including the ability to try some offenders as adults. He also discussed the increase of gang membership and gang related crimes. He discussed collaborations taking place to help decrease juvenile crime such as the collaboration with Juvenile Justice. He stated that they just completed an initiative at Scotland County Schools to address ways to stop violence in communities. He discussed support groups, safe zones, a community support team, the police department's "National Night Out" and a GREAT program which is gang resistance education training program in the school system. He stated that violence needs to be addressed in a holistic approach. Chief Johnson discussed the use of camera systems to help the police department identify individuals and juveniles that need to be addressed. He stated that gun violence is not an easy fix, and the community must make a stand to make a change. Chief Johnson asked Mr. Randy Jones and Mrs. Rogena Deese to give the Council an update from the Juvenile Crime Prevention Council.

a. Update from Juvenile Crime Prevention Council - Rogena Deese.

Mr. Jones stated that his office processes all complaints regarding juveniles in Scotland County. He stated that any citizen can make a complaint against a juvenile but most of the time it is done by law enforcement. Mr. Jones stated they essentially deal with kids from the age 10 through 17. He stated that on December 1, 2024, the law was changed so that all class A through E felonies will now be

processed as adults so they will now go through the magistrate's office. He stated that they still have to house those juveniles in a juvenile detention facility. He stated that once juveniles with class F and G

felonies are indicted or probable cause is found, they will be transferred to adult court as well. He explained that they work in close partnership with the Laurinburg Police Department to protect the community by getting the juveniles committing violent crimes in secured custody. A conversation ensued about whether parents should be liable and charged for crimes committed by juveniles. Mr. Jones stated that his office is not responsible for holding the parents accountable. Mr. Jones discussed parenting programs that are available to assist parents that are having issues with their juveniles. Chief Johnson gave the Council information about the ability and inability to charge parents based on case-by-case situations and the role of the parent in each situation. A conversation ensued about where the juveniles are getting access to firearms. Chief Johnson stated that many firearms are stolen. He explained the Laurinburg Police Department's ability to trace firearms. A conversation ensued about resources for parents, the need for partnerships and the need for parent involvement to address juvenile crimes.

Mrs. Deese spoke before the Council. She stated that it is easier to address issues as a youth than as an adult. She stated that it is hard to repair an adult. Mrs. Deese gave an overview of the Juvenile Crime Prevention Council and who is required to be on the board. She stated that the JCPC funds 2 programs in Scotland County. She stated that Scotland County received funds in the amount of \$179,764 based on the youth population. She stated that the two programs that they fund, Scots for Youth and Partners in Ministry, mentor youth but they can only serve so many children. She stated that the JCPC uses information received from organizations to decide how they will spend the funding. Mrs. Deese discussed the needs that are addressed for parents by Scots for Youth and Partners in Ministry. She invited members of the City Council to the JCPC meeting on the second Thursday of every month. A conversation ensued about the need for juvenile crime to be addressed by the legislature. The Council commended law enforcement and discussed the fact that people have become complacent with crime taking place. Mrs. Deese stated that the JCPC board now has a student on the board that will bring a voice to the JCPC that it did not have prior.

- c. Consider the approval of a vendor financing agreement with Axon Enterprise, Inc. for the purchase of in-car cameras for the Police Department through the Sourcewell cooperative purchasing contract.

The City Manager stated that this item is for approval of a vendor financing agreement for a fleet of in-car cameras for the Laurinburg Police Department. He stated that the cameras were included in the budget but since it is a 5-year lease to purchase, it will need to be approved by the Council. He stated that this was done under the Sourcewell cooperative purchasing contract. The City Manager stated that the Council is being asked to award the contract to Axon Enterprises. He stated that the cameras would cover the entire police fleet.

Councilmember Evans motioned to approve the purchase of the in-car camera bundles from Axon Enterprises, Inc. through the Sourcewell Contract 101223-AXN and accept the 5-year vendor financing agreement.

Councilmember Williamson moved to second, and the vote was unanimous.

- d. Fiscal Year 2023-2024 Audit Results Presentation - Carl Head - Roche, Head & Associates, PLLC.

The City Manager stated that Mr. Carl Head was in attendance to present the results of the FY 2023-2024 audit. The City Manager commended the finance department for their hard work and dedication to getting the audit completed and ready for review by December.

Mr. Head, of Roche, Head and Associates, stated that he will be going over the results of the City of Laurinburg audit report for the fiscal year ending June 30, 2024. He stated that they have expressed a clean opinion and a reasonable level of assurance with the audit summary. He discussed the change in fund balance for the 4 major funds, including the general fund, electric fund, water fund and solid waste fund. Mr. Head stated that the general fund had an increase of \$371,395, the electric fund had an increase of \$771,124, the water fund had an increase of \$35,633, and the solid waste fund had an increase of \$79,040. He discussed the new rate structure in the solid waste rate schedule that is in place that assisted in improving fund balance in the solid waste fund. He stated that the new rate structure for the electric fund was only in place for around 6 or 8 weeks during the 2023-2024 fiscal year. Mr. Head gave a breakdown of the cash totals in the 4 major funds. He also discussed the statement of cash flows from operations for the electric fund, water fund, and solid waste fund. Mr. Head stated that the cash flows from operations for the electric fund had an increase of \$592,398, the water fund had an increase of \$1,709,815, and the solid waste fund had an increase of \$2,713,081. He discussed the performance indicators found during the audit which included the unrestricted cash in the water and electric funds which require improvement. He stated that the water fund had 11% percent which is below the 16% needed. He stated that the electric fund went down but the new rate structure should improve the electric fund. Mr. Head discussed the

findings related to adjustments during the audit and an over expenditure in Public Safety related to the lease of Tsunami cameras. He stated that overall, the City of Laurinburg is moving in the right direction.

8. COMMENTS FROM MAYOR AND/OR COUNCILMEMBERS

Mayor Willis stated that Mr. Guy McCook is stepping down from the Southeast Regional Airport Authority's Commissioners. Mayor Willis stated that he would like to announce that he is appointing Mr. Jay Todd to Southeast Regional Airport Authority's Commissioners to replace Mr. McCook. He discussed Mr. Todd's experience and service to the community. He thanked Mr. McCook for his years of service.

Councilmember Adams discussed projects going on at the airport, grants that were received by the airport, and additional funding needed for projects taking place at the airport.

Councilmember Rogers discussed the need for outreach with the youth and the need to make resources available. She stated that she hopes that they can keep brainstorming on how to help the youth.

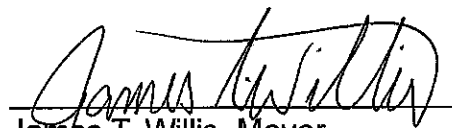
9. CLOSED SESSION (IF NEEDED)

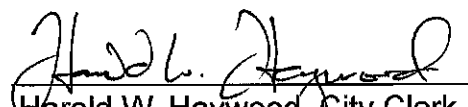
No closed session needed.

10. ADJOURNMENT

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

The meeting was adjourned at 7:14 p.m.


James T. Willis, Mayor


Harold W. Haywood, City Clerk