

**Norris City Council  
Regular Meeting**

**September 11, 2023  
6:00 p.m.**

**Minutes**

The regular meeting of the City Council of Norris Tennessee convened September 11, 2023 at 6:00 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 Bailey Whited, Assistant City Manager and representatives of the press from Courier News and the Norris Bulletin.

Meeting was called to order by Mayor Mitchell.

**APPROVAL OF AGENDA**

Councilmember Painter mentioned that for the October council meeting, City Manager Adam Ledford's annual review should be included as an agenda item.

No changes were made to the agenda.

**HEAR FROM THE PUBLIC**

Tommy Mariner addressed the council and gave his quarterly report as Norris' representative on the Anderson County Library Board.

Charise Davis from the Anderson County Family Justice Center gave a brief description of their organization and requested permission from council for the use of the city's land as a part of their "Clothesline Project," which aims to raise awareness for domestic violence during the month of October. Council agreed that somewhere in front of the community building would be the best location to set up a display and for Ms. Davis to coordinate with Mr. Ledford on the details.

Ron Hill addressed council regarding a utility bill adjustment request that was recently denied by the Norris Water Commission. Mr. Hill was appealing the decision to council. Mr. Hill asked council to "not be dogmatic and autocratic" and "not be harnessed by historical practice." Mayor Mitchell stated that nothing in code supported the request and thus, he could not approve it. Councilmember Painter stated they historically used policy but it has never been codified. Mayor Mitchell pointed out that the historical policy would also not allow for an adjustment to be made. Loy Johnson spoke up in favor of Mr. Hill's request. Al Fletcher asked about the process for calculating usage. Tony Wilkerson, Water Superintendent, explained that multiple checks were made on their meter, and it was always in sequence; the water went through the meter. Tommy Mariner asked about a historical practice of one annual adjustment. Mr. Wilkerson noted that all adjustments had to meet the policy for forgiveness and this one did not. Council did not take action on Mr. Hill's grant for appeal. Mr. Hill "disagreed with the decision."

**MINUTES**

**APPROVAL OF THE AUGUST 14, 2023 REGULAR MEETING MINUTES** – Councilmember Nicholson stated on page 3, a quote regarding the marking of historic sites in the Watershed was attributed to him, but he did not recall saying that and requested it either be struck from the minutes or reattributed. Joe Feeman said he said that. Councilmember Grieve moved to approve the minutes with the change, and Councilmember Grinder seconded. The motion passed unanimously by voice vote.

**APPROVAL OF THE AUGUST 14, 2023, PUBLIC HEARING MINUTES** – Councilmember Nicholson requested that moving forward, the number of people in attendance should be included in hearing minutes and any comments that were made (even if none were). Councilmember Nicholson moved to approve the minutes, and Councilmember Grieve seconded. The motion passed unanimously by voice vote.

**APPROVAL OF THE SEPTEMBER 6, 2023 SPECIAL MEETING MINUTES** – Councilmember Grieve moved to approve the minutes, and Councilmember Nicholson seconded. The motion passed unanimously by voice vote.

#### **OLD BUSINESS**

**SAFE ROUTES TO SCHOOL** - Mr. Whited reported that no new progress had been made. Spencer Boardman asked about the costs of delays by the state. Mr. Whited stated that miscommunication as well as prioritization have let this project linger in a state of limbo. Councilmember Painter pointed out that this project was initiated in 2014.

**SIA SAWMILL ROAD PROJECT**- Mr. Ledford reported that the appraiser was supposed to come soon but that illness had prevented the previously scheduled visit.

**UPDATE ON FACILITIES CONDITION** - Mr. Ledford reported that while temporary fixes have been explored, temporary fixes would not fix the primary issues with the roof at the police and fire building. He further reported the internal conversation is that the police would eventually be moving out, but that upgrades would still be required to make the space work perfectly for the fire department; regardless of those future updates, however, the focus right now is the roof. Mr. Ledford presented a bid package to receive a new roof on the structure. Councilmembers Grinder and Nicholson expressed the need to include more specifics in the bid document. Councilmember Grinder moved to approve going out for bids so long as the bid package was updated to include greater detail about the scope of the project, specifically pertaining to the lifespan of the roof and a mandatory inspection by the building inspector. Councilmember Nicholson seconded the motion. Mayor Mitchell stated he would be abstaining from the vote as he owns an adjacent property which would benefit from better stormwater management at the police and fire building. The motion passed unanimously by voice vote with Councilmembers Grieve, Grinder, Nicholson and Painter voting, “Aye.” Mayor Mitchell abstained.

**CAPITAL OUTLAY NOTE** – No update.

**SECOND READING OF ORDINANCE #659, ENTITLED, “AN ORDINANCE OF THE CITY OF NORRIS, TENNESSEE, AMENDING THE ANNUAL BUDGET FOR THE FISCAL YEAR BEGINNING JULY 1, 2023 AND ENDING JUNE 30, 2024.”** – Mr. Ledford described changes that were requested at the previous meeting to reflect other anticipated rollover costs. Councilmember Nicholson moved to approve the ordinance as amended, and Councilmember Painter seconded. The motion passed unanimously by voice vote.

#### **NEW BUSINESS**

**CONSIDERATION OF RESOLUTION #10-2023, ENTITLED, “A RESOLUTION TO PETITION THE TENNESSEE DEPARTMENT OF REVENUE TO ADJUST THE ANNEXATION DATE REVENUE FOR ANNEXED BUSINESSES WITHIN THE CITY OF NORRIS AND REIMBURSE THE CITY FOR WRONGLY TRANSMITTED FUNDS.”** – Mr. Whited described the resolution. Mayor Mitchell explained that it was the city’s fault that the changes never took place and that he was hopeful that the County would be supportive of the city’s request. Councilmember Grinder moved to approve the resolution, and Councilmember Grieve seconded. The motion passed unanimously by voice vote.

**CONSIDERATION OF THE FIRST READING OF ORDINANCE #660, ENTITLED, “AN ORDINANCE OF THE CITY OF NORRIS, TENNESSEE, TO AMEND THE PERSONNEL POLICY OF THE CITY OF NORRIS.”** – Mr. Ledford explained that the ordinance would change the Title XI coordinator for the city from the “Mayor” to the “City Manager”. Councilmember Nicholson suggested some other potential changes, but the question arose whether the boilerplate language from the state could be modified. Councilmember Nicholson moved to approve the Ordinance on First Reading, and Councilmember Grieve seconded. The motion passed unanimously by voice vote.

Councilmember Painter moved to set a public hearing date for Ordinance #660 of October 9, 2023 at 5:45 p.m., and Councilmember Nicholson seconded. The motion passed unanimously by voice vote.

**CONSIDERATION OF GOING OUT FOR BIDS ON 2023-24 OAK ROAD PARK PAVILION PROJECT** – Councilmember Grinder stated that the lack of specificity in the existing bid package might produce

lackluster or varying bids. Councilmember Nicholson moved to approve going out for bids so long as the specs were updated. Councilmember Painter seconded. The motion passed unanimously by voice vote.

**CONSIDERATION OF GOING OUT FOR BIDS ON LAW ENFORCEMENT SIDE-BY-SIDE –** Councilmember Grinder moved to approve going out for bids for a law enforcement side-by-side, and Councilmember Painter seconded. The motion passed unanimously by voice vote.

**DISCUSSION AND CONSIDERATION OF APPROVING 2023 CITY OF NORRIS STRATEGIC PLAN GOAL SETTING –** Mr. Ledford introduced a concept for developing a new strategic plan. The process would include a survey to collect public input, a public meeting to collect further input and determine goals, and the culmination of those goals into the strategic plan document. Mr. Ledford explained that this is a process he has used with multiple cities in the past. Councilmember Nicholson requested that more multiple-choice questions be included in the survey rather than open-ended questions.

**REVIEW AND CONSIDERATION OF AWARDING BIDS FOR 2023-24 STREET IMPROVEMENT PROJECTS –** Mr. Ledford presented the bid tabulation to council and gave his recommendation that the city accepts the bid from Pave, Grade, and Aggregate for paving on Butternut Dr. and parts of Hickory Trail Rd. Councilmember Grinder moved to award the bid to Pave, Grade, and Aggregate for paving on Butternut Dr. and part of Hickory Trail, and Councilmember Nicholson seconded. The motion passed unanimously by voice vote.

**REVIEW AND CONSIDERATION OF AWARDING BIDS FOR 2023 EXTERIOR SIDING INSTALLATION PROJECT AT MCNEELY BUILDING –** No bids were received. Councilmember Grinder moved to go out for bids again with the same bid package. Councilmember Nicholson seconded. The motion passed unanimously by voice vote. Councilmember Grinder stated that the city should make a greater effort in inviting specific contractors.

**CONSIDERATION OF CONFIRMING MAYORAL APPOINTMENTS TO CITY BOARDS, COMMISSIONS, AND COMMITTEES –** No appointments currently. Mr. Whited explained that the city would be transitioning back to staggered terms, so when the openings are eventually filled, they might not all necessarily be for three full years.

**CONSIDERATION AND REVIEW OF BENNY CARDEN MEMORIALS –** Mr. Wilkerson explained that no public funds went into the memorials and that the responsible parties were asking permission to hang them on public property – one inside the community building and one outside of the McNeely Building. After discussion, Councilmember Grinder moved to approve installing the memorial inside of the Community Building. Councilmember Nicholson seconded. The motion passed unanimously by voice vote.

**DISCUSSION AND CONSIDERATION OF AMENDING FUNDING PLAN FOR CONCERT ON THE COMMONS –** Councilmember Grinder explained that the costs of the Concerts on the Commons have grown over time while the funding source has remained the same year-over-year and requested that the city contribute \$1,000 in funding. George Miceli explained that the primary sponsor, PCUB, contributes the same amount each year and the Community Development Board does not wish to potentially lose their support by opening sponsorship to other entities, and that the City's support would not conflict with PCUB. Mayor Mitchell stated that perhaps the city should consider giving this event over to the Chamber of Commerce or another private entity and allowing it to grow larger than it currently is. Councilmember Grinder moved to approve the city spending \$1,000 to sponsor the Concert on the Commons. Councilmember Nicholson seconded. The motion passed by voice vote with Councilmembers Grieve, Grinder, and Nicholson voting, "Aye" and Councilmember Painter and Mayor Mitchell voting, "Nay."

**DISCUSSION ON EQUIPMENT PURCHASES/LEASES FOR MULTIPLE DEPARTMENT NEEDS –** Mr. Ledford described that certain pieces of equipment have been requested by multiple city departments and a general discussion was held about potentially sourcing the equipment in the future. Spencer Boardman stated that informing the public about "ditch courtesy" might alleviate some of the stormwater issues the city is facing.

## **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”

Mayor Mitchell moved to schedule a follow-up workshop on public works on October 9, 2023, at 5:00 p.m. Councilmember Grinder seconded. The motion passed unanimously by voice vote.

**BILLS PAYABLE**

**CONSIDERATION OF FUNDS TRANSFER** – Councilmember Painter moved to approve transferring \$39,628 from the unreserved fund balance in the Waterworks Fund to a reserved fund balance to be set aside for sewer capital purposes. Councilmember Grinder seconded. The motion passed unanimously by voice vote.

**MINUTES AND REPORTS (BOARDS AND COMMISSIONS)**

**RECREATION COMMISSION** – No report.

**WATERSHED BOARD** – Councilmember Grieve reported they discussed ways to improve the yearly raffle and they also installed some signs at the gates. Joe Feeman reported he was unable to attend the last Water Commission meeting, but listened to the recording of the meeting and he is preparing a map that will show some of the work that needs to be done and will pass that along to the members before the next meeting. Mayor Mitchell asked Mr. Feeman to please include Tony Wilkerson in that communication.

**TREE COMMISSION** – Councilmember Nicholson stated he wanted to thank Public Works and staff for contracting with a company to grind out several tree stumps. We just identified several trees for removal and expects those stumps will need to be grinded out as well. Mr. Ledford stated he let Kerry Hevel, Public Works Director, so he will be onboard and have them scheduled to come back out when the commission is ready. The commission has also been working on writing the Norris Urban Forest Master Plan and is ready to share the draft for public review that will need to be posted on the city’s website for comments. Mayor Mitchell stated he supports the Tree Commission and would like for them to be able to do more and would support an agenda item regarding invasive species. He stated he would love to see an agenda item regarding this and the scope and what the commission needs.

**ANIMAL SHELTER COMMISSION** –No report

**COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT** – No report

**LITTLE THEATRE** – No report

**PLANNING/BZA** – Joe Feeman reported they agreed on new subdivision regulations with intent of hearing from the public and voting on the changes to the subdivision regulations during the November 6, 2023 meeting.

**ARCHIVES** – Joe Feeman reported they are looking into purchasing a new computer.

**ADJOURNMENT**

Councilmember Grieve made a motion to adjourn at 9:04 p.m. Councilmember Painter seconded. The motion passed unanimously by voice vote.

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Bailey Whited, Assistant City Manager

**APPROVED BY CITY COUNCIL**

September 11, 2023

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Chris Mitchell, Mayor