



**Florence City Council
Special Meeting
Tuesday, February 20, 2024
5:00 p.m.**

MINUTES

The City Council of the City of Florence, Kentucky, met in special session on Tuesday, February 20, 2024, at 5:00 p.m. at the Florence Government Center, 8100 Ewing Boulevard, Florence, Kentucky, with Mayor Julie M. Aubuchon presiding as chair.

CALL TO ORDER & WELCOME:

Mayor Julie M. Aubuchon called the special meeting to order and declared the meeting open for the presentation of items on the special meeting agenda.

INVOCATION & PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE:

Mayor Aubuchon and Members of City Council recited the invocation.

All attendees recited the Pledge of Allegiance.

ROLL CALL:

The roll was called, and the following four (4) members of council were registered present: Lesley Chambers, Jenna Kemper (Vice-Mayor), David A. Osborne, and Gary Winn. Councilmembers Mel Carroll and Patricia Wingo were absent.

Staff members present were: City Attorney, Thomas R. Nienaber; Fire/EMS Assistant Chief, John Black; Chief of Police, Tom Grau; Public Services Director, Eric Hall; Director of Administration/City Administrator, Joshua J. Hunt; City Clerk, Melissa Kramer; Videographer, Perry Weber; and Police Lieutenant, Roger Allen.

The following were also present in the audience: Florence Police Department new police officer, Hanna Boyd-Hughes; Friends and family of new police officer, Hanna Boyd-Hughes; Boone County Emergency Management Director, Mark E. Ihrig; Family of Boone County Emergency Management Director, Mark E. Ihrig; Executive Director, Student/Community Services, Boone County Schools, Kathleen Reutman; Resident of Florence, Angie Cable; Resident of Florence, Nancy Corman; Resident of Florence, Brian Kinross; Resident of Florence, Thomas Judd; and Northern Kentucky Tribune Reporter, Trisha Scheyer.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES:

Mayor Aubuchon called for a motion to approve the minutes of the February 6, 2024, special meeting. Councilmember Kemper motioned to approve the minutes with a second from Councilmember Winn. **All councilmembers present voted aye.**

OATH OF OFFICE:

Chief Grau introduced the newest member of the Florence Police Department, Hanna Boyd-Hughes. Chief Grau stated they were excited to be adding Hanna to the department and she started the academy on Monday, February 12.

Mayor Aubuchon administered the oath of office and Chief Grau presented Hanna with her badge.

RECOGNITION – MARK E. IHRIG, J.D., CEM, CKEM, DIRECTOR, BOONE COUNTY EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT:

Mayor Aubuchon introduced Mark Ihrig and congratulated him on his upcoming retirement. Mayor Aubuchon issued a Proclamation recognizing February 29, 2024, as Mark Ihrig Day reading the following Proclamation into record:

WHEREAS, we are here today to express our appreciation to Mark E. Ihrig, J.D., CEM, CKEM and honor him for his distinguished career within our community and dedicated service to the residents of Florence and Boone County; and

WHEREAS, Mark's educational achievements at Covington Catholic High School, Thomas More University, and Northern Kentucky University – Salmon P. Chase College of Law have laid the foundation for his remarkable professional journey including serving as the Assistant Boone County Attorney at the Boone County Attorney's Office and the Boone County Emergency Management for over twenty-three years, first as Deputy Director for 10 years and the past 13 years as Director; and

WHEREAS, his career showcases his commitment to advancing emergency management practices having served as the Certified Emergency Manager with the International Association of Emergency Managers (IAEM), creation of the Community Emergency Response Team (CERT) and participated in organizations such as the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA), American Red Cross Disaster Action Team, and Kentucky Emergency Management Association (KEMA), where he served as Region 4 Secretary/Treasurer; and

WHEREAS, extending beyond his professional career, he served in active roles in volunteering for the Boy Scouts of America as the National Youth Leadership Training for the Dan Beard Council, BSA and served in various events such as the World Scout Jamboree in 2019 and National Jamboree in 2017, reflecting his passion for developing the next generation; and

WHEREAS, on behalf of the entire City of Florence, in recognition of Mark E. Ihrig's distinguished career and unwavering dedication, the City of Florence extends our sincere appreciation as he embarks on a well-deserved retirement and wish him much happiness as he begins this exciting new chapter in his life.

NOW, THEREFORE, I, Julie M. Aubuchon, Mayor of the City of Florence, and on behalf of the members of Florence City Council, do hereby proclaim February 29, 2024, as:

“MARK IHRIG DAY”

in the City of Florence and encourage all citizens and employees to join me and the Florence City Council in congratulating Mark on an outstanding career and wishing him many continued years of happiness and good health.

IN WITNESS WHEREOF, I have hereunto set my hand and caused the seal of the City of Florence, Kentucky, to be affixed hereto, this 13th day of February 2024.

Mr. Ihrig conveyed his gratitude for the acknowledgement and expressed his appreciation of the collaborative efforts throughout his tenure.

PRESENTATION – MENTAL HEALTH SUMMIT:

Mayor Aubuchon called upon Kathleen Reutman, Executive Director, Student/Community Services with Boone County Schools and thanked her for attending the meeting.

Ms. Reutman expressed her appreciation to the city and stated the fourth annual Mental Health Summit is scheduled for Friday and Saturday, February 23, and February 24. The event would take place at Florence Baptist Church on Mount Zion Road. Ms. Reutman stated the keynote speakers include Friday evening, Jason Brewer, a survivor of the Carroll County bus crash that will share insights on resilience and transformation; Saturday morning, Charle Peck, a young woman from Boone County High School that will discuss collaborative strategies for self-help; and Saturday afternoon, Matthew Portell, an educator, and advocate that will provide valuable information on trauma-informed practices. She explained the summit involves thirty-six planning committee members including Councilmember Winn. During the summit, there would be twenty-two breakout sessions covering various mental health topics. On Friday night, there would be a suicide walk with lantern to remember those lost. Attendees can write notes to loved ones on a memorial wall inside the building. Additionally, Ms. Reutman stated Mayor Aubuchon will introduce Charle Peck Saturday morning. She encouraged everyone to attend and stated the event would be an informative and impactful event, bringing together experts and community members to address critical mental health issues.

Councilmember Chambers inquired if an attendee had to attend both Friday and Saturday or if Saturday only was an option. Ms. Reutman stated an attendee could attend just one day and they were still accepting attendees.

FIRST READING ORDINANCE O-3-2024:

Mayor Aubuchon read Ordinance O-3-2024. An Ordinance Annexing certain territory consisting of two parcels of approximately 1.194 acres and 4.127 acres located at 1 Gridiron Lane, adjacent to the city limits. (Boone County Pee Wee Athletic Association, Inc.)

This Ordinance annexes two tracts consisting of approximately 1.194 acres and 4.127 acres located at 1 Gridiron Lane, adjacent to the City limits.

The full text of Ordinance O-3-2024, 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 Aubuchon called for a motion to approve the first reading of Ordinance O-3-2024. Councilmember Winn motioned to approve, with a second from Councilmember Kemper. Mayor Aubuchon requested a Roll Call Vote. Councilmember Chambers, yes; Councilmember Winn, yes; Councilmember Kemper, yes; Councilmember Osborne, yes. **Roll call recognized four yes votes approving the first reading of Ordinance O-3-2024 by unanimous vote.**

MUNICIPAL ORDER MO-2-2024:

Mayor Aubuchon read Municipal Order MO-2-2024. A Municipal Order Approving a loan agreement between the City of Florence, Kentucky and the Boone County Pee Wee Athletic Association, Inc.

Mayor Aubuchon called for a motion to approve Municipal Order MO-2-2024. Councilmember Winn motioned to approve Municipal Order MO-2-2024 with a second from Councilmember Osborne. Mayor Aubuchon requested a Roll Call Vote. Councilmember Chambers, yes; Councilmember Winn, yes; Councilmember Kemper, yes; Councilmember Osborne, yes. **Roll Call recognized four yes votes approving Municipal Order MO-2-2024 by unanimous vote.**

DISCUSSION - PERSONNEL AMENDMENT/SALARY SURVEY:

Mayor Aubuchon called upon Joshua J. Hunt, Director of Administration/City Administrator with regard to the personnel amendments within the Administration Department and salary survey.

Mr. Hunt referenced his memo contained in council packets and proposed a restructuring of the Administration Department. He explained the restructuring would involve eliminating his vacant former position of Business and Community Development and creating two distinct roles: Director of Community Development and Director of Business Development. The Director of Community Development would oversee plan reviews, zoning matters, and the management of over one hundred projects simultaneously. The Director of Business Development would focus on business retention and expansion and would work closely with primary industry companies and small businesses to assess growth potential, mitigating risks, and generating leads.

Additionally, Mr. Hunt recommended removing the standalone Risk Manager role from the pay plan and proposed amending the job duties of the Risk Manager/Community Project Administrator. The change would have the position less focused on economic development and more focused on community engagement and special projects. He explained the Risk Manager position had historically played a role in securing insurance premium discounts for the city and had fluctuated between part-time and full-time responsibilities. In the proposed new role, the job duties would also include grant writing, legislative research, and tasks related to special projects, in addition to the Risk Manager duties. He stated these revisions would align with the city's evolving needs and streamline responsibilities. As part of the modifications, Mr. Hunt additionally recommended eliminating the Community Development/Main Street Project Administrator.

Councilmember Chambers inquired if the new positions would report to him. Mr. Hunt replied yes.

No further questions or discussion were necessitated.

Next, Mr. Hunt reviewed the salary survey he conducted on elected officials within the state. He advised it had been eighteen years since city council had taken action to amend compensation levels for council and the Mayor. He explained that unlike city personnel salaries which can be adjusted and analyzed, elected officials salaries are dictated by KRS 83A. The adoption of pay

scale amendments for elected officials must occur in May preceding an election. Annually, Mr. Hunt stated the Department of Local Government issues a letter to all cities, outlining compensation levels for elected officials. Mr. Hunt explained any changes made now would take effect after the next election in January and the Mayoral position in three years. Mr. Hunt explained that many cities across the state regularly review their elected officials compensation and opened the floor for questions or comments.

Councilmember Chambers stated the current annual salary for the Mayor was \$51,710 and the proposed adjustment would raise the salary to \$86,937, resulting in an approximate 40% increase.

Mr. Hunt explained that the compensation adjustment aims to align with the responsibilities of the role. When compared to similar cities, the Mayor of Florence receives lower compensation, while council is at the higher end. In Florence's Mayor/Council form of government, the Mayor serves as the Chief Executive Officer, overseeing personnel decisions, department heads, and performing CEO duties. Even with the Mayoral pay not increasing for three years, the Mayoral salary will remain on the lower end in Kentucky when it takes effect.

Councilmember Chambers stated the current annual salary for councilmembers is \$17,563 and the proposed adjustment would raise their salary to \$20,605. Mr. Hunt replied yes.

CLOSED SESSION:

Mayor Aubuchon called for a motion to go into Closed Session pursuant to KRS 61.810 (1)(b) acquisition/sale of real property - where publicity would be likely to affect the value of property to be acquired for public use or to be sold by the city, KRS 61.810(1)(c) litigation – proposed or pending against or on behalf of the city, and KRS 61.810(1)(g) discussions between the City and representatives of a business entity – where open discussions would jeopardize the siting, retention, expansion, or upgrading of the business.

Councilmember Winn so moved with a second from Councilmember Kemper. **All councilmembers present voted aye, the time being 5:29 p.m.** Mayor Aubuchon advised they would return to the room to adjourn and did not anticipate any further business taking place following Closed Session.

Mayor Aubuchon called for a motion to come back into session after the Closed Session. Councilmember Kemper so moved, with a second from Councilmember Chambers. **All councilmembers present voted aye, the time being 6:18 p.m.**

ADJOURNMENT:

There being no further business to come before the Council, Mayor Aubuchon called for a motion to adjourn the Special Meeting. Councilmember Kemper so moved, with a second from Councilmember Chambers. **Councilmembers present voted aye**, the time being 6:18 p.m.

APPROVED:

/s/ Julie M. Aubuchon
Julie M. Aubuchon, Mayor

ATTEST:

/s/ Melissa Kramer
Melissa Kramer, City Clerk

