



**Florence City Council  
Business Meeting  
Tuesday, July 27, 2021  
6:00 p.m.**

**MINUTES**

The City Council of the City of Florence, Kentucky, met in regular session on Tuesday, July 27, 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 regular meeting to order and declared the regular session open for the presentation of all city business.

**ROLL CALL:**

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

Staff members present were: Assistant City Attorney, Thomas Nienaber; CFO/HR, Linda Chapman; Chief of Police, Tom Grau; 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, Dustin Zink.

The following were also present in the audience: Trisha Scheyer, The River City News; Boone County High School Fastpitch Softball Team Head Coach, Andy Petridis, Assistant Head Coach, Chad Irwin, members of the team including Karys Black, Morgan Daniels, K.B. Irwin, Mollie Sharp, Abby Sproles, Mia Nixon, Harper Kinman, Amariana Sweet, Kailey Richardson, Dani Wright, Kaitlyn Furnish, Josie Hollingsworth, Savannah Steele, Jaden Gramer, Lindsey Courtney, Ivy Kelley, Skylar Price, Avery Emral, and Sammi Cook; Jesse Parks, Board Member of the Boone County Board of Education; Residents of Florence, Jenna Kemper and Caroline Kemper; Resident of Florence, Brian Kinross; Resident of Hebron, Tom Johnson; Resident of Florence, Lesley Chambers; Resident of Florence, William Hinkle; Resident of Union, Tim O'Brien; Resident of Florence, Jeanne Gripshover; Community Members regarding the Florence Aquatic Center; and Thomas Judd, observer.

**APPROVAL OF MINUTES:**

Mayor Whalen called for a motion to approve the minutes of the July 13, 2021, business meeting. Councilmember Aubuchon motioned to approve the minutes with a second from Councilmember Huff. **All councilmembers present voted aye.**

**PROCLAMATION:**

Mayor Whalen introduced the Boone County High School Fastpitch Softball Team including their Head Coach, Andy Petridis, Assistant Head Coach, Chad Irwin, and members of the team including Karys Black, having just graduated with a softball scholarship to Western Alabama University, Morgan Daniels, having just graduated with the Kentucky Governor’s Scholarship and attending Eastern Kentucky University in the Fall, K.B. Irwin, starting pitcher and District 33 Tournament MVP, Mollie Sharp, Region 9 Tournament MVP, Abby Sproles, Mia Nixson, Harper Kinman, Amariana Sweet, Kailey Richardson, Dani Wright, Kaitlyn Furnish, Josie Hollingsworth, Savannah Steele, Jaden Gramer, Lindsey Courtney, Ivy Kelley, Skylar Price, Avery Emral, and Sammi Cook.

Assistant Head Coach Chad Irwin thanked the Mayor and Councilmembers for recognizing the team. Mr. Irwin also thanked the school administration, athletic trainer, and athletic director, for all their help when so little was known at the beginning of the season regarding Covid-19. He stated the season was beyond unusual starting with wearing masks, taking temperatures, and having the team practice in pods due to the pandemic. For the team to accomplish such an amazing season was a huge achievement. He stated the team “wanted it, fought for it, and earned it.”

Mayor Whalen issued a Proclamation recognizing the Boone County High School Fastpitch Softball Team reading the following Proclamation into record:

***WHEREAS**, the City of Florence recognizes, with respect, pride, and admiration, the contribution, dedication, and hard work of our students within our community, and commends the Boone County High School Fastpitch Softball Lady Rebels for their teamwork, athleticism, and grace in the sport of softball; and,*

***WHEREAS**, the City of Florence celebrates the Boone County High School Fastpitch Softball Team, the Lady Rebels, through their hard work and perseverance throughout the season, winning District 33; and,*

***WHEREAS**, on June 8, 2021, the Boone County High School Fastpitch Softball Team beat their conference rival winning the 9<sup>th</sup> Region Softball Championship game, their first region title since 2002; and,*

***WHEREAS**, the City of Florence enthusiastically applauds the 24-10 season record and 16-game winning streak that culminated into a trip to the 2021 Kentucky High School Athletic Association Fastpitch Softball State Tournament; and*

***WHEREAS**, the City of Florence is proud to congratulate the members of the Boone County High School Fastpitch Softball Team, their head coach, Andy Petridis, assistant head coach, Chad Irwin, and all the parents for their hard work, support, and perseverance in recognition of the aforementioned outstanding accomplishments.*

***NOW, THEREFORE, I, DIANE E. WHALEN**, Mayor of the City of Florence, Kentucky, and on behalf of the members of Florence City Council, do hereby proclaim July 27, 2021, in the City of Florence, Kentucky and invite all citizens to duly note this occasion,*

***BOONE COUNTY HIGH SCHOOL FASTPITCH SOFTBALL TEAM DAY***

***IN WITNESS WHEREOF**, I have hereunto set my hand and caused the seal of the City of Florence, Kentucky, to be affixed hereto, this 27<sup>th</sup> day of July, 2021.*

**DISCUSSION:**

Mayor Whalen opened the floor for discussion regarding the recreation survey and timeline. She advised discussion was held at the City Council Caucus Meeting on July 20, 2021, regarding how to proceed. Based on that discussion, councilmembers requested Public Services Director, Eric Hall, to determine the condition of the pool and a new draft timeline.

Mayor Whalen called upon Public Services Director, Eric Hall. Based upon the request of councilmembers, Mr. Hall stated he was tasked with establishing a new survey timeline should councilmembers decide to “take a step back”. Mr. Hall presented a draft timeline for the community survey regarding the Aquatic Center Site. The draft timeline presented as follows:

- A draft survey would be sent to City Council for review by August 6.
- Deadline for comments by City Council of August 12.
- Establish a representative from the NKY Swims Group and establish two-three questions they would like to see on the survey and submitted to Eric Hall by August 12.
- Based on comments from city council and NKY Swims Group, there would be final draft of the survey by August 16.
- The same week of August 16, based on the discussion, proposing to mail the surveys out to the approximately 9,000 residencies to print and package for delivery.
- Anticipated to start mailing surveys on August 23 to all the residencies in Florence.
- The deadline for receiving surveys back postmarked will be September 24. Those surveys will not be mailed to the city, the surveys will be mailed to the consultant.
- The results from the survey will be tabulated and put together by the consultant and presented at the council meeting on October 26.

Mr. Hall stated the cost to mail the surveys out to the approximately 9,000 residencies would be approximately \$25,000.00 plus the cost of postage and the consultant.

Councilmember Walton requested clarification with regard to which residents would receive a survey. Mr. Hall stated it will be residents that receive a water bill.

Another concern brought up during discussion was the expected return rate of the survey. Mr. Hall stated in working with the consultant, the consultant estimated 3-5% return rate for a survey of this nature. To quantify that percentage, based on 9,000 residencies and a 3% return, they could possibly only receive 270 surveys returned, and on the high end, a return of 450.

Councilmember Walton inquired whether surveys could be returned via mail or in person. Mr. Hall stated the city would like to see the surveys returned by mail.

Councilmember Walton inquired with regard to residents returning the survey at the city. Mr. Hall stated that has not been discussed as the city would like to “stay out of it, in all honesty, so it does

not look like there is, the last thing we want to do is be accused of tampering with surveys.” He recommended residents return the survey to the consultant via mail.

Councilmember Walton inquired with regard to an individual wanting to obtain a survey and providing proof of residency. Mr. Hall replied affirmatively. Councilmember Walton had concerns with individuals receiving multiple surveys and completing those surveys.

Mayor Whalen stated “There comes a point in time where you have to trust and have faith in the people that receive the survey that they will return a survey and we have to have a err of trust on all sides of this.”

Councilmember Walton inquired whether the surveys would be anonymous. Mayor Whalen replied yes. The surveys will have a return envelope addressed to the consultant postage prepaid. The consultant will tabulate the results and present those results at a council meeting.

Councilmember Walton inquired with regard to the surveys being photocopied. Mr. Hall stated they are examining preventative measures, but at the end of the day, there will need to be a level of trust and ethics.

Councilmember Huff inquired with regard to having the name and address of the letter sent to ensure it is from the individual and not receive five responses from the same household. Mr. Hall stated that will be based on how city council would like to proceed with the survey.

Councilmember Huff stated he would like to obtain accurate results from the survey.

Councilmember Aubuchon assumed the consultant would have a way to record the address and match that up with the results. Mr. Hall stated that is a possibility by street name, but not the actual address number.

Mayor Whalen opened the floor for additional questions with regard to the survey and none were needed.

Mr. Hall stated city council requested he evaluate the condition of the pool should the pool be reopened for the 2022 season. The pool was inspected. The liner was inspected by the installer and it has been deemed to still have five-seven years of useful life. While the liner is dirty and once cleaned there could be minor repairs, the liner still appears to be in good shape. Preventative measures were recommended including cleaning the liner and pool, dewinterize, fill the pool with water, maintain for thirty-forty days, and then drain the pool and winterize. Mr. Hall stated if he received authorization to do that tonight, the process could start as early as next week and be completed by the end of October. If the decision is not made, the process would continue into the winter months and water cannot be in the pool with the pumps. Mr. Hall urged councilmembers to make a decision tonight.

Councilmember Carroll inquired with regard to the cost of filling the pool. Mr. Hall stated the total would be \$22,000.

Councilmember Carroll stated, “We have an obligation to do just that. We need to clean it, dewinterize it, fill it, and then winterize it at the proper time that way we will keep our pool in good working order in case we do need it and there would be no issue with reopening it next year. So I would be happy to make that motion to dewinterize it, fill it, and then winterize.”

Mayor Whalen stated Mr. Carroll had made a Motion to instruct public services to dewinterize the pool, have it cleaned, run the pumps to ensure that it would be in working order should council decide based on survey results to move forward with reopening in 2022.

Councilmember Walton replied, “I would like to table that motion until we discuss whether or not we are going to proceed with the survey.”

Councilmember Aubuchon stated, “I would like to make a Motion that we abandon the previous timeline for demolition of the pool, and the previous timeline for the survey, and that we adopt the current timeline for the survey, and if we want to do a second motion, we can do a second motion, but that we also get the pool in condition.” Councilmember Aubuchon recapped her motion and stated to abandon the demolition of the pool, adopt the new draft timeline, and pending the results of the survey, decide the future of the pool based on that survey, and to dewinterize, fill, and winterize the pool.

Mayor Whalen requested clarification from Councilmember Aubuchon and Councilmember Carroll with regard to their motions.

Councilmember Carroll withdrew his motion because his motion was included in Councilmember Aubuchon’s motion and seconded her motion.

To clarify her motion, Councilmember Aubuchon stated her motion was to abandon the previous distributed timeline for demolition of the pool, second, adopt the current draft timeline received tonight, do the survey and decide the direction of the pool based upon the survey, and third, dewintertize the pool, fill it, and winterize the pool.

Councilmember Huff inquired with regard to Councilmember Walton’s tabled motion. Mayor Whalen clarified Councilmember Walton tabled a motion which had been withdrawn by Councilmember Carroll.

Councilmember Walton further tabled Councilmember Aubuchon’s motion.

Councilmember Walton inquired with regard to a new timeline for completion of the previous proposed project should city council decided to move forward with that project. Mr. Hall stated the project timetable could be eighteen months from demolition to complete the total project. With the delay, the project would remain under construction next summer.

Councilmember Walton withdrew his motion to table Councilmember Aubuchon’s motion.

Councilmember Walton inquired with regard to what council was seeking for with regard to the pool and numbers received from the survey. He felt it would be wise to set expectations of what is received back in surveys to base their decision and participation of residents.

Mayor Whalen called upon City of Florence Resident, Jenna Kemper. Mrs. Kemper thanked everyone for listening and appreciated the proposal of NKY Swims as a representative. Mrs. Kemper identified a poster she prepared with regards to the aquatic center and demographics and survey results from her group. Mrs. Kemper began a website and has been polling residents and non-residents.

Mrs. Kemper inquired with regard to individuals working within the city and how they would be able to vote, as well as, the timeline. Mrs. Kemper stated the Northern Kentucky Swim League has informed the Hammerheads they would be disbanded as a swim team if they do not have a “home” for next summer by the end of August.

Mayor Whalen stated there was a motion on the floor made by Councilmember Aubuchon and seconded by Councilmember Carroll to abandon the previous timeline regarding demolition, adopt the current timeline survey, dewinterize the pool and have the pool examined, and then winterized again. Mayor Whalen requested a Roll Call Vote. Councilmember Carroll, yes; Councilmember Winn, yes; Councilmember Huff, yes; Councilmember Aubuchon, yes; Councilmember Walton, yes; Councilmember Osborne, yes. **Roll call recognized six yes votes, approving the motion.**

Mayor Whalen requested NKYSwims group provide Mr. Hall with a few questions to include in the survey.

Councilmember Walton informed the audience he appreciated their passion for the aquatic center. He felt it would be a good idea to address the concerns of the swim team with regard to the team being disbanded.

Mayor Whalen inquired of the swim group whether there would be an opportunity to speak with the league. Tom Johnson, resident of Hebron, addressed the Mayor and stated the Hammerheads are drafting a letter based on the outcome of the aquatic center.

Mayor Whalen called upon Councilmember Walton. Councilmember Walton stated today would be his last city council meeting, as he was submitting his resignation. Councilmember Walton read his letter of resignation into record:

*Dear Mayor and Council,*

*Please accept this as my formal resignation.*

*I love Kentucky, and especially the city of Florence. It has been my home for the vast majority of my life and will always be the place I claim when someone asks me where I am from. This is a special city and I am blessed to have been able to represent its citizens on City Council, even if for only a short time.*

*I never expected to be leaving this place, especially not at this point in my life. However, my family and I*

*are excited about the adventures ahead. As I have previously shared, we will be moving to South Florida as I have accepted a State Farm Agency in Pompano Beach. My final City Council Meeting will be Tuesday, July 27, 2021.*

*I thank all of you for your service to Florence and for your kindness to me as we have worked together over the last several months. I pray God's blessing on you and your families, and on the whole city of Florence. I trust in His sovereign plan for our lives, and am thankful that He has allowed our paths to cross. God bless you and guard you!*

*Sincerely,  
Josh Walton*

Mayor Whalen called for a motion to accept Councilmember Walton's resignation. Councilmember Carroll motioned to accept, with a second from Councilmember Huff. **All councilmembers present voted aye.**

#### **MAYOR'S REPORT:**

- Mayor Whalen reminded everyone the Rotary Club of Florence is providing a recycling event on Saturday, July 31 from 10 am until 2 pm at Boone County High School. They will be collecting phones, servers, desktops, flat monitors, keyboards/mice, cameras, hard drives, laptops, calculators, and power cords. They will not accept any old televisions, microwaves, batteries, or bulky monitors. They are also collecting the plastic lids and caps. Additional information can be found at [www.florencerotary.org](http://www.florencerotary.org).
- Mayor Whalen informed everyone the 34<sup>th</sup> Annual Boone County Senior Picnic is scheduled for Wednesday, September 8, 2021 from 9:00 a.m. until 2:00 p.m. at the Boone County Fairgrounds. Tickets may be purchased at the Finance Counter beginning Monday, August 2.

#### **EXECUTIVE SESSION:**

Mayor Whalen called for a motion to go into Executive Session pursuant to KRS 61.810 (1) (f) appointment, discipline, or dismissal of personnel. Councilmember Huff so moved with a second from Councilmember Winn. **All councilmembers present voted aye, the time being 6:48 p.m.** Mayor Whalen advised they would return to the room to adjourn and did not anticipate any further business taking place following Executive Session.

Mayor Whalen called for a motion to come back into session after the Executive Session. Councilmember Aubuchon so moved, with a second from Councilmember Osborne. **All councilmembers present voted aye, the time being 7:15 p.m.**

**ADJOURNMENT:**

There being no further business to come before the Council, Mayor Whalen called for a motion to adjourn. Councilmember Huff so moved, with a second from Councilmember Winn. **Councilmembers present voted aye**, the time being 7:16 p.m.

**ATTEST:**

/s/ Melissa Kramer  
Melissa Kramer, City Clerk

**APPROVED:**

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

