

**CITY OF LAURINBURG
CITY COUNCIL MEETING
FEBRUARY 11, 2025
CITY HALL AND POLICE DEPARTMENT
303 WEST CHURCH ST.
5:00 PM**

Minutes

1. CALL TO ORDER

The City Council of the City of Laurinburg held its special meeting on Tuesday, February 11, 2025, in the Council Chambers of the City Hall and Police Department at 5:00 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; Harold W. Haywood, Administrative Services Director / City Clerk; Amanda Futrell, Administrative Support Assistant / Deputy City Clerk.

Mayor Willis called the meeting to order at 5:00 p.m. Councilmember Barbara Rogers gave the Invocation and led the Pledge of Allegiance.

2. COMMENTS FROM MAYOR WILLIS

Mayor Willis welcomed everyone and explained the purpose of the meeting.

3. INPUT FROM THE PUBLIC

Henrietta Brown, at 808 Anne Street, represented by her granddaughter, addressed the Council regarding cleaning out the ditch next to her house and paving Anne Street due to excess holes in the dirt road and mud in her yard when it rains. The City Manager will look into whether it is a city-owned street or privately-owned.

Shirley Campbell addressed the Council regarding the plaque on the front of the new Laurinburg North Fire Station. She requested that the plaque contain more memorabilia honoring her late brother, Don Rainer.

Loretta McNeil, at 721 South King Street, addressed the Council regarding room in the budget for a workshop or seminar pertaining to heat-setting controls in an effort to decrease energy usage - specifically for those who do not have personal control of their thermostat settings and energy usage. She also addressed the Council concerning additional room in the budget for more inclusive Black History programs and recognition throughout the year. The City Manager confirmed that the African Pioneers banner was delivered earlier in the day and would be set up in the Art Garden.

Frank "Bishop" McDuffie, of the Laurinburg Institute, addressed the Council to request a letter of support or other recognition to identify the Laurinburg Institute Cemetery, where his grandfather is buried, on the historical Old Campus at the Laurinburg Institute.

Willie Brown, who owns Security Lock & Hardware at 610 East Church Street, addressed the Council regarding room in the budget for more youth development programs, or contributions toward ongoing local efforts of engaging youths.

4. DISCUSSION OF FISCAL YEAR 2025-2026 BUDGET TOPICS/PRIORITIES

a. State Appropriations Request.

The City Manager discussed two request letters sent to Representative Pierce and Senator Britt, totaling \$33,000,000. The first request, regarding water and sewer capital projects, involves the McColl Road water line replacement and sewer line replacement and I&I reduction program, the Leith Creek Wastewater Treatment Plant renovation (Phase 2), and the raw water system expansion. The second request letter was for the 127 South Main Street restoration. The City Manager will meet with Representative Pierce and Senator Britt in the coming weeks to discuss.

b. Scotland County Water Agreement.

The City Manager addressed the current 30-year Water Agreement's termination on November 6, 2025. The County Commissioners want to maintain the current terms of the agreement, in that the City of Laurinburg bills, collects and maintains water logistics for the county. The agreement

costs and verbiage should be updated to reflect modern-day standards and financial reimbursement for the City of Laurinburg.

c. Joint City/County Fueling Facility.

The City Manager addressed the 30-year joint City/County Fueling Facility agreement. The facility is located on city property on Hall Street at Laurinburg Public Works and is a joint venture between the City and County under a 50/50 agreement. Improvements are needed, including bringing all the underground tanks to the surface for contamination testing and pump replacement, estimated at \$700,000. These improvement costs are meant to be partitioned equally between the City and the County, per the agreement and a previous Memorandum of Understanding (MOU). A new MOU needs to be drafted and executed between both parties to ensure a clear understanding of the division of costs.

d. Utility Rates.

The City Manager stated that the City of Laurinburg is entering its third year of a recommended plan from a rate study that was performed to strategize a 5year plan for utility rate increases. Year one required a 25% increase in water and sewer rates; year two required rate restructuring; in the coming year, there is a recommended 15% increase in water and sewer rates in the third year, contingent upon the budget and previous audit. The City Manager stated that there is a potential for an increase in wholesale rates from ElectriCities in the next 6 months that may impact electricity rates as well.

e. City-owned Property on McKay Street (old Fields property).

The City of Laurinburg has taken ownership of the Fields property on McKay Street and the City Manager suggests allocating funds to demo the remainder of the area and create a potential green space for public use.

f. Street Lighting.

The City Manager addressed the need to increase the lighting on Highway 401, spanning from approximately the dog park to the Mi Casita triangle. The City Manager will reach out to the DOT and TDA regarding a potential partnership for the approximately \$500,000 project.

The City Manager addressed Chief Johnson's request for more adequate lighting in the cemeteries and parks to assist his night crew.

g. Cemetery Upgrades.

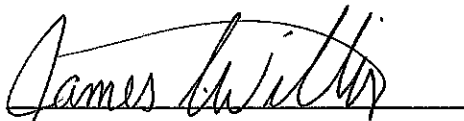
The City Manager stated that an estimated \$250,000 will be allocated towards cemetery upgrades and improvements on the north side of the cemetery.

The City Manager highlighted the cost savings achieved on power outages, thanks to the efforts of the tree crew. As a result, the City Manager proposed handling all tree cutting and right-of-way cleaning and spraying services inhouse rather than outsourcing them.

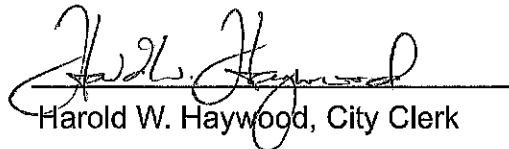
5. COMMENTS FROM MAYOR AND/OR COUNCILMEMBERS

6. ADJOURNMENT

The meeting was adjourned at 5:42 p.m.



James T. Willis, Mayor



Harold W. Haywood, City Clerk