



**Florence City Council
Business Meeting
Tuesday, June 10, 2025
6:00 p.m.**

MINUTES

The City Council of the City of Florence, Kentucky, met in regular session on Tuesday, June 10, 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 five (5) members of council were registered present: Angie Cable, Lesley Chambers, Diane E. Whalen (Vice Mayor), Patricia Wingo, and Gary Winn. Councilmember David M. Schneider was absent.

Staff members present were: City Attorney, Thomas R. Nienaber; Finance Director, Jason Lewis; 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; Videographer, Perry Weber; and Police Lieutenant, Jason Reed.

The following were also present in the audience: Director of Community Development, Todd Morgan; Assistant City Clerk, Brandi Roundtree; Resident of Florence, Joe Berkshire; Resident of Florence, Thomas Judd; Resident of Florence; Resident of Florence, Zeb Gentry; Resident of Florence, Robert Sergeant; and Country Cabins Representatives Jacob Bergman and Mahlon Schlabach.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES:

Mayor Aubuchon called for a motion to approve the minutes of the May 13, 2025, business meeting. Councilmember Whalen motioned to approve the minutes with a second from Councilmember Winn. **All councilmembers present voted aye.**

MUNICIPAL ORDER MO-4-2025:

Mayor Aubuchon read Municipal Order MO-4-2025. A Municipal Order approving the reappointment of Lance Howard to the City of Florence Code Enforcement Board for a three (3) year term.

Mayor Aubuchon called for a motion to approve Municipal Order MO-4-2025. Councilmember Winn motioned to approve, with a second from Councilmember Whalen. **All councilmembers present voted aye.**

MUNICIPAL ORDER MO-5-2025:

Mayor Aubuchon read Municipal Order MO-5-2025. A Municipal Order approving the reappointment of David Spille to the City of Florence Code Enforcement Board for a three (3) year term.

Mayor Aubuchon called for a motion to approve Municipal Order MO-5-2025. Councilmember Wingo motioned to approve, with a second from Councilmember Whalen. **All councilmembers present voted aye.**

MUNICIPAL ORDER MO-6-2025:

Mayor Aubuchon read Municipal Order MO-6-2025. A Municipal Order approving the appointment of Tom Gagnon as the City's Representative and Joseph Newton as the City's Alternate Representative to the Intermodal Coordinating Committee of the Ohio-Kentucky-Indiana Regional Council of Governments.

Mayor Aubuchon called for a motion to approve Municipal Order MO-6-2025. Councilmember Winn motioned to approve, with a second from Councilmember Whalen. **All councilmembers present voted aye.**

MUNICIPAL ORDER MO-7-2025:

Mayor Aubuchon read Municipal Order MO-7-2025. A Municipal Order Approving the Appointment of Thomas Judd to the Boone County Planning Commission as an Appointee of the City of Florence, Kentucky to fill the unexpired term of Kenneth Vaught.

Mayor Aubuchon called for a motion to approve Municipal Order MO-7-2025. Councilmember Whalen motioned to approve, with a second from Councilmember Winn. **All councilmembers present voted aye.**

Mayor Aubuchon informed everyone that the Municipal Orders had been previously discussed during the June 3 Caucus Meeting. Councilmembers received the relevant resumes for review in advance. She noted that Mr. Howard and Mr. Spille had both served on the Code Enforcement Board for several years and had agreed to continue their service. Mr. Judd was appointed to fill

the unexpired term of Kenneth Vaught, who passed away. Additionally, updates were made to the city's staff representation on the OKI board.

FIRST READING ORDINANCE O-11-2025:

Mayor Aubuchon read Ordinance O-11-2025. An Ordinance Adopting and Approving a Zoning Map Amendment/Change of Concept Development Plan in a Suburban Residential Two/Planned Development (SR-2/PD) and Office Two/Planned Development (O-2/PD) Zone To Office Two/Planned Development (O-2/PD) for an approximate 2.06 acre site located at 56-58 Cavalier Boulevard, Florence, Kentucky, to allow for the construction of a 50,645 square foot, four story, 122 room hotel. (Woodspring Suites)

The effect of this Ordinance is to allow a Zoning Map Amendment/Change of Concept Development Plan in a Suburban Residential Two/Planned Development (SR-2/PD) and Office Two/Planned Development (O-2/PD) zone to Office Two/Planned Development (O-2/PD) for an approximate 2.06 acre site located at 56-58 Cavalier Boulevard, Florence, Kentucky, to allow for the construction of a 50,645 square foot, four story, 122 room hotel.

The full text of Ordinance O-11-2025, 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 requested any additional discussion or questions, hearing none, Mayor Aubuchon called for a motion to approve the first reading of Ordinance O-11-2025. Councilmember Wingo motioned to approve, with a second from Councilmember Chambers. Mayor Aubuchon requested a Roll Call Vote. Councilmember Wingo, yes; Councilmember Chambers, yes; Councilmember Winn, yes; Councilmember Whalen, yes; Councilmember Cable, yes. **Roll call recognized five yes votes approving the first reading of Ordinance O-11-2025 by unanimous vote.**

FIRST READING ORDINANCE O-12-2025:

Mayor Aubuchon read Ordinance O-12-2025. An Ordinance Adopting and Approving a Change of Concept Development Plan in an Office Two/Planned Development /Parkway Corridor Overlay (O-2/PD/PO) Zone for an approximate 0.698 acre site located on the south side of Burlington Pike, approximately 235 feet west of the Burlington Pike/Ewing Boulevard Intersection, and between the properties at 7673 and 7777 Burlington Pike, Florence, Kentucky, to keep in place the existing Concept Plan which allows a motor vehicle sales delivery/pick-up location and would also allow a cabin/shed retailer and flower shop in a phased development timeline. (Country Cabins)

The effect of this Ordinance is to allow a Change of Concept Development Plan in an Office Two/Planned Development /Parkway Corridor Overlay (O-2/PD/PO) Zone for an approximate 0.698 acre site located on the south side of Burlington Pike, approximately 235 feet west of the Burlington Pike/Ewing Boulevard Intersection, and between the properties at 7673 and 7777 Burlington Pike, Florence, Kentucky, to keep in place the existing Concept Plan which allows a

motor vehicle sales delivery/pick-up location and would also allow a cabin/shed retailer and flower shop in a phased development timeline.

The full text of Ordinance O-12-2025 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 asked if there were any further questions or discussion regarding Ordinance O-12-2025. Hearing none, she called for a motion to approve the ordinance. No motion was made.

City Attorney Thomas R. Nienaber clarified that the proposed project involved a change to the Concept Development Plan, which follows the same procedures as a zoning map amendment. The Boone County Planning Commission forwarded the application with a recommendation for approval and city council would be required to vote the application down to reject it. He explained that the vote would require a majority of the full council, specifically, four votes to deny the application.

Councilmember Whalen asked whether council could proceed with a motion to deny the application. Attorney Nienaber confirmed that it was procedurally acceptable. Councilmember Whalen made a motion to deny the application.

Before Councilmember Whalen's motion received a second, Mayor Aubuchon clarified that the proposal had been reviewed by the Florence Planning and Zoning Committee, which did not issue a recommendation to City Council. The project was also discussed during the prior week's Caucus Meeting. She further clarified that no vote was required during the first reading of an ordinance, a vote was only necessary during the second reading.

Mayor Aubuchon continued by stating that council had the option to make a motion to deny the proposal, which would require accompanying Findings of Fact to support the denial. Alternatively, Council could choose to take no action, in which case the Boone County Planning Commission's recommendation for approval would stand. She noted that the Florence Planning and Zoning Committee had prepared nearly four pages of conditions should the project be approved by council.

Mayor Aubuchon clarified that if a motion was made and seconded, but subsequently voted down, it would not constitute a denial of the project. A separate, specific motion to deny, supported by Findings of Fact would be required. Attorney Nienaber agreed.

Councilmember Whalen noted that when Mayor Aubuchon had called for a motion to approve the proposal, none was made. She then reiterated that she had made a motion to deny the proposal, which remained on the floor, pending the availability of the necessary Findings of Fact. Attorney Nienaber confirmed that such Findings of Fact would need to be based on the record submitted to council by the Boone County Planning Commission during its public hearing process.

Councilmember Whalen asked whether the draft Findings of Fact for denial had been prepared. Mayor Aubuchon confirmed that draft Findings of Fact had been prepared.

Joshua Hunt, Director of Administration/City Administrator, inquired whether a denial would need to be enacted through a Municipal Order, and whether action on that order would need to be deferred to the next meeting since it was not currently on the agenda.

Councilmember Whalen responded that a motion could be made to add the Municipal Order to the agenda. Both Mayor Aubuchon and Attorney Nienaber confirmed that was correct.

Councilmember Whalen made a motion to add a Municipal Order, including the Findings of Fact for denial of the project, to the agenda. Councilmember Cable seconded the motion.

Mayor Aubuchon requested a Roll Call Vote. Councilmember Wingo, yes; Councilmember Chambers, yes.

Prior to his vote, Councilmember Winn requested clarification on the motion, specifically, whether a “yes” vote signified approval or denial of the project.

Councilmember Whalen stated she made a motion to add a Municipal Order with the findings of facts for denial to the agenda.

Mayor Aubuchon stated the Municipal Order was not prepared and was unable to be placed on the agenda and could be placed on the next agenda for action by council.

Councilmember Whalen requested the draft Findings of Fact be read into the record.

Todd Morgan, Director of Community Development, read the following draft Findings of Fact into the record:

1. The application is not in agreement with the Boone County Comprehensive Plan for the following reasons:
 - a. The application is not in agreement with the “Florence Commercial” or “Florence Central” geographical area text.

“Commercial development in this section should remain near the arterial roads or close to the interstate. These consumer service and traffic-oriented developments must be contained to specific areas adjacent to the arterial roads and interstate. The coordination of curb cuts and parking lot connections in the already developed areas must occur in order to maintain a reasonable ease of travel along these roads. Undeveloped tracts of commercial land should connect to and coordinate with any adjoining commercial, office, or industrial development in existence (Florence Commercial, pg. 126).

“The Parkway Corridor Study, which was originally developed for this area, was updated and replaced by the Central Florence Strategic Plan in 2008. The intent of this plan was to further develop the city’s central neighborhoods and to link existing and/or planned business, civic, recreational, entertainment, and residential

attributes of the study area together to create a vibrant, inter-related city center (Florence Central, pg. 128).”

- b. The application is not in agreement with the following objective:

“Encourage development to occur in efficient, compact, and appropriately scaled designs with consideration of and coordination with surrounding land uses and natural systems. Promote industries in suitable locations to make the county a vital part of a strong regional economy” (Economy, Goal B, Objective 1).

Comments regarding Finding 1 - The pre-manufactured shed/barn/cabin use is not compact, does not connect or coordinate with adjoining properties, and does not follow the recommendations of the Central Florence Strategic Plan.

2. The application is not in agreement with the Central Florence Strategic Plan for the following reasons:
 - a. The “zoning for plan sub-area” 3 text states that “office uses are advocated in the O-2/PD, C-2/PD, and C-3/PD portions of this area (Area 3 – Tanners Lane, pg. 7.2).”
 - b. The area 3 architectural guidelines state that “only high grade materials indicative of a class A office development and which have a solid appearance are permitted, such as clay brick, precast concrete, steel, or steel, and glass. EIFS and other masonry products may be used for wainscots, knee walls, trim, and detailing. Exterior walls shall have rich, natural tones.”

Comments regarding Finding 2 – The pre-manufactured shed/barn/cabin business is not an office use and does not meet the architectural guidelines. Although Carplex was approved on this property in 2021, that Concept Development Plan proposal included superior architecture and landscaping and no outdoor storage.

3. Section 1506 of the Boone County Zoning Regulations states that Concept Development Plan proposals in Planned Development zones shall be primarily evaluated against the Planned Development criteria. The application is not in agreement with the following criteria:
 - a. Architecture – “Sites which are subject to architectural requirements through adopted overlay districts or land use studies shall follow such requirements.”
 - b. Landscaping – “Substantial landscaping shall be provided in a Planned Development with emphasis given to street scape areas, buffer zones, and the provision of significant landscaping (in terms in size of landscape, and quantity and quality of landscape materials) within the developed portions of the site.”
 - c. Conformance with the Comprehensive Plan – See finding #1.

Comments regarding Finding 3 – The pre-manufactured sheds, barns, and cabins do not meet the architectural requirements of the Central Florence Strategic Plan.

The proposed landscaping plan shows that substantial landscaping is not proposed in terms of quantity or quality. The submitted plans included an exception to eliminate the required landscaping buffer along the rear property line.

4. The applicant did present any information indicating that there have been major changes of an economic, physical, or social nature within the area involved which were not anticipated in the adopted comprehensive plan and which have substantially altered the basic character of such area.

Mayor Aubuchon stated that she believed the intent of council was to deny the application. To do so, a Municipal Order including the necessary Findings of Fact must be passed. She explained that city council could vote "no" on Ordinance O-12-2025 at its second reading and then formally adopt a Municipal Order denying the application. Attorney Nienaber agreed, clarifying that at the second reading, council would need to vote to reject the recommendation of the Boone County Planning Commission and deny the proposed change to the Concept Development Plan.

Councilmember Whalen asked for confirmation that, because no motion was made to adopt Ordinance O-12-2025, a second reading would still be required. Attorney Nienaber confirmed, explaining that at the second reading, a motion would be made to reject the Planning Commission's recommendation and deny the application. Mayor Aubuchon reiterated that a vote was not required on the first reading of an Ordinance. Only the vote on the second reading was necessary.

Councilmember Whalen then asked if the only reason council could not take action that evening was because the Municipal Order had not yet been prepared. Attorney Nienaber advised that the draft Findings of Fact had just been read to council and that postponing action until the next meeting would allow adequate time for council to review.

Mayor Aubuchon noted that council was mid vote when the request for clarification was made and asked whether Councilmember Whalen wished to proceed with her motion. Councilmember Whalen withdrew her motion to place it on the agenda for this evening and Councilmember Cable withdrew her second.

FIRST READING ORDINANCE O-13-2025:

Mayor Aubuchon read Ordinance O-13-2025. An Ordinance relating to the adoption and approval of Text Amendments to the Boone County Zoning Regulations Text as applicable to the City of Florence, Kentucky, these Text Amendments being considered for enactment to regulate and define Solar Energy Systems and Battery Storage Facilities and Identify Zoning Districts where such uses are allowed as authorized uses. These Text Amendments Being to Article 40, Section 4000; Article 5, Section 505.1; Article 5, Section 505.2; Article 5, Section 505.3; Article 5, Section 505.4; Article 5, Section 505.5; Article 31, Section 3117; and Article 31, Section 3118.

The purpose of this Ordinance is to approve text amendments to the Boone County Zoning Regulations Text, these text amendments being enacted to define Solar Energy Systems and Battery Storage Facilities and identify Zoning Districts where such uses are allowed as authorized uses.

The full text of Ordinance O-13-2025, 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 Boulevard, Florence, Kentucky, during regular office hours.

Mayor Aubuchon called for a motion to approve the first reading of Ordinance O-13-2025. Councilmember Wingo motioned to approve, with a second from Councilmember Winn.

Councilmember Cable expressed her appreciation that a public hearing was held, allowing residents the opportunity to share their perspectives. However, she voiced concern that the proposed changes could still make it more difficult and expensive for residents who wish to install solar panels on their properties.

Councilmember Chambers believed the ordinance was attempting to regulate a problem that did not exist. In her view, solar panels were not an eyesore requiring additional regulations and many of the concerns addressed in the ordinance were already covered by existing electrical codes. She believed that given rising energy costs, the city should avoid placing unnecessary obstacles in front of residents seeking to lower their utility bills. She also felt that the proposed regulations could discourage potential businesses and negatively affect school tax revenues if the Florence school system decided to pursue solar panel installations. Councilmember Chambers concluded by expressing her confidence in the ability of residents and businesses to make responsible decisions about the use of solar panels on their own properties.

Mayor Aubuchon noted that schools are exempt from zoning regulations.

Mayor Aubuchon requested any additional discussion or questions, hearing none, and based on the motion by Councilmember Wingo and second from Councilmember Winn, Mayor Aubuchon requested a Roll Call Vote. Councilmember Wingo, yes; Councilmember Chambers, no; Councilmember Winn, yes; Councilmember Whalen, yes; Councilmember Cable, no. **Roll call recognized three yes votes and two no votes approving the first reading of Ordinance O-13-2025 by majority vote.**

FIRST READING ORDINANCE O-14-2025:

Mayor Aubuchon read Ordinance O-14-2025. An Ordinance of the City of Florence, Kentucky, amending the budget for the 2024-2025 Fiscal Year of the City. (Amendment #2)

The purpose of this amendment is to reflect an increase in expenditures from the Health and Dental Self-Insurance Fund to reflect increases in Bank Service Charges, Administrative Services, HRA Claims, Health and Dental Claims and Section 125 Employee Reimbursement accounts.

Mayor Aubuchon requested any additional discussion or questions, hearing none, Mayor Aubuchon called for a motion to approve the first reading of Ordinance O-14-2025. Councilmember Wingo motioned to approve, with a second from Councilmember Whalen. Mayor Aubuchon requested a Roll Call Vote. Councilmember Wingo, yes; Councilmember Chambers, yes; Councilmember Winn, yes; Councilmember Whalen, yes; Councilmember Cable, yes. **Roll**

call recognized five yes votes approving the first reading of Ordinance O-14-2025 by unanimous vote.

MAYOR'S ANNUAL STATE OF THE CITY:

Mayor Aubuchon presented the Annual State of the City Address:

It is my pleasure to present the annual State of the City, as a follow up to last week's Budget Address. Each year, the state of the city address is an opportunity to share the overall health of our esteemed city with my fellow elected officials, city staff, business owners and most importantly, the residents of Florence. I am blessed to lead such a dedicated group of individuals as your Mayor.

Tonight is more than just an update, it is a chance to reflect on where we have been, honor those who have shaped our path, and look ahead to the possibilities before us. Our city continues to move forward with purpose, driven by shared values of service, community, and progress.

One face is deeply missed tonight. In January, we lost longtime Councilmember David A. Osborne. His decades of public service and commitment to Florence leave a mark on our community. We continue to feel that absence. Following his passing, Florence City Council moved through a thoughtful, respectful process to appoint David M. Schneider to fill the vacancy. His experience and dedication have already made a positive impact.

I am honored to serve alongside Mr. Schneider and Councilmembers Lesley Chambers, Patricia Wingo, and Gary Winn, Diane Whalen and Angie Cable.

Together with this Council, and with the leadership of our department heads, City Administrator/Administration Director, Joshua J. Hunt, Finance Director, Jason Lewis, Fire/EMS Chief, Rodney Wren, Police Chief, Jeff Mallery, and Public Services Director, Eric Hall, we are focused on delivering results that matter for Florence.

Our shared mission is to provide the highest quality of life for the people in our community, not as a slogan, but as a daily commitment. Through the dedication of our departments, the partnership of our businesses, and the commitment to our residents, we are shaping a Florence that is not only growing, but prosperous, a city where people feel connected and proud to live.

The general fund budget proposal for 2025-2026 projects revenues of \$52.4 million dollars. The City of Florence's operating costs are \$41.5 million, which is an overall 10% increase over those budgeted for the Fiscal Year 2024-2025. This is mainly due to a rise in operating expenses over the prior year and the addition of personnel in every department.

The projected expenditures, which includes operating expenditures, capital expenditures, and transfers to other city funds are estimated at \$64.7 million. The City of Florence has planned expenditures for capital items of \$19.4 million, which is a 24% decrease from last year.

The Administration Budget totals \$4.9 million and covers expenditures for the Administration and Finance Departments, as well as costs for the entirety of the city for, Human Resources, Events, Human Services, Information Technology and Risk Management Services.

Though the Finance Department may be the smallest city department with just seven dedicated team members, their impact is vast. They ensure every department has the resources needed to serve our community effectively. The Finance Department is often the first point of contact for residents and local businesses seeking assistance with financial questions, payments, and services.

From budgeting to payments, their work supports every facet of city operations.

Over the past year, the department has experienced significant transition and growth. Linda Chapman, our Chief Financial Officer retired in October after years of service to our city. We welcomed Jason Lewis as our new Finance Director in September 2024. Jason brings valuable experience and a fresh perspective to this important role. Additionally, through the fall and winter, the team grew stronger with the addition of Christin Kling, as Staff Accountant and Christine Moon, as Finance Clerk. Meanwhile, Jason Cobb, a long standing member of the department, was promoted to Senior Accountant.

These changes have strengthened the department allowing for additional oversight of our financial operations.

Beyond managing citywide financial operations, the Finance team also oversees the finances of the Florence Aquatic Center and World of Golf. Both facilities have seen remarkable community engagement, with Aquatic Center memberships surpassing prior year numbers in 2024 during the pre-sale discounted period, and World of Golf having its strongest year ever, momentum that continues into 2025.

Looking ahead, the department is focused on enhancing accessibility for our residents. Plans are underway to launch a new interactive Finance Dashboard. This tool will provide the public with more accessibility to explore the city's financial position. Additionally, both the city's budget and audit reports will continue to be readily available on our website. These initiatives, combined with the upcoming fiscal year 2025/2026 budget, underscore our commitment to thoughtful financial stewardship and building public trust.

Jason, thank you and your entire. You are truly our "Economic Warriors" and your efforts keep Florence financially strong and poised for continued growth. On behalf of the Florence City Council and myself, thank you for all that you do.

The next department I want to recognize is the Administration Department, led by our Director of Administration/City Administrator, Joshua Hunt. Josh and his team work behind the scenes every day to ensure smooth governance, thoughtful planning, and forward momentum as we shape our city's future.

Over the past year, the department has continued to evolve through strategic staffing and reorganization, strengthening our ability to serve the other departments of the city as they meet the growing and changing needs of our residents. One notable addition is Laura Grant, who joined our team to lead Human Resources. In just a short time, she has made a lasting impact, revamping our personnel policies for compliance and clarity and enhancing our onboarding process to better support new team members from day one.

We also welcomed Eric Bowles to serve as the Records Clerk to support the City Clerk/Public Relations Administrator team. This team continues to play a critical role in managing legislative agendas, preserving official records, responding to online citizen inquiries, and keeping our residents informed through media and outreach. Their efforts led to the launch of our Visitor Guide, set to debut in July, and the creation of a new communication platform that will improve how we share updates about events, meetings, and city services.

We continue to grow the city's digital presence through social media and with the addition of outdoor digital display boards, this will help continue to share timely announcements and community information directly with our residents and visitors. This ongoing work not only increases accessibility and engagement but helps ensure that Florence residents stay connected in meaningful and modern ways.

One special initiative that reflects this effort is our annual Community Photo Contest, which continues to grow in popularity. The winning entries are now proudly displayed in the Florence Government Center, celebrating the beauty of our city and its landmarks through the eyes of our residents.

Our events team also saw new leadership this past year with the addition of Tina Benjamin as Community Services Coordinator. Alongside the Community Services Administrator, this team has taken city events to the next level. From large scale favorites like Halloween Night Out, the Christmas Tree Lighting, Veterans Day Program, Easter Egg Hunt, and the Memorial Day Parade and Program, they continue to create memorable experiences for residents of all ages.

We also saw new additions including the Holiday Card Contest, which drew submissions from both local schools and community members. Mrs. Claus and I had the joy of delivering these cards, alongside the Human Services Administrator, to three senior living facilities during the holiday season, bringing the spirit of the season to those who could not join us in person.

Their creativity and dedication are helping us reach more people than ever. Beyond public events, this team also oversees the Nature Park Event Center, Kalb Gathering House, and park shelter rentals, which remain in high demand throughout the year. These facilities give residents and visitors a place to gather, celebrate, and enjoy all that our city has to offer.

The work of our Human Services Administrator, Katie James, continues to grow in importance. This year, she has been instrumental in outreach to the unhoused, assisting our first responders with families in crisis, code enforcement matters, and supporting residents through the Good Neighbor Program. Following the Ridgecrest tragedy in our community last July, her presence and support proved invaluable. She also led our city's 9/11 Day of Service, coordinating volunteers to clean up the I-75 corridor, and working with Amazon team members to beautify the historic Florence Cemetery. Her efforts continue to connect people with purpose, helping us serve our city and one another with compassion.

On the economic development front, we welcomed Todd Morgan as Director of Community Development in August. His contribution has reinforced our city's proactive approach to attracting new businesses and managing responsible growth. Florence remains a destination for business investment and innovation.

Over the past year, we have celebrated ribbon cuttings for a wide range of new businesses including the Amazon DKY9 Last Mile Facility, Drury Plaza Hotel, Spear Ridge Café, People's Exchange Bank, Mall Road

Treasures, Josh's Barber Shop, Dave's Hot Chicken and the second Florence location of Mike's Carwash. We are also excited to welcome the new 7 Brew Coffee locations opening soon.

Meanwhile, construction is officially underway on Publix bringing a highly requested grocery option to our residents along with The Hive Salon Studios and CarMax, both preparing to open their doors. Additional projects in the pipeline include Liv Smart Studios on Merchants Street and Woodspring Suites on Cavalier Blvd.

With the Drury Inn now complete and the Residence Inn on Meijer Drive on the horizon, Florence continues to serve as a hub for tourism, lodging, and commerce. Florence remains a highly sought after location to live, work, and invest.

This year, Florence experienced \$273.1 million in new capital investments, oversaw the completion of \$134.3 million in new capital investments with \$106.8 million under construction. We also have \$32 million in capital investments in the pipeline, proof that the momentum is strong and the future is bright.

The economic development team is also taking on a new public art initiative and overseeing master planning for six city properties, further enhancing the way we live, connect, and grow.

Josh, thank you and thank you to your entire team. The Administration Department supports every department, every councilmember, and every resident. From planning and policy to communication and community care, your work is woven into everything we do. Your commitment is felt every day and in every corner of Florence. Thank you for all you do.

The next department I would like to focus on is the Public Services Department, led by Director Eric Hall. The department budget is \$7.3 million.

This department has had an exceptional year marked by growth, innovation, and dedication to enhancing our community. With a team of 73 skilled professionals, they are the backbone of Florence, working behind the scenes to keep our city safe, beautiful, and running smoothly every day.

Since July, the department welcomed several new members including Eric Ford, Tyler Orling, Landen Carpenter, Kevin Turner, and Brandon Webster who have brought fresh energy to crucial roles maintaining our infrastructure and services.

One of the year's hallmark achievements was the successful completion of the inaugural Public Works Academy. This innovative program, launched last summer, provided candidates with hands on training and certifications across all divisions, setting the foundation for a highly skilled municipal workforce for years to come. The second annual Public Works Academy will continue this important workforce development, providing hands-on community projects at Southfork Park.

Throughout the year, Public Services delivered essential infrastructure improvements, including road resurfacing projects, enhancements to neighborhood sidewalks, and the official renaming and renovation of the Stringtown Tennis Courts. Their team also supported cherished community traditions including the annual holiday light display at the Christmas Tree Lighting event and all city events. During the leaf pickup program, they collected approximately 81.5 loads, about 141 tons of leaves that have been turned into compost for our parks and mulching.

Winter brought significant challenges with nine snow events from November 24 to February 25 accumulating 29.3 inches of snow. During this period, the department used 2,285 tons of salt and 5,453 gallons of calcium to keep roads clear and safe. Our “snow defenders” worked nonstop through harsh conditions, ensuring that Florence remained accessible and functional during the Snow Emergency. Their relentless efforts kept our streets open and residents safe, proving once again their critical role in city operations.

Public Services manages an impressive scale of work: 181 lane miles of streets, 154 miles of sidewalks and bike paths, 263 acres of public grounds, 9,147 water meters, and 19 stormwater detention basins. They completed multiple utility repairs, street maintenance projects, and capital improvements that collectively strengthen our city’s infrastructure and resilience.

Modernization continues to be a key focus. This year, the department upgraded LED lighting across multiple city facilities and acquired their first mini excavator, improving efficiency while managing costs. The team completed 20 safety training courses, mechanics earned six ASE certifications, and code enforcement officers achieved nationally recognized credentials—demonstrating a commitment to professional growth and operational excellence.

Looking ahead, Public Services has ambitious plans for Florence’s future. Major infrastructure projects include the reconstruction of Ridgeway Avenue, Old US 42, and Lucas Street, alongside water main improvements on Ridgeway, Claxon Drive, and Banklick. The Greenview Pump Station modernization and completion of Mall Road Phase III will enhance utility reliability and transportation connectivity. Reclamite treatment will extend the lifespan of key roadways, ensuring safer travel for all.

Neighborhood connectivity remains a top priority with new sidewalk additions planned for Russell and Center Streets and street improvements underway across multiple areas, including Action Boulevard and the Florence Marketplace. Sanitary and storm sewer relining projects will also help safeguard infrastructure from future weather impacts.

Public Services is also making significant enhancements to our parks and recreation facilities. Following 18 months of public engagement, upgrades are planned across all six active parks as part of the Parks Master Plan. These include a fishing pier and walking trails at Orleans Park; expansion of the disc golf course at South Fork Park; turf baseball fields, fencing, restroom, and parking upgrades at Lincoln Woods Park; a new splash pad and additional seating at Kentaboo Park; a second basketball court and parking at Stringtown Park; and lighting and maintenance enhancements at the Florence Skate Park.

Facility modernization remains a priority, with LED lighting upgrades completed at the Florence Government Center, Rosetta Campus, and Fire Base 3, reducing energy consumption and improving workplace environments.

None of these accomplishments would be possible without the dedication of Eric Hall and the entire Public Services team, who keep Florence’s streets clear, parks beautiful, functional, and infrastructure strong.

From battling winter storms as our “snow defenders” to maintaining our parks and public spaces year round, they are the foundation of daily life in Florence. They are out before dawn and long after dusk, making this city not just a place to live, but a community we proudly call home.

Thank you, Eric, and your incredible team, for your relentless commitment to making Florence a great place to live.

Next, I would like to recognize the outstanding efforts of our Florence Fire/EMS Department, led by Fire/EMS Chief Rodney Wren. The department budget is \$15.4 million. The Florence Fire/EMS continues to set the standard in emergency response, community outreach, and innovation. 2024 designated the department as the busiest fire department in Northern Kentucky responding to 11,239 service calls. On average, they handled 936 calls per month, with approximately 84% of those being EMS-related. Their personnel responded to 250 fires and nearly 9,500 emergency medical calls, working diligently to protect lives and property. Despite these high call volumes, their professionalism and efficiency helped limit reported property and contents losses to approximately \$3.85 million.

March 17th marked a significant milestone for the department with the official opening and start of operations at our fourth firehouse and headquarters, Station #34 on Dream Street. The addition of Station #34 expands our coverage area, improves response times, and strengthens the department's ability to meet the growing needs of our community.

To fully staff the new station and respond to increasing service demands, the department hired thirteen new personnel bringing fresh energy and expertise to an already high performing team. Those individuals include Zachary Doyle, Cody Flickinger, Mutaz Al-Ramahi, Evan Kerns, Kyle Merkin, Aidan Bray, Connor Gregory, Bradley Althausen, Justin Schmitt and Joe Melville. Additionally, the department also welcomed Paramedics Sami Corbin, Brooke Schermann, Lauren Goldfuss, Jonna Wilson as well as Firefighter/Paramedics, Zach Castleberry and Cristian Espinoza.

This past year also marked the retirement of longtime Assistant Chief John Black in August. We thank him for his many years of dedicated service to the City of Florence. The department wished Firefighter Austin Messer all the best as he transitioned to his new role with the Florence Police Department.

The department experienced several additional personnel changes throughout the year. Rob Barth, Matt Craft, Vince Lanning, Brendan McHugh, Candice Stewart and Josh Tucker were promoted to Lieutenants while Josh Corry, Ricky Lang, and Brent Wuest were promoted to Captains, each demonstrating strong leadership and a continued commitment to excellence in service.

This year, several members of their team were recognized for their outstanding performance with awards presented by St. Elizabeth Healthcare and the American Heart Association. Stroke Brain Pins were awarded to Firefighter/Paramedic Christian Ritchie and Firefighter/EMT Ryan Johnston in January 2025, and to Paramedic Sami Corbin and Firefighter/EMT Josh Abdon in April 2025, honoring their exceptional achievement in the fastest "door to needle" times in stroke care, critical moments that can mean the difference between life and death. Additionally, STEMI Challenge Coins were presented in October 2024 to Firefighter/Paramedics Vince Lanning, Brayden Collins, Christian Ritchie, and Ryan Johnston, as well as Captains Jon McNamara and Chris Fuhrmann for their excellence in cardiac emergency care. Their dedication and precision reflects the highest standards of emergency medical service.

The department also launched the Community Paramedicine Program, a collaboration between Florence Fire/EMS, St. Elizabeth Healthcare, and the City of Covington and is one of the most exciting initiatives of the year. This program is designed to deliver preventive and non-emergency care directly to residents' homes, reducing strain on the 911 system and offering a smarter, more compassionate approach to community wellness.

Florence Fire/EMS continues to be a leader in training and education. The department remains a proud host site for Gateway's Paramedic Class, helping train the next generation of lifesavers. Their team logged thousands of training hours, reinforcing their commitment to excellence.

Maintaining an ISO-2 rating, Florence Fire/EMS continues to operate at the highest standard of professional excellence. That dedication is now being taken even further with exciting plans for the year ahead. The department is preparing for the delivery of a new aerial truck, designated Ladder #34, which will replace the department's 2005 model. The new apparatus is equipped with the latest safety features and upgraded capabilities to support secure elevated operations. In September, the department will also launch Florence's first ever Citizens Fire Academy, offering residents a unique opportunity to go behind the scenes and gain insight into the vital work our Fire/EMS team performs every day. The department will continue to invest in EMS training, and the expansion of the Drone Program to stay at the forefront of modern emergency response practices.

The department remains deeply engaged with residents, offering fire extinguisher training to local industries, school visits, and their annual Fire Safety Poster Contest in October. They hosted CPR and AED classes, helped install smoke detectors, and participated in local career fairs, senior exit interviews at Boone County High School, and public events. Additionally, the Toy and Hygiene Drive benefiting Boone County Family Resource Centers is a highlight. The department plans for annual Safety Day events, and educational presentations at local senior housing facilities, all designed to promote public safety awareness across Florence.

To Chief Wren, the command staff, and every member of Florence Fire/EMS, thank you. Your courage, skill, and steady presence in the most critical moments make an extraordinary difference in the lives of our residents. Firefighters and emergency personnel are a rare kind of professional, running toward danger when others step back, staying calm under pressure, and making life saving decisions in seconds. Whether you are providing emergency medical care, fighting fires, or teaching safety to our community, you do so with professionalism and heart. We are proud to support your continued growth and deeply thankful for the role you play in keeping Florence safe.

And last, but certainly not least, I want to recognize the Florence Police Department, under the leadership of Chief Jeff Mallery. The department budget is \$13.9 million.

This year, the department expanded to 76 sworn officers, each serving with professionalism and dedication across patrol, investigations, drug enforcement, and community resource units. In fiscal year 2024–2025, our officers responded to 57,287 calls for service, an increase from the previous year, leading to 82,956 vehicle responses. These numbers reflect not just activity, but the department's unwavering commitment to public safety.

Traffic-related incidents made up 28% of their overall calls, marking a 5% increase, while general service requests like alarm drops and information inquiries accounted for 43%. Criminal calls held steady at 18%, and administrative calls rounded out the remaining 11%.

Traffic enforcement continues to be a major focus, with 9,003 traffic stops conducted this year. The top violations, speeding, with over 1,000 stops, and failure to wear seatbelts, with nearly 400. Encouragingly, traffic accidents dropped by 3%, down to 2,921.

In general service calls, saw a 20% increase in animal complaints, a 15% rise in juvenile-related calls, and a 13% uptick in calls related to destitute individuals. Requests for information also increased by 5%. Meanwhile, several areas saw welcome declines, loitering calls decreased by 15%, welfare checks by 10%, missing persons reports decreased by 4%, and alarm drops decreased by 2%.

This year, the department welcomed nine new officers, including one lateral transfer, Dakota Brady and eight new recruits entered the police academy: Jeffrey Morgan, Austin Messer, Caleb Hightchew, Layla Robinson, Amin El Brahmi, Cole Rankin, Aaron Spencer and John Martini.

Several officers advanced in rank, reflecting their dedication and leadership. Promotions included Nathan Rettig to Police Captain; Mike Geis to Police Lieutenant; Tad Ecklar and Josh Koors to Police Sergeant; Ethan Manley, Patrick Taylor, and Darry Hutcherson, Jr. to Police Corporal.

We also recognized and honored the retirements of three longtime officers including Officers Sean McKibbin, Patrick Cottingham and Police Captain Eric Bowles. We thank them for their years of service and commitment to the Florence community.

One of the most profound demonstrations of our officers' courage and professionalism occurred during the Ridgecrest tragedy on July 6, 2024. Faced with an unimaginable situation, the Florence Police Department responded with remarkable speed, bravery, and composure. The department's response as a whole stood as a powerful testament to their training, teamwork, and dedication. The "Lifesaver Award" was presented to Sergeant Michael Gonterman, Officer Tyler Jackson, and Officer Hunter Jacobs for their heroic efforts during the active shooter response. Additionally, Detective Keith Guidice received a "Letter of Commendation" for his outstanding professionalism and leadership as the lead investigator in the case. For his exceptional actions that day, Officer Tyler Jackson was awarded the 2024 Chief Robert Shields Memorial Award for Outstanding Police Service by the Northern Kentucky Police Chiefs Association.

Over the past year, the department was honored with other notable accolades that reflect the dedication and excellence of our officers. Officer Cobi Allgeier received the Mothers Against Drunk Driving (MADD) Award for his outstanding efforts in DUI enforcement, while Officer Hunter Jacobs was recognized with the 2024 Governor's Impaired Driving Award for his commitment to keeping impaired drivers off Florence's streets.

Officer Jacob Sander was awarded the Florence Police Medal of Valor for his heroic actions on January 12, when he rescued a citizen who had fallen through ice covered water. Officer Stanaland and Corporal Chapman were also commended for their exceptional service during a critical incident involving the Cabinet for Health and Family Services, demonstrating professionalism and compassion in a challenging situation.

The department continued the impactful D.A.R.E. program, educating over 600 of our young residents. They hosted a successful Spring Citizens Academy, providing residents with a behind the scenes look at law enforcement operations. I am especially proud to say they are bringing back the Youth CSI Camp, an incredible opportunity to engage and connect with the next generation. Beyond education, the Department also raised funds for Cincinnati

Children's Cancer Unit during their annual No Shave November campaign and collected stuffed animals at their Annual Stuff a Cruiser Event to bring comfort to the youngest members of our community in times of crisis.

While meeting today's needs, the Florence Police Department is preparing for tomorrow's challenges. They continue to evolve, integrating cutting edge tools like Flock Safety cameras and staying at the forefront of best practices through regular training and data driven policing. They were the proud recipients of automated external defibrillators from Project Heart Restart, another step toward enhancing their life saving capabilities.

Thank you, Chief Mallery, and every member of your department. Every day you wear the badge, you do so not for applause, but to serve and protect others, even on the hardest days. You face danger head on, show up for our most vulnerable, and bring calm to chaos. This year, you have shown resilience, compassion, and strength. Through all of it, you have never hesitated. We are grateful for you and we are proud to call you Florence's finest.

This past year has brought its share of accomplishments and challenges, but through it all, Florence has shown its resilience. We continue to move forward, honoring our history while writing the next chapter of our own.

As the photos from this past year scroll across the screen and I share this message with you tonight, one thing is clear, change is constant. We must respect our past, but we must also embrace the future because without change, there can be no growth and Florence is a vibrant, evolving city.

I am pleased to lead this journey alongside Florence City Council, our department heads, and our team of 277 dedicated city employees.

To our residents, businesses, and visitors, thank you. This past year's successes were only possible because of your partnership and I know that together, we will continue to achieve even more in the year ahead.

Thank you to our city staff for your commitment. Thank you to our council for your vision and leadership. Most of all, thank you to our community for your trust. Together, we are building a city that is safe, forward thinking, and full of promise.

I will always be proud to call Florence home for me and for my family. Every time someone asks me where I am from, I proudly tell them: "Florence, Y'all," because that water tower is not just a landmark, it is a symbol of who we are.

Thank you, and may God bless our city.

DISCUSSION – CPI ADJUSTMENTS:

Mayor Aubuchon called upon Joshua J. Hunt, Director of Administration/City Administrator, to address a request from council regarding cost of living adjustments.

Mr. Hunt stated that a memo was included in council packets regarding the cost-of-living adjustment (COLA) for elected officials inquiry that was raised during the recent budget workshop. He explained that legal and procedural research had been conducted, including a review of the city's existing ordinance and relevant state statutes. According to Ordinance O-9-06, compensation for elected officials was automatically adjusted annually based on the Consumer Price Index (CPI) as calculated by the Department of Local Government (DLG). Mr. Hunt noted

that similar language appears in CPI ordinances across many Kentucky cities. He explained that legislation enacted in 2006 designated DLG as the independent agency responsible for setting CPI-based COLA rates using an external economic index. At the budget workshop, a question was raised about whether Council could amend the ordinance to allow members to decline the annual COLA. After consulting City Attorney Thomas R. Nienaber and the Kentucky League of Cities (KLC), Mr. Hunt reported that such flexibility is not permitted under state statute. As outlined in the memo, the current budget reflects the CPI-based increase for elected officials.

Councilmember Whalen expressed appreciation for the research and legal opinion provided but stated she found it difficult to believe that council would not have the authority to revoke an ordinance it had previously enacted. Based on her own conversations with KLC, she understood that the ordinance could be repealed prior to May in an election year, avoiding any impact on sitting members. In her view, if council wanted to forgo CPI adjustments in the future, they could repeal the ordinance ahead of the next election cycle.

Attorney Nienaber stated that he had consulted with KLC, reviewed state statutes, and examined the Kentucky Constitution. Based on his interpretation, council could repeal the ordinance, but the COLA would still be required by law. He explained that to eliminate the adjustment, council would need to pass a new ordinance reducing base compensation by the estimated amount of the next two years' COLA increases. The required COLA would then bring the salary back to the current level. He reiterated that, according to statute and supported by KLC, elected officials cannot decline the annual COLA increase.

Councilmember Whalen noted that she would share her correspondence with the Kentucky League of Cities with Attorney Nienaber following the meeting.

FIRST READING ORDINANCE O-15-2025:

Mayor Aubuchon read Ordinance O-15-2025. An Ordinance of the City of Florence, Kentucky, adopting the official budget for the 2025-2026 Fiscal Year of the city.

This Ordinance adopts the fiscal year 2025-2026 budget of the City, including the General Fund, the Municipal Aid Road Fund, the Infrastructure Fund, the Asset Forfeiture Fund, the Health and Dental Self-Insurance Fund, the Aquatic Center Fund, the Golf Course Fund and the Water & Sewer Fund. Budgeted resources and expenditures are as shown on Exhibit "A".

The full text of Ordinance O-15-2025, 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-15-2025. Councilmember Wingo motioned to approve, with a second from Councilmember Whalen. Mayor Aubuchon requested a Roll Call Vote. Councilmember Wingo voted yes. Councilmember Chambers requested recognition and expressed her support for the budget, calling it a strong step forward for City of Florence employees. She emphasized the importance of continuing efforts to ensure employees have a healthy work life balance. She also thanked the department heads for

their dedication and hard work and shared her hope that future budgets would continue to build on this positive momentum.

The Roll Call Vote proceeded: Councilmember Wingo, yes; Councilmember Chambers, yes; Councilmember Winn, yes; Councilmember Whalen, yes; Councilmember Cable, yes. **Roll call recognized five yes votes approving the first reading of Ordinance O-15-2025 by unanimous vote.**

FIRST READING ORDINANCE O-16-2025:

Mayor Aubuchon read Ordinance O-16-2025. An Ordinance relating to personnel thereby amending Ordinance O-26-2024 relating to Job Descriptions, Authorized Positions and Pay Plan.

The purpose of this amendment to the Job Descriptions, Pay Plan, and List of Authorized Positions is to add one position for Project Manager (TID); add three positions for Police Officer; add one position for Director of Human Resources; create the job description for Project Manager (TID); create the job description for Director of Human Resources; and update the Pay Plan.

The full text of Ordinance O-16-2025, 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 requested any additional discussion or questions, hearing none, Mayor Aubuchon called for a motion to approve the first reading of Ordinance O-16-2025. 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 Cable, yes. **Roll call recognized five yes votes approving the first reading of Ordinance O-16-2025 by unanimous vote.**

FIRST READING ORDINANCE O-17-2025:

Mayor Aubuchon read Ordinance O-17-2025. An Ordinance amending Ordinance O-25-2024 relating to Florence's Personnel Policy Manual.

The purpose of this Ordinance O-17-2025 is to adopt and approve amendments to the City of Florence Personnel Policy Manual. These amendments include adding Seniority Pay and Educational Incentives; and updating Pregnancy Leave to Paternal Leave.

The full text of Ordinance O-17-2025, 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 requested any additional discussion or questions, hearing none, Mayor Aubuchon called for a motion to approve the first reading of Ordinance O-17-2025. Councilmember Chambers motioned to approve, with a second from Councilmember Cable.

Mayor Aubuchon requested a Roll Call Vote. Councilmember Wingo, yes; Councilmember Chambers, yes; Councilmember Winn, yes; Councilmember Whalen, yes; Councilmember Cable, yes. **Roll call recognized five yes votes approving the first reading of Ordinance O-17-2025 by unanimous vote.**

MAYOR'S REPORT:

- Mayor Aubuchon reminded everyone to attend the Movies in the Park this month. Movies would be free and there would also be complimentary popcorn.
- Mayor Aubuchon announced that city offices would be closed on Thursday, June 19 in observance of Juneteenth.
- Mayor Aubuchon reminded everyone that the Florence Police Department would be offering its popular CSI camp this summer for students entering 6th or 7th grade. Applications are due by June 20 to Samantha.riley@florence-ky.gov.
- Mayor Aubuchon reminded everyone that the city would host the Annual Independence Day Celebration on Thursday, July 3 at the Florence Government Center. The evening would feature live music by the Florence Community Band and "Under the Sun" followed by fireworks. Rain date for fireworks only would be July 4.
- Mayor Aubuchon invited everyone to join her for "Cookies and Conversations with the Mayor" on Thursday, July 10 from 2:00 to 3:30 for an informal conversation over lemonade and cookies. This would be a great opportunity to enjoy lemonade and cookies while asking questions, sharing ideas and staying connected.

RECOGNITION:

Mayor Aubuchon asked if any of the following desired recognition:

Members of City Council:

Councilmember Chambers announced that the local nonprofit, For Families by Families, would host a Juneteenth Freedom Day Celebration at the Florence Nature Park on Juneteenth from 12- 5.

Department Heads:

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.

Fire/EMS Chief, Rodney Wren:
Chief Wren did not desire recognition.

Finance Director, Jason Lewis:
Mr. Lewis did not desire recognition.

Public Services Director, Eric Hall
Mr. Hall did not desire recognition.

Members of the Audience:

Joe Berkshire, Resident of Florence, addressed city council and commended the Police Department and Katie James for their efforts in supporting the unhoused along US 42. He also praised Todd Morgan for his ideas regarding park improvements and redevelopment of the former Michels property. Mr. Berkshire noted that while departments like Public Works, Police, and Fire/EMS receive recognition, the hard work of city council and the Mayor often goes unnoticed.

He also voiced concern over the current state of the Florence Library, suggesting it was in need of renovations and encouraged city council to advocate with the Library Board, who he believed may be unaware of the branch's needs. He also requested that a photo of Charles Fleek in the lobby of the Florence Government Center be transferred to the Petersburg Library, where Mr. Fleek was buried.

Mayor Aubuchon thanked Mr. Berkshire for his comments and acknowledged his passion for the library. She noted that former Mayor, current Councilmember Whalen, has strongly advocated for Florence during prior renovation decisions.

Mr. Berkshire expressed disappointment with the Walton Branch upgrades and hoped for a different architectural approach for Florence.

Councilmember Whalen stated that Florence representatives had been actively attending Library Board meetings, emphasizing both the city's contributions and the need for improvements at the Florence branch.

Mr. Berkshire noted that Chet Hand had been appointed as a non-voting board member and expressed hope for his support.

Mayor Aubuchon stated that new Library Board members would be appointed later this month and expressed optimism about future collaboration to benefit the Florence Branch. She thanked Mr. Berkshire for his comments.

Jacob Bergman, Representative of Country Cabins, asked if he would be permitted to present his case regarding the proposed Country Cabins development.

Mayor Aubuchon informed Mr. Bergman that he could only comment on matters already entered into the record but would not be permitted to introduce new testimony.

Mr. Bergman stated that the property in question had remained vacant for over twenty years. He emphasized the challenges associated with the Kentucky Department of Transportation and asked the council to consider these complexities when evaluating the proposal. He noted that viable users for the site were limited.

Mayor Aubuchon acknowledged the site's long-term vacancy and explained that multiple proposals had been submitted over the years, many of which were not appropriate due to the high volume of truck traffic in the area. She noted that while council could not deny development solely based on traffic concerns, efforts are made to minimize traffic impacts when possible.

Additionally, Mayor Aubuchon confirmed that Carplex, a previously proposed user for the site, was not currently able to move forward, and the new proposal was intended as a temporary project until Carplex was ready. She added that the council has the authority to approve the proposal if they choose, and that conditions had been proposed to address concerns outlined in the draft Findings of Fact for denial.

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 likely to affect the value of 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 Winn so moved with a second from Councilmember Wingo. **All councilmembers present voted aye, the time being 7:24 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 Winn so moved, with a second from Councilmember Wingo. **All councilmembers present voted aye, the time being 7:44 p.m.**

ADJOURNMENT:

There being no further business to come before the Council, Mayor Aubuchon called for a motion to adjourn. Councilmember Winn so moved, with a second from Councilmember Cable. **Councilmembers present voted aye, the time being 7:45 p.m.**

APPROVED:

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

ATTEST:

/s/ Melissa Kramer
Melissa Kramer, City Clerk

