

COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE

Tuesday, January 27, 2026

9:00 A.M.

Present: Mayor Joe Gibbons, Mayor Pro-Tem Ike Perkins, Councilmembers present were Jonathan Beal, Rebecca Dellinger, Ralph Prestwood, Kimmie Rogers, David Stevens.

Staff Present: City Manager Scott Hildebran, City Clerk Lauren Hartley, Finance Director Donna Bean, Planning Director Hannah Williams, Public Services Public Works Director Jon Hogan, Parks & Recreation Director Phil Harper, Economic & Main Street Director Brenda Floyd, Fire Chief Norman Staines, Interim Director of Special Projects & Grants & Risk Management/Purchasing David Coffey, Communications & Public Information Director Joshua Harris, Police Chief Andy Wilson.

ABC Board: Steven Stewart, Dr. John Tye; ABC Manager: Mike Suddreth

Western Piedmont Council of Governments (WPCOG): Kyle Case

Absent: Councilmember Crissy Thomas

I. CALL TO ORDER

Mayor Pro-Tem Ike Perkins welcomed everyone and called the meeting to order.

II. CITIZEN COMMENT

There were no citizen comments presented at this time.

III. Audit Report; ABC Board:

Mayor Gibbons asked for everyone to keep ABC Board Chair, Jerry Brooks in your thoughts and prayers as he recovers from health issues at the Shaire Rehabilitation Center.

Mike Suddreth, ABC Manager reviewed the following financial highlights from the report:

1. Amount of cash invested	\$464,283
2. Current assets	\$1,124,810
3. Total assets	\$1,468,650
4. Total liabilities	\$481,075
5. Total net position	\$1,074,402
6. Net sales	\$4,260,119
7. Gross Profit	\$1,371,584

The ABC Board made the following distributions in FY2024-2025:

1. Law Enforcements	\$24,312
2. Alcohol Education	\$34,037
3. City of Lenoir	\$500,000
4. Caldwell School System	\$58,350
5. Change in net position	\$11,854
6. Net position, end of year	\$1,074,402

Mike Suddreth said Longhorn Steakhouse will most likely be the top customer for next year's budget.

A copy of the Audit Report is on file in the City Clerk's office.

IV. PUBLIC SAFETY

A. Police Department –Andy Wilson, Police Chief gave the following updates:

- Chief Wilson said the Fourth Quarter Report October-December 2025 is included in the agenda packet.
- Alcohol Law Enforcement (ALE) cases:
 - The Red Roof Inn case has been a success with no problems after the court order. The general manager is in constant contact with the Police Department.
 - The property at 507 Oak Street has continued problems with public nuisance violations. ALE has been contacted and enforcement will begin.

B. Fire Department – Norman Staines, Fire Chief gave the following updates:

- Chief Staines said the Fourth Quarter Report October-December 2025 is included in the agenda packet. Staines said the numbers in the report reflect from year 2023 due to the hurricane.
- The Fire Department will be doing community outreach and held a Q&A session at the Thrive, Senior Center.

V. PUBLIC SERVICES

A. Jon Hogan, Public Services Public Works Director reported on project updates:

- Jon Hogan and Brenda Floyd, Economic & Main Street Director reported on the Paint It Forward Mural Project. A Mural Committee has been formed to select art and an artist based on requested submission. The art is for 13 city owned and maintained traffic signal cabinets. The committee will select four (signal cabinets) to be painted per quarter. Planning Director, Hannah Williams will be involved in developing the downtown guidelines. A maintenance plan will be created and followed based on material used to extend the longevity of the mural. Councilmember Beal said the Caldwell Arts Council could be involved and discussed art projects in downtown including projection art. Council were in favor of the Mural Project and proceeding.
- Jon Hogan said Rite Lite Signs was awarded the contract for the Phase II Gateway Project. There will be a contract addendum for Destination by Design for \$41,477 on the February 3 City Council agenda. This amendment will cover the survey, design, encroachment, bidding and construction administration for one (1) sign (location) which is the Blowing Rock Blvd south approach located at the corner of Blowing Rock Blvd and Creekway Drive..
- Lenoir Fire Department Infrastructure Repair (sinkhole) will be available for bid on January 30, 2026.
- Wayfinding Sign Project: Rite Lite Sign has completed all manufacturing and installed 13 signs. The remaining 40 signs will require hydro excavating. Due to weather and workload, Public Utilities is unable to provide that service in a timely manner. There will be a contract amendment for Rite Lite Signs to subcontract the hydro excavating for \$62,000 on the February 3 City Council agenda.

B. Jeff Church, Public Services Public Utilities Director reported on project updates:

- Lenoir–Valdese Water Interconnect: The Interconnect project is in the surveying, design, and easement acquisition phase. Survey field work and mapping has been completed for the Valdese Water Treatment Plant site. Survey field work is in progress for the Waterfront Club and Caldwell Timber properties. The community meeting for Waterfront Club was held on January 22, 2026. The city will meet with the owners of the property for the proposed Water Booster Pump Station.
- Lead and Copper: North Carolina Department of Environmental Quality (NCDEQ) has accepted a proposal for Lenoir to conduct computerized predictive modeling to assist in the required lead and copper inventory requirements. A revised contract to include the work to develop the predictive model program is being prepared by Freese and Nichols.
- Lower Creek Waste Water Treatment Plant Process Basin Upgrades: The ER/EID was submitted to the Division of Water Infrastructure for review on January 15, 2026.
- CIP Update and Financial Analysis: The kickoff meeting with city staff has been scheduled for February 2, 2026.
- Water and Sewer Asset Inventory and Assessment: water and sewer evaluations and recommended projects are being completed. High priority projects that would be recommended in years 1-10 will be discussed for the CIP. The Asset Management Plan will be prepared after completion of the assessments.
- Finley Water project is under construction. Certification No. 1 has been partially submitted after completion of the water main work on the tank site.
- Lenoir–Hickory–Granite Falls Water Interconnect: Awaiting funding status from state budget.

VI. COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT

- A. Brenda Floyd, Economic & Main Street Director reported on the following:
- The Lenoir Tourism Development Authority (LTDA) and Lenoir Business Advisory Board (LBAB) received training from NC Main Street. Several board members will be attending the NC Main Street Conference in March.
 - A mini library will be built downtown in front of the Police Department.
 - The new branding for holiday events brought more people and traffic.
 - Merchant Mingles meetings are being held once a month.
 - The “Time Well Spent” clock tower is making progress.
 - Hometown Hearts are \$15 and are personalized conversation hearts that will be displayed on lampposts throughout downtown.
 - The 24th annual Blackberry Festival vendors registration is now open.
- B. Kyle Case, Community & Economic Development Manager with WPCOG reported on the grant funding opportunity with Community Development Block Grants (CDBG) disaster recovery monies. This funding money is divided into three categories with most going towards housing. Kyle Case said he has been working with Planning Director, Hannah Williams on city properties where this money can be utilized. These city owned properties would be donated, there are 10-12 potential lots. The State is getting final approval from HUD on the amount of money. For any CDBG application, a public hearing is required. The first public hearing is good for one year.

Council is in favor of this item.

- C. Hannah Williams, Planning Director reported on the following:
- The Planning Board will meet on February 9 at 5:30 p.m., they do not have any cases.
 - The Planning Board plans to have two rezoning cases for March.

D. Phil Harper, Parks & Recreation Director reported on the following:

- The Martin Luther King Jr. events went well.
- The Parks & Recreation board will meet on February 16 at 6:00 p.m.
- Pickleball, youth basketball, and youth swim are going well.
- Spring sports registration will begin next week.

VII. FINANCE & ADMINISTRATION

A. Donna Bean, Finance Director said the financial summary is included in the packet and the city is on track.

1. Financial Summary

Donna Bean reported the General Fund's Over/Under balance as of December 31, 2025 is \$3,954,325.44, the Downtown District is \$ (127,814.94) and the Water & Sewer Fund is \$1,249,022.86.

VIII. PUBLIC SERVICES; David Coffey, Interim Director of Special Projects and Grants reported on the following:

- The OVT Pavilion project will have some site re-design because of the stormwater revisions and underground retentions.
- The Aquatics Center remodel should be complete in March.
- The task order for the gymnasium and auditorium at The Campus will come before council at the February 3 meeting.

IX. PUBLIC COMMUNICATIONS; Joshua Harris, Communications & Public Information Director reported on the following:

- Joshua Harris gave a presentation for the Civic Clerk software. Harris said Civic Plus is the software the city uses to manage our website and municode. The costs would be \$9725 for the initial fee and \$7500 annual fee. We are looking for council support to purchase.

Council was in favor of purchasing the Civic Clerk software.

- Harris said he is leading the Leadership Lenoir Civic Learning Academy offered by the city. Applications will be accepted starting in February, you must live or work in the city limits of Lenoir and be willing to commit the time to the program. The academy will be held March 9-June 1 2026. The goal is to teach citizens about the City of Lenoir local government and services it provides. A graduation ceremony will be held at a city council meeting.
- Communication Report. There were 4 new releases, 130 social posts, 568 photos, 1 videos, and 86 web updates. The website had a total of 46,774 views along with 2,984 video views. Social followers total 64,288 and there were 197 new followers this month.

X. OTHER

A. The calendar for the month of February was provided in the packet as information.

B. City Manager, Scott Hildebran said just to be aware that the City of Hickory is looking into having their elections on even number years to get a larger turnout of voters.

XI. ADJOURN

There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned at 10:57 a.m.