

BUDGET WORK SESSION – May 23, 2025

The Mayor and City Council held a budget work session on Friday, May 23, 2025, at 10:00 a.m. in the Council Chambers at City Hall located at 114 W. Sycamore Street, Lincolnton, NC 28092.

Mayor Hatley called the meeting to order. The following Council Members were in attendance:

DEMENY JOHNSON TIPTON JETTON

Staff members present were City Manager Ritchie Haynes, Assistant City Manager Scott Clerk, City Clerk Daphne Ingram and Finance Director Pamela McBryde. City Attorney John Friguglietti was also in attendance.

Mayor Hatley recognized City Manager Ritchie Haynes to review the items for discussion. Mr. Haynes began with an open invitation to discuss any item in addition to the items listed to be covered during the work session. He noted that none of the items had to be finalized in the meeting, informing members of his plan to schedule a policy/ strategic plan workshop sometime in September or October.

Discussion items were as follows:

- Shared Services – 911 Communications, Animal Control and Code Enforcement - Mr. Haynes reported that each party got some of what they wanted in the agreement. He explained the breakdown of the cost paid for the services. He stated that the outside rate will be charged to be make for “cleaner” transactions.
- Fluoride – Mr. Haynes expressed his thoughts on the topic, stating that his feeling on state and federal regulations that may be coming in the near future. Seeking directions from Council, he suggested waiting to discuss the topic further at the September/October planning meeting. There was some discussion among members regarding cost savings. Assistant City Manager Scott Clark shared valuable information on the topic of fluoride in water. Mr. Clark gave some background on the subject, and he spoke to the hazards it can potentially cause to the employees that handle it. He informed that a resolution and a notice to the county and the state will be needed to request removal of the fluoride in the city’s drinking water. Several members expressed their position on whether for or against removing the fluoride. City Manager Ritchie Haynes suggested that a decision be delayed until the planning meeting in September/October.
- Oaklawn – City Manager Ritchie Haynes updated Council on the status of the property. Mr. Haynes spoke specifically to the historical building on the property and his discussions with the Coalition of Churches regarding them taking ownership of the building. Mr. Haynes shared his recommendation of setting up a lease with the Coalition, which will allow them time to determine if they will be able to generate

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enough funds to maintain the property before taking full ownership. He also communicated that the agreement would contain covenants requiring that the building remains a historical and something used for the good of the community. He explained that the property would be subdivided, with the aforementioned portion being a standalone parcel. There was some discussion, with Council agreeing that moving forward with the lease option is the best plan with covenants.

- Christian Ministries – City Manager Richie Haynes gave an update on the status of this project. Mr. Haynes informed that with Council's permission he plans to hire an architect to design a building exactly as their needs are. After which, he stated that he plans to sign a contract with Christian Ministries to move forward. Mr. Haynes discussed other details with members regarding the location of the structure to be built and access to the structure. He confirmed that he will require that a contract, with full board approval, be signed before construction begins.
- Park Expansions – Mr. Haynes spoke to the two park expansion projects, both Federal Park and the Farmers Market projects. He expressed his desire to hire Mr. David Ledford to create a rendering of the First Federal Park project to give residents an idea of the vision for the park. He also mentioned the plan to again do some fundraising and the possibility of extending the naming rights of the park to First Federal Bank. Mr. Haynes informed Council that negotiations with the family next to the farmer's market is continuing. He stated that due to increasing medical costs, it is his opinion that the family is ready to move forward. He reminded members of the two-year pay-out under the agreement. Some questions were asked and answered.
- I.T./Planning – City Manager Ritchie Haynes spoke to the new position included in the 2025-2026 fiscal year budget and how it will function. He explained how the position will be funded and he reported that this position will serve as a back-up for Chris Jones, the City's I.T. Director. The position will also handle some of the duties previously taken care of by our former Community Relations Director.
- Flock Cameras – Mr. Haynes briefly spoke to the cameras. He provided several examples of how instrumental the cameras have been in the last several months and he talked about how many the City would need to cover if purchased. He explained that the cameras are not in the budget so funds will need to be identified. He also confirmed this being in addition to the cameras previously approved. There was much discussion among Council members regarding the purchase. After considering their options, members agreed to re-visit the item at the September/October work session. Mr. Haynes informed members that he would direct Chief Greene to give a brief presentation at that time.
- Fire Marshal/Inspector – City Manager Ritchie Haynes addressed the issue the current Fire Marshall/Fire Inspector positions. He explained the current situation and what Chief Heavner feels needs to happen. Mr. Haynes stressed that there was

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no money in the budget for this, but he needed to address it as it will need to be done in the near future.

- Trucks Downtown – Mr. Haynes reported on the things that have been done to try and improve the issue with trucks downtown. He informed that the traffic safety committee has looked at putting “No Trucks” signage on the downtown streets. He also informed of the Highway Patrols plans to some traffic stops. There are also plans to contact the DOT and request permission to install Truck Route signs on the DOT streets. Mr. Haynes assured that they are doing what they can to keep trucks out of the residential areas. City Attorney John Frigugliette gave an update on the lawsuit against Lipari Foods. Mr. Haynes expressed his plans to present changes to the council at the second June meeting. There were questions and discussions regarding the issues with trucks and there restrictions.
- Pool Policy – There was discussion regarding the current policy regarding to swim suits for lifeguards. Councilmember Jill Tipton explained the issue and expressed her concerns with what should be done moving forward. City Manager Ritchie provided a sample of what is available when inappropriate attire is worn while on duty.

There were several questions asked and answered regarding various items. In response to a question from Councilmember Kevin Demeny, City Manager Ritchie Haynes briefly explained the cost and purpose of the Centralina Council of Governments (COG), and how it has benefited the City in the past. There was some discussion regarding what benefit they are to the City. Mr. Demeny also voiced his thoughts on discontinuing the recycling program. Discussion was generated with City Attorney John Frigugliette suggesting the topic be something the proposed Advisory Citizen Board research and bring back to Council. Mr. Frigugliette explained the purpose of the Board and why it will be beneficial to the Council. City Manager Ritchie Haynes spoke to his desire to possibly sponsor a Citizen Academy as well. There as also discussion about possible employment opportunities with the City for graduate from the Community Court program. Discussion was generated among both staff and members of the Council on that and other issues as well.

In conclusion, City Manager Ritchie Haynes announced that the 2025-2026 budget will not change unless directed. The Mayor and Council expressed their appreciation to Mr. Haynes for addressing their questions and concerns. Mr. Haynes again expressed his desire to hold a planning session in September/October, which will allow for the budget work session to focus only on the budget. Mr. Haynes recognized both Pam McBryde and Scott Clark, giving special thanks to Pam and her team for all that they do. Scott gave an update on the generators at the Water and Wastewater Treatment plants. He spoke to the idea of coupling the purchase with other work needing to be done at the plant, mentioning what work could be done. He explained what the project entitled, stating that he would keep them updated on the no match grant they are planning to apply for.

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City Manager Ritchie Haynes talked briefly about putting together a strategic plan to replace the water lines and sewer lines that have been identified on the maps. He spoke to having this repair work match the paving and sidewalk replacement schedules to limit unnecessary utility cuts around town.

There being no further business, Councilmember Kevin Demeny made a motion to adjourn. Members voted 4-0 in favor of the motion.

Daphne Ingram, City Clerk

Ed Hatley, Mayor