



**Florence City Council  
Special Meeting  
Wednesday, December 4, 2024  
11:30 a.m.**

**MINUTES**

The City Council of the City of Florence, Kentucky, met in special session on Wednesday, December 4, 2024, at 11:30 a.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: Mel Carroll, Lesley Chambers, Patricia Wingo and Gary Winn. Councilmembers Jenna Kemper and David A. Osborne were absent.

Staff members present were: City Attorney, Thomas R. Nienaber; Fire/EMS Chief, Rodney Wren; Chief of Police, Jeff Mallery; Public Services Director, Eric Hall; Director of Administration/City Administrator, Joshua J. Hunt; City Clerk, Melissa Kramer; Finance Director, Jason Lewis; and Videographer, Perry Weber.

The following were also present in the audience: Director of Community Development, Todd Morgan; Human Resources Coordinator, Laura Grant; Resident of Florence, Thomas Judd; NKY Tribune Reporter, Trisha Scheyer and Councilmember Elect, Diane E. Whalen.

**APPROVAL OF MINUTES:**

Mayor Aubuchon called for a motion to approve the minutes of the November 19, 2024, special meeting. Councilmember Carroll motioned to approve the minutes with a second from Councilmember Wingo. **All councilmembers present voted aye.**

**SECOND READING – ORDINANCE O-16-2024:**

Mayor Aubuchon read Ordinance O-16-2024. An Ordinance annexing certain territory consisting of a parcel of approximately 18.8473 acres located on the east side of Gunpowder Road, adjacent to the city limits. (BBB Developers, LLC/KPD Holdings, LLC Property)

The effect of this Ordinance is to annex an approximately 18.8473-acre tract located on the east side of Gunpowder Road and to establish zoning for the parcel as Urban Residential One (UR-1).

The full text of Ordinance O-16-2024, 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 second reading of Ordinance O-16-2024. Councilmember Wingo motioned to approve, with a second from Councilmember Winn. Mayor Aubuchon requested a Roll Call Vote. Councilmember Carroll, yes; Councilmember Chambers, yes; Councilmember Winn, yes; Councilmember Wingo, yes. **Roll call recognized four yes votes approving the second reading of Ordinance O-16-2024 by unanimous vote.**

**DISCUSSION - INTERLOCAL COOPERATION AGREEMENT BETWEEN THE HOUSING AUTHORITY OF COVINGTON, KENTUCKY AND THE CITY OF FLORENCE, KENTUCKY:**

Mayor Aubuchon called upon Director of Administration/City Administrator, Joshua Hunt, to discuss the Interlocal Cooperation Agreement between the Housing Authority of Covington, Kentucky and the City of Florence, Kentucky.

Mr. Hunt explained the interlocal agreement authorizes the Covington Housing Authority to accept transfer from the City of Covington of their Housing Choice Voucher program that is formerly known as Section Eight. This program was managed by the Home Consortium, which the City of Florence was a part of; therefore, an interlocal agreement was required authorizing the consortium to take action.

Mr. Hunt clarified taking this action does not impact the City of Florence in any way. Boone County has their own separate program for how the funds are managed.

Councilmember Chambers inquired how many residents have taken advantage of the Home Consortium Program in Florence. Mr. Hunt stated one resident has been able to take advantage of the program.

No further questions or comments were necessitated. Therefore, a Municipal Order would be placed on the next agenda for formal action.

**DISCUSSION – REAPPOINTMENTS TO THE FLORENCE BOARD OF ADJUSTMENT AND ZONING APPEALS:**

Mayor Aubuchon explained that Duane Froelicher and Lois Evans terms on the Florence Board of Adjustment and Zoning Appeals were set to expire on December 31, 2024. She asked for any objections to the reappointments.

No questions or comments were necessitated. Therefore, Municipal Orders would be placed on the next agenda for formal action.

**DISCUSSION – APPOINTMENT TO THE OKI BOARD OF DIRECTORS:**

Mayor Aubuchon explained that Gary Winn’s term on the OKI Board of Directors was set to expire on December 31, 2024. She stated that Mr. Winn has served in this capacity and does a great job for the city. She asked for any objections to his reappointment.

No questions or comments were necessitated. Therefore, a Municipal Order would be placed on the next agenda for formal action.

**DISCUSSION – BOONE COUNTY PLANNING COMMISSION RESOLUTION R-24-029-A:**

Mayor Aubuchon called upon Director of Administration/City Administrator, Joshua Hunt, to discuss consideration of Resolution R-24-029-A of the Boone County Planning Commission relating to the Adoption of Zoning Text Amendments to the Boone County Zoning Regulations applicable to the Boone Fiscal Court and legislative bodies for the Cities of Florence, Walton, and the City of Union, as members of the Boone County, Kentucky Planning Unit and recommending that these Zoning Text Amendments be considered for enactment to regulate Electric Vehicle Charging Stations and Gasoline Filling Stations as authorized uses open to the public as codified in KRS 100.326, which took effect on July 15, 2024, and other applicable law within the Boone County Planning Unit for Boone County, Kentucky, subject to the recommended terms and provisions set forth in the recommended Zoning Text Amendments set forth in the Technical/Design Review Committee Report, and providing this recommendation be forwarded to the Boone Fiscal Court and cities comprising the Boone County Planning Unit for consideration by their legislative bodies.

Mr. Hunt explained the text amendment was necessitated by a state law change that was opposed by the Kentucky League of Cities as it was a violation of our Home Rule Status.

Mr. Hunt further explained that the city was required to make the text amendment changes including the definition of Electric Vehicle Charging Station and the definition of a Retail Filing Station

Mr. Hunt stated the Florence Planning and Zoning Committee met and opted to follow the state statute.

Councilmember Carroll inquired if charging stations were required to have restrooms. Mr. Hunt did not have the House Bill Number. Mayor Aubuchon stated the House Bill Number was 581.

Mayor Aubuchon inquired if gas stations were required to have restrooms. Mr. Hunt stated from a zoning prospective, there is no requirement. Director of Community Development, Todd Morgan, stated restroom requirements would be required by the Health Department or the Building Department.

Councilmember Chambers inquired if Mr. Hunt had the House Bill Number. Mr. Hunt stated the House Bill Number is 581.

Councilmember Chambers inquired if Mr. Hunt had the Roll Call Vote on the House Bill. Mr. Hunt stated he did not have the vote.

No further discussion was necessitated. Therefore, an Ordinance would be placed on the next agenda for formal action.

#### **DISCUSSION – AMENDMENTS TO PERSONNEL POLICIES:**

Mayor Aubuchon called upon Human Resources Coordinator, Laura Grant, to discuss the amendments to the Personnel Policies.

Mrs. Grant explained that she has completed a complete review of the City of Florence Personnel Policy Book to ensure compliance with the latest federal and state, addressing areas where policies required updates and ensuring the city remains aligned with current legal requirements. In addition, she examined ways to enhance our employee recruitment and retention as these issues were a priority for the city to ensure the city remains competitive in the labor market.

Mrs. Grant explained some of the key updates in the personnel policy such as Equal Opportunity Act and the Americans with Disabilities Act and Reasonable Accommodation Policy. The Equal Opportunity Act was updated to include a clear explanation of retaliation. The accommodation policy that was in place was renamed to the Americans with Disabilities and Reasonable Accommodation Policy and was moved from the general section of the handbook to the Equal Opportunity Section.

Mrs. Grant explained the next section that was updated was the harassment and sexual harassment policies. Additionally, the Kentucky Pregnant Workers Act and the Lactation Accommodation Policy were also updated to ensure compliance with state and federal laws. The Kentucky Public Pension Authority alternative sick leave program was updated to allow for more flexibility by giving retiring employees options as to how they will appropriate the accrued unused sick leave payout.

Mrs. Grant explained that the time off policies were updated by adding three additional federal holidays, Juneteenth, Columbus Day, and New Year's Eve, and by adding an additional twenty-four hours of paid leave for all full-time employees. She stated the sick leave policy was also updated to include six weeks of unpaid pregnancy and parental leave for employees to ensure

employees who were not covered by FMLA were still able to be covered. The policy provided six weeks of unpaid leave for adoption of a child to ensure compliance with state statute.

A few other policies that were updated were the civil leave policy for jury duty; a voting leave policy; an employee enrichment program for tuition assistance; confidentiality of personnel records policy; a Generative Artificial Intelligence Policy; and updated the COBRA policy.

Councilmember Carroll inquired as to who she worked with in the Administration Department on updating the policy. Mrs. Grant stated she met with all Department Heads as a group and individually to ensure it was a group effort.

Councilmember Chambers inquired if an employee had a child, would they get paid leave under the short-term disability. Mrs. Grant stated that short-term disability is voluntary and if the employee opted to participate in the short-term disability, they would get paid for their leave at 60% of their income. However, if the employee did not opt for the short-term disability, they would not be paid.

Councilmember Chambers inquired as to why the adoption leave time was only for children under the age of ten years old. Mrs. Grant stated the city personnel policy follows the state regulations.

Councilmember Chambers inquired if the leave included foster children. Mrs. Grant explained that the leave would not apply if the child was already in the employees' care as a foster child or if the adoption was of a family member. Mrs. Grant further explained that the current employee policy did not include a policy; therefore, the city was not in compliance with state statute.

Mayor Aubuchon explained the policy was being updated to ensure the city is in compliance with state and federal regulations.

Councilmember Chambers inquired about the dollar amount for the changes. Finance Director, Jason Lewis stated he would discuss the budget changes in the budget amendment discussion.

No further discussion was necessitated. Therefore, an Ordinance would be placed on the next agenda for formal action.

### **DISCUSSION – BUDGET AMENDMENT #1 FOR FISCAL YEAR 2024-2025:**

Mayor Aubuchon called upon Finance Director, Jason Lewis, to discuss the first budget amendment for the 2024-2025 fiscal year.

Mr. Lewis explained the update focuses on the city's fiscal position and budget amendments through the first five months of the fiscal year. Revenues from payroll, occupational license, and insurance premium taxes are performing well, with positive trends continuing through November. The bulk of the budget amendment was due to capital project rollovers from previous fiscal years, totaling over \$15 million in the general fund. This included funds for infrastructure projects like sidewalks and road repairs, with an additional \$2.5 million transfer to the Municipal Aid Road Fund for ARPA Street projects. The amendment also accounts for an increase in capital projects

and operating expenditures for Police, Fire, and Public Services. The amendment will ensure all departments stay within budget.

A key area of budget concern is the impact of new personnel policies, particularly the 24-hour administrative leave (APL) policy, which could add an estimated \$200,000 for the remainder of the fiscal year, with an annual maximum of \$400,000. The total incremental impact for the fiscal year is around \$600,000, but the city's healthy financial position, as confirmed by a recent audit, should allow for these adjustments without major strain.

Mr. Lewis noted that while the addition of three holidays may result in reduced productivity, there is not expected to be a significant financial impact, as the holidays are treated as paid time off without additional costs. However, for departments such as police and fire, holidays may be handled with floating days or adjusted scheduling to avoid additional costs.

Mr. Lewis closed by stating the city is in a strong financial position, and the budget adjustments will help maintain stability heading into the next fiscal year.

Councilmember Chambers inquired how three holidays could be added without a budget increase. Mayor Aubuchon stated that employees will still be paid for that day; they just do not have to come to work. Mr. Lewis agreed and explained that it was viewed as a loss of productivity rather than a loss of money. It was not seen as having a large cost impact.

Councilmember Carroll inquired about having members of the Police Department and the Fire/EMS Department on duty during the paid holidays. Mayor Aubuchon stated those departments would use those days as floating holidays to be taken on a different day. Those hours would be added to the employee's APL balance to be used as a vacation day.

No further discussion was necessitated. Therefore, an Ordinance would be placed on the next agenda for formal action.

**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 the Special Meeting. Councilmember Carroll so moved, with a second from Councilmember Winn. **Councilmembers present voted aye**, the time being 12:08 p.m.

**APPROVED:**

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

**ATTEST:**

/s/ Melissa Kramer  
Melissa Kramer, City Clerk

