

**COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE
CITY HALL, THIRD FLOOR
TUESDAY, OCTOBER 26, 2021
8:30 A.M.**

PRESENT: Councilmembers Todd Perdue, Ike Perkins, Ralph Prestwood, David Stevens and Ben Willis. *Councilmember Jonathan Beal participated via Zoom.

Mayor Joe Gibbons arrived at the meeting at 9:40 a.m.

ABSENT: Mayor Pro-Tem Crissy Thomas, Police Chief Brent Phelps and Parks & Recreation Director Kenny Story.

STAFF PRESENT: City Manager Scott Hildebran, City Clerk Shirley Cannon and Public Information Officer, Joshua Harris.

VIA ZOOM: Finance Director Donna Bean, Fire Chief Ken Hair, Recreation Administrative Assistant, Maria Swanson, Economic Development Director Kaylynn Horn, Downtown Event Coordinator, Matthew Anthony, Planning Technician Hannah Williams, Fire Chief Ken Hair, Police Captain Andy Wilson, Public Utilities Director Radford Thomas, and Public Works Director Jared Wright.

I. CALL TO ORDER

A. Councilmember Todd Perdue 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:

- Staff has completed two tours for other organizations interested in the new Gryphon Dryer system at the Wastewater Treatment Plant.
- The metering project is still underway.
- Interconnection Project Study – McGill will present a final draft for the Interconnection Project Study within the next few weeks.
- Reported he has the final draft for the Whitnel Waterline Replacements Project, Phase I.
- EPA Assessment Grant –final Brownfields assessment ended September 30 and all grant funds have been expended. It was noted the City's contact with EPA is pleased with the progress made. An additional assessment grant will be applied for regarding the City owned property on Virginia Street.
- McGill Associates submitted a letter of interest to FEMA to apply for a Building Resilient Infrastructure and Communities (BRIC) grant. The City is allowed to submit an application for construction to remove containers and install an equalization basin which will provide a better and safer place to receive waste from other areas. Director Thomas stated this is a \$6,000,000 project at 70% grant funding with a 30% City match. He clarified the new basin

will be located behind the building on the left at the WWTP. Director Thomas reiterated the City should receive notification about the grant funding by next spring which will be available in October 2022.

- Smith Crossroads Sewer Line Replacement Project – Director Thomas reported this project will begin across the golf course around the parking lot. Following negotiations with individuals at the golf course regarding an easement, he recommends offering \$45,000 in exchange for an easement agreement which is necessary to complete this project.

Following a brief discussion, City Council was in consensus to move forward with acquiring the easement at a cost of \$45,000.00. The project bid will probably go on the December 7 agenda for consideration of approval.

- Update; Turbidity Issue – Director Thomas stated Bud Chapman with McGill is working on recommendations/changes (especially on the communication side) that need to be made at the plant should another incident like this occur in the future. Staff has also reviewed the process internally and will implement the necessary changes. Director Thomas explained our area received six (6) inches of rainfall which came from the north on Friday, October 8 creating a high turbidity issue requiring residents to have to boil their water for one minute for food use. As information, the turbidity of water is a measurement of how clear or cloudy it is. The cloudier the water, the higher its turbidity. He shared the turbidity number was over 300 by 7:00 a.m. Saturday morning and it is normally around 14.

Director Thomas stated if Staff is required to provide a “boil notice” as required by the NC Division of Water Quality, residents have to be notified in a short amount of time thereby the reason for the code red call to a number of residents early Saturday morning. City Manager Hildebran commented the City received a large amount of calls and Communications Director Joshua Harris will be adding additional information on the City’s website to better inform the general public in the future. Director Harris shared he would be creating an Emergency Communication Plan for the website and further shared Caldwell County’s code red program covers the entire County while the City’s program covers the City of Lenoir. He also mentioned updates should have been posted throughout the day as well. Also, Director Harris encouraged citizens to sign up for the code red program and enter their cell phone numbers as their point of contact.

Councilman Willis asked for information to be included in the City’s plan about what is safe for animals to consume as he received several calls from the public asking this question.

Much discussion centered on better ways to notify the public with City Council in consensus to spend additional funds to better educate the public. Director Harris shared he could also add a section on the application for water service directing customers to sign up for the code red program. Also, it was mentioned that educational flyers could be sent out with the monthly water statements.

Director Thomas continued to explain the turbidity situation for Council by stating the situation also changed very quickly causing Staff to have to shut the plant down before the water came into contact with the filters. He remarked Staff will continue to work on how to better address these types of situations and communications procedures in the future.

Director Thomas emphasized the Department's first priority is public health and safety and mentioned that several surrounding areas also experienced the same issues regarding their distribution systems due to the heavy rainfall. In addition, Director Thomas clarified that if turbidity is in the water, it doesn't necessarily mean that bacteria is also in the water. He remarked people could take showers and wash their hands, but stated they should not drink the water or cook with the water unless it has been boiled first.

On behalf of City Council, Councilman Todd Perdue commended Public Utilities Director Radford Thomas and Staff for the great job they did in handling the turbidity issue that occurred throughout the City's water system.

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

- Paving was delayed by the weather and he is working on obtaining an updated paving schedule from the contractor.
- Street crews are working on road repairs at Blue Ridge Memorial Park and will be doing extensive patching and overlays.
- Survey work has begun for the Greenway at Waterlife Church.
- McGill has submitted drawings for a retaining wall, etc. for the Hotel Street project and can begin construction once a Notice to Proceed has been issued for this project.
- Staff is waiting on final resolutions from property owners for four (4) parcels for right-of-ways or easements for the Hospital Avenue Sidewalk project.
- Public Works has also submitted a letter of interest to FEMA for a Bric grant for the replacement of the Arrowood Bridge. It was noted the bridge is still safe to travel on. Director Wright stated they have made it through the letter of intent phase with FEMA.
- Reported every property owner will receive three (3) leaf pickups and mentioned the trucks have been picking up leaves for two weeks, but will begin the designated routes on Monday, November 1.
- The annual Luminary Display will be held on December 10 with a rain date of December 17. Traditional candles will be used this year in lieu of LED lights.
- Reported a Supervisor vacancy in the Vehicle Services Department.

IV. COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT

A. The Lenoir Business Advisory Board (LBAB) conducted a virtual meeting on Thursday, October 18, 2021. Minutes of the September 9 meeting were submitted as information.

Kaylynn Horn, Economic Development Director, gave the following report:

- Extended a thank you to Director Wright and Public Works Staff for their assistance in placing the fall arrangements on the square.
- Reported a number of property acquisitions have occurred downtown and several property owners have interest in a façade grant through the National Main Street program.
- The cruise-in events and local farmer's markets have ended, but a small cruise-in will be held in December for the purpose of a toy drive.
- The Downtown Lenoir Association is hosting a virtual Haunted Halloween Mystery Heist from Monday, October 25 through Sunday, October 31. Teams of up to 10 people can play for a prize pot of \$1,500 cash money. For rules and registration visit www.downtownlenoirnc.com. Downtown Event Coordinator Matthew Anthony played the app he created for the Haunted

Halloween Mystery Heist and explained how it worked. The clues unlock whenever a player gets close to a site.

- Participating merchants will also host an Elf on the Shelf game from November 24 through December 24.
- Carriage rides will also be available for the first time on December 13 through 15 and December 20– 22 in the downtown area.
- A meeting will be held to plan for the annual Christmas parade this year. However, Director Horn pointed out local bands may be used instead of the Winston Salem Marching band due to a significant increase in the cost of providing their transportation plus food costs.
- The American Legion Post 29 will host a Veterans Day Ceremony on Thursday, November 11 at 11:00 a.m. at the Veterans Plaza on the downtown square.
- Director Horn reported the theme for downtown shopping is “Shine on Shop Small.”
- The annual Light Show will begin on the square on Saturday, November 27 and will end in January.

C. Planning Board: The Planning Board met on Monday, October 25. Hannah Williams, Planning Technician, gave the following report:

- A rezoning request for Lenoir First Wesleyan Church will be presented at the December 7 Council meeting. The applicant is requesting to change to B-2 General Business zoning which has multi-uses.
- The Comprehensive Plan has to be updated by June 2022 and will include information about Extra-Territorial Jurisdictions (ETJ's) and future land uses.
- Planning Director Wheelock is currently working on an ordinance for code enforcement (Criminal vs Civil) which requires two readings. This item will be presented at the November 2 meeting with the second reading and public hearing to be held at the December 7 meeting. City Attorney T.J. Rohr has also reviewed and worked on compiling this ordinance.

D. Parks & Recreation Advisory Board: The Recreation Advisory Board met on Monday, October 18. Minutes of the meeting were submitted as information. Maria Swanson, Administrative Assistant, Recreation Department, presented the following report on behalf of Recreation Director Kenny Story:

- Fall baseball season ended on Monday, October 25.
- Youth basketball registration for boys & girls ages 4-15 began on Monday, October 25 and will end on November 19th. This is the first basketball registration since the pandemic began last year.
- The Appalachian State Baseball clinic was held on September 29 and had 70 players participate. The clinic was a huge success and received many positive comments. Coach Kermit Smith, ASU, has requested to host a camp at Mulberry Recreation Center in the spring.
- New LED lighting was installed in the Mulberry Recreation Center gym last week and a new sign was installed at Wilson Park.
- Roof repairs are complete at the Martin Luther King, Jr. Center, but work continues on the roof at the Lenoir Aquatic and Fitness Center.
- High school swim meets will begin on November 19,
- A citizen generously donated funds for new decorative trash cans at the T. H. Broyhill Walking Park.

- A request for Phase II bids for the improvements project at the former LHS Auditorium will be sent out within the next two weeks. The project includes roof repairs, painting, replacement of broken window panes in the stage area, new HVAC system and conversion of existing auditorium lights to LED lighting. This item may be presented for Council action at the December 7 meeting.
- Foothills Performing Arts held their first plays at the LHS Auditorium on October 8-10 and October 15-17 which were well attended. A Christmas play will be held as well.

E. Financial and Administration

1. Finance Director Donna Bean reviewed the Financial Summary as of September 30, 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 \$11,296,198.68 Downtown District (\$18,237.61), and Water & Sewer Fund \$888,917.81.

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

Director Bean stated the City is on target with its budget and has expended 25% for expenditures from the General Fund. Some differences are due to employee salary increases and capital items. In addition, she reported the revenue difference is due to a major taxpayer change, but Staff had already anticipated that difference. Director Bean also mentioned that sales tax revenue remains steady.

In addition, Director Bean stated the Downtown District's budget is lower overall, but remains on target. Expenditures are lower in the Water and Sewer Fund's budget due to capital items and major items that were purchased previously.

2. Position Reclassifications: Director Bean reported that, due to reorganizations in the Water Department and input received from Public Utilities Director Radford Thomas, the following recommendations are submitted for Council's consideration of approval.

A. Lab Supervisor title change to Assistant Superintendent-Treatment Plant Operations

Director Bean explained this change would provide needed assistance to the Water Treatment Plant Superintendent with record keeping, training, safety and laboratory tasks. The pay grade for this position would increase from 18 to 21.

B. Utility Code/Metering Coordinator to Utility Maintenance Pipe Mechanic

Director Bean reported this change would better reflect the needs of the department after the transition to automated meter reading. It is requested to convert this Utility Code/Metering Coordinator position to a Utility Maintenance Pipe Mechanic. The pay grade would decrease from 18 to 17. She further stated this change would improve efficiency, and help with succession planning. The total cost for these two personnel changes is an additional \$3,090, but funds are available in the budget to cover this cost.

Motion

Upon a motion by Councilmember Willis, Council voted 6 to 0 to approve the two position reclassification recommendations as presented by Finance Director Bean.

C. FY2021 Holiday Bonus

Director Bean reported this is the sixth year the City has been able to provide the \$250.00 holiday bonus to employees. Upon approval, the bonus will be given to employees on Wednesday, November 17.

Director Bean stated the City employs 258 full-time employees and the cost of the bonus will be \$78,000. She informed Council she has identified \$131,000 within the budget which consists of lapsed salaries, cost savings due to not holding any events, and funding from cancellations. The proposed bonus also does not require any additional funding from the budget. It was also noted the bonus serves as a morale booster for employees and they look forward to receiving it.

City Council reported they always receive more positive comments from employees regarding the bonus than any other issue.

Motion

Upon a motion by Councilmember Stevens, Council voted 6 to 0 to approve the \$250.00 Holiday Bonus for employees as recommended by City Staff.

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

Director Harris reported the City's Notice to Boil Water received over 12,000 views on the City's Facebook page. There were 6 news releases, 100 photos, 2 videos, 91 social posts, 23 notify me requests, 23 questions & answers and 6 e-sign ups. The website experienced 32,929 views and reached 66,650 people via Facebook and Twitter. Also, there were 271 new followers and 1,095 video views.

V. PUBLIC SAFETY

A. Police Department

1. Update; Police Department: Police Captain Andy Wilson reported on the following items.

- The Department is wrapping up its in-service training which includes driving and firearms.
- A training audit will be conducted on Wednesday, October 27.
- The Department is currently going through the process to promote an officer to Lieutenant.
- The Code Enforcement officer is staying very busy addressing complaints and is doing a great job.

2. Update; Fire Department: Fire Chief Ken Hair reviewed the Departments Quarterly Report for July, August and September and presented the following report:

- Reported the Department was honored to have their story of the Strip Mall fire that occurred in February, 2021 published in Firehouse Magazine which is a national publication. The article was written by Chief Billy Goldfelder based upon accounts of some of the Department's staff that were on the scene. Chief Goldfelder requested to write this article due to the smoke explosion that occurred (based upon the social media video that was seen) which sparked his interest. The article is written as a case study to help other departments that may encounter a similar fire.

- Reported that staff at Station No. 2 spent time to beautify the grounds at their facility by removing some overgrown bushes and plan to plant smaller, more manageable greenery soon.
- The Department selected Captain Jonathan Wright as this year's "Firefighter of the Year." Captain Wright was presented an award from American Legion Post 29 at the August 17 City Council meeting along with the Police Department's Officer of the Year.
- Staff at Fire Station No. 1 installed lighting on the front of the facility to accent and make visible at night the sculpture donated by Kue King titled "Wherever Flames May Rage" plus the signage depicting this facility and our Department patch.
- The Department received a safety grant from the North Carolina League of Municipalities which was used to purchase turnout gear storage lockers for Station No. 1 and a battery operated extrication tool for Station No. 2.
- On September 1, it was decided by Dr. McClinton (Caldwell County's Medical Control Director) and CCEM to stop fire department's First Responders from responding to known COVID positive patients in an effort to control COVID outbreaks in the fire departments. Note: The only time our staff should be responding to known COVID positive patients is for cardiac arrest patients and when EMD advises they need extra help on the scene.
- Two consultants with Geo-Tech along with Public Works Director Jared Wright reviewed the sinkhole situation at Station No. 1 in order to create a plan to mitigate the situation. The crack monitors that were installed previously have not moved which is a good sign.
- The Tower Truck received significant damage to its basket which has to be certified before it can be used. The truck has been taken back to Sutton in Ohio for repairs which are \$72,360.00.
- The Department's two Quick Response Vehicles have been taken to the vendor to have equipment and signage installed.
- A business owner donated funds which were used to purchase thermal imaging for every firefighter which will provide them with additional safety.
- Reported October is Fire Prevention Month and Staff has been busy conducting events at local schools.

VI. OTHER

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

VII. Adjourn

There being no further business; the meeting was adjourned at 9:50 a.m.

Attachments

September Financial Summary



**City of Lenoir
Financial Summary
As of 9/30/2021**



General Fund					
	2021-2022 Budget	9/30/2021	% of Budget	Change from Previous Year	9/30/2020
Total Revenue	\$ 18,594,890.00	\$ 15,893,797.80	85%	\$ (87,490.93)	\$ 15,981,288.73
Expenditures	\$ 18,594,890.00	\$ 4,597,599.12	25%	\$ 198,881.41	\$ 4,398,717.71
Over/Under	\$ -	\$ 11,296,198.68		\$ (286,372.34)	\$ 11,582,571.02
Downtown District					
	2021-2022 Budget	9/30/2021	% of Budget	Change from Previous Year	9/30/2020
Revenues	\$ 184,638.00	\$ 19,384.21	10%	\$ (4,017.14)	\$ 23,401.35
Expenditures	\$ 184,638.00	\$ 37,621.82	20%	\$ (2,754.29)	\$ 40,376.11
Over/Under	\$ -	\$ (18,237.61)		\$ (1,262.85)	\$ (16,974.76)
Water/Sewer Fund					
	2021-2022 Budget	9/30/2021	% of Budget	Change from Previous Year	9/30/2020
Revenues	\$ 9,629,744.00	\$ 2,604,487.83	27%	\$ 181,532.55	\$ 2,422,955.28
Expenditures	\$ 9,629,744.00	\$ 1,715,570.02	18%	\$ (478,898.67)	\$ 2,194,468.69
Over/Under	\$ -	\$ 888,917.81		\$ 660,431.22	\$ 228,486.59