



**Florence City Council
Business Meeting
Tuesday, September 10, 2024
6:00 p.m.**

MINUTES

The City Council of the City of Florence, Kentucky, met in regular session on Tuesday, September 10, 2024, at 6:00 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 regular meeting to order and declared the regular session open for the presentation of all city business.

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 six (6) members of council were registered present: Mel Carroll, Lesley Chambers, Jenna Kemper, David A. Osborne, Patricia Wingo, and Gary Winn.

Staff members present were: City Attorney, Thomas R. Nienaber; Fire/EMS Chief, Rodney Wren; Chief of Police, Jeff Mallery; Director of Administration/City Administrator, Joshua J. Hunt; City Engineer, Bill Viox; City Clerk, Melissa Kramer; Videographer, Perry Weber; and Police Lieutenant, Roger Allen.

The following were also present in the audience: Human Services Administrator, Katie James; Police Lieutenant, Jason Reed; Police Sergeant, Sam Riley; City of Florence Resident, Thomas Judd; City of Florence Resident, Nancy Corman; NKY Tribune Reporter, Trisha Scheyer; Daughters of the American Revolution Boone County Chapter Regent, Peggy Kennedy; Police Officer Jacob Johnson; Police Officer Layla Robinson; Police Officer Amin El Brahmi; Friends and Family of Police Officer Jacob Johnson; Friends and Family of Police Officer Amin El Brahmi; Friends and Family of Police Officer Layla Robinson.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES:

Mayor Aubuchon called for a motion to approve the minutes of the August 27, 2024, business meeting. Councilmember Carroll motioned to approve the minutes with a second from Councilmember Winn. **All councilmembers present voted aye.**

PROCLAMATION:

Mayor Aubuchon issued a Proclamation acknowledging September 17, 2024, through September 23, 2024, to be Constitution Week reading the following Proclamation into record:

***WHEREAS**, the Constitution of the United States of America, the guardian of our liberties, embodies the principles of limited government in a Republic dedicated to rule by law; and*

***WHEREAS**, September 17, 2024, marks the two hundred and thirty-seventh anniversary of the framing of the Constitution of the United States of America by the Constitutional Convention; and*

***WHEREAS**, it is fitting and proper to accord official recognition to this magnificent document and its memorable anniversary, and to the patriotic celebrations which will commemorate the occasion; and*

***WHEREAS**, Public Law 915 guarantees the issuing of a proclamation each year by the President of the United States of America designating September 17 through 23 as Constitution Week.*

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT PROCLAIMED THAT, I, Julie M. Aubuchon, Mayor of the City of Florence, Kentucky, and on behalf of the members of Florence City Council, proclaim the week of September 17 through September 23, 2024, as:

“CONSTITUTION WEEK”

in the City of Florence, Kentucky and ask our citizens to reaffirm the ideals the Framers of the Constitution had in 1787 by vigilantly protecting the freedoms guaranteed to us through this guardian of our liberties.

***IN WITNESS WHEREOF**, I have hereunto set my hand and caused the seal of the City of Florence, Kentucky, to be affixed hereto, this 10th day of September 2024.*

Mayor Aubuchon called upon Regent Peggy Kennedy, Daughters of the American Revolution, Boone County Chapter, District 5 and welcomed her to the meeting in recognition of Constitution Week. Mayor Aubuchon presented the Proclamation to Mrs. Kennedy and thanked her for attending the meeting.

PROCLAMATION:

Mayor Aubuchon issued a Proclamation proclaiming September as City Government Month and read the following Proclamation into record:

***WHEREAS**, civics education is important to ensure Kentucky children develop an interest and understanding of local government and their role in the community; and*

***WHEREAS**, Kentucky Academic Standards for Social Studies require instruction on citizenship and local government for entry-level elementary school children; and*

***WHEREAS**, involving and informing students of local government programs and duties can provide an opportunity for entire families to connect with vital city services and programs; and*

***WHEREAS**, there are 412 active incorporated cities in Kentucky and more than half of the state’s population lives in a city; and*

***WHEREAS**, “City Government Month” is a civics awareness campaign that educates elementary school students about city services by providing teacher lesson plans, students coloring/activity books, and classroom materials; and*

***WHEREAS**, “City Government Month” calls on city officials to get involved in their local schools and in educating and engaging elementary school students in city government.*

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT PROCLAIMED THAT, I, Julie M. Aubuchon, Mayor of the City of Florence, Kentucky, and on behalf of the members of Florence City Council, do hereby proclaim September 2024 as “City Government Month” in the city and encourage city officials and employees to collaborate with local elementary schools to educate students about city government and engage them in city services.

IN WITNESS WHEREOF, I have hereunto set my hand and caused the seal of the City of Florence, Kentucky, to be affixed hereto, this 10th day of September 2024.

Mayor Aubuchon highlighted the city’s active involvement with local schools including the DARE Program and the Youth in Government Program. She stated these programs are very important to making a connection with the children of the community.

OATHS OF OFFICE:

Chief of Police, Jeff Mallery, introduced the newest members of the Florence Police Department members, Jacob Johnson, Amin El Brahmi, and Layla Robinson. Chief Mallery stated they were excited to be adding them to the department.

Mayor Aubuchon administered the oaths of office and Chief Mallery presented them with their badges.

PRESENTATION – GOOD NEIGHBOR PROGRAM:

Katie James, Human Services Administrator, introduced the “Good Neighbor Program” and stated the program was created to support residents with routine outdoor tasks such as mowing the lawn, raking leaves, shoveling snow, cleaning gutters, etc. The initiative would be focused on assisting elderly, disabled, or physically unable residents ensuring they can maintain their home with dignity.

Mrs. James stated the three objectives of the program are to provide essential assistance, promote community engagement, and organized and efficient matching. Mrs. James stated that residents can either sign up for assistance or volunteer to help. Once paired, the volunteers and residents would work together to schedule the necessary tasks. She believes this program will not only help residents maintain their homes but also strengthen community bonds, making Florence a more caring and connected place to live.

Councilmember Kemper expressed her appreciation for the program and inquired if the information would be sent out to organizations to actively seek volunteers. Mrs. James replied affirmatively and stated the program would be promoted on the city’s social media.

Councilmember Carroll thanked Mrs. James for the program and commended the program for supporting community members in need.

Councilmember Wingo shared her experience working with nonprofit organizations and corporations, highlighting their positive impact and encouraged Mrs. James to reach out to local businesses within the city.

Councilmember Winn suggested contacting local schools for student volunteers.

Councilmember Chambers thanked Mrs. James for the program and offered her assistance.

Mayor Aubuchon informed everyone Amazon had recently reached out to perform volunteer work in the community. Mrs. James explained that Amazon team members cleaned headstones in the Florence Cemetery and would return in September to finish. Additionally, Mrs. James noted the city had partnered with the Vineyard and Crossroads to organize several workdays aimed at bringing multiple houses back up to code.

FIRST READING – ORDINANCE O-17-2024:

Mayor Aubuchon read Ordinance O-17-2024. An Ordinance relating to the levying of a tax upon real estate and personal property in the City of Florence, Kentucky; levying a tax on all franchises taxable within the City of Florence, Kentucky; specifying payment dates, discounts and penalties for the franchise tax on financial institutions measured by the deposits in the institutions located within the city; and levying a special tax for the payment of current service costs for police and firemen in the County Employees Retirement System. (2024)

This is the Ordinance by which the City establishes tax rates and levies annual taxes.

The basic tax levied for General Fund purposes is a tax of eighteen and three-tenths cents (\$.183) per one hundred dollars of value on real property and a tax of eighteen and six -tenths cents (\$.186) per one hundred dollars of value on personal property (except for motor vehicles and watercraft) and upon all franchises taxable by the City.

In addition, this Ordinance levies a tax in the amount of five and five-tenths cents (\$.055) per one hundred dollars of value upon all real and personal property (except for motor vehicles and watercraft) and upon all franchises taxable by the City for the purpose of payment of the City's obligations for current service costs for police and firemen in the County employees' retirement system.

All of the above-mentioned taxes are due and payable upon final passage and publication of this Ordinance. A discount of two percent (2%) is allowed for any such taxes paid in full by November 1, 2024. Any such taxes remaining unpaid after January 1, 2025, are subject to a penalty of twelve percent (12%) plus interest on the amount unpaid at the rate of twelve percent (12%) per annum from January 1, 2025, until paid.

This Ordinance also establishes a franchise tax in the amount of twenty-five thousandths of one percent (0.025%) on all financial institutions measured by deposits in such institutions located in the City. This tax was levied by Ordinance No. O-18-96, pursuant to the Bank Franchise and Local Deposit Tax Act. (KRS 136.575) A two percent (2%) discount is allowed against this tax on bank deposits if paid before December 31, 2024. Any such taxes paid after January 31, 2025, will be subject to a penalty of twelve percent (12%) plus interest in the unpaid amount at the rate

of twelve percent (12%) per annum from January 31, 2025, until paid. The Ordinance establishes corresponding due dates, discounts and penalties for subsequent years.

Mayor Aubuchon called for a motion to approve the first reading of Ordinance O-17-2024. Councilmember Winn motioned to approve, with a second from Councilmember Carroll.

Councilmember Carroll remarked on the city's history of maintaining tax rates without increases and noted that, for the first time in fifteen years, the city would be reducing the special hazardous duty tax by \$.10 per \$100.

Mayor Aubuchon clarified that total real estate tax rate, which includes the special assessment tax rate, is now \$2.38. This was a reduction from last year's rate of \$2.46, amounting to a total decrease of \$.08.

Based on the motion to approve Ordinance O-17-2024 by Councilmember Winn and seconded by Councilmember Carroll, Mayor Aubuchon requested a Roll Call Vote. Councilmember Carroll, yes; Councilmember Chambers, yes; Councilmember Winn, yes; Councilmember Kemper, yes; Councilmember Wingo, yes; Councilmember Osborne, yes. **Roll call recognized six yes votes approving the first reading of Ordinance O-17-2024 by unanimous vote.**

MAYOR'S REPORT:

- Mayor Aubuchon reminded everyone the Arbor Day Celebration would be held on Saturday, September 21 beginning at 10:00 a.m. The event would be held at Stringtown Park, 7340 Burlington Pike, Florence.
- Mayor Aubuchon reminded everyone Neighborhood Night Out would be held on Tuesday, September 24, from 5:00 p.m.-7:00 p.m. at Kentaboo Park. There will be food available for attendees. Mayor Aubuchon stated there will be no council meeting that evening.
- Mayor Aubuchon announced the City of Florence, in partnership with Boone County, will host an End of the Summer Concert and Fireworks show here at the Florence Government Center on Saturday, September 28 beginning at 6:00 p.m.
- Mayor Aubuchon reminded everyone the Florence Police Department would hold their Police Citizen's Academy beginning October 9 through December 4. The eight-week class will be held on Wednesdays, from 6:30 p.m.-9:00 p.m.
- Mayor Aubuchon announced Fall Clean Up was scheduled to begin Monday, October 14 thru Sunday, October 20. Drop off is at Public Services Maintenance Facility located at 7850 Tanners Lane. The clean-up is available for Florence residents only and you must show proof of residency.
- Mayor Aubuchon announced the City of Florence Veterans Commission is hosting a two-day veteran resource fair on October 18-19 here at the Florence Government Center. On Saturday, October 19, there will be various veteran support agencies with booths.
- Mayor Aubuchon announced the city would host the Annual Halloween Night Out on Tuesday, October 29 at Thomas More Stadium, Home of the Florence Y'alls from 6:00-8:00 p.m. The event will have vendors and treats for kids. The "Nightmare at the Ballpark" will be a spooktacular family friendly event.

RECOGNITION:

Mayor Aubuchon asked if any of the following desired recognition:

Members of City Council:

Councilmember Chambers mentioned that a gentleman, with the skateboarding community, came to council approximately eight months ago and requested the lights be turned on at the skate park after dark. At that time, council discussed the matter and it was to be addressed. Given that it was getting darker earlier, Councilmember Chambers requested the issue be revisited.

Mayor Aubuchon stated that Public Services Director Eric Hall was not present at the meeting, so an update could not be provided. She suggested that the issue could be addressed once Mr. Hall returns.

Councilmember Carroll commented on the new digital signage installed on Ewing Boulevard and Mall Road. He mentioned receiving positive feedback from residents who appreciated the city's efforts to make information more accessible.

Department Heads:

Fire/EMS Chief, Rodney Wren:

Chief Wren did not desire recognition.

Chief of Police, Jeff Mallery:

Chief Mallery did not desire recognition.

Director of Administration/City Administrator, Joshua J. Hunt:

Mr. Hunt did not desire recognition.

Members of the Audience:

Resident of Florence, Nancy Corman, stated she watched the August 27 council meeting and believed that Mayor Aubuchon and Councilmember Winn should be ashamed of themselves for their treatment of Angie Cable, asserting that Florence citizens have the right to question city decisions. She expressed frustration that while the Mayor and city council requests citizen input, it disregards opinions that do not align with their narrative. Ms. Corman emphasized that council meetings should be an open forum for all voices and warned that ignoring new ideas could discourage community participation. Ms. Corman stated that Angie was only trying to give the citizens of Florence a voice for how they use their property. She again expressed her disappointment and hoped that in the future, the Mayor and council would not do that again to anyone publicly, stating good leaders never allow it to become personal, even if it was.

Mayor Aubuchon responded to Ms. Corman and stated Mrs. Cable made it personal by the accusations of personal attacks made by Angie on social media. She stated that she had only interacted with Mrs. Cable a few times and that she does not know her personally. Mayor Aubuchon emphasized that her comments were not personal and expressed respect for Ms. Corman acknowledging her politeness and participation in coming to the meetings. Mayor Aubuchon stressed that they welcome discussions and disagreements about policies, but personal attacks on elected officials are not acceptable and fair game for social media fodder.

Ms. Corman stated she agreed, however, was defending the fact that Mrs. Cable was confronted during a public forum. She expressed her own apprehension to come forward.

Mayor Aubuchon stated that Ms. Corman had always been respectful and she appreciated her input.

Ms. Corman emphasized that she did not want to defend all actions but wanted to defend what happened in the meeting.

Mayor Aubuchon stated everything had a context.

Ms. Corman stated she watched the previous meeting several times and felt it was personal. She stated that what Angie does is what Angie does, it is not what Nancy does, she just wanted to express her thoughts.

Mayor Aubuchon stressed she did not have an issue with Ms. Corman.

Councilmember Winn stated Ms. Cable had been coming to council meetings for eighteen months and had attacked councilmembers and department heads alike and he was simply defending the department heads.

Ms. Corman stated she went back and watched the other meetings and did not feel that Ms. Cable did that.

Mayor Aubuchon explained to Ms. Corman that she should review social media comments.

Ms. Corman stated she is not very active on social media, preferring to watch the meetings and review the minutes. She could not recall Angie attacking anyone, particularly the Chief of Police and Fire/EMS Chief (gesturing towards them), as they always engage with her. She expressed concern that what happened to Angie might discourage others from coming forward to speak, fearing it would not be safe or fair.

Mayor Aubuchon shared that she had lived in Florence her entire life and is known for being very involved in the community. She emphasized that everyone on council loves Florence and is dedicated to the city, even if they do not always agree on every issue. She stressed that leadership is about respecting one another and maintaining civil discourse. Mayor Aubuchon thanked Ms. Corman for bringing her concerns to council and assured her that council is happy to

discuss any city related issue, such as speed limits or park locations. However, she made it clear that personal attacks are not acceptable.

Councilmember Wingo and Councilmember Chambers thanked Ms. Corman.

CLOSED SESSION:

There was no need for Closed Session.

ADJOURNMENT:

There being no further business to come before the Council, Mayor Aubuchon called for a motion to adjourn. Councilmember Carroll so moved, with a second from Councilmember Wingo. **Councilmembers present voted aye, the time being 6:42 p.m.**

ATTEST:

/s/ Melissa Kramer
Melissa Kramer, City Clerk

APPROVED:

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

