



**MINUTES
WATAUGA CITY COUNCIL
REGULAR COUNCIL MEETING
CITY HALL COUNCIL CHAMBER,
7105 WHITLEY ROAD,
MONDAY JANUARY 13, 2025
6:30 PM**

CALL TO ORDER

Mayor Arthur Miner called the meeting to order at 6:30 p.m.

ROLL CALL

The meeting was 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 Place 5
Council Member Place 1
Council Member Place 2
Council Member Place 3
Council Member Place 4 Absent w/notice
Council Member Place 6
Council Member Place 7

and

Sandra Gibson
Linda Proskey
David Berman
Timothy Hamilton
Paul Hackleman
Deby Woodard
Julie Rodriguez

City Manager
City Secretary
City Attorney
Director of Parks and Community Services
Director of Public Works
Assistant Finance Director
Human Resources Director

INVOCATION

Associate Pastor and Police Chaplin Mathew Hurst of First Baptist Church of Watauga gave the invocation.

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

Mayor Miner led the Pledge of Allegiance.

ANNOUNCEMENTS

Mayor Miner and Councilmember Blackburn stated that there are animals at the shelter in need of a forever home and asked that, if you can, please consider adopting.

PRESENTATIONS

1. **Presentation of Service Awards for the City of Watauga Employees celebrating a Milestone Anniversary during the month of January**

Sandra Gibson and Mayor Miner presented service awards to: Kimberly Rupkalvis, Tyler Smith, Clayton Miller, Michael Maglott and Stephen Saniei for 5 years of service.

2. **Presentation of Employee of the Month Award for the month of January**

Sandra Gibson, City Manager and Mayor Miner, presented the Employee of the Month award to Kacee Honardar.

3. **Capital Improvement Plan (CIP) Projects beginning construction (1) Summertime Lane Reconstruction & (2) Park Vista Drainage Improvements**

Director of Public Works Paul Hackleman presented updates on two city projects. The first, the Summertime Lane project, is a water and wastewater reconstruction effort funded by the 2019 CIPCO. Initially awarded in October, construction was delayed until after the holiday season to minimize disruptions for residents. Work officially began today, with the contractor preparing the site. The project, which includes full reconstruction of water, sewer, paving, and drainage, is expected to be completed by January 2026. During construction, the road will be closed to through traffic, though residents will maintain access to their homes. Notices were hand-delivered to affected residents, with an option to join an email list for updates. The contractor, Quality Excavation, has successfully completed multiple projects for the city, including Whitley Road 4.

The second project, the Park Vista Culvert Extension, commenced on January 2. Since construction is contained within city property, no streets or private properties are affected. However, notices were distributed to keep residents informed. The project is expected to be completed by May. A minor issue was recently identified involving a sanitary sewer line in the park that may require a field change, potentially affecting the budget. Further details are expected later this week. Hackleman invited questions from the Council but did not prepare a formal question slide.

PUBLIC COMMENT

There was no request for public comment

PUBLIC TESTIMONY FOR ACTION ITEMS

There was no request for public testimony

CONSENT AGENDA

- 1. Consider action to approve a Resolution of the City Council of the City of Watauga, Texas, authorizing the City Manager to negotiate and execute on behalf of the City an Interlocal Agreement for vehicle maintenance services by and between the City of Watauga, Texas, and the City of Richland Hills, Texas; providing for repeal; providing for severability; and providing for an effective date.**
- 2. Consider action to approve the October 14, 2024 Regular City Council meeting minutes.**
- 3. Consider action to approve a resolution for a Federal Grant requesting funding for the Mental Health Coordinator position at the Watauga Police Department**
- 4. Consider action to approve the May 15, 2024 Special Council Meeting Canvassing the Election.**
- 5. Consider the approval of minutes from the August 7, 2023 City Council meeting**
- 6. Consider action to approve the October 28, 2024 Council Workshop meeting minutes.**
- 7. Consider action to approve the October 28, 2024 Regular City Council meeting minutes.**
- 8. Consider action to approve the November 11, 2024 Regular City Council meeting minutes.**
- 9. Consider action on approval of the Monthly Financial Report for the period ending November 30, 2024**
- 10. Consider action on approval of the Monthly Financial Report for the period ending November 30, 2024**
- 11. Consider the approval of the July 10, 2023 Regular City Council meeting minutes**

Mayor Miner asked the council if they wish to pull any of the items, hearing none he asked for a Motion. Councilmember Blackburn made a motion to accept the consent agenda as presented. Mayor Pro Tem Minucci seconded the motion. Mayor Miner called for a vote.

Motion passed 6-0-0-1.

Ayes, Shelbourne, Blackburn, Downey, Minucci, Taylor, Hill
Nays: None

Abstain: None

Absent: Neal

PUBLIC HEARINGS

1. **Public hearing to receive comments for or against the consideration of an ordinance revising single family dwelling rental regulations and adopting short-term rental regulations within the City of Watauga.**

Randy Richards, Assistant Director of Public Works, presented a proposed short-term rental ordinance. Following a City Council workshop on September 9, where direction was given on regulating short-term rentals, the Council later requested that staff draft an ordinance for future consideration. In early December, staff and the city attorney reviewed and finalized amendments to Article 11 of the Code of Ordinances, adding a section for short-term rentals under Chapter 22.

Short-term rentals, which allow property owners to rent out homes on a nightly, weekly, or short-term basis, fall under the existing single-family rental dwelling regulations. As such, they must be registered and permitted as both rental properties and short-term rentals. The proposed ordinance allows for regulation and inspection by all relevant city departments.

Mayor Miner opened the public hearing at 6:50 p.m.

Sharon Gehle, of 7725 Partridge Drive, Watauga, spoke against the ordinance, stating that residents should have more input on it. She believes that restrictions and penalties were not adequately addressed, nor were the placement and pickup of trash.

Mayor Miner closed the public hearing at 6:55 p.m.

2. **Public hearing to receive comments for or against the consideration of an ordinance amending Chapter 12, Code of Ordinances, Fee schedule, adopting fees for short-term rentals**

Randy Richards, CFM, Assistant Director of Public Works, presented the item, explaining that the proposed ordinance required the development of a fee schedule. Staff conducted due diligence by consulting multiple cities on ordinance creation, application, and the staff time involved in enforcement. Richards stated that the proposed fee schedule aligns with those of surrounding cities.

Mayor Miner opened the public hearing at 6:56 p.m.

Sharon Gehle, of 7725 Partridge Drive, Watauga, requested delaying the fee schedule to allow for additional citizen input, expressing concerns that the proposed registration and inspection fees were too low. Given the workload involved in inspections, follow-ups, and enforcement, she suggested hiring a full-time or part-time staff member to oversee short-term rentals. She noted existing issues with regulating short-term rentals and warned that adding more responsibilities would be burdensome. Ms. Gehle recommended increasing fees, incorporating fines and penalties for noncompliance, and holding property owners accountable for any criminal activity on their premises. She urged the council to vote against the fee schedule and reconsider it after further public input.

Councilmember Taylor asked whether the fees and penalties in the proposed ordinance were too high or too low. Ms. Gehle stated that she believed they were too low. Councilmember Taylor clarified that the penalty was \$2,000 per day. Ms. Gehle responded that noncompliance penalties should be included in that amount, adding that the ordinance's wording seemed vague and nonspecific. Councilmember Taylor referenced the ordinance, which states that each day a violation exists constitutes a separate offense, each punishable by \$2,000, emphasizing that this was a significant penalty. Ms. Gehle acknowledged her misunderstanding and apologized.

Councilmember Taylor further noted that while he does not actively engage on social media, he receives updates via email and has seen extensive discussion about this meeting for over a week. He stated that public notice was provided in accordance with state regulations and observed that, despite prior discussions, Ms. Gehle was the only attendee raising concerns. He questioned whether postponing the decision would result in meaningful participation or merely delaying the process.

Mayor Miner closed the public hearing at 7:02 p.m.

ACTION ITEMS

- 1. Consider action to approve AN ORDINANCE OF THE CITY OF WATAUGA, TEXAS, AMENDING THE CODE OF ORDINANCES, CITY OF WATAUGA, TEXAS, BY AMENDING ARTICLE XI ("SINGLE FAMILY DWELLING RENTAL PERMIT") OF CHAPTER 22 ("LICENSES, PERMITS AND BUSINESS REGULATIONS") TO AMEND SECTION 22-561, SECTION 22-562, SECTION 22-563, SECTION 22-564, SECTION 22-567, SECTION 22-568, AND SECTION 22-571, AMENDING REGULATIONS FOR SINGLE-FAMILY DWELLING RENTAL UNITS TO PROVIDE PENALTIES FOR VIOLATIONS, REVISE DEFINITIONS, REVISE REGULATIONS FOR REGISTRATION AND PERMITS, PROVIDE FOR MINIMUM STANDARDS AND INSPECTIONS, PROVIDE REGULATIONS FOR SHORT-TERM RENTAL UNITS, AND REVISE REGULATIONS RELATING THE SUSPENSION OF PERMITS; PROVIDING A REPEALING CLAUSE; PROVIDING A SAVINGS CLAUSE; PROVIDING A SEVERABILITY CLAUSE; AND PROVIDING FOR AN EFFECTIVE DATE.**

Randy Richards, Assistant Director of Public Works, presented the proposed short-term rental regulations to the Mayor and Council, explaining that they had been thoroughly reviewed by the city attorney and staff. These regulations aim to protect tenants, maintain neighborhood integrity, and ensure compliance with rental property standards. Previously, the city had no specific short-term rental regulations, but the new rules will be integrated into the broader rental property framework. Richards noted a council member's request to modify the occupancy limit based on bedroom size, proposing a reduction from 120 to 99 square feet for single-occupancy bedrooms, along with a total cap of ten people per rental property.

Mayor Miner referenced the practice of converting garages into bedrooms to increase occupancy, to which Richards reaffirmed that the ordinance maintains a strict occupancy limit. Councilmember Hill supported penalties, parking rules, and

waste management requirements, suggesting an increase in trash bins for larger rentals. Councilmember Taylor questioned enforcement logistics, emphasizing the challenge of regulating absentee property owners and late-night violations. Richards explained that enforcement would be a joint effort between code enforcement, the police department, and development services, with multiple channels for reporting violations. The ordinance also grants the fire department authority to inspect rental properties.

Taylor stressed the need for a clear enforcement strategy and inquired about tracking non-compliant listings. Richards assured the council that staff would monitor online rental platforms and enforce penalties, including fines and permit revocation. Councilmembers Downey and Blackburn supported the regulations, citing legal disputes in other cities and emphasizing the importance of proactive enforcement. Mayor Miner reiterated the need for regulation, especially with the anticipated rise in short-term rentals due to upcoming major events like the World Cup. The ordinance provides a necessary framework to manage rental activity and maintain community standards.

Mayor Miner asked for a Motion. Councilmember Taylor made a motion to approve as presented with an amendment to modify the bedroom size from 120 sq. ft. to 99 sq. ft. Councilmember Hill seconded the motion. Mayor Miner called for a vote.

Motion passed 6-0-0-1.

Ayes, Shelbourne, Blackburn, Downey, Minucci, Taylor, Hill
Nays: None
Abstain: None
Absent: Neal

2. **Consider action to approve AN ORDINANCE OF THE CITY OF WATAUGA, TEXAS, AMENDING CHAPTER 12 ("FEE SCHEDULE") OF THE CODE OF ORDINANCES OF THE CITY OF WATAUGA, TEXAS, AMENDING SECTION 12-22(m) OF CHAPTER 12 AMENDING AND ADDING REGISTRATION AND INSPECTION FEES FOR SINGLE FAMILY DWELLING RENTALS AND SHORT TERM RENTAL UNITS; PROVIDING A REPEALING CLAUSE; PROVIDING A SAVINGS CLAUSE; PROVIDING FOR SEVERABILITY; AND PROVIDING AN EFFECTIVE DATE.**

Assistant Public Works Director Randy Richards presented the item, noting that any fee increases must be justified based on staff time and effort in enforcing the ordinance. He explained that the city attorney would be better suited to address any legal aspects, if applicable, but emphasized that fees cannot be arbitrarily set. Councilmember Hill inquired whether, if enforcement required additional staff, funding for a new position and corresponding fee increases could be requested during the budget process. Richards confirmed that such a request would be considered during budget discussions with the city manager, if it is needed.

Mayor Miner asked for a Motion. Councilmember Shelbourne made a motion to accept the item as presented Councilmember Taylor seconded the motion. Mayor Miner called for a vote.

Motion carried 6-0-0-1.

Ayes, Shelbourne, Blackburn, Downey, Neal, Minucci, Taylor, Hill

Nays: None

Abstain: None

Absent: Neal

EXECUTIVE SESSION

- 1. Pursuant to Section 551.074 of the Texas Government Code, to deliberate the appointment, employment, evaluation, reassignment, duties, discipline, or dismissal of a public officer or employee. City Manager**

Mayor Miner recessed the meeting at 6:52 p.m. for executive session.

RECONVENE

Mayor Miner reconvened the meeting at 8:10 p.m.

ITEMS OF EXECUTIVE SESSION DELIBERATION

- 1. Consideration and possible action relating to the deliberation of the appointment, employment, evaluation, reassignment, duties, discipline, or dismissal of a public officer or employee. City Manager**

Mayor Miner asked for a motion. Councilmember Downey made the following motion: 'I move to appoint Sandra Gibson as the permanent City Manager and to authorize Mayor Miner to negotiate and sign an employment agreement, subject to the approval of the City Attorney.' Councilmember Blackburn seconded the motion. Mayor Miner called for a vote.

Motion passed 6-0-0-1.

Ayes, Shelbourne, Blackburn, Downey, Minucci, Taylor, Hill

Nays: None

Abstain: None

Absent: Neal

ITEMS FOR FUTURE AGENDAS

Councilmember Taylor requested that staff review door-to-door solicitation and explore the possibility of offering a sign that residents can purchase. Councilmember Downey seconded the motion.

Mayor Miner requested that the City Manager's goals be placed on the agenda within the next two months.

ADJOURNMENT

Mayor Miner adjourned the meeting at 8:14 p.m.

Approved: this 10 day of March, 2025

Signed: this 11 day of March, 2025

APPROVED:

/s/ Arthur L. Miner

Arthur L. Miner, Mayor

ATTEST:

/s/ Linda Proskey

Linda Proskey, City Secretary

