



Locust City Council Meeting

Minutes Joel Huneycutt

Community Room

7:00 PM

May 8, 2025

Mayor
Council Members

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

1. Call to Order

Mayor Huber called the meeting to order at 7:00pm

2. Presentation of Colors, Prayer

Mayor Huber led in the Pledge of Allegiance and Council Member Mandy Watson gave the invocation.

3. Adopt Agenda

M/S/A Council Members Larry Baucom and De-Dee Nathan (7-0)
Motion to adopt the agenda as presented

4. Minutes - adopt April 10, 2025 minutes

M/S/A Council Members Larry Baucom and Rusty Efird (7-0)
Motion to approve the April 10, 2025, minutes as presented

April 10, 2025

5. Financial Reports

City Manager Cesar Correa reviewed the monthly financial reports noting that the General Fund revenues exceed expenditures by \$1,621,208.69, and that the Wastewater Fund revenues exceed expenditures by \$2,980,582.75. He then introduced and gave a presentation of the 2025-2026 proposed fiscal year budget. Reviewing the areas of income including ABC income and sales tax income. He then discussed reducing the tax rate to revenue neutral. The City's base estimates as provided by Stanly County Tax Administration show an increase in Stanly County values of approximately 34.9% for a total valuation increase of 31.68%. Our new tax

valuation estimate is \$1,106,905,695. According to our calculations to determine tax-revenue neutral, the recommended tax rate would be reduced from .36 to .29 cents. The tax-revenue neutral rate accounts for an 8.86% growth rate based on our average valuation increase since the last Stanly County revaluation in 2021. To collect the same tax levy from FY 24-25, the Council would have to reduce the tax rate even further to .27 cents. Should the Council decide to do this, it would mean adjusting our tax rate to below tax-revenue neutral and foregoing the growth factor of roughly \$221,381. The tax-revenue-neutral number of .29 cents is the tax rate we recommend for the upcoming FY 2025-2026 budget. The City is also looking to adopt a Capital Project Ordinance to cover projects and purchases that span several years. Following the budget introduction, Council was asked to schedule a public hearing for the 2025-2026 budget adoption during the June 12, 2025, Council meeting.

M/S/A Council Members Larry Baucom and De-Dee Nathan (7-0)

Motion to set a public hearing for the 2025-2026 fiscal year proposed budget for Thursday, June 12, 2025.

Financial Summary - April 2025.

FY 2025-2026 Budget Introduction

Schedule Public Hearing: FY 2025-2026 Budget Adoption

6. Mayor's Report

Mayor Huber announced that the City of Locust has received the GFOA Certificate of Excellence in Financial Reporting. He then gave accolades to Finance Director Stephania Morton for all of her hard work and dedication that achieved the City this award yet again. Mayor Huber then recognized a citizen who brought his son to come and see what local government is all about and what the Council does and what goes on behind the scenes when making decisions for the City.

GFOA - Certificate of Excellence in Financial Reporting

7. Manager's Report

City Manager Cesar Correa reviewed purchase orders. He asked Council to please approve the auditors contract for this fiscal year that ends June 30, 2025. Public Works Director Tim Flieger presented a list of items to City Manager Cesar Correa that are now obsolete within the Public Works Department, which requires Council approval for disposal. City Manager Cesar Correa reviewed the list of requested items for disposal. The plan is to auction whatever items can be used, and to scrap or discard the others. He also discussed purchasing an available Dodge Charger for the police department in this fiscal year. Thank you to the staff for all of their hard work.

Year	Manufacturer	Model	Description	Serial/Vin#	Hours/Miles
1991	GMC	Top Kick	Tandem Axile Dump Truck w/Snowplow	1GDT7H4J1MJ520214	94921
2001	John Deere	Gator	4x2 Utility Vehicle	W004X2X067549	4835
	Toro	Sandpro	Field Groomer w/Attachments(mat drag, nail drag, broom, & surface finisher)		678
2016	Hudson	HTD18D	10-Ton Tandem Axile Dovetail	10HHTD1D1H2000002	
	Mosca		<u>Christmas Decorations</u>		
			30' White Light Panel Christmas Tree		
			(25) Pole Mounted Christmas Tree & Wreaths		
			Season's Greetings Skyline		

He then discussed two proposed resolutions opposing both HB 765 and SB 688. These two bills are going through the General Assembly, which, if signed into law, would be detrimental to NC land development regulations. Please know that I have already personally spoken with Representative Huneycutt (who represents us in Stanly County) and Representative Echevarria (who represents us in Cabarrus County). Other municipalities in Stanly County are sending similar resolutions. This week I will also be contacting the members of the Committee on Housing and Development. The details of the proposed bills are as follows:

NC House Bill 765:

- The bill is intended to address the housing affordability problem in North Carolina by reducing housing supply constraints. If passed into law, the legislation would reform local development regulations in North Carolina and shift control from local governments to state-level oversight. Local government planning departments and planning and zoning commissions would have less/diminished control.
- Any local government ordinance in effect on, or adopted after, October 1, 2025, that is inconsistent with the act is void and unenforceable. This means existing ordinances would be retroactively void. This seems like it would have a huge impact.
- Prohibit a local government from requiring or otherwise specifying the size of parking spaces, placement of parking spaces, configuration of parking spaces, or allocation of parking spaces other than those required by the Americans with Disabilities Act.
- Expand the type of property counted as an exception from requirements for the installation of sidewalks or improvement of existing sidewalks for any commercial or school property, to include residential property.
- Eliminates public hearings on proposed new housing developments

NC Senate Bill 688:

- The bill is intended to limit the authority of local governments to exercise planning, zoning, and development regulations to the authority expressly authorized by State statute. If passed into law, the new law would:
- Prohibit local governments from requiring, as a condition for approval of a conditional district, anything not specifically authorized by law, or any offer from the petitioner to consent to requirements not authorized by law. Local governments would be required to use quasi-judicial procedures to adopt a zoning or development regulation authorized by the statute.
- Prohibit local governments from setting regulations for the minimum square footage, width, or length of structures
- Prohibit local governments from setting parking space requirements, except as required by the Americans with Disabilities Act
- Require local governments to allow no fewer than four dwellings per acre for cities with population less than 150,000 and five dwellings per acre for cities with a population of 150,000 or more.

M/S/A Council Members De-Dee Nathan and Mandy Watson (7-0)
Motion to approve purchase orders

M/S/A Council Members Larry Baucom and Michael Haigler (7-0)
Motion to adopt resolution in opposition of HB765

M/S/A Council Members Larry Baucom and Michael Haigler (7-0)
Motion to adopt resolution in opposition of SB688

M/S/A Council Members Larry Baucom and Roger Hypes (7-0)
Motion to approve asset disposal of obsolete equipment in the Public Works Department

M/S/A Council Members De-Dee Nathan and Michael Haigler (7-0)
Motion to approve audit contract

M/S/A Council Members De-Dee Nathan and Michael Haigler (7-0)
Motion to approve purchase of Dodge Charger for PD in this fiscal year

Resolution Opposing NC House Bill 765 and Senate Bill 688

Property Surplus

Purchase Orders

8. Administration/HR

Council Member De-Dee Nathan had nothing to report at this time.

9. Parks

Council Member Mandy Watson reviewed the upcoming events for the park. Hands on Locust this Saturday and family movie night featuring Mufasa.

10. Facilities

Council Member Barry Sims reviewed that the City received 8 (eight) bids for the new senior center, which were opened yesterday at noon. The lowest bid came in at \$2,595,680.00 by Cinderella Partners Inc. based out of Indian Trail. This amount is \$1,163,289 under the last budget estimate from December 3, 2024. Our last estimate anticipated a cost per square foot of \$553.93 But with the lowest bid, the cost per square foot would come in at \$382.50. The average amount for all bids was \$3,190,730, which would put the average cost per square foot to \$470.19. The highest bid came in at \$4,622,000.00. City Manager Cesar Correa forwarded this information to our architects to review for responsiveness. We anticipate presenting a recommendation to City Council to award the contract during the June 12th meeting.

11. Public Works

Council Member Larry Baucom reviewed the monthly flow report.

Wastewater Flow Report - April 2025.

12. ABC, Economic Development & Small Business Support

Council Member Rusty Efird stated that the Farm Bureau office will open June 1st, and Papa Johns has rented out the last space available in the Walmart/RedBridge Plaza.

13. Public Safety

Council Member Roger Hypes reviewed the monthly report and police department statistics. Officer of the month for the month of April was Officer Caleb Whitley.

Monthly Report - April 2025.

14. Planning & Zoning

Council Member Michael Haigler reviewed the monthly report. He then brought back the conditional rezoning request submitted by Russell Huntley for Caliber Corner from last month's meeting. The public hearing was completed during the April 10, 2025, meeting.

M/A Council Member Michael Haigler (No second needed) (7-0)
Motion to approve the conditional rezoning request by Russell Huntley for Caliber Corner designating the subject property as Campus Business Institutional – Conditional (CBI-C) parcel pin# 556401377753, Kylie Ct. Locust NC with the associated site plan and proposed elevations, to be consistent with the 2014 Land Use Plan.

Benji Laymon with The Isaacs Group spoke on behalf of Cookout and presented a conditional rezoning request for the property located on Jame Avenue between Burger King and Mavis Tire. Cookout has owned this parcel for a couple of years and just recently submitted their application for rezoning. The P&Z Board sent a unanimous favorable recommendation. Site plan, elevations, and materials were presented and reviewed.

Public Hearing for Conditional Re-zoning request for Cookout opened at 7:52pm:
No one spoke for or against

Public hearing closed at 7:53pm

M/A Council Member Michael Haigler (no second needed) (7-0)
Motion to approve the conditional rezoning request by Cookout designating the subject property as Highway Commercial – Conditional (HC-C) parcel pin# 556504504683, James Ave. Locust NC with the associated site plan and proposed elevations, to be consistent with the 2014 Land Use Plan.

City Manager Cesar Correa gave an update to the proposed updated Land Use Plan. The City has completed a couple of public input sessions. The consultants have begun writing the draft update. Now we are tasked with solidifying any changes that the Council wants to see in the updated plan. Changes that have been suggested are updating the map to include the Kolter Homes/Cresswinds project to mark it as high density. Similarly, the Whispering Hills community will also will need to be marked at high density. Removing the area that was marked as park open space and adding the parcels that were identified in the Parks Master Plan and adding the property at the Locust Tree. Also to have the City Center marked at Mixed Use. The goal is to present the plan in December.

M/S/A Council Members Larry Baucom and Michael Haigler (7-0)
Motion to approve changes to the updated land use plan

Monthly Report - April 2025

Conditional Rezoning: Caliber Corner

Conditional Rezoning: Cook Out

Land Use Plan Update - Map Update

15. Public Comment Period:

Harry Fletcher, 308 Brentwood, thanked staff for all of their assistance in helping with the National Day of Prayer. Thankful to live in Locust and that the elected officials get along and can be cordial with each other.

Barry Slater, 107 Mockingbird, spoke about his concern about the speed limit on Mockingbird as one of the entrances to the Crossroads Neighborhood is beside his property. The developers finally put up a stop sign, but there is no speed limit sign and people drive through that entrance too fast.

16. Board Closing Comments

Thank you to everyone who came out this evening. Thank you to all of the staff for all they do and Finance Director Stephania Morton for all of her hard work on the financial reporting. Thank you to the representatives from Caliber Corner and Cookout for their investment in Locust. Council Member Roger Hypes gave a few words regarding transparency and authenticity regarding Locust and what makes it a City with a Soul. Thank you to Harry Fletcher and Barry Slater for their comments.

17. Adjourn

M/S/A Council Members Barry Sims and Larry Baucom (7-0)

Motion to adjourn at 8:24pm

Amy Furr, City Clerk

Stephen Huber, Mayor