

CITY OF MOUNT HOLLY
CITY COUNCIL MEETING MINUTES
MONDAY, MARCH 24, 2025
COUNCIL CHAMBERS
6:30 PM

CALL TO ORDER

Mayor Moore called the meeting to order at 6:30 pm. The following were present:

Mayor David Moore	Jonathan Blanton, City Manager
Mayor Pro Tem Lauren Shoemaker	Brian DuPont, Assistant City Manager
Councilman Ivory Craig	Alexis Hines, Human Resources Director
Councilman Jeff Meadows	Brian Reagan, Police Chief
Councilman Bryan Hough	Greg Beal, Planning Director
Councilwoman Phyllis Harris	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	Michelle Wood, Finance Director
	Matt Black, Economic Development Director
	Jason Green, Public Works Director

INVOCATION

Councilman Hough led the Council, Staff, and attendees in prayer.

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

Councilman Craig 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. Councilwoman Harris requested that item one on the Consent Agenda be moved to item one under Old Business. Mayor Moore entertained a motion to set the agenda as amended.

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

All Council members present and voting, voted in favor 5-1. (Motion Carried)

Aye: Councilman Hough, Councilman Reeves, Councilwoman Harris, Mayor Pro-Tem Shoemaker, and Councilman Meadows

Nay: Councilman Craig

CITY OF MOUNT HOLLY
CITY COUNCIL MEETING MINUTES
MONDAY, MARCH 24, 2025
COUNCIL CHAMBERS
6:30 PM

CONSENT AGENDA

1. ~~Budget amendment for Property Acquisition.~~
2. Approval to apply for the North Carolina Amateur Sports-Youth Sports Grant
3. Adoption of the Cleveland, Gaston, Lincoln Regional Hazard Mitigation Plan
4. Approval to declare the 1998 Ladder Truck and 2002 Fire Engine as surplus property
5. Approval of Minutes from the March 10, 2025 Council Meeting

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

Motion: Councilwoman Harris made a motion to approve the Consent Agenda as amended. Mayor Pro-Tem Shoemaker seconded the motion.

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

PRESENTATIONS

1. Consideration & Approval of the Updated Works Associated with the Creative Spaces Initiative. **Paul Lowe**

Mr. Lowe presented the images of the artwork up for consideration. Mr. Lowe stated that staff is working to change out the art associated with the Creative Spaces Initiative. Mr. Lowe stated this is the second year of this program which seeks to spread the footprint of art through the placement of sculpture throughout the City. Mr. Lowe stated we currently have four locations, and will move to six locations, as two new locations come online at the Tuckaseegee Park and at Arts on the Greenway. Mr. Lowe stated staff has checked with the leadership of Arts on the Greenway and Building Maintenance regarding the latter location, and have worked the Parks and Recreation Department to locate a new pad location at Tuckaseegee Park, when one location decided not to work with us. Mr. Lowe stated staff is very appreciative of the Parks staff for working with them on this effort to ensure that they can bring six works to the City during the next fiscal year. Mr. Lowe stated that staff has also sent the six works to be reviewed by the leadership of the Parks and Recreation Department, which is supportive of the project. Mr. Lowe stated that if approved, we will have this project completed by the end of June. Mr. Lowe stated the PAAC reviewed the six proposed works at their meeting held on March 19th, 2025 and voted to recommend approval to the City Council.

Motion: Councilman Craig made a motion to approve the Updated Works Associated with the Creative Spaces Initiative. Councilman Meadows seconded the motion.

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

CITY OF MOUNT HOLLY
CITY COUNCIL MEETING MINUTES
MONDAY, MARCH 24, 2025
COUNCIL CHAMBERS
6:30 PM

2. Update Regarding the Reappointment Process for the Planning Commission.

Greg Beal

Mr. Beal stated that the City has a vacant Planning Commission position, which comprises one seat on a nine-seat board. Mr. Beal stated the Planning Commission differs from the other commissions and committees in that it is required by NC General Statutes as a land-use recommendation board, but other committees and commissions are not required under State law. Mr. Beal stated that five members of the Planning Commission serve on the Board of Adjustment, with the four remaining members serving as alternates in case of absences. Mr. Beal stated the Board of Adjustment presides over evidentiary hearings, such as special use permits, appeals and variances, with several of these taking place annually. Mr. Beal stated that staff currently has six applications in-hand from interested citizens. Mr. Beal stated that within the past year, the Planning Commission has updated its rules and procures, which is in tonight's agenda packet. Mr. Beal stated that staff is seeking Council's direction on proceeding with the vacancy appointment under the current process.

Mr. Beal reviewed the historical process stating that for the past several years, the City has advertised extensively on social media, in the monthly utilities bill, and on the City website when a vacancy on the Planning Commission takes place. Mr. Beal stated the City has also developed an application form for interested citizens to complete. Mr. Beal stated that having been a part of several vacancy-filling processes over nearly 24 years, he can say that at times, there are not a lot of citizens interested in serving and the board has gone several months without any interest whatsoever. Mr. Beal stated however, at other times, the City has received a lot of interest. Mr. Beal stated that other times, the City has chosen person to serve, only for them to give up the position at a later time, due to the commitment requirements.

Mr. Beal stated that once the applications are received, by the pre-determined cut-off date, the Planning staff schedules interviews with the applicants before the Planning Commission at a regularly scheduled public meeting. Mr. Beal stated there has been a limit to how many interviews are scheduled, and merit-based review of the applications has been applied in the past, in order to select the top several candidates for interviews before the Planning Commission. Mr. Beal stated that applicants are notified well in advance of the interview and meeting. Mr. Beal stated that some have decided to drop out of the process at this point. Mr. Beal stated that the interviews are conducted before the Planning Commission on an individual basis. Mr. Beal stated this gives the Planning Commission members a chance to answer questions such as "Why are you interested in serving?" "What area of land use interests you the most?" "Are you willing to meet the monthly meeting requirements and the annual training meeting?" Mr. Beal stated that each applicant leaves after his/her respective interview, and the board discusses candidates in an

CITY OF MOUNT HOLLY
CITY COUNCIL MEETING MINUTES
MONDAY, MARCH 24, 2025
COUNCIL CHAMBERS
6:30 PM

open meeting. Mr. Beal stated that at that point, one can submit a nomination through the form of a motion and second with a vote from the entire Planning Commission. Mr. Beal stated that the selected person then moves on as a recommended candidate to fill the position and that this recommendation is placed on the consent agenda for the next City Council meeting for the Council's consideration. Mr. Beal stated that if no nominations are given, staff asks that individuals submit ballots, ranking their preferred candidates in order. Mr. Beal stated that staff then tallies the votes in this scenario with the recommendation being formalized at this meeting; the recommended candidate to fill the position is then placed on the consent agenda at the next City Council meeting. Mr. Beal stated this process has served the Planning Commission well for at least 10 years.

Mr. Beal stated although this process is not solidified, it can easily be added to the Rules and Procedures. Mr. Beal stated that past processes have included a past-Mayor appointing members in the community and having Council approve this at their regularly scheduled meeting on the consent agenda. Mr. Beal stated that this process has its downside in that it does not give all citizens an equal opportunity to serve. Mr. Beal stated that the Chair and Vice-Chair have specific one-year term limits, but both can be reappointed by a majority vote. Mr. Beal stated that the Planning Commission members do not have term limits, and that the City tried this in the past, around 2005, only to dismiss three members, with no one interested in serving the vacant positions. Mr. Beal stated the City had to go back to the dismissed members and ask them to serve again, which not all did, and staff dealt with a reduced number of members for many months. Mr. Beal stated this certainly is not to say this scenario will happen again; it only notes this past issue as one example of term limits and vacancies.

Councilman Meadows asked if Mr. Beal has compared our process to any other cities? Mr. Beal stated that he found more cities who do it the "old way" and he has had other cities ask him about the City's process, and that they like the interview process.

Mayor Pro-Tem Shoemaker asked if there are any current applicants? Mr. Beal stated yes, there are six applications, with one gentleman indicating he is going to drop out.

Councilman Craig asked what are Mr. Beal's thoughts on term limits? Mr. Beal reiterated that around 2005 the City had an issue with term limits leading to long-term vacancies. Mr. Beal stated that with the Planning Commission, they really focus on training to help keep personal opinions aside. Mr. Beal stated that every year they have someone come in to do training and they invest approximately \$1,000-\$2,000 annually to train the board members. Mr. Beal stated there could be a term limit, like having two terms then sitting off for a year to be reappointed, but it has never come full circle because of the investment.

CITY OF MOUNT HOLLY
CITY COUNCIL MEETING MINUTES
MONDAY, MARCH 24, 2025
COUNCIL CHAMBERS
6:30 PM

Councilman Meadows stated that rank-choice voting was mentioned in the packet, and asked if it is possible to examine that and move towards the Robert's Rules of Order methodology to match what is in the ordinance for appointing a Councilmember? Mr. Beal stated that this could be addressed, but there have been instances in the past where there were no motions or nominations made. Councilman Meadows stated that if you look at Robert's Rules of Order you do not need a second there would just be a motion, and you would go until there is a majority candidate. Councilman Meadows stated that the rank-choice method could have the second person in the list being recommended so we should go through the universally accepted political process of Robert's Rules of Order. Mr. Beal stated that it would also be more transparent with Robert's Rules of Order so there is not a ballot vote, and rank-choice could give a second-choice candidate recommendation when tallying votes. Mr. Beal stated that he will get back with the Planning Commission and bring back information for the Council's consideration and review at a future City Council meeting.

OLD BUSINESS

1. Budget amendment for Property Acquisition

Michelle Wood

Motion: Councilman Reeves made a motion to not move \$3.5 million from the unassigned fund balance to the general fund balance for the purchase of the Stroupe and Sisk properties. Councilwoman Harris seconded the motion.

All Council members present and voting, voted against, 2-4. (Motion Failed)

Aye: Councilman Reeves, Councilwoman Harris

Nay: Councilman Hough, Councilman Craig, Mayor Pro-Tem Shoemaker, and Councilman Meadows

Mayor Pro-Tem Shoemaker stated that this is not voting to cancel the contract, this is looking at not paying for the contract that we are obligated to. Mayor Pro-Tem Shoemaker stated that she is not in support of defaulting on the agreement.

Mr. Blanton stated that he would like to put the total amounts for the contracts on the record as there has been a slight update from what is in Council's packet. Mr. Blanton stated this is for three transactions; the first is to Dean N Stroupe for \$995,179.59 for 120 E Central Ave., the second is also to Dean N Stroupe for 128, 138, 140 E Central Ave and 200 Municipal Ln \$2,160,304.49, and the third is to SPCS Properties in the amount of \$423,953.54. Mr. Blanton asked that the motion to approve a budget amount reflect the above stated amounts.

CITY OF MOUNT HOLLY
CITY COUNCIL MEETING MINUTES
MONDAY, MARCH 24, 2025
COUNCIL CHAMBERS
6:30 PM

Motion: Councilman Hough made a motion to approve the amounts stated by Mr. Blanton to be allocated in the budget for the purchase of the properties from Dean N. Stroupe and SPCS Properties. Councilman Craig seconded the motion.

All Council members present and voting, voted in favor, 4-2. (Motion Passes)

Aye: Councilman Hough, Councilman Craig, Mayor Pro-Tem Shoemaker, and Councilman Meadows

Nay: Councilman Reeves, Councilwoman Harris

NEW BUSINESS

1. Discussion Regarding Downtown Sanitation Services.

Jonathan Blanton

Mr. Blanton stated that the issue of downtown sanitation collection has been brought to his attention, and to some Councilmembers, regarding how the City picks up garbage downtown. Mr. Blanton stated that currently, each business has the opportunity to provide for monthly charges of \$11.91 per rollout container. Mr. Blanton stated that with the help of the Finance Department, they have evaluated 28 businesses on South Main, East Central, and West Charlotte. Mr. Blanton stated that of those 28, 16 businesses utilize one can at \$11.91 per month, 5 businesses utilize 2 cans at \$23.82 per month, 2 businesses utilize 3 cans at \$35.73 per month, 2 businesses utilize 4 cans at \$47.84 per month, and 3 businesses utilize 5 cans at \$59.55 per month. Mr. Blanton stated that businesses also have the option to contract with private dumpster services. Mr. Blanton stated the City has standard specifications for a dumpster pad if the businesses want to build it, but the City does not offer dumpster services so they would have to use a private company. Mr. Blanton stated that he has been evaluating other cities in how they provide these services. Mr. Blanton showed a map made by GIS Technician II, Beth Ann Winebarger, that shows the locations of some of the dumpster pads downtown. Mr. Blanton stated the City does not maintain or provide pick-up services for any of these sites, it is contracted to private companies. Mr. Blanton stated the City of Gastonia does provide dumpster service to their municipal service district, and they also have a \$0.20 municipal service tax that subsidizes some of the cost. Mr. Blanton stated that it's about \$50 that the City of Gastonia charges each business for the shared dumpster service, and then some of the cost is offset by the municipal service tax. Mr. Blanton stated he spoke with the City Manager in Gastonia about their

CITY OF MOUNT HOLLY
CITY COUNCIL MEETING MINUTES
MONDAY, MARCH 24, 2025
COUNCIL CHAMBERS
6:30 PM

policies and they do have the ability to provide the service in house. Mr. Blanton stated that Belmont uses Cooperative Waste Programs Agreements, ranging from \$300 to \$500 annually for services, and business owners pay the cost. Mr. Blanton stated that Bessemer City does twice a week pick up for rollout bins and allows for private dumpsters. Mr. Blanton stated that the Town of Stanley also does weekly pick up for rollout bins and allows for private dumpsters. Mr. Blanton stated that if Council is interested in moving forward with providing dumpster services, they would need to consider determining the downtown district, evaluate costs associated with pick-up, obtain access easements, and negotiate service contracts with third-party providers.

Councilman Hough stated that, thankfully, the City's growth has created more opportunities to cooperate with our businesses downtown. Councilman Hough stated that the City seems to have a lot of rollout containers and with no more recycling, the container numbers will grow. Councilman Hough stated that he is in favor of looking for ways to collaborate with our downtown district and sharing existing dumpsters if possible. Councilman Hough stated that the Council could consider additional dumpster locations if needed. Councilman Hough stated that he would like to have more information, and that the Council should look at the cost and issues that may come along with additional dumpster locations. Councilman Meadows asked if it was part of this year's budget to have a shared location for dumpsters to get rid of the rollout bins and establish shared pads and screens because of previous complaints and issues? Mr. Blanton said that he would need to evaluate that as he can only think of the funds that were allocated for building a dumpster pad behind the Holland building for this fiscal year. Councilman Meadows stated that it was requested for the budget because there was a lot of discussion around treating this like the façade grant program.

Mayor Moore asked how many people have approached Mr. Blanton about the issue of providing dumpster service? Mr. Blanton stated he has heard several complaints from the downtown area with a specific business repeatedly requesting Council review this issue. Mr. Blanton stated he has informally engaged business owners downtown about it and has made it a habit that while he is out to check on the number of dumpsters in downtown.

Councilwoman Harris asked if we are only talking about doing the dumpster pad and not taking on the cost? Mr. Blanton stated no, currently we do not provide or subsidize dumpster services for the downtown area.

Councilman Meadows asked staff to explore an ordinance that requires restaurants to have dumpster service as it becoming harder to provide the can service with the growth downtown. Councilman Hough stated that he thought the businesses would pay for the service if the City

CITY OF MOUNT HOLLY
CITY COUNCIL MEETING MINUTES
MONDAY, MARCH 24, 2025
COUNCIL CHAMBERS
6:30 PM

would help with the contracting. Councilman Hough stated the City would tell them here is the cost, here is the rollout, and ask if the businesses want to continue. Councilman Hough stated that what staff currently has to do to get to the bins is inefficient, going through back alleys to collect the cans, so the City should look into a service that is more efficient and cost effective for the businesses.

Mayor Moore asked about the dumpster pad behind Traust Brewing Company. Mr. Blanton stated that there is a dumpster pad behind Traust Brewing Company that they maintain and contract services for. Mr. Blanton stated he spoke with one of the owners of Traust Brewing Company last week about their dumpster pad and discussed the possibility of a partnership to help some of the other businesses.

2. City Manager Report

Jonathan Blanton

Mr. Blanton gave an update on the Upset Bid Process as the first 10-day upset bid period ended today, March 24, 2025, at 5 PM. Mr. Blanton stated we received one upset bid in the amount of \$815,000 from the Mount Holly Historical Society. Mr. Blanton stated that staff worked before the meeting to readvertise in the Gazette to restart the next 10-day period which will end April 7, 2025 at 5 PM. Mr. Blanton stated the City will continue the upset bid process since we did receive an upset bid to the original offer of \$762,500 and the current offer is \$815,000. Mr. Blanton stated that a social media video came out last week about our public works department coordinating with the US Army Corps of Engineers to do sand and debris removal from Hurricane Helene out of Taylors Creek, Dutchman's Creek, and the Catawba River. Mr. Blanton stated that this will take three months to complete, but we appreciate the assistance from the Federal Government and gave thanks to the Public Works department for their continued work with this project that will hopefully be completed by Summer 2025. Mr. Blanton stated the digital message board in front of Marco's Pizza has power as of today. Mr. Blanton stated this is another long-term project that has finally come to fruition and he is appreciative of the Council's support and the Tourism Development Authority for joining us on the project. Mr. Blanton stated that the North Main Street lights have been installed, and we have been working on this project since the City requested the Department of Transportation to relinquish that part of North Main earlier this year. Mr. Blanton stated that before we meet again, we will be having our first ever Chalk the Walk event on Saturday April 12, 2025 at 10 AM in Linear Park. Mr. Blanton thanked the Council and citizens and stated that he had nothing further but would be happy to answer any questions.

CITY OF MOUNT HOLLY
CITY COUNCIL MEETING MINUTES
MONDAY, MARCH 24, 2025
COUNCIL CHAMBERS
6:30 PM

With no additional questions, Mayor Moore entertained a motion to adjourn the March 24, 2025 City Council meeting.

Motion: Councilman Hough made a motion to adjourn the March 24, 2025 City Council meeting at 7:02 PM. Councilman Meadows seconded the motion.

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

The meeting adjourned at 7:02 PM.