



**Florence City Council
Business Meeting
Tuesday, March 25, 2025
6:00 p.m.**

MINUTES

The City Council of the City of Florence, Kentucky, met in regular session on Tuesday, March 25, 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; Finance Director, Jason Lewis; Fire/EMS Chief, Rodney Wren; Police Captain, Nathan Rettig; Public Services Director, Eric Hall; Director of Administration/City Administrator, Joshua J. Hunt; City Engineer, Bill Viox; City Clerk, Melissa Kramer; Videographer, Perry Weber; and Police Lieutenant, Jason Reed.

The following were also present in the audience: Director of Community Development, Todd Morgan; Resident of Florence, Thomas Judd; Resident of Florence, James Leach; Resident of Florence, Naomi Liebson; Resident of Florence, Zeb Gentry; Resident of Florence, Robert Sergent; NKY Tribune Reporter, Tricia Scheyer; and Representative of Dualite, Jonathan Brouwer.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES:

Mayor Aubuchon called for a motion to approve the minutes of the March 11, 2025, business meeting. Councilmember Whalen motioned to approve the minutes with a second from Councilmember Schneider. **All councilmembers present voted aye.**

PROCLAMATION:

Mayor Aubuchon issued a Proclamation acknowledging April 2025 as Child Abuse Prevention month reading the following Proclamation into record:

WHEREAS, the welfare of children is vital to the future of our communities, and all children have the right to grow up in a safe, nurturing, and supportive environment; and

WHEREAS, child abuse and neglect are serious social problems that can have long-lasting and devastating effects on children, families, and society as a whole; and

WHEREAS, every year thousands of children in our nation, and in our community, experience physical and emotional abuse, as well as neglect, and are left without the support and protection they need to excel; and

WHEREAS, child abuse and neglect can be prevented through awareness, education, support services, and a concerted effort by all members of society to ensure the safety and well-being of children; and

WHEREAS, organizations and individuals in our community are dedicated to raising awareness of the dangers of child abuse and providing resources to prevent abuse, support victims, and educate the public about how to recognize and report child abuse; and

WHEREAS, it is the responsibility of each of us to take action to protect children, ensure their safety, and offer them the love, care, and support they deserve; and

NOW, THEREFORE, I, Julie M. Aubuchon, Mayor of the City of Florence, Kentucky, and on behalf of the members of Florence City Council, do hereby proclaim April 2025 as:

CHILD ABUSE PREVENTION MONTH

in Florence, Kentucky and invite all citizens to duly note this occasion.

IN WITNESS WHEREOF, I have hereunto set my hand and caused the seal of the City of Florence, Kentucky, to be affixed hereto, this 1st day of April 2025.

Mayor Aubuchon reminded everyone that the Blue Ribbon Ceremony, hosted by Tom Gill Chevrolet, is set for Tuesday, April 1 at 11:30 a.m. She encouraged the community to attend and show their support, expressing gratitude to Tom Gill Chevrolet for sponsoring this meaningful event.

FIRST READING ORDINANCE O-8-2025:

Mayor Aubuchon read Ordinance O-8-2025. An Ordinance Adopting and Approving a Change of Concept Development Plan in a Commercial Two/ Planned Development (C-2/PD) District for an approximate 0.97 acre area located at 8534 US 42, Florence, Kentucky, to allow for alternative signage. (Mike's Carwash)

The effect of this Ordinance is to allow a change of concept development plan in a Commercial Two/Planned Development (C-2/PD) district for an approximate 0.97 acre area located at 8534 US 42, Florence, Kentucky, to allow for changes in signage currently located on the site.

The full text of Ordinance O-8-2025 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-8-2025. Councilmember Wingo motioned to approve, with a second from Councilmember Winn.

Councilmember Chambers recalled watching a council meeting several years ago when HealthPoint requested approval for an electronic message board. At the time, she felt city council hesitated to allow it and HealthPoint had to convince them otherwise. Since the time she had served on city council, Councilmember Chambers noted the city had received numerous similar requests, including its own installation of electronic message boards. She asked if any councilmembers could provide insight into the initial reluctance and what led to the shift.

Joshua Hunt, Director of Administration/City Administrator, stated that he was not part of the original discussion and questioned its relevance to the current issue.

City Attorney Thomas R. Nienaber clarified that the decision regarding HealthPoint's electronic message board should not influence the council's consideration of the current request.

Councilmember Whalen believed Councilmember Chambers referenced the HealthPoint request in light of the Mike's Car Wash application. She acknowledged that at the time of HealthPoint's request, there was resistance from council. However, since then, schools have been permitted to install electronic message boards, and council had adopted a more flexible stance.

Mayor Aubuchon noted that between HealthPoint's request and the current proposal from Mike's Car Wash, regulations surrounding electronic message boards had been strengthened.

Todd Morgan, Director of Community Development, agreed that some of the regulations had become more stringent but was uncertain about the exact timeline in relation to HealthPoint's request.

Councilmember Chambers noted that council seemed to have a completely different view on electronic message boards now verses when the HealthPoint board was requested and wondered why the feelings had shifted. She thanked everyone for the information they provided.

Councilmember Wingo believed companies having electronic message boards had become more common practice recently. She believed this was due to schools in the area obtaining electronic message boards without having to follow any regulations. She stated that many other communities in the area do not have as many regulations and had more images flashing on the screen. Additionally, electronic message boards technology had advanced which made them more affordable and better looking.

Councilmember Whalen recommended obtaining historical information regarding the electronic message boards due to the prior hesitation from council due to the fear of the boards causing distracted driving

Mayor Aubuchon stated she was unsure if council's approach to electronic message boards had changed. She stated the request was made by the property owner and had worked its way through the correct process. She agreed that technology had improved and the signs look better than what they used to.

Additionally, Mr. Morgan explained that there had been conditions and more regulations such as 10 second hold times and pixel pitch requirement to ensure messages looked crisper than previously.

No further discussion was necessitated and based on the motion to approve the first reading of Ordinance O-8-2025 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-8-2025 by unanimous vote.**

YOUTH IN GOVERNMENT:

Mayor Aubuchon announced the kickoff of the Youth in Government program, welcoming approximately 200 students from Florence Elementary, Ockerman Elementary, and St. Paul School. She noted that over the course of two additional days, students would continue rotating through the Florence Government Center. She expressed her gratitude to the teachers and administrators whose efforts made the Youth in Government program possible.

MAYOR'S REPORT:

- Mayor Aubuchon reminded everyone that applications were open for the second annual Florence Public Works Academy from June 9 through July 25.
- Mayor Aubuchon invited everyone to join her for Coffee with the Mayor this Friday.
- Mayor Aubuchon reminded everyone the Florence Aquatic Center memberships would go on sale starting April 1 for a special pre-season discount.
- Mayor Aubuchon reminded everyone that the Florence Police Department would host the Annual Easter Egg Hunt on Saturday, April 12 at Thomas More Stadium.
- Mayor Aubuchon reminded everyone that the City of Florence would host the Great American Cleanup on Saturday, April 26.
- Mayor Aubuchon reminded everyone that the Community Photo Contest would take place from May 1- May 15.
- Mayor Aubuchon announced there would be a public hearing on Solar Energy on April 15 at 6:45 p.m. in Council Chambers.

RECOGNITION:

Mayor Aubuchon asked if any of the following desired recognition:

Members of City Council:

Councilmember Whalen noted that the Governor signed a new law allowing fifteen-year-olds to obtain their learner's permits.

Councilmember Chambers reminded everyone that aquatic center memberships would be discounted to \$67 during April and encouraged residents to take advantage of the special rate. She inquired about the primary contact for the aquatic center.

Mayor Aubuchon stated that Anne Kinross would serve as the point of contact for the facility and the city's main contact was Finance Director Jason Lewis.

Councilmember Chambers inquired about marketing efforts.

Mayor Aubuchon stated that Melissa Kramer, City Clerk/Public Relations Administrator, would handle the marketing.

Councilmember Chambers sought clarification on a new regulation requiring that a child be part of a household with at least one adult passholder. She expressed concern, noting that she generally purchased memberships for her nephews even though they do not reside in her household.

Mayor Aubuchon explained that the regulation was implemented to ensure children would be accompanied by an adult.

Councilmember Chambers requested an update on the replacement of the octopus slide, which was out of service last season.

Public Services Director, Eric Hall, explained that new state regulations for water features were recently enacted, which the existing octopus slide did not meet when originally constructed and different chlorination and filtration systems would be required for the replacement. Currently, the city was working with the state on the design of the new features. While they hoped to have it completed by opening day, state approval was required before construction could begin, which could cause delays. If necessary, the existing octopus slide may remain for another year, as installation of a new feature must occur when the pool is empty, and they do not want to postpone the pool's seasonal opening.

Councilmember Chambers thanked Mr. Hall for the update and his efforts. She further inquired whether a temporary water feature could be installed for children affected by the delay.

Mr. Hall confirmed that the city would explore that possibility.

Councilmember Cable also thanked Mr. Hall and his team regarding the construction on her street which had been handled with great accommodation by the workers.

Councilmember Cable mentioned that some residents had reached out regarding Vice Mayor Whalen's comments about individuals posing as Duke Energy representatives to sell solar panels. She reminded everyone to remain vigilant about door-to-door salespeople as well.

Department Heads:

Public Services Director, Eric Hall:

Mr. Hall did not desire recognition.

Police Captain, Nathan Rettig:

Captain Rettig did not desire recognition.

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

Mr. Hunt did not desire recognition.

Fire/EMS Chief, Rodney Wren:

Chief Wren did not desire recognition.

Finance Director, Jason Lewis:

Mr. Lewis did not desire recognition.

Members of the Audience:

Naomi Liebson, Resident of Florence, shared that she had Ehlers-Danlos Syndrome, which affects blood flow to her extremities. She explained that water therapy could help alleviate her symptoms but noted that the heat and sun at the aquatic center worsen her condition. She inquired about the addition of an indoor pool.

Mayor Aubuchon responded that there are currently no plans for an indoor pool, but the city was reviewing the aquatic center master plan. Once the plan was presented to the council, it would be up to the council to decide whether to allocate funding. She also mentioned that the Parks Master Plan was being reviewed, which included potential improvements for six other parks in the city.

Ms. Liebson emphasized that an indoor pool would benefit not only people with Ehlers-Danlos Syndrome but also individuals with other health conditions that could improve with water therapy.

Zeb Gentry, Resident of Florence, acknowledged the upcoming public hearing on solar energy and thanked Councilmember Cable for facilitating it. He also expressed gratitude to the City Clerk for providing documents related to his open records request. Mr. Gentry stated that he

had ten copies of issues he would like to address at the public hearing. Mayor Aubuchon directed him to submit his comments to the City Clerk to be included in the official record.

Robert Sergent, Resident of Florence, expressed concern about pedestrian safety along Wetherington Boulevard between Mt. Zion Road and U.S. 42. He highlighted that the seven crosswalks in the area pose a significant safety risk at all times of the day and night, as vehicles frequently exceed the posted 35 mph speed limit, often reaching speeds of around 55 mph. He also noted that the issue had led to verbal altercations between pedestrians and drivers. Mr. Sergent explained that he initially approached the Plantation Point Homeowners Association for assistance but was informed that they were unable to address the problem. He then brought the matter to Boone County Commissioner Chet Hand, who advised that the county could not act and recommended he reach out to the City of Florence. To seek a resolution, he sent a letter to Councilmember Cable, who acknowledged his concerns and assured him she would pass them along to Joshua Hunt. He also expressed gratitude to Councilmember Chambers for her sensitivity to the issue.

Additionally, Mr. Sergent thanked Melissa Kramer, City Clerk, for keeping him informed about council meetings and the agenda. He also expressed gratitude to everyone for allowing him the opportunity to speak and shared that he feels strongly about the issue because his grandchild attends Erpenbeck Elementary School and walks to and from school every day using the crosswalks and the help of a crossing guard.

Finally, Mr. Sergent invited everyone to take a walk with him along Wetherington Boulevard to see firsthand the pedestrian safety issues in the area.

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 Whalen so moved, with a second from Councilmember Cable. **Councilmembers present voted aye**, the time being 6:28 p.m.

APPROVED:

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

ATTEST:

/s/ Melissa Kramer
Melissa Kramer, City Clerk

