

**CITY OF LAURINBURG
CITY COUNCIL MEETING
JANUARY 21, 2025
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 21, 2025, 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 Rainer gave the Invocation and led the Pledge of Allegiance.

2. APPROVAL OF AGENDA

The City Manager stated that the Council was given a copy of the amended agenda. He stated that there were two items removed from the original agenda to include an update from Willis Engineers and an update about the recycling program. Changes were made to try to shorten the meeting due to the upcoming inclement weather. The City Manager stated that two items were added to the agenda in the City Manager's report to include item b, which is a proposed revision to the City Council Regular Meeting schedule, and item d, which is for a discussion of the use of office space at the City Hall for Congressman Mark Harris' staff.

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

3. PUBLIC COMMENT PERIOD

There was no one present to speak.

4. CONSENT AGENDA

Mayor Willis Read aloud the Consent Agenda:

- a. Consider the approval of the draft minutes for the December 17, 2024, Regular Meeting.
- b. Consider Resolution No. R-2025-01, Finding of Facts, for a request to rezone Parcel # 010245 01064 on Harry Malloy Road from Residential-20MH to Industrial, that was approved at the December 17, 2024, regular meeting.
- c. Consider Financial Performance Indicators of Concern (FPIC) Required Responses to the Local Government Commission for the Fiscal Year 2024 Audit.
- d. Consider Ordinance No. O-2025-01 amending the FY 2024-2025 Budget Appropriations Ordinance (Ordinance No. O-2024-21) to appropriate the 5% state grant match for the Rural Transformation Grant funds awarded by the N.C. Department of Commerce.
- e. Consider Ordinance No. O-2025-02 to amend the Special Revenue Fund for the 5 % State Grant Match for the Rural Transformation Grant Funds awarded by the N.C. Department of Commerce.
- f. Consider the semi-annual surplus property sold report.
- g. Consider the road closures and the application to use McDuffie Square for the 3rd Annual Suds & Swine BBQ Festival, from 12:00 p.m. April 11th to 9:00 p.m. April 12th.

Councilmember Rainer moved to approve the Consent Agenda.

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

Ayes - Rainer, Rogers, Adams, Evans, Williamson

Nays - None

(Copy of Resolution No. R-2025-01, Ordinance No. O-2025-01 and Ordinance No. O-2025-02 on file in the clerk's office)

5. PUBLIC HEARING

- a. Consider a resolution ordering the closing of a 10-foot alley located off the 300 block of Washington Avenue.

The City Manager stated that this process began in December of last year. He stated that General Statute 160A-299 authorizes the City Council to close alleys through a process that must be followed. He stated that the Resolution of Intent was approved by the City Council at the December 17, 2024, regular meeting. He stated that the requirements were met with the resolution being published in the Laurinburg Exchange, the resolution was posted online, the resolution of intent was mailed to the property owners adjacent to the alley and this public hearing would be to complete the process to allow the public to voice any support or dispute. The City Manager stated that there hasn't been anyone reaching out in opposition to the request. Mayor Willis opened the public hearing to consider a resolution ordering the closing of a 10-foot alley located off the 300 block of Washington Avenue. Mayor Willis asked if anyone wanted to speak in favor of closing the 10-foot alley located off the 300 block of Washington Avenue.

Public Comments in Favor of Closing the 10-foot Alley Located Off the 300 block of Washington Avenue

Mrs. Barbara Gardner, 310 Washington Avenue, stated that her property has been in her family's possession since 1911. She stated that her grandfather purchased the property and 4 parcels across the street. She stated that when they surveyed the property, they found that part of her house was in the alley. She stated that she had issues with a neighbor going across her property in the back. Mrs. Gardner stated that since her family owned the property, they have taken care of the alley. She stated that she is requesting the closure of the alley to get her home completely back on her parcel. She stated that this would also prevent anything from going in and out of the alley. Mayor Willis asked if anyone wanted to speak in opposition to closing the alley. There wasn't anyone present that wanted to speak in opposition. Mayor Willis declared the public hearing closed.

Councilmember Mary Jo Adams motioned to approve Resolution No. R-2025-02 to hereby order the said 10-foot alley closed, and all right, title and interest that may be vested in the public to said area for street purposes is hereby released and quitclaimed to the abutting property owners in accordance with the provisions of G. S. 160A-299. Councilmember Williamson moved to second the motion and the vote was as follows:

Ayes - Adams, Williamson, Evans, Rainer, Rogers
Nays - None
(Copy of Resolution No. R-2025-02 on file in the clerk's office)

6. CITY MANAGER REPORTS

a. Sanford Building Discussion / Direction.

The City Manager stated that this item is to get some direction from the Council as to what they would like to do regarding the Sanford Building. He stated that Smart Start has a commercial lease with the City for the building. He stated that they have nudged Smart Start to see if they wanted to purchase the building or if they wanted to continue leasing the building. He stated that if Smart Start plans to continue leasing the building, there will need to be an adjustment to the current lease amount. He stated that they currently pay \$2000 a month. The City Manager stated that there was an appraisal completed on the building, and it was presented to Smart Start. He stated that the lease on an average building the size of the Sanford Building should be around \$2500 a month at current market rates. He asked the Council if they desired to keep ownership of the building and continue to lease the building. A conversation ensued about the possibility of selling the building with a provisionary clause that the building would revert back to the City of Laurinburg if it was ever used for any purpose besides public purposes. A conversation ensued about options such as having the DAC market the sale of the building while still leasing to Smart Start to allow both groups to explore their options. The Council discussed Smart Start's ability to pay the rent increase if the lease were to continue. The City Manager stated that Smart Start has not given that information or tried to make any offers. He stated that future repairs were needed, and those costs would have to be considered when deciding on a new lease amount. The Council discussed options including marketing the building for sale or increasing the lease for Smart Start based on future expenses and repairs on the building. The City Manager stated that he would come back to the Council with more information to include estimates on future repairs. He stated that he would also speak with DAC and the Main Street group to see if they have thoughts on marketing the property.

b. Consider the revised City Council Regular Meeting schedule.

The City Manager stated that this item is for the City Council to consider the revised City Council Regular Meeting schedule in order to move the February 18, 2025, regular meeting to February 11, 2025, due to scheduling conflicts.

Councilmember Rainer motioned to approve the revised City Council Regular Meeting Schedule for 2025 with a second by Councilmember Evans, and the vote was unanimous.

- c. Consider dates for Citizen Input Session and Budget Retreat.

The City Manager stated that this item is to consider having the first Citizen Input Session and Budget retreat on February 11, 2025, at 5:00 p.m.

Councilmember Rogers motioned to call a special meeting to hold the annual Citizen Input Session for February 11, 2025, at 5:00 p.m, with a second by Councilmember Adams, and the vote was unanimous.

- d. Discussion of the use of office space at City Hall for Congressman Mark Harris staff.

Mayor Willis stated that he received a call from Congressman Mark Harris regarding the use of office space at the City Hall. He explained that there is a precedence for this, and it has happened in other government buildings. The City Manager stated that Congressman Harris' staff toured the City Hall. He stated that Congressman Harris' staff had requested the Council to consider the use of office space at City Hall for Congressman Harris. Councilmember Evans motioned to allow the use of office space at City Hall for Congressman Harris' staff with a second by Councilmember Williamson, and the vote was unanimous.

The City Manager congratulated Captain Chris Young on his recent promotion to Assistant Police Chief.

The City Manager stated that the Rescue Squad gave the County an update and there was discussion about a grant that was received. He stated that the City had budgeted for the Rescue Squad to receive a \$25,000 grant. He stated that it was a match dollar for dollar grant and the City and County would match \$25,000 each if the \$25,000 was received. He stated that the Rescue Squad was awarded the grant with a lesser match amount. The City Manager stated that both the City and the County denied the full \$25,000 due to the lesser match amount being required. He stated that he wanted to inform the Council so that they are aware because the County plans on revisiting the issue.

7. COMMENTS FROM MAYOR AND/OR COUNCILMEMBERS

Mayor Willis discussed a wood-bat baseball league that would be coming to Laurinburg. Mayor Willis discussed the Martin Luther King celebration which he attended.

Councilmember Adams stated that the airport authority agreed on an architectural plan for the new airport terminal. She stated that they also have a plan to try to obtain the additional funding needed. She stated that Mr. Thomas Ammons is the new chairman of the airport authority.

Councilmember Rogers stated that the 3rd annual Black History Month Parade will take place on February 8, 2025. She also discussed a trash pick-up event and thanked those who helped.

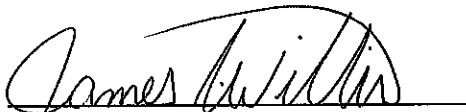
8. CLOSED SESSION (IF NEEDED)

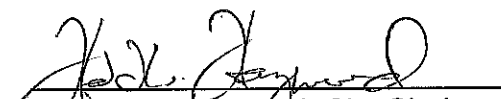
No closed session needed.

9. ADJOURNMENT

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

The meeting was adjourned at 6:35 p.m.


James T. Willis, Mayor


Harold W. Haywood, City Clerk