

**Norris City Council
Regular Meeting**

**January 9, 2023
7:00 p.m.**

Minutes

The regular meeting of the City Council of Norris Tennessee convened January 9, 2023 at 7:00 pm.

The following council members were present: Bill Grieve, Will Grinder, Mayor Chris Mitchell, Chuck Nicholson and Loretta Painter.

Also present were Charles Adam Ledford, City Manager and Sandy Johnson, City Recorder, and representatives of the press from Clinton Courier and the Norris Bulletin.

Meeting was called to order by Mayor Mitchell.

APPROVAL OF AGENDA

Mayor Mitchell distributed communications he had received for transparency purposes. He explained the different items/sections in that packet. He also stated the workshop was to discuss making the water sewer utility a regular department.

HEAR FROM THE PUBLIC

Harry Shatz, resident, stated he understands that Norris is a unique town but is frustrated that as a tax paying citizen, he doesn't get mail delivered to his home and asked if it could be changed. He stated this is a 19th century issue, but would like to know if it could be changed. He is annoyed he has to pay to get junk mail.

Councilmember Grieve stated he wants to keep mail going to the post office because it's a social gathering spot. Years ago, the forefathers didn't want mailboxes outside of houses in Norris.

Richard Dyer, Chairman of Norris Water Commission (NWC) and resident, stated Norris doesn't exist for online home deliveries either.

Spencer Boardman, resident, stated it appeared to be a security issue years ago with having mailboxes on the street, and that Norris almost lost its post office but many citizens spoke up to keep it. He would like for the mail to continue going to the post office, it's just safer.

Lisa Shirey, resident, stated that it's very difficult to start a new business within the city of Norris, because the federal government does not recognize the Norris post office as a physical address, and the issue may need to be addressed in order to make our city more business friendly.

Chamber Williams, resident, stated none of the Norris addresses are in the US Postal database. He stated he asked Jack Mitchell what the deal was and he stated years ago the city voted to only have their mail sent to the post office. Norris is not the only place in the United States, there are other cities that residents have to go to the post office to get their mail.

Sue Hill, NWC and resident, stated at the last meeting there were issues hearing what the Councilmembers were saying, and asked that everyone speak loud and more clearly.

Mayor Mitchell stated there are chairs up front if anyone wants to get closer due to having difficulties hearing out in the audience.

MINUTES

December 12, 2022 Public Hearing on Short-Term Rental Amendment Ordinance

Councilmember Grieve made a motion to approve the minutes. Councilmember Painter seconded. The motion passed by voice vote with Councilmembers Grieve, Grinder, Painter and Mayor Mitchell voting "Aye." Councilmember Nicholson abstained.

December 12, 2022 Regular City Council Meeting

Councilmember Grieve made a motion to approve the minutes. Councilmember Painter seconded. The motion passed unanimously by voice vote with Councilmembers Grieve, Grinder, Nicholson, Painter and Mayor Mitchell voting "Aye."

OLD BUSINESS

Safe Routes to School – Mayor Mitchell stated the timeline has been extended and will know more in the future. Mayor Mitchell stressed that this is a project that is sensitive to the trees in front of the middle school and we want to do everything we can to not damage them, and to work with the Tree Commission with schedule and involvement during this project. Mr. Ledford stated he had a conversation with Spencer Boardman this morning.

SIA Sawmill Road Project – no updates

Hwy 61/441 Lighting Project – Mr. Ledford stated he will get a status update and communicate with Council.

Leave Issue – Mr. Ledford stated the leave agreement Phase 1 is closed out. Phase II is being worked on by the NWC. We all are working on Phase III. Mayor Mitchell stated he wants Mr. Ledford and Mr. Wilkerson to discuss with their employees, get their feedback and report those comments back to Council. Mr. Ledford stated he will collect comments and put them into a packet for Council to review.

Employee 401K Matching Fund – Mr. Ledford stated he knows what needs to be done but has not completed it yet.

McNeeley Building Condition – Mr. Ledford stated there is a meeting tomorrow with the stakeholders to look at the quotes they received and choose a path moving forward. Mayor Mitchell asked what does Council think about asking for a home inspection similar to asking a contractor or inspector to tell me everything that is wrong so we can address everything. He stated he would like for us to consider a rigid, thorough, commercial home-style inspection on all of the buildings so we can get an inventory of all things that need to be fixed so we know how to approach it. Councilmember Painter stated she thinks it's a great idea and we can get the entire picture of the issues and everything that needs to be fixed at one time. Councilmember Painter asked if he's talking about getting an inspection on all the buildings at one time or just inspect this one? Mayor Mitchell stated before he votes on anything on the McNeeley building he would like a "home inspection style" exercise done. Councilmember Painter stated are you referring to getting bids on each individual building or all as a package? Mayor Mitchell stated he is indifferent, he wants it done before a decision is made, but he doesn't want it to delay the process. Councilmember Nicholson asked Council what was the threshold amount for going out for bids? Mr. Ledford stated he believes it's \$20,000.00. Mr. Ledford stated he feels it would make sense and he will discuss with Kerry Hevel, Public Works Director to get his opinion.

Sign Ordinance – Second Reading

Mayor Mitchell stated this ordinance passed on first reading and there was a public hearing with discussion prior to the council meeting tonight. Councilmember Grinder asked Mr. Ledford to read the discussed corrections. Councilmember Grinder made a motion to approve the ordinance as corrected and amended. Councilmember Nicholson seconded. The motion passed unanimously by voice vote with Councilmembers Grieve, Grinder, Nicholson, Painter and Mayor Mitchell voting "Aye."

Capital Outlay Note

Mayor Mitchell stated this will be incorporated into the budget process when the amount of need is clearly identified. He has been coordinated with the treasury and everything is processed and understood, keep it on the agenda as it is important.

NEW BUSINESS

2022/2023 Budget Amendment 637- Multiple Adjustments – Mayor Mitchell asked Mr. Ledford to walk them through the process of amendments. Mr. Ledford discussed the amounts and needs for the transfers as follows:

General Fund	Description	Increase/Decrease
Revenues		
<i>Intergovernmental</i>		
110-33400	Police Supplements – State Grant	\$77,000
Total Revenues		\$77,000
Appropriations Expenditures		
52213-329 (WWTP)	Other Operating Supplies	(\$18,500)
52211-260 (WW Collection)	Repairs & Maintenance Services	(\$5000)
52113-110 (WTP)	Personnel	\$13,500
52114-338 (Water Trans & Dist)	Repair Parts for Lines, Meters, Hydrants	\$10,000
41000-110 (City Office)	Personnel	\$30,000
41000-141 (City Office)	Payroll Taxes	\$2,300
41000-142 (City Office)	Hospital & Health Insurance	\$5,400
41000-143 (City Office)	Retirement	\$1,000
41900-266 (McNeeley Bldg)	Repair & Maintenance Buildings	\$25,000
41800-260 (Community Bldg)	Repair & Maintenance Services	\$30,000
42000-216 (Police)	Radio & TV Services	\$40,000
42000-320 (Police)	Operating Supplies	\$37,000
45100-320 (NR)	Operating Supplies (NR – Landscaping)	\$1,500
Total Appropriations		\$117,200

Councilmember Painter discussed concerns regarding moving money from sewer collection and sewer treatment and disposal to water. She stated she struggles with moving money with as much as they raised the rates this year, and as much work that needs to be done in the sewer department. Sue Hill, NWC, stated she would like to suggest that this be addressed at their meeting next week. Mayor Mitchell asked if a special called City Council meeting is needed. Mr. Ledford asked Council to consider approving the 8 highlighted items in the above section tonight. Councilmember Painter made a motion to approve. Councilmember Grinder seconded. The motion passed unanimously by voice vote with Councilmembers Grieve, Grinder, Nicholson, Painter and Mayor Mitchell voting “Aye.”

Margueritte Wilson, NWC, asked Mayor Mitchell to repeat what he stated earlier regarding the Capital Outlay Notes. Mayor Mitchell stated that it would be incorporated into the budget process, he knows the process, he has spoken to the State Ms. Wilson asked does the NWC need to do anything in advance. Mayor Mitchell explained that it would be part of the budget process.

A Discussion on Structure and Topics for Water/Sewer Workshop. Mayor Mitchell stated he is not going to talk about the merits of the workshop, just the structure and proposed agenda for the format. He also reiterated that this workshop is not about personnel or who is on the NWC. Councilmember Painter asked Mayor Mitchell if this was his way of starting the conversation but that we will all have our own comments but not limited to just the topics he suggested. Mayor responded you are not limited to what I suggested, and everyone has equal voice and you can bring your own ideas. He stated his suggestions were just a framework to stay focused. Councilmember Painter stated Council can bring other things to the conversation. Mayor responded yes. Mr. Ledford stated if any changes that are suggested, I believe they should equally be connected to a timeline being proposed. Mayor Mitchell agreed, and that he captured that mentally with the impact to cost (budget/rates).

Ms. Hill, NWC, stated we are trying to decide exactly what we want to present and would like some input from the Council members in terms of what are you anticipating. She stated when she reads this it’s almost as if you already have a solution, and they don’t understand what is the problem. Ms. Hill stated she would like to know what the problem is instead of simply acting to change the structure. Mayor Mitchell stated he would respond by saying he has heard words from NWC discuss additional personnel, assistants for Tony and resources for budgeting. He stated he has heard needs from NWC over the last year, and he is not bringing new identified needs, he’s just trying to be responsive. Ms. Hill stated she just wanted to make sure she is understanding the scope of his structure. Ms. Wilson stated those are needs, not really problems. Ms. Wilson stated they heard there was a solution, but we wanted to know what was the problem, she agreed they do have needs. Mayor Mitchell stated we have opportunities and new resources. Councilmember Painter reiterated she is looking for a clear chain of command inside the city, and with the department just like the Police Department that would be helpful. She also stated with the new assistant manager a look at the structure of the city is needed. Councilmember Grinder stated he would like to see

clarification of some of the issues, and some sort of plan. Councilmember Nicholson stated he is looking forward to an open discussion about what we are doing now and some sort of potential changes could be helpful in the future.

Ms. Hill stated she has an issue and this goes back to not being able to hear at the last council meeting, but she has a conflict with the date of the meeting that was scheduled from the last council meeting and she would like to change the date of that meeting. If not, she would like to be able to participate electronically. Councilmember Grinder stated he feels this meeting is important to them and sees no problem in rescheduling the meeting because it is a big deal to them, and they should have their input, this is not that big of an emergency. Councilmember Painter stated how it took five (5) minutes of their time at the last meeting to set a date and she does think it's a priority, she stated it's not a voting meeting, but a conversation. She would like to stick with the time and date they chose. Councilmember Grinder stated he believes it's a touchy subject and if the NWC isn't feeling too good about it, and feels it's very important to them they all should have the opportunity to be there. Councilmember Grieve agreed with Councilmember Grinder, he doesn't feel why is has to be a fixed date, and why we can't accommodate everyone. Councilmember Nicholson stated he feels they should be able to accommodate everyone, and wants to know what the problem is with pushing it out a little further. Councilmember Painter stated we've pushed it out six (6) weeks to start with. Mayor Mitchell stated he would like to respect the reason you can't attend and asked how much time was needed to reschedule so she could attend. Ms. Hill stated she could attend the next week or the following week. After a discussion of schedules, Councilmember Painter made a motion to have a special called meeting on Monday, January 23, 2023 at 5:00 p.m. to have a discussion on making the Utility a department of the City. Councilmember Nicholson seconded. Mayor Mitchell asked NWC if this work for all of you, and they agreed, this was a good date and everyone could attend. The motion passed unanimously by voice vote with Councilmembers Grieve, Grinder, Nicholson, Painter and Mayor Mitchell voting "Aye."

Mayor Mitchell proposed another special called meeting be scheduled on Monday, January 23, 2023 at 4:45 p.m. for Consideration of a Budget Amendment for the NWC. Councilmember Grinder made a motion to accept. Councilmember Nicholson seconded. The motion passed unanimously by voice vote with Councilmembers Grieve, Grinder, Nicholson, Painter and Mayor Mitchell voting "Aye."

Norris Identity Project - A Branding Program

Councilmember Grinder stated that the Community Development Board (CDB) has had conversations regarding upgrading the Norris entrance signs. During the conversation, they began a discussion of branding. With the 75th Anniversary coming soon and Norris Creamery Park in the works, the CDB is looking for Council's support. Mr. Ledford has worked on projects like this in the past and described it as something the city should support. Don Barger, resident, offered his input to CDB, and stated he has experience with this type of project. Councilmember Grinder stated he would like to have a meeting with Blue Space Creative to discuss the project at no cost. Mayor Mitchell stated he believes in the effort but recognizes there are complexities. Councilmember Grinder encouraged everyone to come to the next CDB meeting.

Budget Development Schedule and Expectations of Process

Mayor Mitchell stated this is Mr. Ledford's first budget experience with Norris, but he is very experienced in doing budgets. He asked the Councilmembers to discuss individually what their expectations are for Mr. Ledford regarding the budget process. Councilmember Grinder stated he would like to see more time spent on the budget than in the past. Councilmember Painter stated that Mr. Ledford knows what she expects and that she needs to see things in advance, and actual numbers. Councilmember Grieve stated he looks forward to working with Mr. Ledford. Councilmember Nicholson stated that this is new to him and he is looking forward to a new approach. Mayor Mitchell stated he would like to see a 5- year budget projection. He stated this allows the city to have a vision and build towards that and help to maintain assets better because we have planned. Mayor Mitchell would also like to see scenarios, choices and recommendations, on how we manage cash and opportunities. He also stated that NWC needs to be involved. Mr. Ledford stated the first thing he usually does is to develop a 5-year capital plan. Mayor Mitchell also mentioned annexations and he would like mapping and confirmation that we are receiving the proper amount of sales tax from those annexations. He would like an audit of those. Mayor Mitchell also would like to make sure we are receiving sales tax from new businesses. The information is extremely confidential but the city manager will be given a controlled file for audit. Councilmember Painter asked if Mr. Ledford is comfortable with enough staff to make the July deadline for the auditors. Mr. Ledford stated yes. Ms. Hill, NWC, stated she is working with Mr. Ledford on the NWC side. Mr. Ledford stated we have been working on cleaning

our processes and getting better each day. He gave a timeline of dates for planning this year's budget meetings.

DEPARTMENT AND COMMISSIONS REPORTS

City Manager's Report – Mr. Ledford stated he has scheduled interviews for the new assistant city manager position and should be completed by Friday of next week. Councilmember Painter made a motion to schedule a special called meeting on January 31, 2023 at 5:00 p.m. to Consider a Contract for the Employment of the Assistant City Manager. Councilmember Nicholson seconded. The motion passed unanimously by voice vote with Councilmembers Grieve, Grinder, Nicholson, Painter and Mayor Mitchell voting "Aye."

Police Department – Nothing additional to report.

Fire Department - Nothing additional to report.

Norris Water Commission (NWC) – Margueritte Wilson, NWC, stated they should receive notice this month about the Tennessee Department of Environment and Conservation (TDEC) grant application for \$1.034M. All Approved applicants will be under contract with TDEC in February. NWC also submitted a pre-application in December for \$750K for an Appalachian Regional Commission (ARC) grant. They are expecting to hear if they are approved to submit the full application during the March/April time frame. The next funding sources that NWC plans to apply for include TDEC's Water Infrastructure Investment Program "Competitive" grant and the State Revolving Fund loan program. The TDEC application is expected to be due April 2023 and the SRF application is due May 2023.

Ms. Wilson stated this is a very touchy subject and I appreciate what Councilmember Grinder stated earlier about we are struggling with the way the proposal came up last month the way it was presented in the newspaper that the NWC was going to be eliminated and City Council would take over our responsibilities. She stated it has been a difficult month for those of us on the Water Commission. Ms. Wilson stated she would like to ask in the future if we get into a situation like that, we can talk about that before it is presented the way it was. She stated she wasn't at the meeting but she asked others what was said and what was the purpose of the workshop, and a lot of their folks didn't hear what was going on. She reiterated that it has been a difficult month. She went on to say that she would like to ask those on City Council to please treat them with respect, they are all professionals, we know what we are doing so respect us please, we work hard at what we try to do.

Mayor Mitchell asked Ms. Wilson, are we in a better place now, and are we all supportive of a workshop? Ms. Wilson stated yes. Ms. Hill stated she believes we had some contributing issues here in terms of communication and understanding. She stated tonight, recognizing and understanding more about what you are wanting to do with the workshop, she personally feels better about it. Mayor Mitchell stated he does not believe they voted for or stated they wanted a change in the Commission. He stated he knows you have read it in the paper and you have your emotions, but that is not what we voted on. Mayor Mitchell stated regardless of that, he cares about where we are at now and that we will have a good workshop to find needs to meet your goals, and we look at resources with an open mind. He stated he hears commitment and he's going to take everyone that that's true.

Ms. Wilson stated we have been working on things that we need. Mayor Mitchell stated that he is bringing things that you said back to you. Ms. Wilson stated she appreciated that you realize we have needs and that we would definitely appreciate some help.

As an update on the four (\$4.00) dollar fee Mayor Mitchell requested to add to our sewer bills, to date this fee has accumulated \$6739 in our capital account. These figures are two months behind because of the billing and payment cycles. Mayor Mitchell stated you asked me a question in this, may I answer it? Ms. Wilson stated yes. Mayor Mitchell stated you can report this as \$4.00 but I will tell you in the budget process I will not be thinking of it this way and will want to see the rounded number that's being collected. He stated that's the rate going towards the matching funds. Ms. Wilson stated she thought he was specifically interested in that amount that you requested. Mayor Mitchell stated it's all in there about the matching funds and is the total amount. He stated he is fine with the \$4.00 but wants to know the other too, and it's not taking your money, it's just how it is shown towards these matching funds. He also stated it is very important and how we have this plan and it all is tied together.

Councilmember Painter stated she just wanted to understand what the Mayor said about the four (\$4.00) dollars so it's four (\$4.00) that the Water Commission converted into a ten (10%) percent increase? So, it's

the ten (10%) percent you are looking for. Mayor Mitchell stated he wants the bottom line to be ten (10%) percent, just so it totals up.

Councilmember Painter stated that her name was mentioned in the report given by Ms. Wilson, NWC, and NWC gave the report to the press, and the report is from some of the members of the Water Commission, not all of them. She stated she had no input into this correspondence and was not given it in advance, but she was just given this here tonight, this is not the report that Sue sent. Ms. Painter stated she understands the NWC was stunned about the proposal to have a discussion about making the water department under the city manager. It has never been said that I was making a proposal to the press or to council to eliminate the commission, and I have never seen that I plan on City Council taking over the water commission responsibilities and the NWC, which I am a member of. Ms. Wilson wrote we request that Councilperson Painter treat us as professionals that we are and Ms. Painter stated she expects the same from you and that has not been the case.

Public Works

Nothing additional to report.

Bills Payable – Previous Year End Transfers

Mr. Ledford is working on perpetual funds and balances associated with such. He clarified for Councilmember Painter stated that this is not existing balances but is what needs to be moved into those funds. Mr. Ledford stated he is asking for the transfer approval tonight. Councilmember Nicholson made a motion to approve. Councilmember Painter seconded. The motion passed unanimously by voice vote with Councilmembers Grieve, Grinder, Nicholson, Painter and Mayor Mitchell voting “Aye.”

MINUTES AND REPORTS (BOARDS AND COMMISSIONS)

Recreation Commission – Brianna Kibler stated they wrapped up Norris Shines and she has reached out to Evan Sanders regarding a contract proposal and master plan process.

Watershed Board

Councilmember Grieve stated a tour of the watershed is planned on January 19, 2023, and they plan to evaluate wildlife, the road to the spring, and the marked trees that are proposed to be cut in the spring. The tour is open to the public, but you must provide your own transportation.

Tree Commission – there was no December meeting, however they are working on flushing out details for tree purchase order with the county for the highway beautification project. They are discussing the plan for this year’s Arbor Day celebration and purchasing a watering trailer.

Animal Shelter Commission - Nothing Additional to Report

Community Development – Nothing additional to report.

Little Theatre – Nothing Additional to Report.

Planning/BZA – Joe Feeman, Chairman, reported they are expecting a company to come in and discuss rezoning property between Meadow View and Exit 122 Power Equipment, for a boat dealership/storage facility. Mayor Mitchell would like to have public comment regarding this type of business. The parcel is currently a P1 and one of the few prime pieces of the property in the city that remains undeveloped. He asked what would Norris like it to be? Mr. Wilkerson expressed concern about a boat repair facility being next door to an assisted living center and the noise it could cause.

Adjournment

Councilmember Grieve made a motion to adjourn at 9:50 p.m. Councilmember Grinder seconded. The motion passed unanimously by voice vote with Councilmembers Grieve, Grinder, Nicholson, Painter and Mayor Mitchell voting “Aye.”

APPROVED BY CITY COUNCIL
March 13, 2023

Chris Mitchell, Mayor

Sandy Johnson, City Recorder