

**COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE
CITY HALL, THIRD FLOOR
TUESDAY, SEPTEMBER 28, 2021
8:30 A.M.**

PRESENT: Committee members, Mayor Joe Gibbons and Councilmembers David Stevens and Ben Willis.

VIA ZOOM: Mayor Pro-Tem Crissy Thomas.

ABSENT: Councilmembers Jonathan Beal, Todd Perdue, Ike Perkins and Ralph Prestwood.

STAFF PRESENT: City Manager Scott Hildebran, City Clerk Shirley Cannon and Communications Director Joshua Harris.

VIA ZOOM: Fire Chief Ken Hair, Recreation Director Kenny Story, Economic Development Director Kaylynn Horn, Planning Director Jenny Wheelock, Fire Chief Ken Hair, Police Chief Brent Phelps, Public Utilities Director Radford Thomas, and Public Works Director Jared Wright.

I. CALL TO ORDER

A. Mayor Pro-Tem Crissy Thomas welcomed everyone and called the meeting to order.

II. CITIZEN COMMENT PERIOD

III. COMMITTEE ITEMS

A. Public Utilities: Public Utilities Director Radford Thomas reported on the following items:

- Received the draft plans for the Whitnel Water Main Project.
- Freeze & Nichols are conducting a Lead & Copper Study.
- Biosolids Project is almost complete except for punch list items.
- Bids will be received in November or December for the Crossroads Sewer Line Replacement Project. A few final easements are still needed.
- A new grant application will be submitted for the second EPA Brownfields Grant. The previously awarded funds have been expended and \$300,000 is needed to complete the project.
- The metering software continues to be modified and Staff is experiencing shipping issues for additional meters.
- McGill Associates submitted a Letter of Intent to FEMA for floodplain mitigation in the amount of \$500,000 for the Zacks Fork Sewer outfall.

B. Public Works: Public Works Director Jared Wright reported on the following items:

- Three (3) bids were received for the Hotel Street Extension project. A recommendation will be submitted to City Council at the October 5 meeting.
- Additional streets will be resurfaced next week as per the paving contractor.

- Work continues on various sections of the Greenway including the section at the former service station which will complete this area. Connection points will be constructed at each entrance.
- Hospital Avenue Sidewalk project is ongoing and Staff is half-way finished with the right-of-way acquisitions.
- Cameras will be used on Thursday to review the foundation issues at Fire Station #1 to determine if a sinkhole has occurred. Finance Director Bean and Risk Manager David Coffey are checking with the City's insurance company regarding this issue.
- The IT Department along with Staff are working on installing cameras at Blue Ridge Memorial Cemetery and around the downtown area.
- Leaf pickup begins soon and Director Wright mentioned the Department is doing internal transfers to address staff issues. This step is working well. Also, the number of job applications for areas of Public Works has increased.

IV. COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT

- A. The Lenoir Tourism Development Authority (LTDA) conducted a virtual meeting on September 9. Kaylynn Horn, Economic Development Director, reported the LTDA helped support the Sculpture Festival, Tuckers Gallery and the Visit Lenoir website.
- B. The Lenoir Business Advisory Board (LBAB) conducted a virtual meeting on Thursday, September 9, 2021. Minutes of the August 12 meeting were submitted as information. Kaylynn Horn, Economic Development Director, gave the following report:
 - The downtown bathrooms were closed during the pandemic and the City currently provides port-a-johns. She stated additional lighting would be installed in the parking lot to address security and overnight issues that are happening in this lot.
 - Director Horn shared issues with scheduling the annual Christmas Parade this year. She stated the cost to hire the number of buses needed to bring the marching band from Winston Salem has significantly increased. Also included is the expense of providing food for the band members along with a safe place to social distance. Staff is seeking other activities that may be held downtown instead. Also, Staff will consult with UNC Healthcare before making a determination on the parade.
- C. Planning Board: The Planning Board and Board of Adjustment met on Monday, September 27. Jenny Wheelock, Planning Director, gave the following report:
 - Reported the Board of Adjustment approved a variance for property located on Dulatown Road.
 - Code Enforcement is currently working on an update.
 - City Manager Hildebran said the City is also working with the Western Piedmont Council of Governments (WPCOG) regarding market rate housing and apartments.
- D. Parks & Recreation Advisory Board: The Recreation Advisory Board met on Monday, September 20. Minutes of the meeting were submitted as information. Kenny Story, Recreation Director, presented the following report:
 - The annual Sculpture Festival went well and was well attended.
 - A free baseball clinic will be held on Wednesday, September 29. The coaches and players from Appalachian State University will be the clinicians for this clinic.

- A free softball clinic will be held on Thursday, September 30 from 6:00 p.m. – 8:00 p.m. The CCC&TI coaches and players will be the clinicians for this clinic.
- The Lenoir Youth Soccer Association is practicing at the Soccer Complex and at Mack Cook Stadium.
- Staff will be compiling another bid packet for additional renovations the former Lenoir High School Renovations Project.
- The new roof replacement at the Martin Luther King, Jr. Center is almost 100% complete.
- Hibriten High School is hosting a Cross Country meet at the Soccer Complex.
- The Department is still having issues with vandalism resulting in some property damage. The individuals broke the door locks at the outside restrooms at Mulberry Recreation Center and broke the lock to the concession stand at Optimist Park. Also, some damage occurred at the Martin Luther King, Jr. Center (MLK) where three signs were damaged around the playground and the walking trail. Staff has replaced the locks and three signs were replaced at MLK.

E. Financial and Administration

1. Finance Director Donna Bean reviewed the Financial Summary as of August 31, 2021. She stated the City is in good financial shape and remains on track with its budget. The over/under balance in the General Fund is \$10,862,177.18, Downtown District (\$6,049.66), and Water & Sewer Fund \$390,093.85.

A copy of the August financial summary is attached to these minutes as information.

Director Bean explained the changes in total revenue was anticipated due to a reduction in personal property taxes. Also, expenditures have increased due to an extra payroll cycle, a salary increase for part-time employees, plus several capital items being purchased.

The Downtown District has not hosted any events due to the ongoing pandemic. In addition, Director Bean said expenditures in the Water Department reflect the additional payroll, but the Department is on target with its budget. She also mentioned IT Staff continues to work on installing cameras in different areas for safety measures.

Director Bean thanked the Department Directors for maintaining their budgets and shared that Eric Bowman, PA, will present the FY2020-21 Annual Audit Report to City Council at the October 5 meeting.

- F. Public Communications: A copy of the August 2021 Communications Report was presented to Council as information.

There were 9 news releases, 182 photos, 5 videos, 1 podcasts/radio, 95 social posts, 20 notify me requests, 25 questions & answers, and 7 e-sign ups. The website experienced 44,821 views and reached 74,716 people via Facebook and Twitter. Also, there were 355 new followers and 3,709 video views.

V. PUBLIC SAFETY

A. Police Department

1. Update; Police Department: Police Chief Brent Phelps reported on the following items.
 - Two new officers are currently in training plus staffing levels are full. There will be announcements of several upcoming retirements in the future.
 - Due to new legislation, Supervisors and Attorneys are looking at how the Department can come into compliance with the new changes.
 - Seeking ways to modify how the Department tracks information in its database to assist Staff with compiling audit reports.

Code Enforcement Issues

Chief Phelps gave an update on code enforcement situations on Jolly Place and Oak Street. The Code Enforcement Officer has been working with Zack Clark and Jenny Wheelock to try and mitigate these more intense cases. Staff will be submitting a recommendation to City Council in the near future regarding Jolly Place.

Chief Phelps stated the City has made some progress by removing a large amount of vehicles, etc. from the property, but one home owner is making the process more difficult by refusing to come into compliance.

Homeless Issue

Chief Phelps reported Sharon Harmon, Executive Director of Yokefellow, and he will be meeting with other community partners to discuss ways to address this issue. He emphasized this problem is not specific to Lenoir.

Councilman Willis asked how the current homeless problem was different from several years ago. Chief Phelps stated Staff is encountering individuals who have mental health and substance abuse issues making it harder for officers to engage with them. Also, he remarked these individuals are not as proactive in trying to find solutions to change their situation. In addition, Chief Phelps shared a meeting has been scheduled with smaller focus groups in order to start having group discussions as to what can be done. However, he stressed the Police Department would not be able to administer this project as they cannot provide the services these individuals require.

2. Update; Fire Department: Fire Chief Ken Hair presented the following report:
 - Reported inspectors will check the pipe creating issues at Station No. 1 on Thursday. He stated the pipe extends 25-feet into the ground and Staff is hoping it can be repaired.
 - Reported an incident occurred with the large tower truck resulting in the truck having to be sent back to the factory for repairs. The insurance adjuster's estimated cost is \$20,000.
 - Staff will assist with the upcoming cruise-in on October 2 and any other downtown events coming up.
 - October is Fire Prevention Month and Staff will be participating in events with the Caldwell County School System.
 - Reported Staff will be conducting hydrant flow testing.

VI. COTHER

- A. October Calendar: By consensus of the Council, the calendar for the month of October was approved listing various committee meetings.

- B. Former City of Lenoir Fire Chief Ken Briscoe has been hired as the Interim Fire Chief for the Isle of Palms Fire Department in South Carolina.
- C. The annual Cross Community Turkey Tuesday will be held on Tuesday, November 23 at the Martin Luther King, Jr. Center. Additional details will be submitted.
- D. Mayor Gibbons reported Donald Duncan has been hired as the new Manager for Caldwell County. Mr. Duncan currently serves as the Town Manager for the Town of Conover and will begin his employment with Caldwell County on November 1.

VII. Adjourn

There being no further business; the meeting was adjourned at 9:38 a.m.

Attachments

August Financial Summary



**City of Lenoir
Financial Summary
As of 8/31/2021**



Minutes-Committee of the Whole Meeting
Tuesday, September 28, 2021

General Fund					
	2021-2022 Budget	8/31/2021	% of Budget	Change from Previous Year	8/31/2020
Total Revenue	\$ 18,594,890.00	\$ 14,194,944.38	76%	\$ (112,591.48)	\$ 14,307,535.86
Expenditures	\$ 18,594,890.00	\$ 3,332,767.20	18%	\$ 578,628.80	\$ 2,754,138.40
Over/Under	\$ -	\$ 10,862,177.18		\$ (691,220.28)	\$ 11,553,397.46
Downtown District					
	2021-2022 Budget	8/31/2021	% of Budget	Change from Previous Year	8/31/2020
Revenues	\$ 184,638.00	\$ 19,047.79	10%	\$ (1,512.55)	\$ 20,560.34
Expenditures	\$ 184,638.00	\$ 25,097.45	14%	\$ 3,666.71	\$ 21,430.74
Over/Under	\$ -	\$ (6,049.66)		\$ (5,179.26)	\$ (870.40)
Water/Sewer Fund					
	2021-2022 Budget	8/31/2021	% of Budget	Change from Previous Year	8/31/2020
Revenues	\$ 9,629,744.00	\$ 1,722,339.27	18%	\$ 147,826.85	\$ 1,574,512.42
Expenditures	\$ 9,629,744.00	\$ 1,332,245.42	14%	\$ 71,178.01	\$ 1,261,067.41
Over/Under	\$ -	\$ 390,093.85		\$ 76,648.84	\$ 313,445.01