

CITY OF MOUNT HOLLY
CITY COUNCIL MEETING MINUTES
MONDAY, JUNE 8, 2026
COUNCIL CHAMBERS
7:00 PM

CALL TO ORDER

Mayor Moore called the meeting to order at 7:00 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
Tara Douglas, City Clerk	Ashley Whetstine Finance Director
	Matt Black, Economic Development Director
	Jason Green, Public Works Director

INVOCATION

Gavin Cerilli led the Council, Staff, and attendees in prayer.

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

Boy Scout Troop 59 led the Council, Staff, and attendees in the Pledge of Allegiance.

SET THE AGENDA

Mayor Moore entertained a motion to set the agenda as presented.

Motion: Councilwoman Shoemaker made a motion to approve the agenda as presented.
Councilman Brooks seconded the motion.

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

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CONSENT AGENDA

1. Proclamation for Aphasia Awareness Month
2. Amendment to Capital Project Ordinance for the Waste Water Treatment Plant Decommissioning.
3. Amendment to Capital Project Ordinance for South Gateway Road Project.
4. Amendment to Capital Project Ordinance for 911 Communication Center Upgrade.
5. Call for a public hearing to consider an update to Section 153.049 of the Subdivision Land Development Ordinance to develop standards for private streets. Case # TA-26-4.
6. Call for a public hearing to consider an update to Section 153.085 of the Subdivision Land Development Ordinance to require fencing for BMPs. Case # TA-26-5.
7. Call for a public hearing to consider an update to Sections 5.11-C-3-h & 5-12-C-3-h of the Zoning Ordinance to update the maximum height of fences in the LI & HI zoning districts. Case # TA-26-6.
8. Call for a public hearing to consider rezoning Parcel # 123202 from R-8-MF to R-8-SF. Case # R-26-3.
9. Approval of City Council Meeting Minutes – May 18, 2026

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

Motion: Mayor Pro Tem Harris made a motion to approve the Consent Agenda as presented. Councilman Meadows seconded the motion.

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

PRESENTATIONS

1. Presentation of a Proclamation honoring Will Crist for his service to the Planning Commission.

Mayor Moore

Mayor Moore read and presented a proclamation honoring Will Crist for his service to the Planning Commission.

2. Presentation of a Proclamation for Bonnie Beatty celebrating her 106th birthday.

Mayor Moore

Mayor Moore read and presented a proclamation for Bonnie Beatty celebrating her 106th birthday.

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PUBLIC HEARING

1. Proposed Fiscal Year 2026/2027 Budget and Fee Schedule

Jonathan Blanton and Ashley Whetstine

Mayor Moore entertained a motion to go out of the Regular Meeting and into the Public Hearing.

Motion: Councilman Meadows made a motion to go out of the regular meeting and into the continuation of the Public Hearing. Councilman Reeves seconded the motion.

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

Mr. Blanton restated the highlight from his Fiscal Year 2026-2027 budget presentation at the May 18, 2026 City Council Meeting. Mr. Blanton stated that the budget is balanced at \$47.7 million and is a spending plan that reflects our continued commitment to fiscal responsibility, excellent public service, and strategic investment in the community's future. Mr. Blanton stated that the public is welcome to make any comments regarding the budget at this hearing. Mr. Blanton stated that following the public hearing he would ask for a motion from the Council to approve the budget ordinance and the fee schedule for the upcoming fiscal year.

With no one signed up to speak at the Public Hearing, Mayor Moore entertained a motion to come out of the Public Hearing and back into the Regular Meeting.

Motion: Councilman Meadows made a motion to come out of the Public Hearing and back into the Regular Meeting. Councilwoman Shoemaker seconded the motion.

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

Motion: Councilwoman Shoemaker made a motion to approve the proposed Fiscal Year 2026-2027 Budget and Fee Schedule. Mayor Pro Tem Harris seconded the motion.

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

2. Public Hearing to consider a rezoning of Tax Parcel #184436 from R-12 (Single Family) to B-3 (General Business), Case R-26-2.

Brandon Livingston

Mr. Livingston stated that a rezoning application was submitted by Cynthia Woolbright requesting to rezone Tax Parcel #184436 located at 303 Ferstl Avenue from R-12 (Single Family)

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to B-3 (General Business), Case R-26-2. Mr. Livingston stated that this location is being used as a daycare and if approved this space would operate as a medical office or a related use. Mr. Livingston stated that this is a general rezoning permitting anything to operate in this business that is permitted in the B-3's in the South Gateway District. Mr. Livingston stated that the Planning Commission voted unanimously recommending approval at their June 1, 2026 meeting.

Mayor Moore entertained a motion to go out of the regular meeting and into the Public Hearing.

Motion: Councilwoman Shoemaker made a motion to go out of the regular meeting and into the continuation of the public hearing. Councilman Brooks seconded the motion.

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

PUBLIC HEARING SPEAKERS:

1. Brad Druey: 106 Cramer Mountain Woods- Mr. Druey stated that he is part of the group who is looking to purchase the property. Mr. Druey stated that they are looking to invest \$400,000 which will primarily be a cosmetic overhaul. Mr. Druey stated that it would be a multi-tenant building.

The other two speakers signed up to speak chose not to speak.

Motion: Councilman Meadows made a motion to go out of the Public Hearing and back into the Regular Meeting. Councilman Brooks seconded the motion.

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

Motion: Councilman Reeves made a motion to approve the rezoning of Tax Parcel #184436 from R-12 (Single Family) to B-3 (General Business) Case R-26-2. Councilman Brooks seconded the motion.

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

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PUBLIC COMMENT

1. Jeff Lee-119 S. Main Street- Mr. Lee stated that he would like to publicly recognize and thank Special Events Coordinator Chloe Clary for the outstanding success of the inaugural Piedmont Arts and Cultural Experience (PACE). Mr. Lee highlighted the professionalism, the attention to detail, and the elevated experience of the event. Mr. Lee stated that the festival truly represented the art initiatives that have been steadily growing over the years.
2. Rodney Eppes-107 S. Hawthorn Street: Mr. Eppes expressed concerns over the increase in the water and sewer rates in the budget.

NEW BUSINESS

1. Discussion on Public Input Process for Downtown Redevelopment

Brian DuPont

Mr. DuPont presented information regarding what it could look like if the Council decides to get further input from the public regarding Veterans Park and the downtown redevelopment. Mr. DuPont reviewed how the City has received public input citing online surveys and Charette style meetings. Mr. DuPont discussed how the input would be evaluated citing focus on the environmental assessment, reviewing existing plans, cost evaluations and funding options. Mr. DuPont reviewed a draft public input timeline citing public input meetings and surveys in August and September of 2026 and a presentation of finding to the Council in the Winter of 2026.

Mayor Moore stated that following the StreetLights proposal vote in April, he felt that the Council needed additional time to evaluate alternatives, address concerns, and gather meaningful public input before determining the future of these properties. Mayor Moore stated that given the importance of this area to our downtown and community's long-term vision for Veteran's Park, he believes that it is appropriate to reengage the residents before making any major decisions. Mayor Moore requested the Council to direct staff to develop a public engagement and community vision process. Mayor Moore asked for a motion directing staff to prepare a public engagement plan for the Council's consideration with dates for the public involvement meetings.

Motion: Mayor Pro Tem Harris made a motion directing staff to prepare a downtown redevelopment public engagement plan to bring back for the Council's consideration. Seconded by Councilman Reeves.

Councilman Brooks inquired as to the number of public meetings that have been had on this topic. Mr. DuPont stated that there have been 28 public meetings on this topic dating back as early as

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the February 19, 2018 Council Retreat. Councilman Brooks asked if the City has any staff members that can build parks. Mr. DuPont stated that Planning Director Greg Beal, Parks and Recreation Director Eric Smallwood, and City Engineer Jon Ford who have varied experience that could be utilized.

Councilman Craig stated that he is in favor of the online survey but expressed concerns about continually going back to the public for more input when the public has sufficient details about what the plan is. Councilman Craig stated that he, Councilwoman Shoemaker, and Councilman Brooks were elected and re-elected for being in favor of this park. Councilman Craig is in favor of staff coming up with a plan for the Council to discuss, but that he is not in favor of having additional public involvement meetings.

Mayor Moore stated that the online survey would be good for those who cannot attend these meetings but feels that the public involvement meetings are still necessary regardless of how many we have had in the past.

Mayor Pro Tem Harris stated that the plans have changed tremendously over the years. Mayor Pro Tem Harris stated that she has always wanted just the park, but the plans have evolved to adding retail and housing. Mayor Pro Tem Harris stated that the public should be involved so that they can give the Council direction as to what they would like to see.

Mayor Moore stated that end in the end it will be up to the Council to decide what we want to do and how we want to do it, but we owe it to our public to be involved.

Mayor Pro Tem Harris asked City Manager Blanton to explain the staff's experience with building parks. Mr. Blanton stated that at his previous job, the Town of Ranlo was fortunate enough to receive funds from the General Assembly whereby he and Mr. Green were able to revamp two parks for the town. Mr. Blanton stated that prior to that, he was the City Manager in Hamlet where we were fortunate enough to receive grant funding to renovate, build, and manage park processes. Mr. Blanton stated that the City of Mount Holly has a longstanding history of building, maintaining, and keeping parks in a stellar fashion, naming the success with the Ransom Hunter Park that was recently completed. Mr. Blanton stated that he, the City of Mount Holly staff, Mr. Green, and the City Engineer have a lot of diverse experiences managing parks, working through the construction projects, and being the project manager as it pertains to park renovations, park construction, and seeing those processed through from start to finish.

Councilman Brooks asked for confirmation that the City could do most of the work in-house. Mr. Blanton stated that the City staff could certainly work towards evaluating these options based on the direction of the Council to see what would be feasible that we could do in-house. Mr. Blanton stated that Mr. Green has done an excellent job so far on a small scale, starting some of the

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clearings as well as other items that can be done in-house. Mr. Blanton stated that we are awaiting further direction from the City Council as it pertains to what next steps look like and how far the Council would like the staff to continue in-house and what that plan would look like based on the Council's direction. Mr. Blanton stated that staff can evaluate and come back to the Council with a plan of what staff can do in-house and what would need to be contracted based on the expertise of staff and based on the direction of the Council.

Councilwoman Shoemaker stated that it seems that further information is needed from staff as to what they are capable of doing in-house. Councilwoman Shoemaker reminded the Council about conversations regarding a possible interim park until further plans are made. Councilwoman Shoemaker stated that while she is for getting additional input from the residents, she expressed the need for input in a controlled manner.

City Attorney Anders clarified with Councilwoman Shoemaker the potential motion to table so that it could be restated.

Motion: Councilwoman Shoemaker made a motion to table the motion made by Mayor Pro Tem Harris directing staff to prepare a downtown redevelopment public engagement plan to bring back for the Council's consideration. Mayor Pro Tem Harris seconded the motion.

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

Councilman Craig wants to know how we are going to pay for this since the bond referendum was voted down and then the public private partnership was voted down.

2. City Manager Report

Jonathan Blanton

Mr. Blanton thanked the Finance team and the Executive Staff for their excellent work on the budget. Mr. Blanton recognized the legacy of former City Attorney Kemp A. Michael, who recently passed away. Mr. Blanton stated that the Wastewater Treatment Plant Decommissioning budget ordinance was approved tonight and that City was able to get an extension on the use of the funds, giving the City an additional year to finalize the \$15 million decommissioning projects. Mr. Blanton stated that the City is finalizing where the soccer fields will go, walking track placement, parking, irrigation, and other amenities that are in compliance with the grant process.

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Mr. Blanton updated the Council on the progress of Kemp A. Michael Way stating that the South Gateway Connector road recently finished phase 1.

Mr. Blanton stated that tonight the 911 Communication Center upgrades were revised. Mr. Blanton stated that the City had representatives from the North Carolina State Auditor's Office here last week that were interested in receiving a tour of the City's 911 center. Mr. Blanton stated that they were impressed that the City of Mount Holly's Police Department had zero deficiencies on their latest audit. Mr. Blanton stated that we are excited to see this capital project move forward to completion.

Mr. Blanton stated that the unveiling of the Accuvision project will be on Wednesday, June 17, 2026 with a reception following at the Municipal Complex pergola.

Mr. Blanton stated that there will be a Juneteenth Celebration held in Ransom Park on Friday, June 19, 2026 beginning at 10:00 am.

Mr. Blanton thanked the Parks and Recreation and the Public Works staff for the Friday Night Concert Series Event.

Mr. Blanton stated that the River Street Greenway bridge was installed on Friday. Mr. Blanton stated that this project is not complete but that the City will plan a large-scale ribbon cutting celebration that will officially open the bridge. Mr. Blanton stated that this bridge is the largest pedestrian bridge in Gaston County.

Mr. Blanton reviewed the information from the North Carolina League of Municipalities regarding Senate Bill 1047 and the harmful impacts that this bill could have on local government. Mr. Blanton stated that some of those impacts could be automatic development approvals, limited zoning authority, and expanded vested rights. Mr. Blanton stated that he has written a resolution addressing the City's concerns for the Council's consideration that would be sent to the North Carolina General Assembly.

Mr. Blanton requested that the City Council make a motion to direct staff to finalize this resolution and to share it with our local delegation.

Motion: Mayor Pro Tem Harris made a motion to direct staff to finalize this resolution and to share it with our local delegation. Councilman Meadows seconded the motion.

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

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CLOSED SESSION

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

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

Motion: Councilman Brooks made a motion to go out of the regular meeting and into closed session at 7:53 pm. Councilwoman Shoemaker seconded the motion.

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

Motion: Councilwoman Shoemaker made a motion to come out of closed session and back into the regular meeting at 8:41 pm. Councilman Brooks 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 June 8, 2026 City Council Meeting at 8:41pm. Councilman Craig seconded the motion.

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

The meeting adjourned at 8:41 pm.