



**Florence City Council
Business Meeting
Tuesday, December 14, 2021
6:00 p.m.**

MINUTES

The City Council of the City of Florence, Kentucky, met in regular session on Tuesday, December 14, 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 registered present: Dr. Julie Aubuchon (Vice-Mayor), Mel Carroll, J. Kelly Huff, David Osborne, Patricia Wingo, and Gary Winn.

Staff members present were: Assistant City Attorney, Thomas Nienaber; CFO/HR, Linda Chapman; Fire/EMS Chief, Rodney Wren; 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, Mike Stanaland.

The following were also present in the audience: President & CEO of the Northern Kentucky Chamber of Commerce, Brent Cooper; Vice President of Public Affairs with the Northern Kentucky Chamber of Commerce, Tami Wilson; Executive Director/CEO of the Kentucky League of Cities, J.D. Chaney; Director of Public Affairs of the Kentucky League of Cities, Bryanna L. Carroll; State Representative, C. Ed Massey; Assistant City Clerk, Brandi Roundtree; The River City News Reporter, Trisha Scheyer; and observer, Thomas Judd.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES:

Mayor Whalen called for a motion to approve the minutes of the December 7, 2021, special meeting. Councilmember Winn motioned to approve the minutes with a second from Councilmember Aubuchon. **All councilmembers present voted aye.**

PRESENTATION – NKY CHAMBER OF COMMERCE:

Mayor Whalen introduced and welcomed Brent Cooper, President & CEO of the Northern Kentucky Chamber of Commerce. Mr. Cooper thanked everyone for their service and stated he was honored to serve the region as President of the Northern Kentucky Chamber of Commerce.

He introduced Tami Wilson, Vice President of Public Affairs with the Northern Kentucky Chamber of Commerce.

Mr. Cooper stated the Chamber of Commerce was formed fifty-two years ago with the vision that the area is stronger when acting together. Within the Northern Kentucky Chamber of Commerce, there are approximately 1,600 businesses. The City of Florence has approximately 33,000 residents with 1,900 businesses operating within the city.

The Chamber of Commerce has aligned with Northern Kentucky Tri-Ed and Meet NKY to work together to improve the regions workforce, health, and transportation. Mr. Cooper believes the challenges faced by the workforce is an overarching issue for the entire community. Talent, attraction, and retention is also a factor. He stated the region needs to attract people and demonstrate the high quality of life with low cost of living in our area.

Mr. Cooper stated during the past year, the “Grow NKY (Growing Regional Outcomes through Workforce)” effort has been a successful implantation with seventy-five workforce partners. The Grow NKY is a strategic workforce comprised of leaders across key industries. During the pandemic, the Chamber of Commerce assisted restaurants with restaurant relief grants and grants in partnership with Duke Energy. Mr. Cooper estimated \$250,000 in grants was provided to various businesses throughout the region.

On behalf of Julie Kirkpatrick with Meet NKY and Lee Crume with Northern Kentucky Tri-Ed, Mr. Cooper provided an update. Meet NKY is currently in the process of a destination assessment, strategic planning process, hospitality leadership institute, and finalizing an EDA Grant for Riverfront Commons. Northern Kentucky Tri-Ed will be releasing their five year target industry study in January which will highlight their expanding industries.

Mayor Whalen opened the floor for questions and inquired with regard to the proposed infrastructure bill. While there are obstacles, Mr. Cooper is optimistic that 80-90% of the funding for the Brent Spence Bridge could be obtained. However, Kentucky and Ohio will have to compete with other states and work together.

Councilmember Huff inquired with regard to the difficulties faced by other cities while the Brent Spence Bridge is closed. Mr. Cooper stated he has been engaged with the neighboring cities and city leaders and believes their concerns will be overcome.

Councilmember Carroll inquired with regard to the new bridge and possible rerouting of the interstate. Mr. Cooper believes both states will come up with a design, although, it is too early in the process to speculate.

Mayor Whalen thanked Mr. Cooper for attending the meeting.

SECOND READING ORDINANCE O-23-21:

Mayor Whalen read Ordinance O-23-21. An Ordinance of the City of Florence, Kentucky, amending the budget for the 2021-2022 Fiscal Year of the City (Amendment #2).

The purposes of this amendment are: (a) to reflect an increase in General Fund Revenues for the ARPA grant funds received; (b) to reflect an increase in General Fund Expenditures for an increase in personnel services due to the new pay plan adopted in September; (c) to reflect an increase in General Fund Capital Outlay for all departments and city projects due to carryover amounts from the FY 2021 Budget; (d) to reflect an increase in Infrastructure Fund Revenues for the Center Street sidewalk grant project; (e) to reflect an increase in Infrastructure Fund Expenditures for the Center Street sidewalk grant project, Houston Road project, and Weaver Road project; (f) to reflect an increase in Water/Sewer Fund Expenditures for personnel services due to the new pay plan adopted in September; and (g) to reflect an increase in Fund Balances to reflect the ending fund balance amounts per the June 30, 2021 year-end audit report.

Mayor Whalen called for a motion to approve the second reading of Ordinance O-23-21. Councilmember Huff motioned to approve, with a second from Councilmember Osborne. **All councilmembers present voted aye.**

DISCUSSION AND POSSIBLE ACTION - MUNICIPAL ORDER MO-20-21:

Mayor Whalen identified the next item on the Agenda and read Municipal Order MO-20-21. A Municipal Order Authorizing the City of Florence, by and through Mayor Diane E. Whalen, to transfer the real estate located at 8275 Ewing Boulevard, Florence, Kentucky, to AEGIS Holdings, LLC, a Kentucky Limited Liability Company; and Authorizing and Directing the Mayor of the City to take all such other steps as necessary to complete the sale.

Mayor Whalen called upon Joshua Hunt, Business and Community Development Director. Mr. Hunt stated an RFP was issued on December 10, 2020, seeking interested parties to purchase the building on the corner of Ewing and KY18, formally known as the Social Security Building, for medical office usage. Following the RFP, the city entered into negotiations with AEGIS Holdings, LLC, managed by Dr. Susan Bushelman, a well-known dermatologist in the area. Part of the response required the building to be rezoned from Public Facilities (PF) zoning to a Commercial Two (C2) Zone building. Following the zone change, environmental studies were conducted. The city is ready to proceed with the closing and authorization is required by City Council for the Mayor to sign the closing documents.

Councilmember Winn made a motion to take action on Municipal Order MO-20-21 with a second from Councilmember Huff. **All councilmembers present voted aye.**

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Mayor Whalen called for a motion to approve Municipal Order MO-20-21. Councilmember Winn motioned to approve Municipal Order MO-20-21 with a second from Councilmember Wingo. **All councilmembers present voted aye.**

KENTUCKY LEAGUE OF CITIES PRESENTATION:

Mayor Whalen introduced J.D. Chaney, Executive Director/CEO of the Kentucky League of Cities, and Bryanna L. Carroll, Director of Public Affairs of the Kentucky League of Cities, to present the 2021 “Friend of Kentucky Cities” Award.

Mr. Chaney thanked everyone and stated it was great to be back in Florence at a Florence City Council Meeting. Mr. Chaney stated Representative Massey was Chair of the Judiciary Committee and reviewed a great deal of legislation for criminal justice reform, code adjustments, and judicial redistricting. During the 2021 session, Representative Massey carried Senate Bill 5, a Kentucky League of Cities initiative that provided COVID liability protections for local governments and businesses. Representative Massey was able to help facilitate the passing of Senate Bill 5 and was also an advocate with the CERS separation. Mr. Chaney thanked Representative Massey and stated it was an honor to present him with the 2021 “Friend of Kentucky Cities” Award on behalf of the Kentucky League of Cities Board of Directors.

Representative Massey stated it was an honor to be in attendance and see everyone that he has known for many years. He was honored to receive the award and acknowledged it has been a pleasure to serve the citizens of Kentucky in Frankfort. During the past session, 489 Bills were filed in the House for a thirty day session. The upcoming session has bill requests which exceed a thousand. Representative Massey stated it was a pleasure to carry Senate Bill 5 and he was very proud of the pension bill which was passed. Due to the growth in Northern Kentucky, Representative Massey stated the upcoming session will address legislative and judicial redistricting.

Mayor Whalen thanked Representative Massey for his assistance in the area and continuing to work for the constituents within the region. Mayor Whalen called upon Mr. Chaney to provide an update to councilmembers regarding the relief efforts and damage received from the tornado in Western Kentucky.

Mr. Chaney stated one of the first cities he heard from, that was not impacted by the tornado, was the City of Florence, Mayor Whalen. He received a text from Mayor Whalen checking on Mayor O’Nan with the City of Mayfield and what assistance could be provided. Mr. Chaney stated the Cities of Mayfield, Dawson Springs, Bremen, and Muhlenberg County have experienced severe destruction to their cities and municipalities with loss of life. The Cities of Bowling Green, Campbellsville, and Princeton also experienced loss of life and destruction to their residential areas. The Kentucky League of Cities has been assisting with the recovery efforts which will be ongoing. Those cities will need the assistance of their fellow cities and the Kentucky League of Cities will be assisting in the process. Mr. Chaney stated, “It is absolutely heart wrenching to see a city decimated in that kind of way in terms of its buildings. Prayers, Mayor O’Nan from Mayfield said it very well, if you saw her press conference on national news, they need prayers and they certainly do.”

Councilmember Osborne inquired with regard to damage sustained in Bowling Green. Mr. Chaney stated Bowling Green did experience loss of life and damage to their residential area.

Mayor Whalen thanked Mr. Chaney for the update. Mayor Whalen stated the warnings had been received to inform everyone of the severe weather and “we were blessed to wake up with rain”.

Mr. Chaney informed everyone he was asked by KET (Kentucky Educational Television) how a city official can adequately prepare for such an incident. Mr. Chaney replied, “I do not think from what we have seen, and what we have heard, what we know about Mayfield, that all the training in the world as elected officials, would prepare you to be able to adequately respond to your constituents that way...They feel helpless.”

Mayor Whalen stated the City of Florence is acting as a remote drop off location for Matthew 25 Ministries for disaster relief. She informed everyone Matthew 25 ministries is focusing collecting the following types of supplies: cases of bottled water, personal care products, antibacterial soap, hand sanitizer, toothpaste, toothbrushes, shampoo, body wash, deodorant, lotion, cleaning supplies, laundry detergents, general cleaner, sponges, bleach, mops, scrub brushes, buckets, rubber gloves, paper products, toilet paper, paper towels, baby and infant supplies, diapers, wipes, diaper rash ointment, baby wash, baby shampoo, baby lotion, first-aid items such as bandages, gauze, pads, first aid tape, antiseptic creams, hydrogen peroxide, latex gloves, and instant cold packs. The list has been provided on the City of Florence Facebook page and website. Matthew 25 is not accepting clothing. Mayor Whalen acknowledged the city has received a wonderful response and continues to receive donations. She encouraged cash donations be sent through the website created by the Commonwealth of Kentucky. The Florence Elks Lodge is accepting new unwrapped toys to provide Christmas for the children affected.

Councilmember Winn inquired where donations should be delivered within the building. Mayor Whalen stated the donations are being collected in the Administration Department.

Councilmember Osborne inquired where the displaced individuals were being housed. Mr. Chaney stated the response received from the state has been overwhelming. State parks have been opened free of charge to lodge the displaced and area hotels are also providing rooms.

Mr. Chaney thanked everyone and wished everyone a Merry Christmas. Mayor Whalen and Councilmembers thanked Mr. Chaney.

MAYOR’S REPORT:

- Mayor Whalen announced the Florence Government Center will be closed on Thursday, December 23 and Friday, December 24 for the Christmas holiday. The city will resume regular hours on Monday, December 27.
- Mayor Whalen announced city offices will also be closed on Monday, January 3, 2022 for New Year’s Day and resume regular hours on Tuesday, January 4, 2022.

- Mayor Whalen reminded everyone the Public Services Department is continuing with their annual leaf collection which runs through December 28. The schedule is available on the city website – florence-ky.gov.
- Mayor Whalen announced the city will have Christmas Tree Recycling Pickup on Wednesday, January 5, 2022. Trees must be placed at the curb prior to 7:00 a.m. to be collected. Please remove all tinsel, ornaments, ribbons, and lights and do not place the tree in a bag. Contact the City of Florence Public Services Department at 859.647.5416 for more information.
- Boone County Christmas Tree recycling drop off will be held on Saturday, January 8, 2022.
- Mayor Whalen announced pending no further legislation, the meeting would be the last for the year.

RECOGNITION:

Mayor Whalen asked if any of the following desired recognition:

Members of City Council:

Councilmember Aubuchon stated the Government Center Campus looked fabulous with the lights. Mayor Whalen stated the Christmas Tree Lighting Drive-Thru Event was beautiful, as well as, the lights throughout the city.

Councilmember Winn wished everyone a Merry Christmas and hope all stay well.

Department Heads:

Public Services Director, Eric Hall:

Mr. Hall did not desire recognition.

Fire/EMS Chief, Rodney Wren:

Chief Wren did not desire recognition.

Audience:

No recognition requested from the audience.

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 6:52 p.m.

ATTEST:

/s/ Melissa Kramer
Melissa Kramer, City Clerk

APPROVED:

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

