



**Florence City Council
Business Meeting
Tuesday, June 14, 2022
6:00 p.m.**

MINUTES

The City Council of the City of Florence, Kentucky, met in regular session on Tuesday, June 14, 2022 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 five (5) members of council were registered present: Dr. Julie Aubuchon (Vice-Mayor), Mel Carroll, David Osborne, Patricia Wingo, and Gary Winn. Councilmember J. Kelly Huff was absent.

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

The following were also present in the audience: Assistant City Clerk, Brandi Roundtree; Assistant Fire/EMS Chief, Chris Miller; Battalion Chief of Prevention/Fire Marshall, Randy Childress; Florence Fire/EMS Department Lieutenant, Rick Puryear; Fire/EMS Captain David Curtis; Family and Friends of the Florence Fire/EMS Department employee being recognized; St. Elizabeth Healthcare Representative, Melissa Stephenson; Boy Scout Carter Verst and family; Resident of Florence, Aaron Gillum; and Resident of Florence, Thomas Judd.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES:

Mayor Whalen called for a motion to approve the minutes of the May 24, 2022, business meeting. Councilmember Winn motioned to approve the minutes with a second from Councilmember Aubuchon. **All councilmembers present voted aye.**

RECOGNITION:

Mayor Whalen called upon Fire/EMS Chief, Rodney Wren with regard to the recognition of Florence Fire/EMS Department personnel. Chief Wren introduced Registered Nurse, Melissa Stephenson, with St. Elizabeth Healthcare.

Ms. Stephenson stated Target Stroke is a national quality improvement initiative started by the American Heart Association in 2010. She explained the initiative focuses on improving stroke care by reducing the time stroke patients receive treatment once they arrive at the hospital. Timely response, rapid identification, treatment and transport, prehospital notification and hand off from the field to the hospital are key links in the chain of survival for stroke patients.

During the month of March 2022, Florence Fire/EMS Personnel were involved in the transport of a stroke patient leading to the fastest door to needle delivery of t-PA for the St. Elizabeth Healthcare system. On behalf of St. Elizabeth Healthcare and the American Heart Association, Ms. Stephenson recognized Lieutenant Rick Puryear and Firefighter/Paramedic Jim Flynn for their service. Ms. Stephenson presented Lieutenant Puryear with a certificate and a pink brain pin.

Mayor Whalen thanked everyone for attending the meeting and recognizing Lieutenant Puryear. Mayor Whalen expressed her appreciation and thankfulness for the entire Florence Fire/EMS Department.

SECOND READING ORDINANCE O-9-22:

Mayor Whalen read Ordinance O-9-22. An Ordinance amending Ordinance No. O-37-91 relating to the Urban Forest Commission of the City of Florence, Kentucky.

The purpose of this Ordinance is to decrease the membership on the City's Urban Forest Commission from seven (7) members to five (5) members.

The full text of Ordinance O-9-22 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 second reading of Ordinance O-9-22. Councilmember Winn motioned to approve, with a second from Councilmember Carroll. **All councilmembers present voted aye.**

FIRST READING OF ORDINANCE O-10-22:

Mayor Whalen read Ordinance O-10-22. An Ordinance of the City of Florence, Kentucky, amending the budget for the 2021-2022 Fiscal Year of the City. (Amendment #3) The purposes of this amendment are: (a) to reflect an increase in MARF Fund Expenditures for snow removal costs due to the number of snow and ice events during the past winter; (b) to reflect a budget for the Aquatic Center Fund Revenues; (c) to reflect a budget for the Aquatic Center Fund Expenditures; (d) to reflect an increase in Golf Course Fund Revenues for merchandise, food and

beverage, and beer sales; (e) to reflect an increase in Golf Course Fund Expenditures due to rising wage rates and additional personnel, increased golf lessons, and recent renovations; (f) to reflect an increase in Water and Sewer Fund Expenses for estimated water purchases.

Mayor Whalen called for a motion to approve the first reading of Ordinance O-10-22. Councilmember Osborne motioned to approve, with a second from Councilmember Wingo. **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. I presented my first State of the City and Budget Address in 1999. This year, I present my 24th and final State of the City and Budget Address.

Thanks to years of sound fiscal management and growth, we have the resources to continue to provide the services you deserve and have come to expect. With the encouragement and shared vision of this council and our city departments led by CFO/HR Manager Linda Chapman; Chief of Police Tom Grau; Fire/EMS Chief Rodney Wren and Public Services Director Eric Hall, the city will continue to focus on the city's core municipal responsibilities of providing the best and most reliable services to all of our citizens. The city has saved for our "rainy days" and we have been able to sustain and thrive during financial crisis and the pandemic. The city remains committed to our biggest asset, and that is the people who work and volunteer to provide the very best service to our citizens. When I retire at the end of the year, I know I will leave the city in good hands.

To that end, it is my pleasure to present our 2022-2023 State of the City and Budget Address. The budget for fiscal year 2023 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 revenues.

The general fund budget proposal for 2022-2023 totals \$61.2 million. This includes operating and capital expenditures, which include transfers to other city funds. The City of Florence's operating costs are \$34.2 million, which is an overall 7.8% increase over those budgeted for the Fiscal Year 2021-2022. 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 \$25.3 million, which is a 22.3% decrease from last year.

The Administration and Finance Departments account for 6.1% of the city's total budget. The Administration and Finance Departments are comprised of 11 employees which 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 eighteen 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 the City's CFO, Linda Chapman, for her expertise and delivery in this area.

Mayor Whalen expressed her appreciation and gratitude for Ms. Chapman.

The next department I would like to discuss is the Florence Police Department. The 74 men and women of the Florence Police Department strive to keep Florence safe by combining active patrol and investigation with positive community and business partnerships. The department is committed to achieving their mission of providing services professionally, with integrity and honesty, working in partnership with the community to preserve the public peace, protecting the rights of persons and their property, preventing crime, and providing assistance to citizens in need.

The total departmental budget for the next fiscal year is \$11.6 million. The Florence Police divisions include patrol, detectives, drug investigations, and community resources. Fiscal year 2021 saw a consistent amount of calls for service from the previous year with a total of 50,735 calls. These calls for service resulted in a total of 73,063 car responses. These calls include everything from traffic enforcement, to accident investigations, to responding to 911 calls, and assisting residents, business, and visitors with their request for service.

The department added one lateral officer this year: Patrick Taylor from the Kenton County Police Department. We had two recruits attend the police academy: Caleb Saalfeld and Hunter Jacobs. Several officers received promotions during the year: Michael Gonterman, Sam Riley, and Rick Saint-Blancard to the rank Sergeant and Kelli Chapman, Ben Kolkneier, and Tad Ecklar to the rank of Corporal. Officer Les Moore retired this year after serving 22 years as a police officer, 21 years of those with Florence.

Members of the Police Department continue to be recognized for their exemplary service. Officer Michael Stanaland received the 2021 Governor's Award for Impaired Driving Enforcement. Lieutenant Jeff Mallery, Officer Tara Ruschell, Officer Aubrey Carter, and Officer Tyler Jackson received the Citation of Heroism for their assistance in Graves County, Kentucky from December 20 through December 27 to provide extra law enforcement coverage to the area devastated by the catastrophic tornado which struck the area on December 10, 2021. Corporal Michael Gonterman, Officer Kyle Sorensen, Officer Chris Boone, Officer Josh Dalton, Officer Kelli Chapman, and Officer Derek Jackson were recognized for their heroic actions during the structure fire at the Champion Club Apartments by NKY Thrives. Additionally, the department participated in their "No Shave November" fundraiser for Cincinnati Children's Hospital Cancer Unit.

The City of Florence is committed to hiring the best, training to the fullest extent possible, and supporting our departments with the resources necessary 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 Fire & EMS. 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 the budget for the next fiscal year is \$11.9 million.

Over this past year, the department responded to over 10,536 total incidents, 8,790 medical emergencies, 165 fires, and 1,581 other incidents throughout the community. Those fires resulted in over \$1.4 million in damage; although, through the diligent work of the Fire/EMS Department, \$86.4 million in property was saved because of their quick responses and action. Unfortunately, we have had two fatalities in structure fires this year with 21 recorded civilian injuries.

The department added several new employees this year including Firefighter/EMT's Reed Bertke, Tate Hatton, Ryan Johnston, Austin Messer, Nathan Dietz, Ryan Petronio; Firefighter/Paramedics Cory Garnett, Danielle Eilerman, Holly Bowman, Josh Willoughby and Taylor Schooler; and Battalion Chief of Training, Matt Pleiman. Several received promotions during the year: Dave Dannemiller to Fire/EMS Battalion Chief; Chris Fuhrmann to Fire/EMS Captain and Shawn Ross to Fire/EMS Lieutenant. Several employees retired including Apparatus Operator/Paramedic Paul Hilmer, Battalion Chief Bud Webster and Battalion Chief Steve Schreck.

In August, Fire/EMS Chief Scott Knoll retired with more than 20 years of service. Following a search and interview process, Rodney E. Wren joined the City of Florence as the new Fire/EMS Chief of the department in July.

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A 22 year career and second generation firefighter, Chief Wren came to us from the City of Warren, Pennsylvania, also having served in Huntington, West Virginia.

Members of the Fire/EMS Department continue to be recognized for actions that go above and beyond. Firefighter/Paramedics Holly Bowman and Kyle Brandt received the Target Stroke Award from St. Elizabeth Hospital for their rapid door to needle time on an EMS call.

Northern Kentucky Firefighters Association Awards were received by Florence Fire/EMS personnel for their actions on emergency calls. Members of B-Shift received the Department of the Year Award for their actions at the Champion Club Apartments Fire. Members of B-Shift also received the Monica Rath Emergency Medical Services Award for their actions at a motor vehicle accident involving a tractor trailer on Interstate 75. Retired Battalion Chief Bud Webster received the Larry B. Atwell Award for Lifetime Achievements related to the Fire and EMS services.

The Departmental, R.G. Bidwell Medal of Merit for Rescue Award was received by the B-Shift crews of Engine 31 and Engine 32 for the rescues made at the Champion Club Apartments Fire. B-Shift received a departmental unit citation for their actions on the vehicle accident involving a tractor trailer on Interstate 75.

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, Rodney Wren. All the men and women of these departments handle their roles as skillful professionals and represent both the city and their professions very well. They are always ready and willing to protect and serve our great community.

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 \$13.7 million consists of nine divisions, including facilities, fleet, transportation, grounds maintenance, water, sanitary sewer, parks and recreation, Infrastructure Support Services, and Community Support Services.

Public Services performs daily preventative maintenance on hundreds of miles of underground utilities. Your commute to work is made possible by the transportation crew that works tirelessly to build and repair city roads to keep you moving. Our fleet division maintains over 200 emergency and Public Services vehicles that always stay ready to keep you safe.

In the upcoming year, the budget includes infrastructure improvements on 16 city streets through contracted work, and 27 city streets through in-house work. Proposed water line replacement will take place on Roger Lane. Sanitary sewer relining will take place in the Rosetta sewer shed.

Finally, park and facility improvements for the coming year include maintenance to the Orleans Park and South Fork basketball courts. Additionally, the city received a grant which will allow for installation of "smart signals" along 27 intersections throughout the city. Future projects also include the construction of a new Fire Station located along Dream Street to better serve and respond to emergencies and the reconstruction of the Florence Y'alls clubhouse.

We are thankful for the efforts of the City's Urban Forest Commission and the willingness of this and prior city councils to fund these projects. A few projects undertaken this past year include the installation of 15 trees at the Florence Government Center for Arbor Day, 18 trees planted at South Fork Park with Duke Energy volunteers, and 30 additional trees were planted at various locations throughout the city. The city's commitment to its urban forestry and beautification strategy is favorable to our city. This commitment has allowed the city to be designated for the 30th consecutive year as a "Tree City USA".

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When mentioning our Public Services Department, it would be remiss if we did not mention the special contributions they make during the winter months. Our Public Services employees report for duty to help keep city streets clear whether snow falls or ice forms, or 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 our community. Thank you for not missing a beat during this winter season.

Throughout the year, the Public Services Department saw the retirements of long time employees including Fleet Manager, Matt Miller and Utility Operator for Water Division, Charles Lawson. Several employees received promotions including Ryan McDowell to Inspector, Jill Tensy to Project Administrator, Landon Rouse to Lead Operator, Lee Garcia to Fleet Manager and Jacob Carpenter to Code Enforcement Officer. We welcomed several new employees in the Public Services Department including Jacob Lemker, Caleb Bowman, Bradley Sipple, David Sabie, Patrick Meyung, Jesse Lancaster, Tyler Payne, Jake Strunk, Randy Evans, and Cody Thacker.

The past year, the Public Services Department was honored to receive awards including the American Public Works Association Project of the Year for our Event Center, American Public Works Association Project of the Year for the Main Street Fire House Renovation, and American Public Works Association Project of the Year for their Advanced Metering Infrastructure (AMI) System. Additionally, the city received the 2022 Building Adaptive Reuse Award by Boone County Historic Preservation Review Board in recognition of the city's efforts to rehabilitate and adaptively reuse the historical Florence Main Street Fire Station. Employees Adam Duncan, Ben Dade, Jordan Sullivan, Jill Tensy, Rodney Deno, and Jacob Carpenter all received their Road Scholar Certificate. Mike Macaluso received his Road Master Certificate.

A special thank you to Eric Hall and all of his crew for their efforts throughout the year keeping our city beautiful and operating on a daily basis.

Our economic development staff finalized many development projects and continue to search for the businesses our community needs and desires. We are thrilled to see the new Turfway Racing and Gaming redevelopment nearing completion of their \$150 million project, which will include a brand new state of the art racing and gaming facility, new track, and infrastructure upgrades. Churchill is confident that the new facility will be open this fall just in time for winter races.

Right next door to Turfway Race Track construction has started on Tapestry at Turfway Park Apartments. This project will add 320 apartments units, in a high density, urban setting with many amenities and is expected to be completed this fall. Just to the East, plans are underway for a new concept development plan for the 272-acre Marydale property, which was annexed into our city last year after a the City established 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.

Additionally, the city annexed approximately 23 acres off of Weaver Road which will be the future home of Avalon Square. This development will add 128 luxury townhomes within the city. Construction is ongoing on the St. Elizabeth Orthopedic building on Turfway Road, TownePlace Suites of Turfway Road, Hilton Garden Inn on Meijer Drive, AE Door and Window on Freedom Way and the Amazon Last Mile Facility on Industrial Road. Some upcoming developments are: Ford's Garage, Roy Rogers, Dunkin Donuts, Drury Inn, Sierra Trading Post, the Farmview Commons Development, and CarMax.

Those 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.

Mayor Whalen expressed her appreciation and thankfulness for the city's Economic Development Team.

We continue to improve the quality of life for our citizens and invest in our public services, all without a tax rate increase since 2008. Today, we remain one of the lowest taxed cities in the Northern Kentucky Region. Florence is a full service city. As a full service city, we are able to provide a better quality of life for our residents and build one of the most talented professional workforces in the state.

As I have said many times and will continue to say, I live in a community I love, and I am grateful to be its Mayor. While Florence is a busy place and a traffic headache sometimes with the busy roads, traffic signals, storefronts, restaurants, and many other businesses, I also believe it is a testimony that we are doing something right. My history in Florence dates back to 1955 when we had a few thousand residents. Since I became Mayor, the city's population has gone from approximately 23,000 to approximately 32,000. I have seen a lot of change throughout the years. I developed my love for the city by watching my father, Carroll M. "Hop" Ewing. The city has continued to build upon the foundation that was laid by my father and previous generations of community leaders. I am frequently reminded of what the definition of city means: An area in which a large number of people live fairly close together. The City of Florence is a city where people choose to live together, work together, play and educate their children and raise a family. Our city cannot thrive without the input from the community. Despite our growth, we have never lost sight of the sense of community.

With the supportive attitude and commitment of our current city elected officials, Julie Metzger Aubuchon, Mel Carroll, Kelly Huff, David Osborne, Patricia Wingo, and Gary Winn, our department heads and staff members, I continue to be excited about the future, knowing that our community can continue to flourish. We have amazing people here who genuinely care about this community.

On behalf of the city, I want to thank those who serve the city and those who retired throughout the year, as well as, those who have stepped up to fill positions. The success of the city is because of the dedicated public servants, our residents, our business owners and their employees. I offer my sincere thanks to each and everyone one of you who come to work every day to keep our city on track.

The last 26 years of service to the City of Florence have been both a blessing and a labor of love. There have been great times and multiple successes. There have been hard times and disappointments. Through it all, it has always been about making decisions and recommendations that are about the good of the city as a whole.

The city is stronger, better and financially stable. The Northern Kentucky area continues to grow and change. My wish is that the changes don't cause us to lose the heart of who we are. Please keep those who serve and protect our community in your prayers. Their job is a hard one and deserving of kindness and respect. So if you can't be anything else – be kind.

Thank you again for the opportunity to serve.

FIRST READING OF ORDINANCE O-11-22:

Mayor Whalen read Ordinance O-11-22. An Ordinance of the City of Florence, Kentucky, adopting the official budget for the 2022-2023 fiscal year of the city.

This Ordinance adopts the fiscal year 2022-2023 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 O-11-22, 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-11-22. Councilmember Aubuchon motioned to approve, with a second from Councilmember Wingo. **All councilmembers present voted aye.**

FIRST READING OF ORDINANCE O-12-22:

Mayor Whalen read Ordinance O-12-22. An Ordinance relating to personnel; amending Ordinance No. O-15-21 relating to personnel policies, job descriptions, authorized positions, and the pay plan.

The Pay Plan is changed by a complete analysis of all positions corresponding changes related thereto.

The full text of Ordinance O-12-22, 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-12-22. Councilmember Osborne motioned to approve, with a second from Councilmember Winn. **All councilmembers present voted aye.**

MAYOR'S REPORT:

- Mayor Whalen announced that the Annual Independence Day Celebration will be a fireworks display on Sunday, July 3, 2022 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.
- Mayor Whalen announced city offices will be closed Monday, July 4, in observance of Independence Day.

RECOGNITION:

Mayor Whalen asked if any of the following desired recognition:

Members of City Council:

None desired recognition.

Department Heads:

Fire/EMS Chief, Rodney Wren:

Chief Wren 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.

ADJOURNMENT:

There being no further business to come before the Council, Mayor Whalen called for a motion to adjourn. Councilmember Winn so moved, with a second from Councilmember Carroll. **Councilmembers present voted aye**, the time being 6:37 p.m.

APPROVED:

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

ATTEST:

/s/ Melissa Kramer
Melissa Kramer, City Clerk

