

Tuesday, January 21, 2025
Minutes-City of Lenoir Council Meeting

**LENOIR CITY COUNCIL
TUESDAY, JANUARY 21, 2025
6:00 P.M.**

PRESENT: Mayor Joe Gibbons presiding. Councilmembers present were Jonathan Beal, Todd Perdue, Ike Perkins, Ralph Prestwood, Kimmie Rogers, David Stevens, City Manager Scott Hildebran, City Clerk Shirley Cannon and Attorney Will Sparks, filling in for City Attorney Timothy Rohr.

ABSENT: Councilmember Crissy Thomas and City Attorney Timothy Rohr.

CITY STAFF: In attendance was Finance Director Donna Bean, Fire Chief Norman Staines, Police Chief Brent Phelps, Police Major Andy Wilson, Planning Director Hannah Williams, Parks & Recreation Director Phil Harper, Public Services & Public Works Director Jon Hogan, Public Services Public Utilities Director Jeff Church, Director of Special Projects & Grants Jared Wright and Public Information/Communication Director, Joshua Harris.

I. CALL TO ORDER

A. The meeting was opened by a moment of silence and the pledge of allegiance as led by Mayor Gibbons.

GENERAL

COMMENTS: B. On behalf of City Council, Mayor Gibbons asked everyone to keep Dr. Dana Clark in their thoughts and prayers as he is currently having some health issues. He also asked everyone to keep Judge Beverly Beal and wife Judy in their thoughts and prayers as well. They are the parents of Councilmember Jonathan Beal.

CONGRATULATIONS;

CITY ATTORNEY

TIMOTHY ROHR:

C. On behalf of City Council, Mayor Gibbons introduced and welcomed Attorney Will Sparks who was filling in for City Attorney Timothy Rohr. Attorney Sparks shared that Attorney Rohr was selected to serve on the North Carolina Bar Council as a judicial councilor and was currently in Raleigh taking training. Attorney Sparks also stated the North Carolina Bar Council has a significant role as they regulate the legal profession and handle different issues.

On behalf of City Council, Mayor Gibbons stated City Council was proud of Attorney Rohr and extended congratulations upon his being selected to serve on the North Carolina Bar Council.

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**MARTIN LUTHER
KING, JR. DAY:**

- D. On behalf of City Council, Mayor Gibbons reported the celebration of events held for the Martin Luther King, Jr. holiday were a success. A breakfast was held on Saturday, January 18 at the Martin Luther King, Jr. Center followed by a gospel singing that evening along with a march held on Monday, January 21. All of the events were well attended.

**SPECIAL RECOGNITION;
KENNY NELSON:**

- E. On behalf of City Council, Mayor Gibbons read and presented a resolution to Deputy Fire Chief Kenny Nelson in honor and recognition of his retirement from the Lenoir Fire Department following over 35 years of service to the City of Lenoir and its citizens and over 43 years in the fire service. Mayor Gibbons also presented Chief Nelson with a key to the City for his dedicated and outstanding service. Chief Nelson's retirement date is effective January 31.

Mayor Gibbons stated the City was proud of Chief Nelson and all of his accomplishments during his tenure with the City. He remarked that Chief Nelson will be greatly missed and has worked diligently during his career to take care of others. Mayor Gibbons further thanked him for filling in as Interim Fire Chief for several months.

Deputy Chief Nelson stated he was honored to serve and work with such a special group of people. He thanked City Council, Mayor Gibbons, City Manager Hildebran, Fire Chief Norman Staines, Department Directors, co-workers and additional City Staff for the recognition.

He shared that he always wanted to be a firefighter and briefly talked about his experience of being offered a job with the Lenoir Fire Department by former Fire Chief Sam Williams.

He introduced his family members that were in attendance and remarked that it was a privilege to serve.

II. MATTERS SCHEDULED FOR PUBLIC HEARINGS

III. CONSENT AGENDA ITEMS

- A. Minutes: Approval of the minutes of the City Council meeting of Tuesday, December 7, 2024 as submitted.
- B. Lenoir AFC Design Vendor Selection: Following a thorough review and evaluation of each Statement of Qualifications (SOQ), Staff recommends entering into contract negotiations with J.M. Cope, Inc. to provide Design-Build services for the 2022 PARTF Project – Lenoir Aquatic and Fitness Center Improvements. Cope's qualification package demonstrated the firm's experience with the design build project delivery method, an experienced team with members of offering specific, pertinent areas, a thorough understanding of the project scope, and a suitable approach to project management and adequate quality control programs necessary to perform the work in a responsible manner. Additionally, J.M. Cope is appropriately licensed and insured, has financial capability to undertake the project, and is in good legal standing. The firm's full submittal package was included in the agenda packet for review.

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- C. FY2024-25 Audit Contract/Non-Contest Services – C. Randolph, CPA PLLC/S: Staff request's City Council approve the FY2025 Annual Audit Contract for the City of Lenoir as submitted by C. Randolph CPA, PLLC to not exceed \$45,000.
- D. Resolution; Kenny Nelson: Approval of the resolution presented to Kenny Nelson in honor and recognition of his 35 years of dedicated and outstanding service to the City of Lenoir and its citizens. (A copy of the resolution is attached to these minutes as information.)

Upon a motion by Mayor Pro-Tem Stevens, City Council voted 6 to 0 to approve Items A through D on the Consent Agenda as submitted.

IV. REQUESTS AND PETITIONS OF CITIZENS

HOMELESSNESS

ISSUE:

- A. Mr. Patrick Ariztia, 1873 Greasy Creek Road, Lenoir, NC addressed City Council about the issue of homelessness in Lenoir. Mr. Ariztia referred to the current weather conditions and asked City Council whether the City plans to open another homeless shelter. He also referenced warming tents along with people's personal items being picked up by the Police Department. Mr. Ariztia also stated he tried to help these individuals by providing a food pantry, but was informed by someone that he wasn't allowed to do that. He further stated he helps clean up these camps and is willing to work with the City regarding this issue.

City Manager Hildebran stated the Western Piedmont Council of Governments (WPCOG) Homelessness Response Team has a website that outlines the homelessness services available in their four (4) county area. Also, WPCOG hosted a seminar at the Broyhill Civic Center which was recorded and is available online. This video further discusses operation considerations regarding a warming center/shelter.

Police Chief Brent Phelps explained the City does not condone homeless camping and if one is found by the department in a wooded area, Staff will contact the property owner to check whether they have given access or permission to their property. Once it is determined the property owner has not given permission and they do want the individuals to leave the property, the individuals are requested to gather their belongings and leave the property. This then becomes a trespassing concern for the Police Department. If items are left on the property, he stated the Department will use city resources to clean up the area. As an example, he cited a situation where it took three (3) dump loads to haul off all of the debris and items from a property. In this case, several individuals were charged with Felony Littering.

Chief Phelps also clarified for City Council that these individuals are advised by the Police Department that they have 24 hours to remove their property before it will be cleaned up by Police. This is a matter of trying to work with the homeless community while meeting the needs and request of our other community members.

V. REPORTS OF BOARDS AND COMMISSIONS

VI. REPORT AND RECOMMENDATIONS OF THE CITY MANAGER

- A. Items of Information

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PLANNING

BOARD: 1. The Planning Board will meet on Monday, January 27 at 5:30 p.m. at the City/County Chambers.

COMMITTEE OF

THE WHOLE: 2. The Committee of the Whole will meet on Tuesday, January 28 at 8:30 a.m. at City Hall.

**FOOTHILLS REGIONAL
AIRPORT AUTHORITY:**

3. The Foothills Regional Airport Authority will meet on Wednesday, January 29 at noon at the airport facility.

B. Items for Council Action

VII. REPORT AND RECOMMENDATIONS OF THE CITY ATTORNEY

VIII. REPORT AND RECOMMENDATIONS OF THE MAYOR

IX. REPORT AND RECOMMENDATIONS OF COUNCILMEMBERS

X. ADJOURNMENT

A. There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned at 6:35 p.m.

Shirley M. Cannon, City Clerk

Joseph L. Gibbons, Mayor



CITY MANAGER
SCOTT E. HILDEBRAN

CITY OF LENOIR
NORTH CAROLINA

MAYOR
JOSEPH L. GIBBONS

CITY COUNCIL
J. T. BEAL
T. H. PERDUE
J. I. PERKINS
R. S. PRESTWOOD
K. R. ROGERS
D. F. STEVENS
C. D. THOMAS

Resolution honoring Kenneth Dale Nelson

WHEREAS, Kenneth "Kenny" Dale Nelson started his fire service career in 1982 as a volunteer firefighter at Valmead Fire Department and started working at the City of Lenoir Fire Department in June 1990; and

WHEREAS, Chief Nelson served at Valmead Fire for 20 years earning the rank of Lieutenant and Captain and volunteered as a firefighter for five years at Sawmills Fire Department; and

WHEREAS, during his career at the Lenoir Fire Department, Chief Nelson held the positions of Firefighter, Driver Operator, Acting Officer, Second Lieutenant, Lieutenant, Captain, Training Officer, Battalion Chief, and Deputy Fire Chief, and in 2000, Chief Nelson was recognized as Firefighter of the Year for the City of Lenoir Fire Department; and

WHEREAS, during his time in the fire service, Chief Nelson taught fire, rescue, and EMS classes at Caldwell Community College & Technical Institute, and in 2015, Chief Nelson obtained his Associate Degree in Emergency Management from Caldwell Community College & Technical Institute; and

WHEREAS, in 2023, after the retirement of the previous Fire Chief, Chief Nelson stepped up to serve as Interim Fire Chief and successfully led the department from February to June of that year; and

WHEREAS, during his 43-year fire service career, Chief Nelson completed many state certifications including Firefighter 3, Fire Officer 3, Certified Fire Investigator, Fire Inspector 1, Fire and Life Safety Educator, and Technical Rescuer, and he obtained instructor qualifications in Firefighter I and II, Rapid Intervention Team, Live Burn, Emergency Vehicle Driver and Emergency Medical Technician; and

WHEREAS, Chief Nelson has been a model firefighter, an exceptional leader, and a humble servant to his fellow firefighters, residents, and the City of Lenoir. He has displayed the highest levels of integrity on and off the job, and he has always been willing to help the department, the City, his coworkers, and people in the community in any way he can; and

WHEREAS, Chief Nelson has announced his retirement from the Lenoir Fire Department as of January 31, 2025, ending his 34 and a half years of exemplary service to the City of Lenoir.

NOW THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED, that I, Joseph L. Gibbons, Mayor, on behalf of the City of Lenoir Council and all of our citizens, do hereby congratulate Kenny on his retirement and commend him for the example he has set as a dedicated public servant; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that Council and I extend our sincere appreciation and deep gratitude for Kenny's faithful and outstanding service and many contributions to the betterment of the fire service in North Carolina and to the City of Lenoir.

THIS, the 21st day of January 2025.




Joseph L. Gibbons, Mayor