



**Florence City Council
Special Meeting
Tuesday, June 8, 2021
6:00 p.m.**

MINUTES

The City Council of the City of Florence, Kentucky, met in special session on Tuesday, June 8, 2021, at 6:00 p.m. at the Florence Government Center, 8100 Ewing Boulevard, Florence, Kentucky, with Mayor Diane E. Whalen presiding as chair.

CALL TO ORDER & WELCOME:

Mayor Diane E. Whalen called the special meeting to order and declared the meeting open for the presentation of items on the special meeting agenda.

ROLL CALL:

The roll was called, and the following six (6) members of council were present: Dr. Julie Aubuchon, Mel Carroll, J. Kelly Huff, David A. Osborne, Josh Walton, and Gary Winn.

Staff members present were: Assistant City Attorney, Thomas Nienaber; CFO/HR, Linda Chapman; Chief of Police, Tom Grau; Fire/EMS Chief, Scott Knoll; Public Services Director, Eric Hall; Business & Community Development Director, Joshua Hunt; City Engineer, Bill Viox; City Clerk, Melissa Kramer; Videographer, Spencer Foreman; and Police Officer, Ethan Manley.

The following were also present in the audience: Assistant City Clerk, Brandi Roundtree; Events Consultant, Victoria Wells; Communications and Community Projects Manager, Staci Leiker; Assistant Fire/EMS Chief, Chris Miller; Assistant Fire/EMS Chief, John Black; Fire/EMS Department, Battalion Chief of Prevention/Fire Marshall, Randy Childress; Police Captain, Eric Bowles; Police Captain, Greg Rehkamp; Police Officer, Kevin Duncan; Police Officer, Ki Ransdall; Police Administrative Clerk, Jackie Hart; Police Lieutenant, Jeff Mallery; Police Officer, B.J. Eder; K9 Officer, Dustin Zink; Corporal, Michael Gonterman; Police Officer Chris Boone; Police Officer, Kelli Chapman; K9 Officer Josh Dalton; Police Officer Derek Jackson; Officer Kyle Sorensen; Family and friends of the Florence Police Department employees being recognized; Fire/EMS Lieutenant, Josh Corry; Firefighter/EMT Jimmy Rose; Firefighter/EMT Zechariah King; Fire/EMS Captain Greg Vincent; Firefighter/Paramedic Wallace LeMaster; Battalion Chief Steve Schreck; Fire/EMS Captain Wesley Burns; Firefighter/Paramedic Jason Bowling; Firefighter/Paramedic Craig Emerson; Firefighter/EMT Derek Tengowski; Firefighter/Paramedic Ben Riggs; Firefighter/Paramedic Brendan McHugh; Family and friends of the Fire/EMS Department employees being recognized; Dress Homes Land Analyst, Alex Martin; President/CEO of Freedom Baseball Club, LLC, David DelBello; Observer, Thomas Judd; and The River City News Reporter, Trisha Scheyer.

RECOGNITION AND PRESENTATION OF AWARDS REGARDING THE CHAMPION CLUB APARTMENTS/PARKLAND PLACE FIRE:

A video depicting the brave actions by the members of the Florence Police Department and Florence Fire/EMS Department was presented.

Following the video, Mayor Whalen called upon Chief Grau for the presentation of the awards to the members of the Florence Police Department. Chief Grau announced the officers receiving “The Lifesaver Award”.

Chief Grau thanked everyone and stated, “It was a big night for the city as we honor the police and fire department for their outstanding work they did on April 28, 2021 at 1:00 a.m. in the morning at the Champion Club Apartments Fire.”

After watching the video, Chief Grau stated it was hard to express how proud he was of the officers being recognized. Chief Grau stated, “Within one minute and twenty seconds of being dispatched, the first officer was on the scene. The three fifteen minute mark, all six, the entire third shift was at the fire. It was a critical moment for the fire. 1:20 a.m. in the morning, a large building, and I don’t have to tell the firemen, that thing was rolling.” Chief Grau continued, many of the residents were unaware of what was happening. Without hesitation, everyone worked together as a team with the common goal to evacuate as many people as they could, as quickly as they could, and however they could.

Chief Grau stated the video documented a large extent of the fire, however, body cam footage showed residents jumping out of third story windows right by the officers and the officers trying to catch the residents as they jumped. Countless number of children were tossed to the officers. Chief Grau stated the officers entered the building engulfed in smoke and were able to pass along critical information to the fire department to distinguish the fire. Chief Grau expressed how truly unbelievable it was. However, he stated he was not surprised by the actions of the officers and acknowledged that when you hire the right people, and have good people working for you, they put service before self. Chief Grau stated the Florence Police Department is fortunate to have the unbelievable support received from the Mayor, city council, and residents which helps the department be as successful as the department can be and it is evident across the country, those departments that are not supported.

Chief Grau conveyed how he was most proud that as a city, the police department and the fire department, work so well together as a group and the actions taken that night made it evident. He believes that when critical incidents happen and there is the bond between the two departments, that bodes well for our residents and that is what all is about, service to our residents. Other cities are not as fortunate.

Chief Grau stated the six officers will receive the “The Lifesaver Award”, a citation and a red/white accommodation bar to wear on their dress uniform.

The citation received states as follows:

“On April 28, 2021, these officers demonstrated initiative and professional ability as an officer with the Florence Police Department while responding to a structure fire at 6761 Parkland Place. Officers arrived and they observed flames showing from several locations on the building, heavy smoke throughout the hallways, the officers instructed the residents to exit the building and move to safe areas, disregarding their own safety. The officers entered the building several times to escort residents out. Several officers were outside as residents jumped from the third floor windows, tossing children into their arms. There is no doubt that the courageous actions taken by these officers that morning saved countless numbers of lives. All officers went above and beyond the call of duty, placing themselves in harm’s way, to help the residents of the City of Florence. These officer’s outstanding performance of duty reflect great credit upon themselves and the Florence Police Department.”

Chief Grau announced the officers and presented their awards, Corporal Michael Gonterman, Officer Chris Boone, Officer Kelli Chapman, K-9 Officer Josh Dalton, Officer Derek Jackson, and Officer Kyle Sorensen.

Mayor Whalen called upon Chief Knoll for the presentation of awards to the members of Florence Fire/EMS Department. Chief Knoll reiterated Chief Grau’s comments and stated it was an excellent job by all and well deserved. Chief Knoll stated both departments benefit, as does the community, from the outstanding cooperative effort between every department within the city, particularly the police department and fire department in this instance. Throughout the years, both departments have worked well together on emergency situations and “when the chips are down, everybody pitches in.”

Chief Knoll explained as part of the promotional process within the Fire Department, there is an assessment center and one of the stations is a tactical scenario. During the tactical scenario, complex situations are provided and candidates are evaluated as to how they perform under stress. During the planning phase of the scenario, the department attempts to make the scenario as realistic as possible. Chief Knoll stated the incident which occurred on April 28, 2021 potentially falls into the category of being too complex and whether it is realistic. He stated what the crews were faced with evening, he had not seen in decades of fire service, nor had others at the meeting. Chief Knoll stated not only from the complexity, seriousness, and gravity of the situation, but the pace at which everything occurred and the duties throughout that night. He was astonished that there was no loss of life and is still taken aback by the fact that no loss of life occurred that evening.

Chief Knoll stated, “...it is because of the people sitting in front of us here tonight that there are members of the community, that are still members of the community, because of their actions. In twenty plus years of doing this, I have very rarely ever used the word heroism when speaking on an event, of which my own department was part of. But there is absolutely no word that better describes what went on that night than heroism, from top to bottom. Everybody that was on that scene should be extremely proud of what they did, and I am absolutely humbled to be part of this fire department.”

Chief Knoll presented the first of two awards, “The Battalion Citation”. The Battalion Citation recognizes a shift, while operating as a team, performed an act in an exemplary manner that unselfishly displays coordination, cooperation, and teamwork in the accomplishment of a common goal.

Chief Knoll presented “The Battalion Citation” to Battalion Chief Steve Schreck, Lieutenant Josh Corry, Firefighter/EMT Zechariah King, Firefighter/EMT Jimmy Rose, Captain Greg Vincent, Lieutenant/Paramedic Chris Fuhrman, Firefighter/Paramedic Wallace LeMaster, Captain Wesley Burns, Firefighter/Paramedic Jason Bowling, Firefighter/Paramedic Josh Tucker, Firefighter/Paramedic Craig Emerson, Firefighter/EMT Derek Tengowski, Firefighter/Paramedic Ben Riggs, Firefighter/Paramedic Candice Biltz, Firefighter/Paramedic Brendan McHugh, and Firefighter/EMT Brandon Kannady.

Chief Knoll next presented “The R.G. Bidwell Medal of Merit” recognizing the actions of the Fire/EMS members for the rescue of trapped occupants in the fire. Chief Knoll stated this was the first time the department has presented this award. The R.G. Bidwell Medal of Merit recognizes the special diligence and initiation in the performance of duty and extended conduct that reflects the utmost credit to the individual and enhances the progression of the Florence Fire/EMS Department. In addition to their certificate, the Fire/EMS members will also receive a ribbon which will be worn on their Class A Uniform.

Chief Knoll presented “The R.G. Bidwell Medal of Merit” to Lieutenant Josh Corry, Firefighter/EMT Zechariah King, Firefighter/EMT Jimmy Rose, Captain Greg Vincent, Lieutenant/Paramedic Chris Fuhrman, Firefighter/Paramedic Wallace LeMaster, and Firefighter/Paramedic Craig Emerson.

Mayor Whalen thanked the honorees on behalf of herself, city council, and the residents of the City of Florence. Mayor Whalen thanked the first responders for all they do every day and expressed her appreciation. She stated the goal of the city is to provide them with the best they can in regards to equipment, training, and service. Mayor Whalen stated city council and herself are here for them, just as they are for us and our residents and they are appreciated.

Mayor Whalen thanked Events Consultant, Victoria Wells, for creating the video and highlighting some of the events received from all of the body cam and video footage received. Mayor Whalen stated while some of the language was edited, the language was certainly understandable.

Mayor Whalen thanked the first responders and stated: “Thank you for what you do, day in and day out. Running into burning buildings when everyone else is running out. God bless you all and stay safe.”

APPROVAL OF MINUTES:

Mayor Whalen called for a motion to approve the minutes of the May 25, 2021, business meeting. Councilmember Winn motioned to approve the minutes with a second from Councilmember Huff. **All councilmembers present voted aye.**

FIRST READING OF ORDINANCE O-5-21:

Mayor Whalen read Ordinance O-5-21. An Ordinance annexing certain territory consisting of a parcel of approximately 23.0348 acres located at the northeastwardly right-of-way of Weaver Road, approximately 20 feet southwest of Morgan Trace Drive within the Saddlebrook subdivision, adjacent to the city limits. (Weaver Road Properties, LLC)

This Ordinance annexes and makes a part of the City a tract of approximately 23.0348 acres located at the northeastwardly right-of-way of Weaver Road, approximately 20 feet southwest of Morgan Trace Drive within the Saddlebrook Subdivision, adjacent to the City limits. This annexation is in response to a request by Weaver Road Properties, LLC, the owner, to have the property become part of the City. The annexation will be complete upon second reading and publication of this Ordinance. After annexation the property shall be zoned Residential Planned Development District (RPD).

Mayor Whalen called upon Joshua Hunt, Business Community and Development Director. Mr. Hunt advised his previous Memorandum indicated that the project would consist primarily of townhomes, however, he received a new concept plan today which indicated the project will comprise of townhomes and condominiums. He advised city council would not vote on the concept plans until the plans went through the approval process of the Boone County Planning Commission.

Councilmember Aubuchon inquired whether the townhomes/condos would be owner occurred. Mr. Hunt replied yes.

Councilmember Walton inquired whether the new plans submitted included the same price range. Mr. Hunt stated the price range had not changed.

Mayor Whalen called for a motion to approve the first reading of Ordinance O-5-21. Councilmember Huff motioned to approve, with a second from Councilmember Winn. **All councilmembers present voted aye.**

FIRST READING OF ORDINANCE O-9-21:

Mayor Whalen read Ordinance O-9-21. An Ordinance adopting and approving a change in a Concept Development Plan in a Commercial Two/Planned Development (C-2/PD) Zone for an approximate 11.82 acre site located on the northeast corner of the U.S. 42/Farmview Drive Intersection and the southeast corner of the Old U.S. 42/Farmview Drive Intersection, Florence

and Union, Kentucky, to allow eating and drinking establishments and commercial uses, including drive-through facilities, elderly housing facility, multi-family housing, medical offices and a car wash, and to modify previous conditions of approval concerning architectural design and to permit a 50 foot maximum building height on the entire site. (Farmview Commons, LLC)

The effect of this Ordinance is to allow certain commercial uses in a Commercial Two/Planned Development (C-2/PD) zone and to modify previous conditions of approval concerning architectural design; and to permit a 50 foot maximum building height on the entire site.

The full text of Ordinance O-9-21, including its exhibits, is available for examination in the office of the City Clerk of the City of Florence, Kentucky, in the Florence Government Center, 8100 Ewing Blvd., Florence, Kentucky, during regular office hours.

Mayor Whalen called upon Joshua Hunt, Business Community and Development Director. Mr. Hunt stated as previously discussed at the Caucus Meeting on June 1, 2021, the concept plan for lots one through five, facing US 42, will be smaller commercial uses. Lot six, on the rear side of the development, is proposed for multi-family, senior housing, or a medical office building.

Mr. Hunt stated it was important to note that the Florence Planning and Zoning Committee met and proposed three conditions including:

Condition #1: The property owner has the option to follow the original concept development plan approval, if a medical office user submits a concept development plan utilizing approximately 6(±) acres of the original 11.82 acre tract that is generally consistent with the conditions outlined in the 2014 Change in Concept Development Plan, and the medical office user is approved by the City of Florence. This condition applies to a medical office use only. If this option is selected, the property owner agrees that automobile related retail, automotive repair facility, gasoline service station, or car wash uses will not occur on the remaining acreage, regardless of prior approvals.

Condition #2: The City of Florence may in its discretion waive the proposed main on-site north/south driveway, which runs between lot 6 & 7 to Old U.S. 42, as shown in the Farmview Commons Option A rendering. If an alternative use requiring a larger building footprint is submitted and approved by the City of Florence, the developer shall provide a Traffic Impact Study that supports adequate ingress/egress to the site with alternate road improvements.

Condition #3: The final architectural details, building materials, and colors shall be evaluated and approved by the City of Florence prior to the major site plan approval. Future modifications of the site plan and/or architectural renderings must be approved by the City of Florence. The City of Florence reserves the right to allow substitutes to finished building materials, colors and design details that are consistent with requirements in the Boone County Zoning Regulations.

Councilmember Aubuchon clarified that even though the Reading Summary noted a possible car wash, that option had been removed. Mr. Hunt replied yes, the option for a car wash had been withdrawn.

Councilmember Carroll stated the project would affect the Farmview Subdivision and was concerned with regard to the potential traffic issues on US 42 and Farmview Drive. Councilmember Carroll stressed the important of a deceleration lane. Councilmember Carroll stated he would vote for the project, but believes there are traffic issues at Farmview Drive now and is concerned with regard to the traffic in the future.

Mr. Hunt stated a deceleration lane was one of the seventeen conditions of the Boone County Planning Commission. Mr. Hunt stated once the tenants are determined and the traffic study has been completed, should the Kentucky Transportation Cabinet require a deceleration lane, the builder will have to comply as stated in the conditions.

Councilmember Walton inquired whether the deceleration lane was a requirement of the plan contingent with the Boone County Planning Commission. Mr. Hunt clarified that it is a condition that they will have to build a deceleration lane should the Kentucky Transportation Cabinet require a deceleration lane based on the traffic study.

Mayor Whalen called for a motion to approve the first reading of Ordinance O-9-21. Councilmember Aubuchon motioned to approve, with a second from Councilmember Huff. **All councilmembers present voted aye.**

FIRST READING OF ORDINANCE O-10-21:

Mayor Whalen read Ordinance O-10-21. An Ordinance adopting and approving a Zoning Map Amendment from Public Facilities/Planned Development/Parkway Corridor Study Overlay (PF/PD/PO) to Commercial Two/Planned Development/Parkway Corridor Study Overlay (C-2/PD/PO) for the approximate 1.06 acre site located at 8275 Ewing Boulevard, Florence, Kentucky, to allow medical, dental, optical and veterinary clinics and professional office uses that provide medical, dental, optical and veterinary administrative services in an existing building.

This Ordinance adopts and approves a zoning map amendment from Public Facilities/Planned Development/Parkway Corridor Study Overlay (PF/PD/PO) to Commercial Two/Planned Development/Parkway Corridor Study Overlay (C-2/PD/PO) for the approximate 1.06 acre site located at 8275 Ewing Boulevard, Florence, Kentucky, to allow medical, dental, optical and veterinary clinics and professional office uses that provide medical, dental, optical and veterinary administrative services in an existing building.

Mayor Whalen called upon Joshua Hunt, Business Community and Development Director. Mr. Hunt advised the city owns the building and property at 8275 Ewing Boulevard. Mr. Hunt explained currently only a non-profit or government use agency could use that building. Therefore, the city issued a Request for Proposal (RFP) previously and is now requesting a zoning change from Public Facilities to Commercial Two (C-2) Planned Development. Mayor Whalen stated the property was the former site of the Social Security Building and subsequently, The Family Nurturing Center.

Mayor Whalen called for a motion to approve the first reading of Ordinance O-10-21. Councilmember Osborne motioned to approve, with a second from Councilmember Aubuchon. **All councilmembers present voted aye.**

FIRST READING OF ORDINANCE O-6-21:

Mayor Whalen read Ordinance O-6-21. An Ordinance of the City of Florence, Kentucky, amending the Budget for The 2020-2021 Fiscal Year of The City. (Amendment #3) The purposes of this amendment are: (a) to reflect an increase in General Fund Revenues for the Property Taxes, Payroll Taxes, and Grant Receipts due to actual results; (b) to reflect an increase in General Fund Expenditures in the Fire Department line item for unscheduled overtime; (c) to reflect an increase in Municipal Aid Road Fund Expenditures for snow removal costs; (d) to reflect transfers between the Infrastructure Fund and Aquatic Center Fund for future capital needs; (e) to reflect an increase in Golf Course Fund Revenues for Greens Fees, Driving Range Fees, Golf Carts, Private Lessons, Merchandise Sales, and Beer Sales; (f) to reflect an increase in Golf Fund Expenditures for salaries, bank service charges, miscellaneous expenses due to COVID protocols, Beer COGS, and Pro Shop COGS; (g) to reflect the addition of a System Maintenance Account for both sewer and water in the Water and Sewer Fund; and (h) to reflect an increase in expenses for the Health and Dental Fund due to high claimants.

Mayor Whalen called for a motion to approve the first reading of Ordinance O-6-21. Councilmember Aubuchon motioned to approve, with a second from Councilmember Carroll. **All councilmembers present voted aye.**

MAYOR'S ANNUAL BUDGET ADDRESS AND STATE OF THE CITY:

Mayor Whalen presented the annual Budget Address and State of the City:

Every year as we prepare to present our annual budget, I have the honor to deliver the State of the City and Budget Address. As I prepared my 23rd address as Mayor, I spent a lot of time reflecting about the past year and how we have collectively experienced A Time like No Other! As a mother, grandmother, sister, wife, resident, and Mayor, my heart goes out to all of our neighbors and friends whose health (or that of a loved one) has been affected by COVID-19, as well as to all those who have been devastated by its subsequent economic impact, or a dire combination of both. Far too many lives will never be the same, and we must keep them in our thoughts.

While COVID-19 has certainly brought us unprecedented challenges, the crisis has also rallied our community to work together to help one another. Things are beginning to recover, all across the Commonwealth and Nation, and we cannot say we are on the road to recovery without addressing the issue of our local economy. As a region and a city, we must focus our hard earned dollars and make every effort to buy local. Remember, every penny you spend with our local business community goes to supporting our neighbors who are employed by those establishments, so I would encourage everyone to please buy local and support the businesses in our community.

The past year, we have asked so many to slow down, we have also asked many others to act much more quickly—our healthcare professionals and essential workers, specifically all City employees have been asked to act more quickly, I want to express my gratitude for your willingness to respond during this unprecedented time.

Thanks to years of sound fiscal management and growth, the city has the resources to continue to provide the services you deserve and have come to expect. With the encouragement and shared vision of this council, we continue to focus on the city's core municipal responsibilities of providing the best and most reliable services to all of our stakeholders. Our city department heads are working at our direction in concentrating on economic and community development efforts, and helping Florence to continue to lead the region with an innovative and positive business-friendly atmosphere.

Our city departments, led by CFO/HR Manager Linda Chapman; Chief of Police Tom Grau; Fire/EMS Chief Scott Knoll and Public Services Director Eric Hall, all have been at the forefront in leading us. With years of combined experience, nearly all of it with the City of Florence, our city is blessed to have the best of the best leading us and our departments during this unprecedented time. They are dedicated and passionate about our community.

We will remain strong, and this upcoming year should be one of hope and a well-executed vision. We will continue our hard work on your behalf and find our way through these challenging times. So to that end, I present our 2021-2022 State of the City and Budget Address.

The budget for fiscal year 2022 represents a comprehensive spending plan for all city funds. The budget reflects all known and estimated increases in costs as well as the estimated projections for the various sources of revenue. Our occupational license fees, insurance premium tax, payroll tax receipts, and real estate tax revenues are all dependent on economic conditions and as such, these numbers are subject to continued analysis and review throughout the fiscal year for adjustment.

The general fund budget proposal for 2021-2022 totals \$54.1 million. This includes operating and capital expenditures, which include transfers to other city funds. The City of Florence's operating costs are \$30.8 million, which is an overall 11.5% increase over those budgeted for the Fiscal Year 2020-2021. This is mainly due to a rise in operating expenses over the prior year and an annual State pension increase of 12% per year. The City of Florence has planned expenditures for capital items of \$18.4 million, which is a 1.1% decrease from last year.

The Administration and Finance Departments account for 5.3% of the city's total budget. These departments are responsible for executing the city's responsibilities with the management of all city departments. This includes economic and community development, city event planning, and safety and risk management. The Finance Department staff members are responsible for the collection of all revenues for the city, disbursing all payments, administering employee benefits program, and coordinating the city's information technology vendor relationship.

For seventeen consecutive years, our CFO and Finance Department has been recognized by the Government Finance Officers Association for excellence in financial reporting through the Comprehensive Annual Financial Report, which is the highest recognition award for a municipality's financial reporting. Furthermore, the city received its seventh consecutive Government Finance Officers Association "Distinguished Budget Presentation" award. I would like to thank our CFO, Linda Chapman, for her expertise and delivery in this area.

The next department I would like to discuss is the Florence Police Department. The primary goal of the Police Department is to provide a safe environment for our residents and visitors by working cooperatively with other city departments. The 71 men and women of the Florence Police Department are committed to achieving that goal. The department strives to keep Florence safe by combining active patrol and investigation with community and business partnerships.

The total departmental budget for the next fiscal year is \$10.1 million. The Florence Police divisions include patrol, detectives, drug investigations, and community resources. Fiscal year 2020 was a challenging year for all due to the impact of COVID-19. The Florence Police Department took the precautions needed to keep our officers and community members as safe as possible from spreading the virus. Most of our officer's activity to calls

were limited for service only which resulted in a slight decrease in the amount of calls for service compared to the previous year with a total of 52,548 calls. These calls for service resulted in a total of 79,371 car responses.

The department added five lateral officers this year: Todd Manning from Lexington PD, DJ Hutcherson from Erlanger PD, Matthew Feltz from Richmond PD, Anthony McMahan from Louisville Metro PD, and Antonio McKinney from the United States Capitol PD. We also had the following six recruits attend the police academy: Blake Burkhardt, Jacob Sander, Aubrey Carter, Tyler Jackson, Brady Ast and Haley Ransler. Several officers received promotions during the year: Nathan Rettig was promoted to Lieutenant, Mike Geis and Jon Newton to Sergeant and Michael Gonterman, Zac Eagler, and Joshua Koors to the rank of Corporal. Sergeant Craig Burris and Corporal Walt Cooley retired this year as well. Officer Dalton introduced the City to our newest canine, Noctis at the end of July.

The City of Florence is committed to hiring the best, training to the fullest extent possible, and supporting our departments with the necessary resources to do their jobs safely and without reproach. We are grateful for the support shown our officers and the very positive difference they all make in our community.

The next department I would like to discuss is our Fire & EMS Department. The Florence Fire/EMS Department provides fire and rescue services, emergency medical services, fire & safety code compliance, and public fire education. The department has 74 employees and a budget for the next fiscal year is \$10.6 million.

Over this past year, the department responded to over 9,551 total incidents, 7,829 medical emergencies, 225 fires, and 1,497 other incidents throughout the community. Those fires resulted in over \$4 million in damage; although, through the diligent work of the Fire/EMS Department, \$227.6 million in property was saved because of their quick responses and action. Unfortunately, there was one fatality in a structure fire this year.

Members of the Fire/EMS Department continue to be recognized for actions that go above and beyond. Firefighter/Paramedic Ryan Romey received a Letter of Commendation for his actions related to an EMS call.

A special thank you to the command staff and all the members of our Police and Fire/EMS departments – led by Chief of Police Tom Grau and Fire/EMS Chief, Scott Knoll. All the men and women of these departments handle their roles as skillful professionals and represent both the city and their professions well. They are always ready and willing to protect and serve our great community. This city council, as the ones before, are supportive in both equipment and manpower, we know we are a busy community and we are blessed to have the people willing to fight the fires and stand ready to protect us twenty-four hours a day.

Our Public Services Department stands ready at every hour to provide the services that Florence residents, businesses, and visitors expect and deserve. The department's 71 employees and budget of \$13.2 million consists of nine divisions, including facilities, fleet, transportation, grounds maintenance, water, sanitary sewer, parks and recreation, Infrastructure Support Services, and Community Support Services.

Daily preventative maintenance on hundreds of miles of underground utilities may go unnoticed, but when an emergency occurs, you can always count on Public Services to deliver. Your commute to work is made possible by the transportation crew that works tirelessly to build and repair roads to keep you moving. Our fleet division maintains nearly 200 emergency and Public Services vehicles that always stay ready to keep you safe.

In the upcoming year, the budget includes infrastructure improvements on 17 streets through contracted work, and 50 streets through in-house work. Proposed water line replacements will take place on Kentaboo Avenue.

Sanitary sewer relining will take place in the Tee and Rosetta sewer shed. Stormwater improvements are slated along West Dilcrest, Raintree, Claxon, and Utz Drive.

Finally, park and facility improvements for the coming year include maintenance to the Orleans Park, Stringtown Park, and South Fork parking lots, and the expansion of the South Fork Park Disc Golf to add another 9 holes. Additionally, we will add a new tennis court next to Boone County High School and begin a review process on the highest and best use for the Aquatic Center which will not reopen.

Thanks to the City's Urban Forest Commission and the willingness of this and prior City councils to fund projects. There are a few projects undertaken this past year include the installation of trees along Rampart Way, Chateau Court, Nature Park Drive, and Turfway Road. The city's commitment to its urban forestry and beautification strategy is favorable to our city.

When we talk about our Public Services Department, it would be remiss if we did not mention the contributions they made during the winter months. While we are always prepared to deal with whatever winter weather comes our way, this year kept everyone busy. The month of February alone accumulated snowfall of 20 inches in the span of ten days, making it the second snowiest February on record. Our Public Services employees report for duty to help keep city streets clear whether snow falls or ice forms, and whenever Mother Nature strikes. Their efforts ensure businesses can open and residents can get to work. Their hard work also allows our other 24 hour a day employees to respond to calls for service within the community. We are very grateful that they did not miss a beat during this past winter season. Thanks to Eric Hall and all of his crew for those efforts.

Even during a time of financial concerns and overall economic unrest, our economic development staff works tirelessly to ensure projects are moving forward. My personal thanks to Joshua Hunt for that effort and his continued cheerleading for our city with all of the developers.

We are thrilled to have Turfway Racing and Gaming start their \$150 million project, which will include a brand new state of the art racing and gaming facility, new racetrack, and infrastructure upgrades. Many of you know that this project was put on hold for close to a year due to a Kentucky Supreme Court ruling that found types of parimutuel gaming machines illegal. In February 2021, state lawmakers passed a bill that secured the legal status of wagering on historical racing machines, allowing Churchill to move forward with their plans for a new Florence facility and securing a critical revenue stream that guarantees horse racing remains a staple industry in our state.

I am more than thrilled to announce that the City, after years of negotiations with Eagle Properties, who own the 272-acre Marydale property, came to an agreement to annex the property into the City of Florence and establish a Tax Increment Financing (TIF) District, to assist with infrastructure development of the proposed 600 million dollar development project. This development may be a few years out from starting, but will have a long-term positive impact to Florence, and serve as a major employment hub in our Region.

Construction is ongoing for the St. Elizabeth Endoscopy building on Turfway Road, Episcopal Senior Living and Legacy Living Senior Housing off of Gunpowder Drive, TownePlace Suites of Turfway Road, and Tom Gill Digital Auto Sales on Commerce Drive. Some upcoming developments are: Arlington Luxury Apartments, AE Door and Window, Blind Squirrel Restaurant, Sierra Trading Post, the Farmview Commons Development, and Hilton Garden Inn. These are just some of the highlights, and we would encourage you to read the city's latest Development Update published quarterly on our website. It contains details about all the new development occurring in Florence.

Every ten years the United States conducts an official Census. According to the 2010 Census, the residential population of Florence was 29,951, estimated at 33,004 in 2019. Once the 2020 Census data is received, we will have a new, official count of our residential population. The 2020 Census data was delayed due to Covid. It is said, we will have a new state representative within Florence in the Pleasant Valley/Farmview Area.

As I have said many times, I live in a community I love, and I am grateful to be its Mayor. I live in a community where I have seen the transformation and recognize the visionaries that made it happen. Even in these unparalleled times, we are a community that pulls together rather than apart which I believe was evident earlier in some of the ways that we do pull together. The state of our city is strong. No one person can do this alone. We have continue to work together.

It is the supportive attitude and commitment of our current city council, Dr. Aubuchon, Mr. Carroll, Mr. Huff, Mr. Osborne, Mr. Walton, and Mr. Winn, all of the department heads and staff members, I continue to be excited about our future together knowing that our community can continue to flourish. We are all a part of an ongoing commitment to the progress of our community. Together we will keep it moving forward. There are challenges no matter what, and as we come out of this pandemic, we will start to recognize the changes to our economy and what that means for our community long term in regards to payroll taxes and occupational taxes.

I offer my sincere thanks to everybody. Our residents, our business owners, our employees, and their employees, and the public servants who come to work every day to keep our city on track. Our success is because of you. While the past year has not been easy, it is the commitment and response to the challenge and that has been heartwarming. We would like everyone to stay safe and stay well. We are blessed and grateful nobody was seriously injured or killed in the last fire, but it is not the first fire and won't be the last fire. Take the time to enjoy the blessings that you have. Here's to a much better 2021-2022.

We all do this out of a labor of love, we do it because we care and I am grateful to have each one of you as part of that. Thank you very much.

FIRST READING OF ORDINANCE O-7-21:

Mayor Whalen read Ordinance O-7-21. An Ordinance of the City of Florence, Kentucky, adopting the official budget for the 2021-2022 fiscal year of the city. This Ordinance adopts the fiscal year 2021-2022 budget of the City, including the General Fund, the Municipal Aid Road Fund, the Infrastructure Fund, the Asset Forfeiture Fund, the Aquatic Center Fund, the Water & Sewer Fund, the World of Golf Fund, and the Health and Dental Fund. Budgeted resources and expenditures are as shown on Exhibit "A".

The full text of Ordinance No. O-7-21, including its exhibits, is available for examination in the office of the City Clerk of the City of Florence, Kentucky, in the Florence Government Center, 8100 Ewing Blvd., Florence, Kentucky, during regular office hours.

Mayor Whalen called for a motion to approve the first reading of Ordinance O-7-21. Councilmember Aubuchon motioned to approve, with a second from Councilmember Winn. **All councilmembers present voted aye.**

FIRST READING OF ORDINANCE O-8-21:

Mayor Whalen read Ordinance O-8-21. An Ordinance relating to personnel; amending Ordinance No. O-8-20 relating to personnel policies, job descriptions, authorized positions, and the pay plan.

This Ordinance makes revisions to City Personnel Policies by adding one Project Administrator position; adding two Field Technician positions; adding three Police Sergeant Positions; adding nine Firefighter EMT and Paramedic positions.

To eliminate Section IV.8 b. Retirement Gift and Party of the personnel policy.

To amend Section VI.1 a. Amount of Paid Leave Credited to reflect the addition of three additional holidays effective January 1, 2022. To amend Section VI.1 b. use of Annual Paid Leave to add the holidays Martin Luther King Day, Good Friday and Day after Thanksgiving effective January 1, 2022.

To amend Section VI.9 Retirement Program to allow for a 4% employer match for the first 4% contribution from an employee into a personal retirement account effective July 1, 2021. The employee must be in the Tier 3 Cash Balance Plan in the Kentucky Retirement System to qualify for both hazardous and non-hazardous employees OR Tier 2 plan for non-hazardous employees.

The Pay Plan is changed by the addition of a 2.0% Cost of Living increase with corresponding changes related thereto.

The full text of Ordinance O-8-21, including its exhibits, is available for examination in the office of the City Clerk of the City of Florence, Kentucky, in the Florence Government Center, 8100 Ewing Blvd., Florence, Kentucky, during regular office hours.

Mayor Whalen called for a motion to approve the first reading of Ordinance O-8-21. Councilmember Huff motioned to approve, with a second from Councilmember Walton. **All councilmembers present voted aye.**

MUNICIPAL ORDER MO-5-21:

Mayor Whalen read Municipal Order MO-5-21. A Municipal Order approving and authorizing execution of an Amended and Restated Baseball Stadium Lease Agreement between the City and Freedom Baseball Club, LLC.

Mayor Whalen called for a motion to approve Municipal Order MO-5-21. Councilmember Osborne motioned to approve Municipal Order MO-5-21 with a second from Councilmember Aubuchon. **All councilmembers present voted aye.**

MAYOR'S REPORT:

- Mayor Whalen announced the Kentucky Transportation Cabinet started the project of widening the bridge on US 42 over I-71/75 which may result in overnight lane closures. Once complete, the project will allow for additional stacking to enter Southbound 75 while still allow two lanes of traffic westbound and a pedestrian walkway will also be installed from Dream Street to Heights Blvd.
- Mayor Whalen announced that the Annual Independence Day Celebration will be fireworks only on Saturday, July 3, 2021 at 10:00 p.m. Rain date will be held on July 4th. The fireworks display will be held at the Florence Public Services Facility on Tanners Lane. This will allow the fireworks to be more visible. Guests can park at the Florence Mall parking area and at the Florence Government Center.
- Mayor Whalen announced the Florence Senior Center will begin a phased reopening on Tuesday, July 6. They are coordinating with all senior centers in the area under the NKADD's leadership and will update everyone as details are released.
- Mayor Whalen informed councilmembers she met with John Heater, the new Senior Community Executive with the YMCA of Greater Cincinnati. Mr. Heater assumed the role previously undertaken by Jacob Brooks. Mr. Heater intends to attend a council meeting later this summer.

RECOGNITION:

Mayor Whalen asked if any of the following desired recognition:

Members of City Council:

None desired recognition.

Department Heads:

Fire/EMS Chief, Scott Knoll:

Chief Knoll did not desire recognition.

Public Services Director, Eric Hall:

Mr. Hall did not desire recognition.

Chief of Police, Tom Grau:

Chief Grau did not desire recognition.

Audience:

None desired recognition.

ADJOURNMENT:

There being no further business to come before Council, Mayor Whalen called for a motion to adjourn the Special Meeting. Councilmember Huff so moved, with a second from Councilmember Winn. **Council approved by unanimous vote**, the time being 7:07 p.m.

APPROVED:

/s/ Diane E. Whalen
Diane E. Whalen, Mayor

ATTEST:

/s/ Melissa Kramer
Melissa Kramer, City Clerk

