

**Committee of the Whole  
Meeting Minutes  
Tuesday, May 26, 2026  
8:30 AM**

- Present:** Mayor Joe Gibbons, Mayor Pro-Tem Ike Perkins, Councilmembers present were Jonathan Beal, Ralph Prestwood, Kimmie Rogers, and David Stevens
- City Staff:** In attendance was City Manager Scott Hildebran, City Clerk Lauren Hartley, Finance Director Donna Bean, Public Services Public Works Director Jon Hogan, Communication & Public Information Director Joshua Harris, Fire Chief Norman Staines, Police Chief Andy Wilson, Planning Director Hannah Williams, City Parks & Recreation Director Phil Harper, Public Services Public Utilities Director Jeff Church, and Community Engagement Coordinator Ashley Smith.
- Absent** Councilmembers Rebecca Dellinger and Crissy Thomas, Economic Development Main Street Director Brenda Floyd, Interim Director of Special Projects & Grants & Risk Management/Purchasing David Coffey.

**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. Public Safety**

**A.** Police Chief Andy Wilson gave the following update:

- The BLET course through Caldwell Community College will be completed June 5 with four City of Lenoir Police trainees.
- The C.A.D.E.T Camp will be held June 15–19.
- The Communications merger with the County will begin Monday, June 1, for night shift, day shift will begin at a later date.
- The Police Department now has an automated phone tree active 24/7.

**B.** Fire Chief Norman Staines gave the following update:

- Off-duty training: Completed the 2<sup>nd</sup> week of facilities training at Catawba Valley Community College, each day is 7 hours, and each staff member needs 18 hours annually for ISO.
- Staffing: One new firefighter has started and two completed physicals and are waiting on background checks. One open firefighter position remains.
- Due to the drought, staff paused hose testing, hydrant testing and hydrant inspections. These will start back once restrictions allow.
- Knox Box Ordinance will come before council in the future. A Knox Box is a secure box placed on a business that only the fire department has access to, which allows the fire department to gain entry on calls prior to a

keyholder. Many municipalities have ordinances requiring Knox Boxes currently on certain types of facilities.

#### **IV. Public Services**

**A.** Public Services Public Works Director Jon Hogan gave the following update:

- Hospital Avenue Sidewalk Project: Currently working with Wetherill Engineering (design firm) to address utility conflicts (stormwater, gas, water and sewer) at Taubrook Street. There were some miscalculations with stormwater volume in planning and design that created an increase in culvert size that created the utility conflicts. We have addressed those issues and are working with NCDOT to ensure we are updating the design per LAP requirements. After this is finalized Neill Grading will be back on site within the next couple of weeks.
- Phase II Gateway Project: Shop drawings have been approved and materials are on order. A major material component of this project has been given a 12-week lead-time for delivery, this may push the project into August.
- Veterans Plaza Project: Project is underway. Street Department has formed and poured the concrete footers for the new monuments, the next step is delivery and installation of the new monuments.
- Clock Tower: The Western North Carolina Sculpture Center continues the welding of the art tiles and other pieces. Design firm M&C has completed the foundation plans and bid documents.
- Wayfinding Sign Project: This project is complete. One sign remains and will be installed once the Lenoir Fire Department infrastructure repair is complete.
- Greenway Links: Design firm M&C has presented the city's letter of intent to NCDOT for the Hwy 18 Crossing at the Google Link Connector. NCDOT has issued a request to meet and discuss the project. The Google Connector and crossing are planned to begin in July/August if plans are approved by NCDOT.

City Manager Scott Hildebran talked with Council about a proposal from Richard Lamont for a new veteran banner program. Mr. Hildebran reminded Council about the current \$200,000 veterans plaza renovation project and said the City had a limited number of poles for banners. Most of the poles in Downtown are used for City banners, hanging flower baskets, and Christmas decorations. If Council were to approve such a program, someone would have to pay to put up and take down the banners. There may be alternatives, but staff needs to look at zoning, sign regulations, and utility providers.

Mayor Gibbons said staff should meet with the resident and explain the City's concerns.

**B.** Public Services Public Utilities Director Jeff Church gave the following update:

- Lenoir–Valdese Water Interconnect: A design progress meeting was held with City staff on May 6, 2026. The full topographical and site features have been surveyed along Big View Lane in Waterfront. Final field surveying work has been completed along Carpenter Rd and Baton School Road necessary for easement mapping. A contract amendment (which includes the funding Engineering Report, easement maps for Waterfront, and easement maps for Carpenter Road) has been submitted to the City for approval.
- Lower Creek WWTP Process Basin Upgrades: Preliminary design calculations and drawings are underway.
- ARC Flash Assessments: Preliminary work is underway.
- Water and Sewer AIAs: Water and sewer evaluations and project recommendations continue to be completed. The Asset Management Plan will begin to be prepared.
- Finley Water project: The 8-inch water line from the tank site to Holloway has been installed and tested and is in the process of being certified. The 12-inch water line is being installed south along Finley. The contractor has begun installing individual PRVs within the pressure zone and preparing the locations for the insertion valves.
- Division 2 (East Harper) Sewer Replacement: Construction recently commenced.

## **V. Community Development**

### **A. Community Engagement Coordinator Ashley Smith gave the following update:**

- Downtown Economic Development is currently working on the Main Street America accreditation.
- New Businesses:
  - Magnolia Kitchen located at 209 N Main Street NW.
  - Main Street Antiques and Treasures located at 203 Mulberry Street NW.
  - Caldwell County Democratic Party headquarters located at 118 Mulberry Street NW.
  - Spaces available for rent at 1001 West Ave.
- Events:
  - The Paint it Forward mural project is on-going.
  - Neon Night ride Friday, May 29 from 8:30-10:30 p.m.
  - Friday Night Live concerts will be June 7 and 14 from 7:00-10:00 p.m.
  - Juneteenth will be held on Friday, June 19.
  - National yoga day will be held on Sunday, June 21.

### **B. Planning Director Hannah Williams gave the following report and update:**

- The Planning Board met on May 11 to discuss the rules of procedures for the citizen comment section and limiting speaking time to 5 minutes.

- A Historic Preservation Commission ordinance will come before council on June 16.
- A public hearing for changes to the Flood Plain model will come before council in June.
- A public hearing for a cell tower will come before council in July.
- The LAP funding grant for a resolution of support will come before council on June 2.
- The Planning Department has not received any information on the commercial development for property located at Hospital Ave and Hwy 321. The developers have had stormwater issues.

C. Parks & Recreation Director Phil Harper gave the following update:

- Youth athletics and adult basketball have ended.
- Youth basketball camp will be held at the Martin Luther King Jr. Center, June 22-24.
- Registration is open for summer basketball and cheer.
- The outdoor pool opened at the Aquatics Center on May 25.
- The splash pad opening will be delayed until drought conditions improve and water restrictions are lifted.

## **VI. Finance & Administration**

A. Finance Director Donna Bean gave the following update:

- The financials were reviewed and included in the budget session meeting held on May 21.
- Director Bean addressed a question from council at the budget session meeting on water resale. The projected bulk resale revenue for FY 2025-2026 is \$3.4 million dollars and makes up 29% of the city's total water and sales.

B. Staff was not available for an update on special projects and grants.

C. Communications & Public Information Director Joshua Harris gave the following update:

- Communication Report. There were 5 new releases, 171 social posts, 544 photos, 2 videos, and 79 web updates. The website had a total of 39,588 views along with 1,802 video views. Social followers total 66,605 and there were 709 new followers this month.

## **VII. Other**

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

## **VIII. Adjournment**

There being no further business, Mayor Gibbons adjourned the meeting at 9:48 a.m.

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Lauren Hartley, City Clerk

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Joseph L. Gibbons, Mayor