



**Florence City Council
Business Meeting
Tuesday, February 11, 2025
6:00 p.m.**

MINUTES

The City Council of the City of Florence, Kentucky, met in regular session on Tuesday, February 11, 2025, 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: Angie Cable, Lesley Chambers, David M. Schneider, Diane E. Whalen (Vice Mayor), Patricia Wingo and Gary Winn.

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 Engineer, Bill Viox; City Clerk, Melissa Kramer; Finance Director, Jason Lewis; Videographer, Perry Weber; and Police Lieutenant Jason Reed.

The following were also present in the audience: Director of Community Development, Todd Morgan; Battalion Chief of EMS, Danielle Stiner; Battalion Chief of Training, Matt Pleiman; Assistant Fire/EMS Chief Chris Miller; Assistant Fire/EMS Chief Ryan Born; Fire Marshal, Randy Childress; Fire/EMS Lieutenant Candice Stewart; Fire/EMS Captain Tim Webster; Fire/EMS Captain Brent Wuest; Fire/EMS Captain Josh Corry; Fire/EMS Captain Richard Lang; Firefighter/Paramedic, Jason Bowling; Members of the Florence Fire/EMS Department; Family and Friends of Fire/EMS Captain, Brent Wuest; Family and Friends of Fire/EMS Captain, Josh Corry; Family and Friends of Fire/EMS Captain, Richard Lang; Resident of Florence, Thomas Judd; Resident of Florence, James Leach; Seva Hospitality Managing Partner, Ravi Narsinghani; Resident of Florence, Jonathan Sterling; Resident of Boone County, Randy O'Hara; and Resident of Boone County, Alex Evans.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES:

Mayor Aubuchon called for a motion to approve the minutes of the January 28, 2025, business meeting. Councilmember Whalen motioned to approve the minutes with a second from Councilmember Winn. **All councilmembers present voted aye.**

OATHS OF OFFICE:

Rodney Wren, Fire/EMS Chief introduced the Florence Fire/EMS Department members including Fire/EMS Captain Brent Wuest, Fire/EMS Captain Josh Corry, and Fire/EMS Captain Richard Lang. Mayor Aubuchon administered the oaths of office to the newly promoted Captains of the Florence Fire/EMS Department and Fire/EMS Chief Wren and Assistant Fire/EMS Chief Born presented them with their badges.

SECOND READING ORDINANCE O-1-2025:

Mayor Aubuchon read Ordinance O-1-2025. An Ordinance Adopting and Approving a Zoning Map Amendment from Commercial Two/Planned Development/Houston Donaldson Study Corridor (C-2/PD/HDO) to Office Two/Planned Development/Houston Donaldson Study Corridor (O-2/PD/HDO) for an approximate 5.3 Acre Area located at 5935 and 5945 Merchants Street, Florence, Kentucky, to allow the development of a four-story, 62,000 square foot hotel. (Seva at Merchants Square II, LLC/Kemba Credit Union, Inc.)

The effect of this Ordinance is to allow a zoning map amendment from Commercial Two/Planned Development/Houston Donaldson Study Corridor (C-2/PD/HDO) to Office Two/Planned Development/Houston Donaldson Study Corridor (O-2/PD/HDO) for an approximate 5.3-acre site located at 5935 and 5945 Merchants Street, Florence, Kentucky, to allow the development of a four-story, 62,000 square foot hotel.

The full text of Ordinance O-1-2025 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-1-2025. Councilmember Winn motioned to approve, with a second from Councilmember Wingo. Mayor Aubuchon requested a Roll Call Vote. Councilmember Wingo, yes; Councilmember Chambers, yes; Councilmember Winn, yes; Councilmember Whalen, yes; Councilmember Schneider, yes; Councilmember Cable, yes. **Roll call recognized six yes votes approving the second reading of Ordinance O-1-2025 by unanimous vote.**

FIRST READING ORDINANCE O-2-2025:

Mayor Aubuchon read Ordinance O-2-2025. An Ordinance enacting and creating the Florence Transportation Improvement District (TID) as authorized by KRS 184.350-184.395.

This Ordinance creates the Florence Transportation Improvement District (TID) as authorized by KRS 184.350 to KRS 184.395 and provides for the establishment of a Board of Trustees as authorized by KRS 184.353. This Ordinance directs the Board of Trustees to establish By-Laws for submittal to and approval by City Council.

The full text of Ordinance O-2-2025, 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-2-2025. Councilmember Whalen motioned to approve, with a second from Councilmember Wingo.

Councilmember Whalen requested that Eric Hall, Public Services Director, provide additional details on the TID District, emphasizing its significance for the city.

Mr. Hall explained that establishing a TID District would provide the city with opportunities to secure funding from the state, federal, and public/private partnerships, granting local control over areas currently beyond its authority. By receiving these funds directly, the city could implement improvements on roadways such as US 42 and KY 18. He further noted that with anticipated staffing enhancements, to be discussed during the budget retreat, the TID District would enable the city to initiate projects, secure funding and complete improvements on a significantly faster timeline than if reliant solely on state funding.

Councilmember Cable acknowledged that Boone County had established its TID District about a year ago but had yet to receive funding. She asked about the expected timeline for the city to receive funds if a TID District was established.

Mr. Hall explained that Boone County had been awarded \$10 million, however, the funds had not yet been received, as the county was still navigating the process with Frankfort to gain access. He also noted that Boone County was working toward receiving additional funds for a separate project. He stated that the city had priority projects they would be pursuing should the TID District be established.

Councilmember Cable requested confirmation that public hearings would be part of the process. Mr. Hall confirmed that there would be public hearings.

Councilmember Cable asked about potential projects that could be addressed through the TID District beyond what was in his memo including the truck stop and the Florence/Union exit ramp lane going south.

Mr. Hall confirmed that improvements and studies are underway including the Florence/Union exit. He also noted that a comprehensive study was underway to assess potential enhancements along the entire 71-75 corridor, from I-275 to KY 18. The study examines every stop along the way and identifies opportunities for improvement.

Councilmember Cable inquired as to the chances the board would deliver on fulfilling its assurances and ensure the board was established to complete projects rather than merely claiming the distinction of the first city with a TID District in the state.

Mr. Hall explained this TID board would have a dedicated leadership staff component to ensure the success of the TID and advancement of projects. He explained that the city's approach would differ from the county which did not have a staff component. By having a dedicated staff member focused on managing and driving TID initiatives, the city aims to accelerate progress. This role would report within his department and align with the city's goals.

Councilmember Cable asked whether the members of the TID board would be compensated. Mr. Hall explained that this decision would be determined during the development of the bylaws.

No further discussion was necessitated and based on the motion to approve Ordinance O-2-2025 by Councilmember Whalen and seconded by Councilmember Wingo, Mayor Aubuchon requested a Roll Call Vote. Councilmember Wingo, yes; Councilmember Chambers, no; Councilmember Winn, yes; Councilmember Whalen, yes; Councilmember Schneider, yes; Councilmember Cable, no. **Roll call recognized four yes votes and two no votes, approving the first reading of Ordinance O-2-2025 by majority vote.**

FIRST READING ORDINANCE O-3-2025:

Mayor Aubuchon read Ordinance O-3-2025. An Ordinance updating the traffic regulations of the City of Florence by amending Ordinance O-23-22 relating to parking prohibitions, stop signs, speed regulations, truck traffic prohibitions, left turn prohibitions, one-way streets, and right turn only streets.

This Ordinance revises existing traffic regulations of the City to make appropriate changes to parking prohibitions, stop signs, speed limits, truck traffic prohibitions, left turn prohibitions, one-way street prohibitions, and right turn only authorizations. This Ordinance effectively amends the existing Ordinance O-23-22.

The full text of Ordinance O-3-2025, 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-3-2025. Councilmember Wingo motioned to approve, with a second from Councilmember Winn.

Councilmember Cable expressed her concern that the speed limit on cul-de-sac streets should be lowered from 20 mph to 15 mph.

Mr. Hall explained that the Municipal Uniform Traffic Code (MUTC) provided guidelines for setting speed limits on various types of streets and all of the city traffic codes must comply with these standards. He noted that speed limits could be adjusted when necessary and that the city periodically conducts traffic studies in collaboration with the police department. He explained

these studies involve placing traffic counters on different streets to measure actual vehicle speeds using a standardized formula to determine appropriate speed limits.

No further discussion was necessitated and based on the motion to approve Ordinance O-3-2025 by Councilmember Wingo and seconded by Councilmember Winn, Mayor Aubuchon requested a Roll Call Vote. Councilmember Wingo, yes; Councilmember Chambers, yes; Councilmember Winn, yes; Councilmember Whalen, yes; Councilmember Schneider, yes; Councilmember Cable, yes. **Roll call recognized six yes votes approving the first reading of Ordinance O-3-2025 by unanimous vote.**

FIRST READING ORDINANCE O-4-2025:

Mayor Aubuchon read Ordinance O-4-2025. An Ordinance of the City of Florence, Kentucky establishing procedures and regulations for declaring and managing snow emergencies within the city.

This Ordinance establishes new regulations for declaring and managing snow emergencies within the City. The Ordinance provides for publication and notification to the general public regarding snow emergencies. This Ordinance effectively repeals all previous procedures and regulations set forth in Ordinance No. O-37-93 enacted November 23, 1993, which directly relates to snow emergencies. All other aspects of Ordinance No. O-4-85 and Ordinance No. O-37-93 shall remain in full force and effect.

The full text of Ordinance O-4-2025, 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-4-2025. Councilmember Wingo motioned to approve, with a second from Councilmember Winn.

Councilmember Whalen sought clarification on the parking restrictions and their enforcement, particularly the language that stated vehicles “may” receive a ticket versus “shall” receive a ticket if parked on the street. She requested further insight from public services on the necessity of vehicle removal and inquired about the police department’s capability to issue tickets when required.

Mr. Hall explained that during a snow emergency, once the snow reaches two inches, the city aims to keep traffic off the roads. If a vehicle impedes their ability to turn around or progress down the street, they would contact the police department to locate the vehicle’s owner and request that the vehicle be moved. If the owner could not be located, the police would be notified to have the vehicle towed.

Chief Mallery emphasized the importance of residents moving their cars off the streets during a snow emergency. If a vehicle obstructs the snowplows, they will make every effort to have it moved, including towing if necessary. He believes that the current approach is the most effective.

Councilmember Chambers asked Fire/EMS Chief Wren to explain how illegally parked vehicles on the street cause problems for the Fire/EMS Department, especially during a snow emergency. She requested that he address the public about the importance of parking properly.

Fire/EMS Chief Wren noted that the primary obstacles for Fire/EMS vehicles are typically larger trucks, big vehicles, or dumpsters blocking roadways under any conditions. He mentioned that, in most cases, they can navigate around these obstacles. During winter, vehicles are usually parked in their normal spots, which the department can manage and navigate. However, unusual situations such as a dumpster or a larger vehicle could pose a problem. In the worst case scenario, the department's vehicles are equipped with large bumpers, and in an absolute emergency, they would push the obstructing vehicle out of the way themselves.

No further discussion was necessitated and based on the motion to approve Ordinance O-4-2025 by Councilmember Wingo and seconded by Councilmember Winn, Mayor Aubuchon requested a Roll Call Vote. Councilmember Wingo, yes; Councilmember Chambers, yes; Councilmember Winn, yes; Councilmember Whalen, yes; Councilmember Schneider, yes; Councilmember Cable, yes. **Roll call recognized six yes votes approving the first reading of Ordinance O-4-2025 by unanimous vote.**

RESOLUTION R-3-2025:

Mayor Aubuchon read Resolution R-3-2025. A Resolution of the City of Florence, Kentucky, opposing any bills brought forth during the 2025 Kentucky General Assembly session by any member of the Kentucky Legislature, in full or in part, that provides for the mandated centralized collection of local Occupational Fees/Taxes by the Commonwealth of Kentucky or other third parties.

Mayor Aubuchon called for a motion to approve Resolution R-3-2025. Councilmember Whalen motioned to approve, with a second from Councilmember Schneider.

Mr. Hunt explained that in addition to the centralized collection, the bill introduced by State Representatives Jared Bauman and Rachel Roarx from Louisville would grant the state treasurer the authority to impose a fee on users of the online system for paying occupational licenses. However, details remain unclear regarding who would be responsible for paying the fee. Additionally, the bill includes provisions for creating a workgroup to explore further centralization of tax collection. He noted that he is actively monitoring the bill's progress.

Councilmember Whalen emphasized the importance of closely monitoring this issue, noting that it represents government overreach. She cautioned that, historically, similar actions have resulted in the city losing out on critical funds.

No further discussion was necessitated and based on the motion to approve Resolution R-3-2025 by Councilmember Whalen and seconded by Councilmember Schneider, Mayor Aubuchon requested a Roll Call Vote. Councilmember Wingo, yes; Councilmember Chambers, yes; Councilmember Winn, yes; Councilmember Whalen, yes; Councilmember Schneider, yes;

Councilmember Cable, yes. **Roll call recognized six yes votes approving Resolution R-3-2025 by unanimous vote.**

MOTION TO AUTHORIZE:

Mayor Aubuchon requested a motion to allow her to proceed with a request to provide written notice extending the City's solid waste contract with Rumpke for two years beginning April 1, 2025.

Councilmember Whalen motioned to approve the extension, with a second from Councilmember Winn.

As discussed at the Caucus Meeting on February 4, Mr. Hall stated the solid waste contract was re-bid in 2018 which resulted in a contract with Rumpke. The term of the contract was two years with four optional two-year extensions. He explained the first extension was authorized in 2021 and the second extension was authorized in 2023. The current two-year contract period expires on March 31, 2025. The residential waste collection rate will increase from \$6.62 per month to \$7.02 per month and the recycling rate would increase from \$4.41 per month to \$4.67 per month. He explained Florence still has the lowest residential trash and/or recycling rates in the area compared with cities in Boone and Kenton County. Mr. Hall stated he would like to exercise the extension based on Rumpke's lowest rates and excellent customer service.

No further discussion was necessitated and based on the motion to approve the extension by Councilmember Whalen and seconded by Councilmember Winn, Mayor Aubuchon requested a Roll Call Vote. Councilmember Wingo, yes; Councilmember Chambers, yes; Councilmember Winn, yes; Councilmember Whalen, yes; Councilmember Schneider, yes; Councilmember Cable, yes. **Roll call recognized six yes votes approving the extension of the Rumpke contract.**

DISCUSSION & POSSIBLE ACTION MUNICIPAL ORDER MO-1-2025:

Mayor Aubuchon read Municipal Order MO-1-2025. A Municipal Order approving the appointment of Jonathan Sterling to the Florence Board of Adjustment and Zoning Appeals to fill the unexpired term of Duane Froelicher.

Mayor Aubuchon called for a motion to approve Municipal Order MO-1-2025. Councilmember Winn motioned to approve, with a second from Councilmember Wingo. Mayor Aubuchon requested a Roll Call Vote. Councilmember Wingo, yes; Councilmember Chambers, yes; Councilmember Winn, yes; Councilmember Whalen, yes; Councilmember Schneider, yes; Councilmember Cable, yes. **Roll call recognized six yes votes approving Municipal Order MO-1-2025 by unanimous vote**

MAYOR'S REPORT:

- Mayor Aubuchon reminded everyone that Monday, February 17, Presidents Day, the City of Florence offices would be open with a Presidents Day display in the lobby.

- Mayor Aubuchon reminded everyone that on Friday evening, February 28, there would be a “Books & Bottles” event at the Florence Nature Park Event Center. Registration for the Books & Bottle Event was online on the city website and on Facebook.
- Mayor Aubuchon reminded everyone that the Children’s Book Festival would be held Saturday morning, March 1 from 10:00 – 12:00 p.m. at the Florence Nature Park Event Center.
- Mayor Aubuchon announced the city would be hosting a city-wide St. Patrick’s Day Scavenger Hunt from March 7-March 17. Participants are to capture their journey by taking photos at each stop and emailing photos to the city to receive a pot of gold prize.
- Mayor Aubuchon announced the Florence Police Department would hold their Police Citizen’s Academy beginning March 26 through May 14.

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, Jeff Mallery:

Chief Mallery did not desire recognition.

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

Mr. Hunt did not desire recognition.

Finance Director, Jason Lewis:

Mr. Lewis did not desire recognition.

Members of the Audience:

Alex Evans, owner of Grateful Skate Shop requested an update on the skate park lighting. Mr. Hall stated that March 1 was set as the start date for the lighting. A decision had not been made as to how that information would be communicated to the public.

Mr. Evans asked what time the lights would turn on. Mr. Hall stated that a specific time had not been set yet.

Mayor Aubuchon explained that the lighting was a pilot program as it conflicts with the city’s park ordinance. A trial period would be implemented to evaluate its impact and effectiveness.

Councilmember Chambers inquired whether Mr. Hall had gathered information on how the lighting system worked at the basketball courts in Boone Woods.

Mr. Hall stated he had not yet received that information.

Councilmember Chambers mentioned that Boone Woods had a feature where users could press a button to reset the playing time. She believed that implementing a similar option for the skate park would benefit citizens who work odd hours, allowing them to use the skate park at their convenience. She expressed hope that the city would permit users to choose their hours for the skate park.

Mr. Evans proposed that the skate park trial hours be set for 11:00 p.m. on weekdays and 12:00 a.m. on weekends. He expressed a desire for citizens to be able to utilize the park as much as possible. Additionally, Mr. Evans suggested installing motion sensor lighting at the skate park to ensure that citizens are not limited to specific hours.

Mayor Aubuchon noted that most city parks are in residential areas, and this should be taken into consideration when scheduling park lighting. She also thanked Mr. Evans for his enthusiasm and appreciated his attendance.

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 or property to be acquired for public use or to be sold by the city and KRS 61.810(1)(c) litigation – proposed or pending against or on behalf of the city. Councilmember Wingo so moved with a second from Councilmember Whalen. **All councilmembers present voted aye, the time being 6:41 p.m.**

Mayor Aubuchon called for a motion to come back into session after the Closed Session. Councilmember Wingo so moved, with a second from Councilmember Winn. **All councilmembers present voted aye, the time being 7:35 p.m.**

ADJOURNMENT:

There being no further business to come before the Council, Mayor Aubuchon called for a motion to adjourn. Councilmember Wingo so moved, with a second from Councilmember Winn. **Councilmembers present voted aye, the time being 7:36 p.m.**

APPROVED:

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

ATTEST:

/s/ Melissa Kramer
Melissa Kramer, City Clerk

