



Locust City Council Meeting

Minutes

Joel Huneycutt Community Room

7:00 PM

May 9, 2024

Mayor
Council Members

Mayor Steve Huber
Mayor Pro-Tem Larry Baucom, Mandy
Watson, Roger Hypes, Harry Fletcher, Mike
Haigler, Barry Sims, and Rusty Efird

1. Call to Order

Mayor Huber called the meeting to order at 7:02pm

2. Presentation of Colors, Prayer

Mayor Huber led in the Pledge of Allegiance and gave the invocation

3. Adopt Agenda

M/S/A Council Members Harry Fletcher and Larry Baucom (6-0)
Motion to excuse Council Member Rusty Efird

M/S/A Council Members Harry Fletcher and Larry Baucom (6-0)
Motion to adopt the agenda as presented

4. Minutes - adopt April 11, 2024 minutes

M/S/A Council Members Harry Fletcher and Barry Sims (6-0)
Motion to approve the April 11, 2024 minutes

April 11, 2024 Minutes

5. Financial Reports

City Manager Cesar Correa stated that ten months into the fiscal year, our reports indicate a promising end to the fiscal year. Excluding the \$500,000 grant for the Senior Center, we will be carrying a healthy surplus into

the fund balance reserve. General Fund revenues exceed expenditures by \$2,140,756.70 (excluding the \$500,000 Senior Center grant). Wastewater expenditures exceed revenues by \$677,850.86. The negative balance in the wastewater fund is due to reimbursement delays from NCDEQ. We have received notification that all our contracts are fully eligible to use the grants we received. Various offices within NCDEQ have completed their reviews, and we are awaiting final disbursements from their accounting team. The City has already paid over \$1.6M in cash towards these projects. We received our first reimbursement on Monday. However, I am confident that we will receive our reimbursements before the end of the fiscal year. A week ago, Council Members received a copy of the proposed budget ordinance, along with a revised PowerPoint presentation. City Manager Cesar Correa provided both the Council and the public with an update on how our budget has changed since our budget retreat meeting in early March. This serves as the formal introduction to the 2024/2025 Fiscal Year Budget. Which includes no tax rate increase for the 27th consecutive year, 10% decrease in base sewer user fees, eliminating the \$10 per vehicle fee and no general fund appropriation. He also gave an update to the estimated assessed valuation for the City of Locust at \$812,240,000. This year the Cabarrus County side had a revaluation and next year Stanly County will have a revaluation. City Manager Cesar Correa gave an explanation and example on how text revenue-neutral is comprised. He then reviewed projected revenues including sales tax, ad valorem, solid waste (no fee increase), ABC income and investments. He then displayed and reviewed expenditures and how that falls in each City department. Some time was spent regarding sports and recreation fees for multi-children households. The cap for the season per family would be \$150 for Locust residents and a hardship fee would be available on a case by case basis with review from staff for approval. He then reviewed projected revenues and expenditures in the Wastewater fund. Capital projects were reviewed including Locust Police Department fleet purchase, dash and body cameras, a Public Works vehicle, an updated Land Use Plan to continue purchasing holiday decorations and digital message boards. A public hearing will need to be set for the June 13th meeting to allow citizens the opportunity to comment on the proposed budget. A copy of the proposed 2024/2025 budget is available for public inspection at City Hall.

M/S/A Council Members Michael Haigler and Barry Sims (6-0)
Motion to schedule a public hearing for the 2024/2025 Fiscal Budget on June 13, 2024

Financial Summary - April 2024

Budget Introduction

Schedule Public Hearing for Budget Adoption

6. Mayor's Report

Mayor Huber expressed celebration for former Chief of Police Steven Smith's birthday and Thanks to City Clerk Amy Furr in celebration of Municipals Clerks Week.

7. Manager's Report

Purchase orders and budget amendments were reviewed. City manager Cesar Correa gave an update to 2 proposed projects. The traffic triangle in front of City Hall and the connection off of Market Street to the Post Office. Instead of converting the triangle piece in front of City Hall into a roundabout, we propose that Council consider converting a portion of Harrison Lane into a one-way street. This would cover the portion in front of the Council Chambers and Library, allowing us to increase the number of parking spots for the future senior center. Vehicle traffic could continue along Kerri Dawn, connecting back via Kiser Lane. We also propose installing two additional stop signs along Ray Kennedy at the intersections of Market Street and Bank Street,

addressing the main areas of concern around Town Center. AWCK would sketch the proposed connection from Market Street to the post office, providing us with an idea of the cost of the improvements. Our conversation will also revolve around whether this new connection is to be a public street (owned and maintained by the City) or a private driveway with the appropriate easement to ensure the connection remains following development of this site. Thank you to all of the staff for all they do.

M/S/A Council Members Michael Haigler and Roger Hypes (6-0)

Motion to approve contract with the engineering firm AWCK at the cost of \$5,000 to look at the Harrison Road project and Post Office access project

M/S/A Council Members Harry Fletcher and Michael Haigler (6-0)

Motion to approve purchase orders

M/S/A Council Members Larry Baucom and Harry Fletcher (6-0)

Motion to approve budget amendments

Traffic Improvements in Town Center

Purchase Orders

Budget Amendments

8. Administration/HR

Nothing to report at this time

9. Parks

Council Member Mandy Watson gave an update on events as the farmers market on Tuesday's and Thursday's and the Locust Cinema Party will be this Saturday and then on May 18th will be Hands on Locust and a family movie night to follow. City Manager Cesar Correa gave an update on the grants that the Parks Department applied for over the last month. The PARTF grant application was submitted for a new set of pickleball courts! Awards will be announced in early fall. Our grant consultant informed us that unfortunately, we did not have all the information needed to apply for the Accessibility grant. We require a public input session, and we thought our Master Plan would cover this requirement. However, the public input session needs to be explicitly focused on collecting feedback on accessibility and individuals with disabilities. We will keep this draft ready for the next grant cycle and will be sure to advertise the additional public input session we need. We missed the deadline for the Stanly County Parks and Rec grant because we are still waiting for pricing for the playground equipment we intended to replace.

Update on Grants

10. Facilities

Following our last Council meeting, the City received information from our architects regarding pricing. They sent the proposed layout to estimators, and we were shocked to receive a price of just under \$600/sqft. This information came from recent/similar projects being built. The budget for this project is set at \$3M, of which \$2.5M is for construction. However, the estimated cost for construction alone came back at \$4.1M. The architects and City Manager Cesar Correa had a work session to identify potential savings and potential

changes to the layout/size of the facility. it appears that we are still about \$700,000 over the construction budget. The City is awaiting revised floor plans for your consideration, which include a size reduction to help us reduce the estimated cost of the new facility. The good news is that we're having a very good fiscal year, with revenues like sales tax and investment income performing better than expected. In the event the Council wishes to allocate additional resources towards this project, please know that such resources are available. CPL Architects had a representative present to review how the input sessions have gone and how they have looked for ways to potentially save some funds on the project.

Senior Center Update

11. Public Works

The public works department has been busy and flow report was good considering the rain we have had over the last month.

Wastewater Flow Report - April 2024

12. ABC, Economic Development & Small Business Support

Nothing to report at this time

13. Public Safety

Council Member Roger Hypes reviewed the monthly report. There has not been an April Officer of the Month decided on as of yet. Our hearts and prayers go out to the neighboring law enforcement communities who have experienced loss recently. Very thankful for our department and all they do for us.

Monthly Report

14. Planning & Zoning

Council Member Michael Haigler reviewed the monthly report. 25 new house permits issued as of April 2024.

Monthly Report

15. Public Comment Period:

No one signed up to speak

16. Board Closing Comments

Thank you to City Clerk Amy Furr and all she does for the City. Thank you to all the staff and looking forward to what is in store in the next fiscal year. Thank you to all who came out to the meeting. Very grateful for the council members and their diligence and passion for what is best for the City of Locust. Celebrate the upcoming holidays, Mothers Day and Memorial Day. Thank you to City Manager Cesar Correa and Finance Director Stephania Morton for all their hard work and diligence into the budget and making it understandable for all.

17. Executive Session

M/S/A Council Members Harry Fletcher and Mandy Watson (6-0)

Motion to enter into executive session at 8:30pm GS: 143-318.11 (6) Personnel

Out of executive session at 8:56pm

M/S/A Council Members Roger Hypes and Harry Fletcher (6-0)
Motion to allow Chief of Police to utilize the cadet program for new recruits

18. Adjourn

M/S/A Council Members Harry Fletcher and Barry Sims (6-0)
Motion to adjourn at 8:58pm

Amy Furr, City Clerk

Stephen Huber, Mayor