CITY OF LAURINBURG
CITY COUNCIL MEETING
FEBRUARY 11, 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, February,11,2025, 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 Rogers gave the Invocation and led the Pledge of Allegiance.

2. APPROVAL OF AGENDA

The City Manager stated that there was an amendment needed to the agenda. He stated that a closed session was being added to the agenda to consult with the City Attorney regarding the potential purchase of real estate.

Councilmember Evans moved to approve the amended agenda, with a second by Councilmember Rainer, 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 January 21, 2025, Regular Meeting.

b. Set a public hearing for Tuesday, March 18, 2025, at 6:00 p.m. to consider a request to rezone 321 Plaza Road from General Business to Residential-6.

c. Set a public hearing for Tuesday, March 18, 2025, at 6:00 p.m. to consider a request for a Special Use Permit for the development of a 72-unit apartment complex on Plaza Road on Parcel Nos. 0100160100404 and 01001601005.

d. Consider approval of the site plan for the retail stores at the corner of Ford Drive and South Main Street, Parcel No. 01001702006.

e. Consider the application to use McDuffie Square by the Storytelling Arts Center of the Southeast for a concert on Friday, June 20, 2025, from 7:00 a.m. to 7:00 p.m.

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

5. CITY MANAGER REPORTS

a. Water & Sewer Capital Projects Update - Willis Engineers.

The City Manager stated that Mr. Chuck Willis was in attendance to give an update on the water and sewer capital improvement projects that are currently taking place.

Mr. Chuck Willis discussed 2 brand new wells that are being constructed and the renovation of well number 15 by Charles R. Underwood, Inc. He discussed grant funding which has assisted with the projects. He discussed a project taking place which will replace the flow meters on each well. Mr. Willis discussed water distribution system improvements, elevated tank improvements, McColl Road water line replacements, and lead service line inventory projects that are currently taking place. Mr. Willis discussed the wastewater collection projects that are taking place to include the Bridge Creek and College Park sewer rehabilitation, pump station renovations and the Bridge Creek Basin sewer replacements. He also discussed projects at the wastewater treatment plant to include renovations at the Leith Creek Wastewater Treatment Plant and the influent pump station and headworks project. Mr. Willis discussed future actions that will be needed from the Council to include awarding future contracts, continuing the rate adjustments suggested by the rate study, and adoption of future capital improvement plans.

b. Consider contract amendment for Charles R. Underwood, Inc. to approve Phase II of Raw Water Wells Design-Build Project.

The City Manager stated that this item is to ask the Council to approve an amendment to the contract with Charles R Underwood, Inc. for the second phase of the Raw Water Wells Design-Build Project. He stated that this will fully complete all 3 of the wells. He stated that all of the funds for this project are state appropriations.

Councilmember Williamson moved to approve the contract amendment with Charles R. Underwood, Inc to begin Phase II of the Raw Water Wells Design-Build Project, increasing the total contract amount from $50,5010.00 to $2,323,510.00, with a second by Councilmember Rogers, and the vote was unanimous.

c. Recycling Program Update.

The City Manager stated that Mrs. Angie Foster is in attendance to give an update on the recycling program. He stated that the City is 8 months into the changes made to the program.

Mrs. Angie Foster gave an overview of the items accepted in the recycling program. She stated that all residents are required to come to Public Works for an information session on the recycling program, and they are required to sign an acknowledgment form if they wish to participate in the program. She stated that there are currently 4,941 households/businesses that have regular garbage carts. Mrs. Foster stated that there are currently 606 households that are utilizing the recycling program. She stated that of the 606 participants, 107 have received a courtesy call about their recycling efforts and 20 of those 107 residents have been given a first warning. She stated that 10 carts had been removed due to second offenses. Mrs. Foster advised the Council that the sale of recycle materials in the 2023-2024 FY was $6,397 for a 12-month time frame and has increased to $9,494 in just a 7-month time frame in the 20242025 FY year. She discussed the improvement in the quality of the recycle materials since the changes in the program.

d. Consider Releases, Discoveries, and Adjustments to Tax Levy.

The City Manager stated that Mrs. Diana Chavis is in attendance to ask the Council to consider releases, discoveries and adjustments to tax levy. He stated that the Council is also being asked to authorize the tax collector to advertise tax liens the week of March 10-14, 2025.

Mrs. Diana Chavis stated that for the 2024 tax year, the discoveries were $87,486.98 and releases/adjustments were $1,855.23. She asked the Council to accept the release, discoveries and adjustments to the tax levy.

Councilmember Rainer moved to approve adjustments to the tax levy, with a second by Councilmember Evans, and the vote was unanimous.

A conversation ensued about the "Eagle View" program which Scotland County is now using that gives an aerial view of properties to monitor additions made to properties that may increase the property value. Mrs. Chavis stated that the resident may receive a separate bill for this but in the future, it should be added to future tax bills.

e. Authorize Tax Collector to Advertise Tax Liens the Week of March 10-14, 2025.

Councilmember Rogers motioned to authorize the tax collector to advertise tax liens the week of March 10-14, 2025, with a second by Councilmember Adams, and the vote was unanimous.

f. Request from Scotland County Rescue Squad - David Laviner.

The City Manager stated that Mr. David Laviner, the Scotland County Rescue Squad Director, was not in attendance tonight. He stated that there were funds budgeted for a matching for a dollar-for-dollar grant that the Scotland County Rescue Squad received. He stated that the rescue squad found out that they received the grant of $24,997.97 and that the required match was reduced to $2,500.00. He stated that the $2,500.00 match is to be split between the City and the County. The City Manager stated that the request of the Scotland County Rescue Squad is for the full amount of funds which were budgeted for the original match amount to be spent on equipment for the rescue squad. He stated that he, the City of Laurinburg Finance Director and the County all agreed that the funds were set aside for the match that were above the current required match amount of $2,500.00 can be placed in fund balance and if additional equipment is needed, they can look at next year's budget.

g. Request from Cross Pointe Church to operate a cemetery.

The City Manager stated that this item is a request from Cross Pointe Church to operate a cemetery on their property. He stated that there is a representative from Cross Pointe Church in attendance tonight. He stated that the church made a request to operate a cemetery on 4.5 acres of their 13-acre parcel on Wilkerson Drive. He stated that article 6.6 of the City of Laurinburg UDO, states that this is a permitted use in an Office/Institutional zoned district as an accessory to the church. He stated that according to section 10.5 of the City of Laurinburg Code of Ordinance, a new cemetery can only be established and maintained with the consent of the City Council. The City Manager stated that the Community Development Department has requested that the Council table the discussion to allow them to research the request and they will come back to the Council with a recommendation on the request. He stated that the request from Community Development is just to give them time to research any requirements, such as perimeter requirements like fencing or landscaping. He stated that this is the first time something like this has come before the Council, so they just want to ensure all requirements are met.

Pastor Jason Watson of Cross Pointe Church spoke before the Council. He stated that members have reached out to them to see about operating a member only cemetery at the church. A conversation ensued about who would be responsible for the services needed at the cemetery such as moving of the dirt. Pastor Watson stated that they would probably contract those services out.

The consensus of the Council was to table the request to allow the Community Development Department to research the requirements for the request.

h. Update/Discussion on Sanford Building.

The City Manager stated that this item is to give an update and have further discussion concerning the Sanford Building. He stated that the Council has discussed the current commercial lease that Smart Start has on the building. He stated that the Director of Smart Start, Mr. Benny Cox, is in attendance tonight if the Council would like to ask him any questions. The City Manager went over a brief history of the Sanford Building. He stated that Smart Start had signed a 5-year lease on the building with a monthly rent of $2,000.00 a month. He discussed upcoming expenses that may need to be addressed, including a new HVAC system and roof within the next 3 to 5 years. He stated that the potential future capital improvements are estimated to be around $150,000.00 to $200,000.00. The City Manager stated that Mr. Cox has met with his board. He stated that the option of a triple-net lease was discussed with Smart Start, which would make them responsible for the taxes, insurance and maintenance on the building. He stated that the board at Smart Start offered to enter a 10-year commercial lease paying $2,300.00 a month in rent. He stated that this lease would allow the City to know the revenue that would be received from the building and Smart Start would have a sense of security. The City Manager stated that he has suggested that Mr. Cox or someone from Smart Start to come and give the City Council updates on what is taking place at Smart Start. A conversation ensued about things that have been added to the Smart Start program to stations that resemble that of Discovery Place.

The consensus of the board was to instruct the City Clerk to publish the Notice of Intended Lease as required by North Carolina General Statute and bring the matter back before the Council next month.

i. Update on McDuffie Square Signage.

The City Manager stated that this item is to update the Council on the proposed signage for McDuffie Square. He showed the Council photo of a black metal archway sign with the verbiage "McDuffie Square" written across the top that will be placed at one of the entrances to McDuffie Square. The City Manager asked for the Council's thoughts.

Councilmember Adams motion to approve the signage for McDuffie Square, with a second by Councilmember Evans, and the vote was unanimous.

6. APPOINTMENTS

a. Consider the appointment of a Planning Board member.

The City Manager stated that there is a County appointed seat vacant on the Planning Board. The County has been notified and has not appointed anyone to fill the vacancy resulting in the City being allowed to fill the seat. Mr. Scott Gentry applied to fill the seat on the Planning Board.

Councilmember Adams motioned to approve the appointment of Mr. Scott Gentry to the City of Laurinburg Planning Board to finish the unexpired term of the previous appointee to expire on August 31, 2025, with a second by Councilmember Williamson, and the vote was unanimous.

7. COMMENTS FROM MAYOR AND/OR COUNCILMEMBERS

Councilmember Adams discussed updates on the new terminal design at the Laurinburg-Maxton Airport.

Mayor Willis advised the Council that he swore in 3 new police officers today. He stated that he is pleased to watch Chief Johnson continue to grow the police force.

8. CLOSED SESSION (Consult with Attorney & Discuss the Potential Acquisition of Real Property)

Councilmember Rogers motioned to enter closed session, at 7:07pm, to consult with attorney and discuss the potential acquisition of real property as allowed by NCGS 143-318.11 (a)(5), with a second by Councilmember Williamson, and the vote was unanimous.

Councilmember Adams motioned to adjourn closed session, at 7:21pm, with a second by Councilmember Evans, and the vote was unanimous.

9. ADJOURNMENT

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

The meeting was adjourned at 7:22 p.m.

James T. Willis, Mayor

Harold W. Haywood, City Clerk