

**Norris City Council
Regular Meeting**

**February 12, 2024
6:00 p.m.**

Minutes

The regular meeting of the City Council of Norris Tennessee convened February 12, 2024 at 6:00 pm.

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

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

Meeting was called to order by Mayor Mitchell.

APPROVAL OF AGENDA

Mayor Mitchell moved item #1 up from New Business, the representative of Pugh CPA up and also moved up Minutes and Reports (Boards and Commissions) Recreation Commission, Brianne Kibler, Chair, Recreation Commission, before Minutes.

HEAR FROM THE PUBLIC – No comments

MINUTES

APPROVAL OF THE JANUARY 8, 2024 REGULAR MEETING MINUTES

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

APPROVAL OF THE JANUARY 8, 2024 PUBLIC HEARING MEETING MINUTES

Councilmember Nicholson made a motion approve and 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

Mr. Whited reported the project deadline of March 31, 2024 is approaching therefore, we are at a crossroad of either extending or terminating the contract. He explained this project has been on-going since 2014 and it would require the city to pay back approximately \$10,500.00 if we were to terminate the project. Councilmember Nicholson made a motion to extend and Councilmember Grinder seconded. The motion passed unanimously by voice vote with Councilmembers Grieve, Grinder, Nicholson, Painter, and Mayor Mitchell voting "Aye."

SIA SAWMILL ROAD PROJECT

Mr. Ledford reported TDOT is still in the process of hiring someone to handle the property valuations needed for the project to proceed.

UPDATE ON FACILITIES CONDITION

Mr. Ledford reported the contractor requested to reschedule for later this month. He stated he will have information to council at the March meeting.

CAPITAL OUTLAY NOTE

Mayor Mitchell stated he wants to leave this on the agenda until it is needed.

DISCUSSION ON STORM SEWER SYSTEM AND FIRST READING OF ORDINANCE

Mr. Ledford provided an overview of the ordinance. Mayor Mitchell explained this would be a four-step process: 1) Put the ordinance in place; 2) Establish a fee structure; 3) Create a budget; 4) Create the organizational structure to administer it. After a brief discussion, Councilmember Grinder moved to approve the first reading of ordinance as presented and Councilmember Grieve seconded. The motion passed unanimously by voice vote with Councilmembers Grieve, Grinder, Nicholson, Painter, and Mayor Mitchell voting "Aye."

Councilmember Painter moved to schedule a public hearing on Ordinance #672, entitled, "An Ordinance of the City of Norris, Tennessee, establishing a Stormwater Utility on March 11, 2025 at 5:00 p.m. and a Workshop to discuss methods and development of fee structure for Stormwater Utility, March 11, 2024 at 5:15 p.m., and Councilmember Nicholson seconded. The motion passed unanimously by voice vote with Councilmembers Grieve, Grinder, Nicholson, Painter, and Mayor Mitchell voting "Aye."

REVIEW AND CONSIDERATION OF AWARDED BID FOR MINI-EXCAVATOR

Mr. Ledford reported back in December 2023, bids were sent out and on Friday, February 9, 2024 at 2:00 p.m. Bailey Whited, Tony Wilkerson, Water Superintendent and Kerry Hevel, Public Works Director, opened the 5 bids and after deliberating, staff decided the Bobcat E48-R2 best fits their needs. They are also looking to purchase a trailer to haul the equipment that will cost approximately \$15,500.00. Mr. Ledford reported the equipment would be split between the Watershed, Public Works and Water Department. Councilmember Painter moved to approve the bid from Bobcat of Knoxville for the purchase of the equipment in the amount of \$65,675.01.

REVIEW AND DISCUSSION ON NORRIS ENTRANCE SIGN PROJECT

Councilmember Grinder gave a brief description of the proposed signs the Community Development Board (CDB) presented earlier at a City Council workshop. Mayor Mitchell encouraged Councilmember Grinder and CDB to wait until more funds are available from the hotel/motel tax revenue from the Appalachian Museum RV Park. He stated with just a small budget of \$5000.00, it just makes sense to wait for more funds to go along with the funds they have now for bigger and better signs. Laurie Templin, CDB member, asked for guidance and directions on how the board should move forward. Mayor Mitchell stated he would advise the board to have a public meeting and get a broader view and get the residents consensus and it should be done with great respect and represent the style and how proud we are of our community and should be first class. Many residents spoke in regards to the signs and their desires of what the signs should represent and their locations. George Miceli, CDB member, asked for clarification of what he believes the council and members of the audience are suggesting, a comprehensive "50 year" plan, and communicate "pride of place and history" in their decisions. Councilmember Grinder made a motion to refer this project back to the Community Development Board for further review and Councilmember Painter seconded. The motion passed unanimously by voice vote with Councilmembers Grieve, Grinder, Nicholson, Painter, and Mayor Mitchell voting "Aye"

NEW BUSINESS

DISCUSSION AND CONSIDERATION RELATED TO CITY OF NORRIS ONLINE PRESENCE

Mr. Ledford reported that Councilmember Nicholson requested him to add this item to the agenda. Councilmember Nicholson stated interest in the city having a Facebook account to keep residents informed of things going on in within the city. Several Council members spoke against the use of Facebook, some spoke in favor of having some sort of push notification process to communicate emergencies. There were also discussions of relying more on the City's website for helpful and emergency information. Mr. Ledford stated his concern of having a Facebook was about monitoring it on a daily basis and the manpower necessary to incorporate it. He also stated that his concern was it might start small then turn into something much larger than we can handle.

DISCUSSION & CONSIDERATION OF THE PROJECT FOR LOCAL PARKS & RECREATION FUND (LPRF) INTENT TO APPLY PROCESS

Mayor Mitchell distributed a draft copy outline of a master plan for city parks for review. An application to apply for a 50/50 match grant will be used to renovate the tennis courts with dual use capability for pickleball, adding a basketball court and possibly refurbishing of the bathrooms. Councilmember Nicholson moved to approve Mayor Mitchell signing the application for the grant and Councilmember

Grinder seconded. The motion passed unanimously by voice vote with Councilmembers Grieve, Grinder, Nicholson, Painter, and Mayor Mitchell voting “Aye.”

Mayor Mitchell summarized council’s overall efforts to improve Norris for its residents. Efforts have focused on better wages and working conditions for employees, better equipment for them to do their jobs, and improvements in infrastructure – this proposed outdoor sports center being one of those improvements.

DEPARTMENT AND COMMISSIONS REPORTS

CITY MANAGER’S REPORT – A copy of the report as presented is attached as “Exhibit A”

POLICE DEPARTMENT – A copy of the report as presented is attached as “Exhibit B”

FIRE DEPARTMENT – A copy of the report as presented is attached as “Exhibit C”

NORRIS WATER COMMISSION (NWC) – A copy of the report as presented is attached as “Exhibit D”

PUBLIC WORKS - A copy of the report as presented is attached as “Exhibit E”

BILLS PAYABLE – No report.

MINUTES AND REPORTS (BOARDS AND COMMISSIONS)

WATERSHED BOARD – Joe Feeman reported they have scheduled a timber sale for Thursday, February 29, 2024.

TREE COMMISSION – Councilmember Nicholson, Chair of Tree Commission, reported they plan to begin planting trees in the Spring in the Creamery Park and the Arbor Day Celebration will be March 28, 2024.

ANIMAL SHELTER COMMISSION – No report.

COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT – No report.

LITTLE THEATRE – Councilmember Painter reported the cast has been picked and practice has begun.

PLANNING/BZA – Joe Feeman reported they approved the Big Creek Marine’s building site plan.

ARCHIVES – Joe Feeman reported they are still trying to get the data off the old computer.

ADJOURNMENT

Councilmember Grinder moved to adjourn at 8:35 p.m. and Councilmember Grinder seconded. The motion passed unanimously by voice vote with Councilmembers Grieve, Grinder, Nicholson, Painter and Mayor Mitchell voting “Aye.”

Sandy Johnson, City Recorder

APPROVED BY CITY COUNCIL

March 11, 2024

Chris Mitchell, Mayor