

**COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE
TUESDAY, OCTOBER 22, 2024**

8:30 A.M.

Present: Mayor Pro-Tem David Stevens, Mayor Joe Gibbons, Jonathan Beal, Todd Perdue, Ralph Prestwood, and Kimmie Rogers.

Staff Present: City Manager Scott Hildebran, City Clerk Shirley Cannon, Finance Director Donna Bean, Public Services Public Works Director Jon Hogan, Public Services Public Utilities Director Jeff Church, Main Street & Downtown Economic Development Director, Brenda Floyd, Planning Director Hannah Williams, Parks & Recreation Director Phil Harper, Fire Chief Norman Staines, Police Major Andy Wilson, Director of Special Projects & Grants Jared Wright, and Communications Director Joshua Harris.

Absent: Councilmembers Ike Perkins, Crissy Thomas and Brent Phelps, Police Chief.

I. Mayor Pro-Tem David Stevens welcomed everyone and called the meeting to order.

II. CALDWELL COUNTY REVALUATIONS UPDATE: Josh Angle, Tax Administrator presented a power point update to City Council regarding Caldwell County's revaluations.

Mr. Angle reported on the number of revaluations in NC by year as follows:

- * 2021 = 24 Counties
- * 2022 = 10 Counties
- * 2023 = 23 Counties
- * 2024 = 21 Counties

Next, he reviewed a map of the 2025 Revaluation Counties. (A copy of the map is attached to these minutes as information.) Mr. Angle stated there are 49,547 residential parcels, 2,850 commercial parcels, and 171 industrial parcels for a total of 52,568 parcels that have a revaluation. He also shared there are 109,204 registered motor vehicles that have an annual revaluation. In addition, there are also 5,474 individual personal property accounts and 1,352 business personal property accounts that have an annual revaluation.

Mr. Angle further cited §105-283, Uniform appraisal standards, which states all property, real and personal, shall be appraised or valued at its true value in money. True Value shall be interpreted as meaning market value, that is, the price estimated in terms of money at which the property would change hands between a willing and financially able buyer and a willing seller, neither being under any compulsion to buy or to sell and both having reasonable knowledge of all the uses to which the property is adapted and for which it is

capable of being used.

Mr. Angle also shared that per NC law, NCGS §105-286 states counties are required to reappraise all real property (land and other structural improvements) as least once every eight years, but NCGS §105-286 also authorizes or possibly requires counties to reappraise real property more frequently than every eight years.

NCGS §105-284 states that, any county that falls below .900 (Sales Assessment Ratio) on their reappraisal value year (2021) or 4th (2025) and 7th (2028) year after their reappraisal year will have their Public Service Company values equalized using a weighted ratio.

NCGS 105-286 (A), (2) - If your county has a population greater than 75,000 (Caldwell is 80,652) and the Sales Ratio is greater than 1.15 or less than 0.85, the county must reappraise on the third year after being notified by the NCDOR.

Next, Mr. Angle reviewed market statistics and reported the median sale price of a house in August 2020 was \$160,000 and increased to \$255,000 in 2024. The average sale in August 2020 was \$188,005 and the price increased in August 2024 to \$319,389.

Mr. Angle further presented sales data for single-family residential and manufactured housing (real market data). In addition, Mr. Angle discussed methods used for appraising property which are as follows:

- 1) Market Approach- also known as the market comparison approach or market-based approach, is a valuation method that uses market prices to determine the value of an asset, business ownership interest. This approach is often used when there is a lot of data available about recent sales of similar assets.
- 2) Income Approach – a real estate appraisal method that estimates a property's value based on the income it generates.
- 3) Cost Approach – provides a value indication that is the sum of the estimated land value, plus the depreciated cost of the building and other improvements.

Mr. Angle explained that Caldwell County will be purchasing a marketing tool referred to as MLS which is a multiple listing service. The cost of the software is \$20,000 and he remarked it will be cost effective. Mr. Angle shared Caldwell County is also hiring an individual to appraise commercial and industrial property.

Mr. Angle stated January 1, 2025 is the effective date for reappraising all real property at 100% of market value. In addition, he reported that January 31, 2025 is the date for revaluation notices to be sent to all property owners and the appeals process begins. Mr. Angle stated the Board of Equalization and Review convenes to hear formal appeals beginning April 2025 and stated the appeals period ends on or before the third Monday in May.

On behalf of City Council, Mayor Gibbons thanked Mr. Angle for the good report.

III. CITIZEN COMMENTS

- A. Jennifer Indicott, addressed Council about the number of bike riders that participated in the Mountains to the Coast Great Trail bike race recently and who also visited the downtown area along with non-food businesses during their stay. Ms. Indicott suggested this was a reason the City Council should consider making the Social District available on Sunday.

IV. COMMITTEE ITEMS

- A. Public Services Public Works: Public Services Public Works Director Jon Hogan presented the following report:
1. LFD Infrastructure Repair (Sinkhole): The Project is currently on hold as Staff looks at a different approach to the utility i.e. water and sewer relocation portion of the project.
 2. Hospital Avenue Sidewalk Project: The Project is still on schedule for a November LET. However, due to Hurricane Helene, utility relocation schedule, materials and contractor availability may push the LET date beyond our timeline..
 3. Phase III Gateway Project: The Surveying Company is still on schedule to start survey work in the next week. We have also added a 4th location on 321 traveling south from Blowing Rock.
 4. Veterans Memorial Project: We are awaiting prices from monument companies based on the design presented to the committee.
 5. Clock Tower: The Design is complete, and Staff is scheduling a future meeting with WNC Sculpture Center and donors to discuss moving forward.
 6. Park Gate Project: Gates have been installed and are operational in both the JE Broyhill and TH Broyhill Walking Parks.
 7. Update: Blue Ridge Memorial Park & Master Plan: Director of Special Projects and Grants Jared Wright reported that in 2023, the City of Lenoir contracted with McGill Associates to complete a master planning effort for future development of the remaining unimproved property at Blue Ridge Memorial Park. The goals of the plan included identifying local zoning regulations with setbacks and buffering requirements potential utility needs, connectivity to Wildwood Road (NCDOTSR1548), environmental impacts and constraints, and a schematic layout of future roads and dedicated burial spaces.

Director Wright reviewed the background information for Blue Ridge Memorial Park and stated the cemetery occupies City-owned, non-contiguous property on Wilkesboro Boulevard, just beyond the municipal limits. The total property acreage for the two cemetery parcels is approximately 43 acres, with the existing developed cemetery comprising over 26 acres and the proposed expansion area being the remaining 16 acres.

A copy of the proposed map and site plan are attached to these minutes as information.

In addition, two (2) expansions of the existing cemetery have occurred within the last 5 to 6 years, and these included survey and layout of the "Tranquil" and "Serenity Cove" sections. These are the last two remaining, developable sections in the existing cemetery. Director Wright further stated that beginning in 2020 with the COVID-19 pandemic, grave sales and burials have steadily increased, thus prompting a heightened need and prioritization to develop a plan for expansion on the remaining property.

Superintendent Terrance Banner explained the layout of the cemetery and said 132 plots have been sold so far in 2024. Mr. Banner said there were 3 years of sales left for plot purchases and shared that Belleview Cemetery is sold out. A brief discussion was held about the number of cremations increasing. He reported the current cemetery includes approximately 14,000 gravesites and 192 columbarium niche spaces. Each niche has space for 2 interments. These are positioned within 15 distinct, named cemetery sections. He also mentioned roads and travel aisles surround the sections and form physical barriers separating sections plus offering access, parking and vehicular circulation throughout the cemetery.

Director Wright also mentioned adding amenities including a gazebo to section F and placing benches for dedicated seating areas throughout Blue Ridge in order for families to have a place to sit while reflecting on their loved ones.

Next, Superintendent Banner reported the cost of installing 8 new panels will be \$50,000 and equals to 128 new spaces. He also shared the cost of a plot for individuals living inside the city limits is \$750 and \$1,500 for individuals living outside of the city limits. Discussion centered on the remaining space and design of the project. It was noted the city will formally seek bids for the project.

Public Works Director Hogan commended Superintendent Banner and staff for the good report. Mayor Gibbons also thanked them for the good information.

B. Public Services Public Utilities: Public Services Public Utilities Director Jeff Church presented the following report:

- 1) Finley Water project: The plans and specs are under review by Public Water Supply and Land Quality.
- 2) Valdese Water Interconnection: Preliminary engineering work is underway to review pump station alternatives, lake crossing methods, and the water main route through Caldwell County to the tie-in. A review meeting will be scheduled with the City in the next several weeks.
- 3) Harper Ave Sewer Replacement: Survey work has been completed, the existing sewer pipe slopes have been evaluated, and the proposed sewer layout is being finalized.
- 4) West Ave./Ridge St. Sewer: Sewer route alternatives were sent to the City for review. The City has requested McGill Associates to proceed with design of the replacement sewer along West Avenue and Ridge Street
- 5) Water and Sewer AIA: The preliminary and inventory work will continue to increase in October and November.

Tuesday, October 22, 2024
Minutes-Committee of the Whole

- 6) Rhodhiss Flashmix Basin: The project is going well and is on schedule.
- 7) Lead Service Line Inventory: The initial inventory has been submitted and required notifications have been sent to Lisa at Express Business Systems. They will be mailed on/about November 1, 2024. Additional information is available at the following website: <https://diamondmaps.com/map.ashx?mid=26929>.

IV. COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT

- A. Lenoir Business Advisory Board: The Lenoir Business Advisory Board cancelled its meeting on Thursday, October 10 due to Hurricane Helene impacts and recovery efforts. The next meeting is scheduled for Thursday, November 14. Brenda Floyd, Main Street & Economic Development Director presented the following report:
 - 1) The annual Wood, Fire, Smoke event was held on October 19 in the County parking lot and Hogwaller stage area. The event was a huge success.
 - 2) The Mad Hatter Pumpkin Patch Parade and downtown trick or treat was held on Thursday, October 31 from 3:00 p.m. – 6:00 p.m. Additional events were held as well.
 - 3) Light up Lenoir is scheduled on Thursday, November 21 and several groups will also be performing during the event. Director Floyd stated a 30-foot tree will be put up on the square.
 - 4) The annual Christmas Parade will be held on Friday, December 6 beginning at 6:30 p.m. Also, carriage rides will be held in the downtown area on December 9, 10, 11, 16 & 18.

- B. Planning Board: The Planning Board met on Monday, October 28. Hannah Williams, Planning Director presented the following report:

1. The Board of Adjustment met on Monday, October 21. Director Williams presented the following update of the meeting. The Board granted Variance 2-24 for Coyote Creek Place and denied Variance 3-24 for the Hogwaller Stage off of Church Street. In addition, the board denied Appeal 1-24 for Morganton Boulevard.

The Planning Board will meet on Monday, October 28 to discuss a text amendment to CZ-9 ordinance, as well as the light pole banner ordinance. Director Williams stated that to her knowledge as floodplain administrator, she has not seen or heard of any major flood damage to structures in the city during hurricane Helene. She also described public input efforts for several city planning projects and reported the Parks and Recreation's Master Plan Survey is available on the website at cityoflenoir.com.

Next, Director Williams stated the Consultants for the Comprehensive Plan and Recreation's Master Plan were at the Wood, Fire, Smoke festival on October 19, along with Consultants for the MPO's Transportation Safety Plan to solicit public input. The next community Open House for the Comprehensive Plan will be held on Thursday, November 7 at the Martin Luther King, Jr. Center beginning at 5:30 p.m.

- C. Parks & Recreation Advisory Board: The Parks & Recreation Advisory Board met on Monday, October 21 at 6:00 p.m. at the Aquatic & Fitness Center. Phil Harper, Parks & Recreation Director presented the following report:
 - 1) The automatic gates at the TH Broyhill Walking Park appear to be working out well.

- 2) Recreational soccer will finish at the end of October & travel soccer will end by Thanksgiving.
- 3) Youth basketball/cheer registration began on Wednesday, October 16 with practices in November & December and games to begin in January.
- 4) Caldwell Pathways inquired about applying for a grant to place new trash containers at the Greenway entrances. Following approval, they would be able to purchase six new containers including shipping costs.
- 5) The 2024 Cycle North Carolina (Mountains to Coast) Bike Race went well with 775 bikers participating in the challenge. There were 42 states represented along with the United Kingdom and Canada.
- 6) The Martin Luther King, Jr. Center will host the annual drive-through Trunk or Treat event scheduled for Thursday, October 31.

D. Director of Special Projects and Grants Jared Wright gave the following report:

PROJECTS

1. PARTF Zacks Fork Splash Pad – The slab pour did not happen as scheduled due to impacts by Hurricane Helene. The Contractor is back on-site this week to complete slab prep, and pouring within the next week & a half. The project is anticipated to be complete in early to mid-November.
2. PARTF Rotary Soccer Complex Picnic Shelter – The Project is expected to begin within the next couple of weeks and Director Wright will coordinate with the Splash Pad contractor to minimize disruption to each operation.
3. PARTF Remaining Elements – The Design-Build delivery method was approved on October 15 by City Council and the Request for Qualifications (RFQ) will be published by the end of October. The review and recommendation to award is expected to be on the December 3 Agenda for consideration of approval.
4. MRC Rooftop drainage and façade repairs – The gutter installation is almost complete at the Mulberry Recreation Center (MRC) and City staff will self-perform the replacement of the underground drainage system to accept rooftop runoff from gutters. These elements create a critical path to the gym floor replacement and need to be completed prior to floor placement.
5. MRC Gym Floor Replacement – Material delivery is scheduled for the first week of November for the Mulberry Recreation Center gym floor replacement and work will begin immediately thereafter.
6. MRC Pickleball Court Renovation – Work will begin Monday, October 28 at Mulberry Recreation Center for the Pickleball Court Renovation and the courts will be closed to the public during construction.
7. UPCG Teaching and Learning Pavilion – Construction is ongoing for this project.
8. MLK Improvements – A Notice to Proceed is established for November 11 (after Election Day as the Martin Luther King, Jr. Center is a polling place. Also, a Comp Plan public meeting is scheduled for November 7.
9. TH Broyhill Walking Park Retaining Wall Replacement – The rendering for the revised design will be provided and once it is approved, work will begin as soon as possible.
10. Campus Improvements Project – The project is in the final schematic design phase, transitioning to final design/construction drawings. The preliminary budgets are underway by the City Manager.
11. LFD Infrastructure Repair (Sinkhole) – New sanitary sewer replacement – the alternative route has been reviewed and approved by staff. McGill Associates will

begin working on the design. This alternative should shallow the proposed line from 35-feet (existing) to 15-18 feet (proposed).

FUNDING APPS

ARC funding application – A \$500,000 funding application was submitted on July 26, 2024 for the OVT Pavilion and responses to follow-up questions are in-process. This project was delayed due to Hurricane Helene.

Great Trails funding application – A \$497,994 funding application for OVT Connector will be submitted on November 12, 2024.

- V. **Finance and Administration:** Finance Director Donna Bean presented the September Financial Summary as of September 30, 2024.

The over/under balance in the General Fund is \$8,832,228.62, Downtown District (\$35,422.88) and Water & Sewer Fund \$622,927.48.

A copy of the September Financial Summary is attached to these minutes as information.

Director Bean stated all of the financials are on target and are where she anticipated them to be in the general fund budget at this time.

1. **Employee Holiday Bonus Request:** Finance Director Bean presented a bonus request for employees that will be graduated based on years of service as of November 1, 2024. The years of service range from 1 to 5, 6 to 10, 11 to 15 and 16 to 20 and 21+. Director Bean also reviewed the gross cost of the bonuses which is \$87,420.55.

(A copy of the Bonus Request is attached to these minutes as information.)

The date of service will be determined as of November 1, 2024 and will be computed using full-time years of consecutive service. She further shared the bonuses will be distributed on November 22, 2024 for active employees as of November 20, 2024 who have not submitted a resignation as of November 20, 2024.

City Councilmembers were in agreement to approve the proposed bonus for city employees.

Motion

Upon a motion by Councilmember Beal, City Council voted 5 to 0 to approve the Bonus Request in the amount of \$87,420.55 for eligible city employees as presented by Finance Director Bean.

- A. **Update: Public Communications:** Joshua Harris, Public Information Director referred to the September Communication Report as information. There were 4 new releases, 140 social posts, 458 photos, 2 videos, and 74 web updates. The website had a total of 44,676 views along with 807 video views. Social followers total 57,229 and there were 827 new followers this month. Director Harris asked Staff to send him any news/stories they would like to have published.

VI. Public Safety

- A. Update; Police Department: Andy Wilson, Police Major presented the following report: Major Wilson stated staff is in the process of filling one position. He also reported their lounge renovation is underway and commended Building Maintenance staff for the great job they are doing. Major Wilson briefly reviewed highlights of the Department's 3rd quarterly report.
- B. Update; Fire Department: Norman Staines, Fire Chief presented the following report:
- The Quarterly report will be submitted for the January meeting. The timing of Hurricane Helene, a substantial increase in calls and losing CAD during the event slowed our reporting.
 - As recovery continues, the Department was back to normal last week. We still have a few Hurricane related issues, but they are easily absorbed into daily operations.
 - October is Fire Prevention month and staff has been busy conducting fire prevention activities. Activities scheduled during school closures are being rescheduled with new dates.
 - Currently, we have one opening that we are working to fill and we have one upcoming retirement with Captain Morrow retiring at the end of November.

VII. OTHER

- A. November Calendar: The calendar for the month of November was provided in the packet as information listing committee meetings and upcoming events.

VIII. ADJOURN

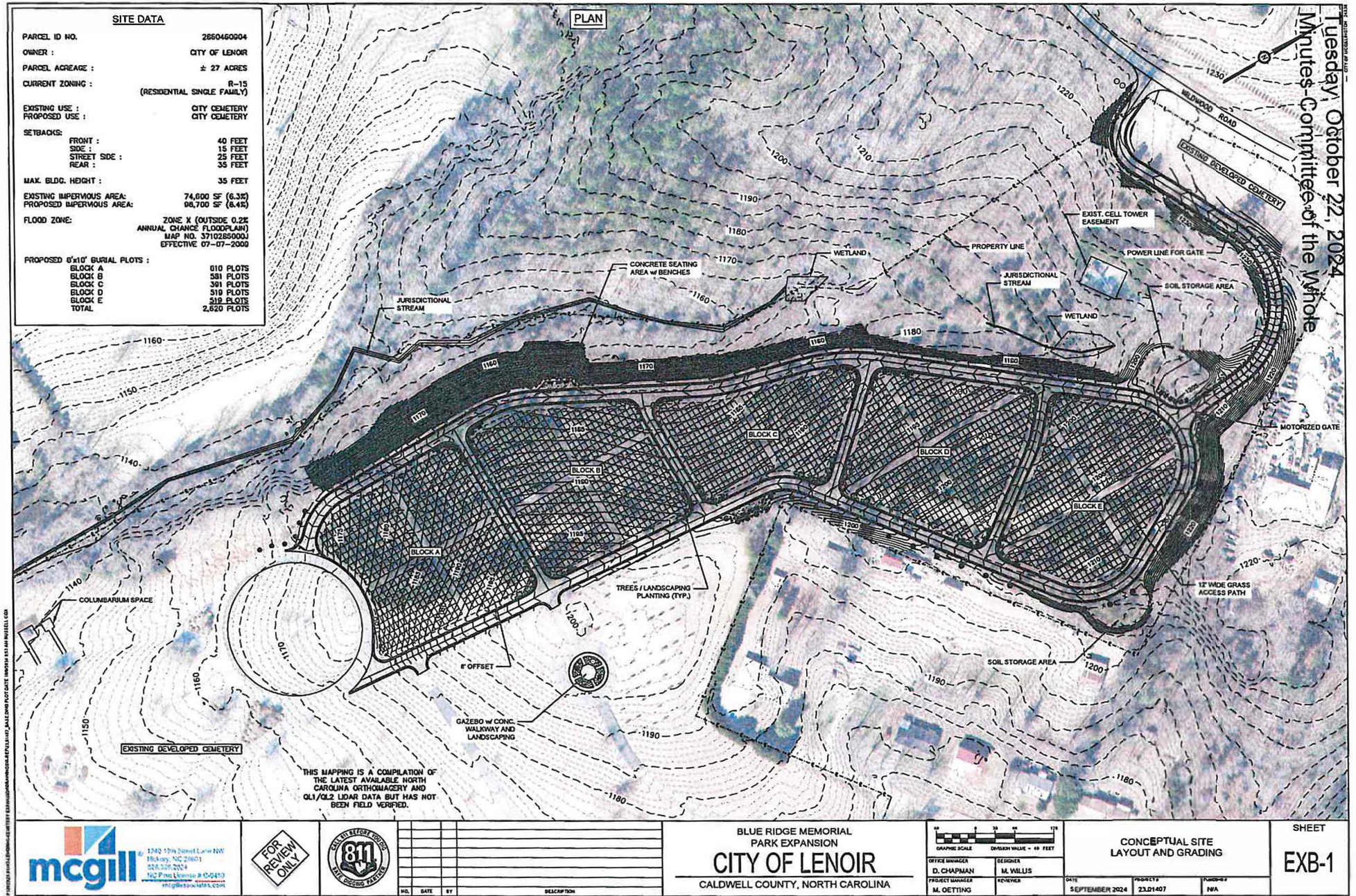
- A. There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned at 10:35 a.m.

Attachments

Map & Site Plan-Proposed Blue Ridge Memorial Park Expansion
September Financial Summary
Bonus Request Spreadsheet

~~Tuesday, October 22, 2024~~
~~Minutes-Committee of the Whole~~





 City of Lenoir Financial Summary As of 9/30/2024 					
General Fund					
	2024-2025 Budget	9/30/2024	% of Budget	Change from Previous Year	9/30/2023
Total Revenue	\$ 23,751,580.00	\$ 14,881,295.63	63%	\$ (1,033,007.42)	\$ 15,914,303.05
Expenditures	\$ 23,751,580.00	\$ 6,049,067.01	25%	\$ 658,838.46	\$ 5,390,228.55
Over/Under	\$ -	\$ 8,832,228.62		\$ (1,691,845.88)	\$ 10,524,074.50
Downtown District					
	2024-2025 Budget	9/30/2024	% of Budget	Change from Previous Year	9/30/2023
Revenues	\$ 264,700.00	\$ 16,966.16	6%	\$ (2,929.42)	\$ 19,895.58
Expenditures	\$ 264,700.00	\$ 52,389.04	20%	\$ (2,063.19)	\$ 54,452.23
Over/Under	\$ -	\$ (35,422.88)		\$ (866.23)	\$ (34,556.65)
Water/Sewer Fund					
	2024-2025 Budget	9/30/2024	% of Budget	Change from Previous Year	9/30/2023
Revenues	\$ 11,770,028.00	\$ 2,970,489.20	25%	\$ 126,414.95	\$ 2,844,074.25
Expenditures	\$ 11,770,028.00	\$ 2,347,561.72	20%	\$ 233,883.37	\$ 2,113,678.35
Over/Under	\$ -	\$ 622,927.48		\$ (107,468.42)	\$ 730,395.90

The date of service will be determined as of 11-1-2024. Service will be computed using full time years of consecutive service. The bonuses will be distributed on 11-22-24 for active employees as of 11-20-24 who have not submitted a resignation as of 11-20-24.