REGULAR MEETING – OCTOBER 2, 2025

The Mayor and City Council met in regular session on Thursday, October 2, 2025 at 7:00 p.m. in the Council Chambers of City Hall, 114 W. Sycamore Street Lincolnton, NC 28092. The following council members were in attendance:

DEMENY JOHNSON TIPTON JETTON

Mayor Ed Hatley called the meeting to order, asking those in attendance to stand for a moment of silence and the Pledge of Allegiance.

Approval of Regular Agenda

Mayor Hatley asked council members to review the Regular Agenda.

Motion by Council Member Jill Tipton to approve the Regular Agenda as submitted. Members voted 4-0 in favor of that motion.

Approval of Consent Agenda

Mayor Hatley noted there was one item to add to the consent agenda - a letter from Richie to the ABC Commission regarding a change for one of the Live After Five events.

> Motion to approve the consent agenda as amended was made by Council Member Kevin Demeny. Members voted 4-0 in favor of that motion.

Public Comment

Mr. Alan Hoyle addressed the Council regarding the Marine Corps' 250th anniversary celebration scheduled for November 7, 2025. He then spoke about recent tragedies, including the death of Charlie Kirk, and emphasized the importance of faith and fear of God in addressing social issues.

Special Presentation

Proclamation — Industry Appreciation Month

Mayor Hatley presented a proclamation recognizing October as Industry Appreciation Month. He emphasized the importance of industry to the city and county, noting that industry helps balance the tax base, provides employment, and adds tax revenues through sales and property taxes.

Anna Mullen, the existing industry manager for LEDA (Lincolnton Economic Development Association), thanked the Mayor and Council for their continued support. She mentioned the upcoming 23rd Annual Forklift Rodeo scheduled for the following day.

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Intermediate Certificate - Noah Watson

Police Chief Brian Greene presented an Intermediate Certificate to Officer Carson Williams. Mayor Hatley and the Council congratulated the officer on his accomplishment and thanked him for choosing to work in Lincolnton.

Public Hearings

ZTA-4-2025

Zoning Text Amendments to Chapter 153 Unified Development Ordinance

Mayor Hatley opened the public hearing. Jean Derby, Planning Director, presented two proposed text amendments:

- Changing the maximum size for Transitional Infill Development projects from 10 acres to 2 acres, noting that most past projects had been less than 2 acres.
- Adding definitions for public parks and recreation facilities and allowing them as permitted uses in all residential zoning districts, explaining that currently parks are only allowed in a few zoning districts.

Ms. Derby noted that the Planning Board recommended approval of these amendments as being consistent with the adopted land use plan and in public interest.

Motion to close the public hearing was made by Council member Kevin Demeny. Members voted 4-0 in favor of the motion.

Council member Jill Tipton made a motion to approve the amendments as recommended by Planning Board. Members voted 4-0 in favor of the motion.

Regular Agenda

BA-10-25

Approval of Amendment to be made to the Annual Budget Ordinance for the Fiscal Year Ending June 20, 2026

Finance Director Pamela McBryde requested approval to add $71,357 to the budget. She explained that the majority of this amount ($63,300) was reimbursement from NCDEQ for AIA grants expected to be completed by the end of the calendar year. The remaining funds were from online convenience fees collected and police revenues from fingerprinting and off-duty DSS work.

Motion to approve the budget amendment as made by Council member Roby Jetton. Members voted 4-0 in favor of the motion.

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Addition to Personnel Policy Article II Recruitment and Selection, Section II Background Checks

Human Resources Director Tanya Osborne presented a new personnel policy requirement stemming from recent state legislation (the False Green Hair in North Carolina Act). The law requires FBI background checks for city positions that interact with children in any capacity.

Ms. Osborne explained that while the city already conducts pre-employment background checks on all candidates, this specific FBI check is now required by law for positions working with children. She noted that the police department is already set up to conduct fingerprinting electronically, which will help with the process, though it may delay hiring as they wait for clearance to come back.

In response to a Council member's question, Ms. Osborne confirmed that parks and recreation employees would be most affected, though each department was asked to identify positions that may fall under the requirement. She mentioned there would be a $35 charge from the FBI for each background check.

> **Motion to approve the extensive background checks was made by Council member Mark Johnson. Members voted 4-0 in favor of that motion**.

Request for Approval of Revision to Both the 2025-2026 Schedule of Budgeted Positions and the 2025-2026 Salary Schedule-Position Classification Listing due to Grant for Police Social Worker Position

Human Resources Director Tanya Osborne presented a request related to a Governor's Crime Commission Criminal Justice Grant that the Police Department anticipates receiving. The grant, which would provide $60,000 per year for two years with no match requirement, would fund a Police Social Worker position.

Ms. Osborne explained that to begin recruitment for this position when grant approval is received, the position needs to be added to the city's position classification listing and salary schedule. She emphasized that if the grant is not received, the position would not be added. Council members confirmed that the position is fully funded by the grant and would dissolve after two years unless Council decided to retain it.

> **Council member Keven Demeny made a motion to approve the proposed change to the schedule of budgeted positions for one Police Social Worker. Members voted 4-0 in favor of that motion.**
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> **Motion to approve the salary schedule was made by Jill, seconded by Kevin, and unanimously approved.**

Consideration of Revisions to Administrative Policy Manual: Addition of Policy #27 Employees Benefits and Stipend Program Replacing Policy #10 Health/Dental Insurance

Human Resources Director Tanya Osborne presented a proposal to replace Administrative Policy #10 (established in 2012 with revisions in 2016 and 2020) with a new Policy #27 regarding employee benefits and the stipend program.

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Ms. Osborne explained that the new policy would provide comprehensive guidelines for determining benefit expenses and how the manager would set them each budget year. She noted that the insurance stipend amount had not been adjusted for some time.

The request had two components:

- Replacing Policy #10 with Policy #27
- Establishing the stipend amount and employee benefit amount

For the first part:

> **Motion to approve Policy #27 replacing Policy #10 was made by Council member Kevin Demeny. Members voted 4-0 in favor of the motion**

For the second part, Osborne explained the proposal to increase the monthly insurance stipend from $50 to $70. This stipend allows employees to apply funds against whatever benefits they elect to have based on their individual needs. The increase would help offset changes made by the State Health Plan, which now bases employee contributions on salary bands rather than a flat amount.

City Manager Ritchie Haynes noted that while this change would increase costs by approximately $50,000, it would be partially offset by a decrease in costs for "grandfathered" employees (those hired before 2012) who receive child coverage. The net impact to the budget would be about $8,000.

The discussion highlighted that the city joined the state health plan in 2016, which has been beneficial despite the current changes, as previous independent insurance rates were "skyrocketing." Mr. Haynes mentioned that the League of Municipalities health insurance program was dissolved as of June 30 because it was no longer sustainable due to costs.

> **Motion to approve the stipend program was made by Councilmember Roby Jetton. Members voted 4-0 in favor of that motion.**

Request for Permission to Post Notice/Accept Applications to Fill Upcoming Vacancies on Various Boards and Commissions

City Clerk Daphne Ingram informed the Council that several vacancies would be created from expiring terms in December. She noted that three positions would need to be filled where current members had already completed two three-year terms. Ms. Ingram requested permission to post the vacancies and accept applications, which would be brought back to Council next month for review, with appointments to be made at the December meeting.

Request Approval of Appointment - Historic Properties Commission

City Clerk Daphne Ingram presented an application from Rob Buff to fill a vacancy on the Historic Properties Commission that had been open since December 2024.

> **Motion to approve Rob Buff for appointment to the Historic Properties Commission was made by Council member Roby Jetton. Members voted 4-0 in favor of that motion.**

Mayor Hatley noted that Mr. Buff is a former city employee who is heavily involved in historical reenactments and preservation.

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Other Business

City Manager's Report

City Manager Ritchie Haynes provided an update on various city matters:

- Employee promotions and certifications:
- Promotions: Darius Collins (Master Police Officer), Elijah Herron (Firefighter 2), Lisa Scronce (Police Officer 2), and David Dellinger (Equipment Operator 2)
- Training certifications for several employees in utility management, water treatment, OSHA, FEMA, cybersecurity, and emergency response
- Monthly homeless report: 14 incidents and 19 charges, though 8 of the charges were from one individual
- Update on the stop sign at Academy and Sycamore: The Traffic Safety Committee would be installing a temporary stop sign the following Friday, with a permanent sign to follow
- Fund balance information in preparation for the October workshop
- An article about the top 25 most dangerous jobs, noting that all city outside workers (firefighters, police officers, linemen, construction workers, lawn maintenance) are on this list, highlighting the importance of safety awards
- A report on Star Town development showing houses sold and revenue received
- Upcoming events:
- Live After Five on October 9 featuring the Unknown Artist Band
- Downtown Fall Park Crawl on October 10
- Second Saturday on October 11
- Halloween events on October 31 including a walk with Place to Grow and a Halloween bash on Water Street
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City Attorney's Report

City Attorney John Friguglietti reported on several ongoing litigation cases:

- A case involving a power line where defendant, Lapari had filed a third-party complaint against AT&T, which has now been identified as Bell South, causing some delay
- A land lawsuit that has been slowed due to a third party (Historic Preservation Foundation) joining the case, with the deadline extended to December 8
- The Broome and Warren cases remain in litigation, with a guardian ad litem appointed for Ms. Warren
- One case has been resolved

Mr. Friguglietti also discussed the new Citizens Board that was proposed in June. He reported significant interest in the board, which will have between 6-12 members. The board will address various city issues, with the homeless situation expected to be a primary focus. Applications will be accepted with appointments planned for December.

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Mr. Friguglietti also shared details about the Halloween Bash scheduled for October 31 from 5-8 PM on Water and South Academy Streets. Triad Title is the platinum sponsor providing free hot dogs, and Caroline Auto Direct is the gold sponsor providing candy. Businesses are invited to participate by bringing tables and candy, with Westside Cruisers bringing classic cars for a "trunk or treat" setup. The event is expected to draw over 1,000 children.

Closed Session

> **Motion to go into closed session in accordance with G.S. 143-318.11(a)(6) to consider personnel matters and real estate was made Council member Kevin Demeny. Members voted 4-0 in favor of the motion.**

Mayor Hatley noted that they would return to open session immediately after the closed session.

Adjournment

Upon returning to open session, Council member Mark Johnson made a motion to adjourn the meeting. Members voted 4-0 in favor of that motion.

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