

**CITY OF MOUNT HOLLY**  
**CITY COUNCIL MEETING MINUTES**  
**MONDAY, MARCH 23, 2026**  
**COUNCIL CHAMBERS**  
**6:30 PM**

CALL TO ORDER

Mayor Moore called the meeting to order at 6:31 pm. The following were present:

Mayor David Moore	Jonathan Blanton, City Manager
Mayor Pro Tem Phyllis Harris	Brian DuPont, Assistant City Manager
Councilman Ivory Craig	Alexis Hines, Human Resources Director
Councilman Jeff Meadows	Brian Reagan, Police Chief
Councilman William Brooks	Greg Beal, Planning Director
Councilwoman Lauren Shoemaker	Ryan Baker, Fire Chief
Councilman Kenneth Reeves	Robert Stewart, Deputy Utilities Director
Marie M. Anders, City Attorney	Eric Smallwood, Parks and Recreation Director
	Ashley Whetstine, Finance Director
Shelly Stewart, Deputy City Clerk	Matt Black, Economic Development Director
	Jason Green, Public Works Director

INVOCATION

Mayor Moore led the Council, Staff, and attendees in prayer.

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

Councilwoman Shoemaker led the Council, Staff, and attendees in the Pledge of Allegiance.

SET THE AGENDA

Mayor Moore stated that Closed Session will be added to the agenda after New Business. Mayor Moore entertained a motion to set the agenda as amended.

**Motion:** Councilman Reeves made a motion to approve the agenda as amended. Councilwoman Shoemaker seconded the motion.

*All Council members present and voting, voted in favor 6-0. (Motion Carried)*

CONSENT AGENDA

1. Appointment of Finance Director
2. Approval of Audit Contract FY Ending 6-30-2026

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3. Memorandum of Understanding for Storefront Wrap
4. Removal of Councilman Meadows as the Gaston-Cleveland-Lincoln Metropolitan Planning Organization Board Alternate
5. Approval of City Council Retreat Minutes – February 27, 2026
6. Approval of City Council Meeting Minutes – March 9, 2026
7. Approval of Closed Session Minutes – March 9, 2026

Mayor Moore entertained a motion to approve the Consent Agenda as presented.

**Motion:** Councilman Meadows made a motion to approve the Consent Agenda as presented. Councilman Craig seconded the motion.

*All Council members present and voting, voted in favor 6-0. (Motion Carried)*

**PRESENTATIONS**

1. Get to Know Gaston

***Adam Gaub and Gavin Stewart***

Mr. Stewart explained the Get to Know Gaston event that he is putting on in partnership with the City of Mount Holly's Parks and Recreation staff, specifically working closely with Special Events Coordinator Chloe Clary. Mr. Stewart explained that the reason for the event is that the local government has a lot of projects and in-kind services that they want the community to be aware of. Mr. Stewart described the different entertainment elements at the event last year, which was partnered with the City of Gastonia. Mr. Stewart discussed last year's event participants and how the Passport System works for the attendees. Mr. Stewart described some of this year's participants and entertainment options which will be held in Tuckaseege Park in Mount Holly on April 15, 2026.

2. Sanitation Truck Options Purchase/Lease

***Jason Green***

Mr. Green stated that for the past two years the Public Works Department has purchased new trucks from capital funds. Mr. Green stated that he worked a maintenance schedule into the purchase price of the trucks to cover servicing on the trucks for five years. Mr. Green stated that he has been researching the benefits to leasing these large trucks instead of purchasing them outright. Mr. Green stated leasing could spread out these large purchases into monthly payments to keep the budget down for the Public Works Department. Mr. Green described the current garbage trucks' pickup schedules and how frequently they are used. Mr. Green stated that the department has two trucks currently, and he is requesting two more to be more efficient with

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their routes. Mr. Green described the type of truck that he is requesting and the price for each, still including the preventive service costs. Mr. Green stated the lease total cost overtime is more than the full up-front purchase price because of financing fees. Mr. Green stated the City can back out of the lease before the end of the term or buy it at the end and would get full coverage insurance, which would not be included with a full up-front purchase. Mr. Green went over a pros and cons list for leasing and for purchasing these trucks. Mr. Green went over the department's fleet list with the milage to show the age on the trucks. Mr. Green stated that with the purchase of two new trucks, they could get rid of four vehicles: trucks 126, 132, 141, and 143. Mr. Green stated the lifespan for these large trucks is about eight years, so the City has gotten the maximum life out of their trucks, and it is the reason there are such high costs for service.

Councilman Craig asked if Mr. Green knew of any other municipalities that lease their trucks. Mr. Green stated that the City coined the idea of adding the maintenance costs into the purchase, and the City is also pioneering the leasing of the trucks. Mr. Green stated he thinks it is good for the City's monies since we do not have a diesel mechanic on staff, and the going pay for one is high.

Councilman Craig asked if the City can expect any returns for selling the old trucks. Mr. Green stated yes, he can put them on the Gov Deals website for sale.

Councilman Reeves asked about the bumper-to-bumper coverage – what does that encompass versus what the City has now. Mr. Green stated that currently if a truck needs service a mechanic comes to our garage, but with the two that were recently purchased that does not happen. Mr. Green stated that with leasing, the company the truck is leased from will take care of all service, besides the tires, because the truck still belongs to them during the lease.

Councilman Brooks asked if there is a restriction on the miles per year with a lease. Mr. Green stated that no, milage is already factored into the lease.

Councilwoman Shoemaker stated that when you lease a regular vehicle you pay for any wear and tear at the end of lease. Councilwoman Shoemaker asked if the City will have to do this. Peterbilt salesman, Eric Krenz, stated that they factor in wear and tear in a vocational lease. Mr. Krenz stated that there is coverage for most everything except for breakage caused by staff.

Councilman Meadows asked if Mr. Green is trying to get this to a fixed cost that is predictable versus variable costs. Mr. Green stated yes, because the costs of services has been up and down over the years. Mr. Green stated he will be able to budget a set amount with the lease.

Councilman Meadows stated that Mr. Green should study to see if it would be worth it to sell the

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two recently purchased trucks in a few years and replace those with leases to save on the maintenance costs. Mr. Green stated he is considering that strategy.

**Motion:** Councilman Brooks made a motion to approve the option to lease two new garbage trucks. Councilman Reeves seconded the motion.

*All Council members present and voting, voted in favor 6-0. (Motion Carried)*

3. Presentation on Wastewater Treatment Plant Decommissioning

***Berry Shearin***

Mr. Shearin stated he is with HDR, the company completing the Wastewater Treatment Plant decommissioning. Mr. Shearin stated the project is moving forward so he is going to provide an update on what is left, challenges they have found, and the next steps. Mr. Shearin presented an aerial photograph of the site from when the project started and then showed a photograph of what the site looks like as of three weeks ago. Mr. Shearin stated that the base contract for this project was awarded by the Council last summer, so they have been working for about 8 months. Mr. Shearin stated about a month ago they learned that the Council approved the site to be a park extension, so they have been working with staff to adjust their work now that they know what the plan is for the site. Mr. Shearin stated that the grant for this project was described as decommissioning the Wastewater Plant for redevelopment, so HDR, staff, and grant administrators are having conversations about what the grant will cover. Mr. Shearin stated the project's next steps are finalizing site grading, replacing stormwater pipes, parking lot and street paving, and an environmental assessment due to phenol detection. Mr. Shearin stated that some of these items will come back to the Council as a change order because they were not covered in the base contract. Mr. Shearin stated that they knew they would have to submit a closure plan to the Department of Environmental Quality to sample for groundwater issues. Mr. Shearin stated that during that testing phenol was detected.

Mark Filardi stated he is a Senior Geologist with HDR, and he was brought in to the project after phenols were detected. Mr. Filardi described the timeline of the environmental assessments at the site. Mr. Filardi showed the Council an aerial photograph of the site before the decommissioning project with outlines of the environmental assessment plan next steps. Mr. Filardi stated that the Department of Environmental Quality requires an assessment and treatment of phenols. Mr. Filardi stated there will be eight days of field work, then samples will be sent to labs, and then they will evaluate the findings for site specific treatments. Mr. Filardi stated he thinks they will need to establish groundwater use restrictions on the site, which would mean the City would agree that in the future development of the site the City would install potable water wells.

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Councilman Brooks asked how long the monitoring wells have to stay on the property. Mr. Filardi stated that currently there is no timeline, they just need to get enough samples to understand how the groundwater changes with the seasons. Mr. Filardi stated they are talking to City staff about where to install the wells to not impede any future use. Mr. Filardi stated they will need to stay in place after the remediations to monitor how the treatments are progressing.

Councilman Reeves asked that if we wanted to move forward, the wells would not hurt any soccer fields in the future. Mr. Filardi stated no, they would not interfere with development of the site.

Councilman Meadows stated he knows there are still a lot of unknowns right now but asked what the general time line is for finding out the Department of Environmental Quality's land use restrictions for the site. Mr. Filardi stated he understands that there is a time limit with the grant funds and the first goal is to get as much work done or booked under the grant. Mr. Filardi stated that the process to get to the groundwater restrictions would take approximately 1 year. Councilman Meadows asked if they should set aside grant funds in escrow for the remediation, so they do not end up paying for it with the City's money. Mr. Filardi stated that the contract does have an allowance amount. Mr. Shearin stated that the grant is administered with paid receipts, and he or Mr. Blanton can look into the mechanism to do what Councilman Meadows asked about.

Councilwoman Shoemaker stated that she is not familiar with remediating phenol but asked if it will just need time to remediate. Mr. Filardi stated it will take both time and some actions. Mr. Filardi stated that the lab that receives the samples will provide a site-specific recommendation for treatment. Mr. Filardi stated the treatment will be approximately a one- or two-time injection event into the groundwater.

Mr. Blanton stated he wanted to speak to Councilman Meadows' question about the grant extension and escrow. Mr. Blanton stated the City was awarded the \$15 million grant from the general assembly several years ago with an original deadline of Fall 2024. Mr. Blanton stated the Wastewater Treatment Plant was still in service in the Fall of 2024, so he approached our general assembly for an extension to June 30, 2026. Mr. Blanton stated he is working with our delegation currently about another extension and anticipates that it will be awarded.

Mr. Shearin stated he wants to address that when people here of a detection of something they want to know how bad it is. Mr. Shearin stated the levels of detection are stricter with ground water than with drinking water, and this is within the level that the EPA deems safe. Mayor Moore asked for confirmation that if there are athletic fields on the site that people or kids

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playing out there will be safe from health issues. Mr. Filardi stated yes because the groundwater is six feet below the ground surface.

Councilwoman Shoemaker stated for clarification it is not in the soil; it is in the groundwater. Mr. Filardi stated that it is correct, but it is likely in the soil where it meets the groundwater. Mr. Filardi stated that the assumption is that inputs into the basins settled at the bottom of the basins which are in contact with the groundwater. Mr. Filardi stated that the Department of Environmental Quality was only concerned with groundwater, not the soil.

PUBLIC HEARING

1. Public legislative hearing on the question of a joint development project conveyance to sell real estate on East Catawba Avenue, East Central Avenue, and Municipal Lane in downtown Mount Holly, NC for redevelopment under NCGS 160D-1315.

*Jonathan Blanton*

Mr. Blanton stated this has previously been known as the Veterans Park Expansion and Downtown Redevelopment project. Mr. Blanton stated tonight's public hearing is on the question of whether to partner with Streetlights Residential to move forward with a mixed-use development. Mr. Blanton stated there are General Statutes that give municipalities the ability to acquire and develop property, N.C.G.S. 160D-1312 and N.C.G.S. 106D-1315. Mr. Blanton stated that the Town of Pineville and the City of Statesville have successfully used these General Statutes to add to and revitalize their downtown with the creation of parks, residential and commercial spaces, parking garages, and public amenity improvements. Mr. Blanton stated the City has been working for several years to expand downtown and create a public park based on the needs identified in the 2018 Strategic Vision Plan. Mr. Blanton stated he is proud of the Council for being selective and their commitment to demanding the best for the community by rejecting a previous proposal because it did not command the best use and highest quality development. Mr. Blanton stated that beginning last year the City started working with Streetlights Residential, a developer that has completed many projects nationally. Mr. Blanton stated staff has been discussing with Streetlights a mixed-use product with townhomes, a public park, amphitheater, and open space. Mr. Blanton stated that the Mount Holly Community Development Foundation helped get feedback from the community at a Mount Holly Matters meeting on January 22, 2026 by gathering questions and inquiries from residents about the project that staff and Council addressed. Mr. Blanton stated there were several common inquiries which consisted of pedestrian infrastructure, restrooms for the park, size and placement of the park, and most commonly commercial spaces downtown. Mr. Blanton stated that they are working the with Gaston Lincoln Cleveland Metropolitan Planning Organization to address the infrastructure needs and showed renderings of the park at the Mount Holly Matters meeting to

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address the size and placement. Mr. Blanton stated that they have been working to address the questions about commercial spaces downtown. Mr. Blanton stated that some commercial space would be demolished by project, but currently on the site of the proposed development there is 28,664 square feet of commercial space. Mr. Blanton stated that if the proposal comes to fruition, 20,086 square feet of commercial space will go offline within the next 18 months, however the City will see an increase of approximately 60,139 square feet of commercial space downtown that would come online in next 18 months from this project, 131 South Main St., and at the Farmers Market. Mr. Blanton stated that there will be a short-term dip in commercial space if the Council decides to move forward with the Streetlights development, but staff will work to promote the spaces that are vacant with an economic development standpoint to get them filled. Mr. Blanton stated that following the feedback from the Mount Holly Matters event, Council called for the public hearing tonight. Mr. Blanton stated the City had to follow certain steps outlined in the General Statutes. Mr. Blanton stated the public hearing has been advertised in the Gaston Gazette and the City's website for the last two weeks. Mr. Blanton stated that the General Statutes require the City to state the appraised value of the property and the proposed consideration. Mr. Blanton stated the appraised value of this transaction is \$2,540,000; the proposed consideration for the construction of the park is \$3,150,000; the total escrow amount is \$4,150,000. Mr. Blanton stated that should Council proceed with these agreements, the next step would be a six-month due diligence period. Mr. Blanton stated that during this time either party can terminate the agreement prior to closing, and there will be lots of discussions with Streetlights about options, finalizing the budgets, Streetlights will evaluate the property, and plat approval will occur. Mr. Blanton stated that work would not start immediately. Mr. Blanton stated that we are working with three separate agreements: purchase and sale agreement, development agreement, and the escrow agreement. Mr. Blanton went over the essential tenants of those agreements. Mr. Blanton discussed the schedule that Council would be looking at should they approve the agreements. Mr. Blanton stated they are working toward the best possible product for downtown Mount Holly.

Mayor Moore entertained a motion to go out of the regular meeting and into the public hearing.

**Motion:** Councilman Craig made a motion to go out of the regular meeting and into the public hearing. Councilman Meadows seconded the motion.

*All Council members present and voting, voted in favor 6-0. (Motion Carried)*

1. Jim Hope, 104 Clover St. – Mr. Hope stated that he served the City for over 31 years. Mr. Hope stated that Mr. Blanton did a great job explaining the project, but the property that was purchased is not going anywhere. Mr. Hope stated he believes that we all want the betterment of the City, but when you turn the project over to a developer, they leave the

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project. Mr. Hope stated they will sell later on. Mr. Hope stated Council should give the citizens something to be proud of and encouraged Council to make the best decision for the betterment of the City.

Mayor Moore entertained a motion to continue the public hearing until the April 13, 2026 Council meeting, citing the need for further review on the contract.

**Motion:** Councilman Reeves made a motion to continue the public hearing until the April 13, 2026 Council meeting. Mayor Pro Tem Harris seconded the motion.

Councilman Meadows asked what prevents the Council from closing the public hearing if there are items that they need to discuss. Mrs. Anders stated that there is nothing preventing the closing of the public hearing, but if you continue it and if issues arise, the Council can hear more opinions at the April 13, 2026 meeting.

Councilman Meadows asked what the issues with the contract are that Mayor Moore mentioned. Mayor Moore stated the contract needs further review. Councilman Craig asked if that can be worked out in the due diligence period. Mrs. Anders stated that it is the buyer's due diligence period. Mrs. Anders clarified an earlier point that only the buyer can back out during the due diligence period for no reason, but the City will be held to the contract as the seller. Mrs. Anders stated that she is still receiving redline revisions, so if the City still has any issues that they want resolved it is important to have them finalized before approving the contract.

Councilman Meadows asked for confirmation that the contract will still have to come back to the Council for approval, even if the public hearing is closed. Mrs. Anders stated yes, the Council can do either option to continue it or close it. Mrs. Anders stated that if the Council decides to continue the public hearing to April 13, 2026 and close it that night, the contract could still be approved on the same night. Councilman Meadows stated he does not know what the issues are that are being mentioned. Mayor Moore stated he thinks the Council should listen to the City Attorney and whatever the Council does, they do it right. Mayor Moore stated it is just two weeks to go through and review the contract that will affect citizens for decades. Councilwoman Shoemaker stated the Council is not agreeing to approve the contract right now. Councilman Craig stated he only has what is in the packet, which he understands, but it has not been explained why we need to continue the public hearing. Mayor Moore stated that this is the reason the Council will be going into closed session. Councilman Craig stated he was not aware of that. Mayor Moore stated that it just happened tonight and why it was added when we set the agenda.

Mayor Moore stated there is a motion on the floor to continue the public hearing to April 13, 2026 by Councilman Reeves, seconded by Mayor Pro Tem Harris.

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*Council members present and voting, voted as follows: (Motion Failed 2-3)*

Yay: Councilman Reeves, Mayor Pro Tem Harris

Nay: Councilman Meadows, Councilwoman Shoemaker, Councilman Craig, Councilman Brooks

**Motion:** Councilman Meadows made a motion to go out of the public hearing and back into the regular meeting. Councilman Craig seconded the motion.

*Council members present and voting, voted as follows: (Motion Carried 5-1)*

Yay: Councilman Meadows, Councilwoman Shoemaker, Councilman Craig, Councilman Reeves  
Councilman Brooks

Nay: Mayor Pro Tem Harris

NEW BUSINESS

1. City Manager Report

*Jonathan Blanton*

Mr. Blanton stated there will be a ribbon cutting for Zimora Orthodontics on Thursday, March 26 at 5 pm with the Montcross Area Chamber to celebrate the newest business in the South Gateway area. Mr. Blanton stated that next Wednesday, April 1 at 10 am the City is hosting the Toddler Egg Hunt at Tuckaseege Park. Mr. Blanton stated that on Friday, April 3 City Administrative Offices will be closed for Good Friday but there will be no delay in residential garbage pickup. Mr. Blanton stated that Chalk the Walk will be held on April 11 at 10 am here at Municipal Complex. Mr. Blanton stated the City's new Finance Director, Ashley Whetstine, started today. Mr. Blanton thanked all of tonight's speakers, specifically Mr. Green. Mr. Blanton stated that there was a similar project with the leasing of the Police Department fleet that has been successful, so he thanked Mr. Green and Mr. Clark for looking into this for the Public Works Department.

CLOSED SESSION

1. Closed Session Pursuant to N.C.G.S. 143-318.11(a) (3 and 5)
- 2.

Mayor Moore entertained a motion to go out of the regular meeting and into closed session pursuant to N.C.G.S. 143-318.11(a) (3 and 5)

**Motion:** Mayor Pro Tem Harris made a motion to go out of the regular meeting and into closed session at 7:38 pm. Councilwoman Shoemaker seconded the motion.

*All Council members present and voting, voted in favor 6-0. (Motion Carried)*

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**Motion:** Councilman Brooks made a motion to go out of closed session and back into the regular meeting at 8:31pm. Councilwoman Shoemaker seconded the motion.

*All Council members present and voting, voted in favor 6-0. (Motion Carried)*

**ADJORN**

**Motion:** Mayor Pro Tem Harris made a motion to adjourn the March 23, 2026 City Council meeting at 8:31 pm. Councilman Reeves seconded the motion.

*All Council members present and voting, voted in favor 6-0. (Motion Carried)*

The meeting adjourned at 8:31 pm.