



**MINUTES
WATAUGA CITY COUNCIL
WORKSHOP MEETING
CITY HALL COUNCIL CHAMBER,
7105 WHITLEY ROAD,
MONDAY, OCTOBER 28, 2024
5:30 PM**

CALL TO ORDER

Mayor Arthur Miner called the meeting to order at 5:30 p.m.

ROLL CALL

The meeting convened with the following members present:

Arthur L. Miner
Malissa Minucci
Pat Shelbourne
Cris Blackburn
Lovie Downey
Andrew Neal
Mark Taylor
Jan Hill

Mayor
Mayor Pro Tem/Council Member Place 5
Council Member Place 1
Council Member Place 2
Council Member Place 3
Council Member Place 4
Council Member Place 6
Council Member Place 7 (Absent with notice)

and

Sandra Gibson
Linda Proskey
Timothy Hamilton
Deby Woodard
Lana Ewell

Interim City Manager/Finance Director
City Secretary
Director of Parks and Community Services
Assistant Finance Director
Library Director

ANNOUNCEMENTS

There were no announcements made.

PRESENTATIONS

- 1. Utility Rate Model Update and Proposed Water and Sewer Rate Increase**

Sandra Gibson, Interim City Manager and Director of Finance, introduced Nyla Jamison from Waterworks, who presented financial models for the city's water and wastewater funds. Nyla reported that current expenses exceed revenues, projecting cash reserves to fall below the operating threshold by 2029 without intervention. Proposed solutions include an 8% annual wastewater rate increase from 2025–2028, followed by 3% increases to align with inflation. For water, a \$2.50 base rate increase is suggested for 2025, with 1% annual increases for 2026–2028, also transitioning to 3% inflation-aligned increases thereafter.

Council discussions clarified that the model accommodates senior discounts and allows flexibility for inflation and cost adjustments. Nyla noted similar trends in the water system, where deficits could begin in 2028, and solutions are designed to stabilize cash reserves. She will address follow-up questions through Sandra or future meetings.

2. Presentation of proposed policy changes for the City of Watauga Personnel, Administration and Financial Policies and Procedures Manual

Juliet Rodriguez, Human Resources and Civil Service Director, presented the proposed updates to city policies, including personnel administration, financial policies, and procedure manuals. Rodriguez outlined key revisions slated for potential approval on November 11. Updates include adjusting Policy 6.02 to reflect a 14-day workweek instead of a 28-day workweek and introducing Policy 6.08 to comply with Department of Labor mandates, which require exempt employees to use time clocks via new technology. Policy 9.01 proposes removing a \$75 annual cell phone hardware stipend and reducing monthly allowances for business-related mobile use. Policy 14.03, addressing social media, includes changes to align with state mandates, such as TikTok restrictions. Future revisions will address callback pay benchmarking, updates to the emergency declaration plan, and potential holiday policy adjustments. Discussions also covered mobile device reimbursement for multi-factor authentication, with Councilmember Neil emphasizing the importance of cybersecurity.

ADJOURNMENT

Mayor Miner adjourned the meeting at 6:19 p.m.

Approved: this 13 day of January, 2025

Signed: this 13 day of January, 2025

ATTEST:
Linda Proskey /s/
Linda Proskey, City Secretary



APPROVED:

Arthur L. Miner /s/
Mayor