

Kinston City Council



MINUTES May 3, 2022

Minutes
Kinston City Council
City Hall · 207 East King Street
Tuesday, May 3, 2022
Regular Meeting at 5:30 pm

**This meeting will be held in person and published electronically at
<https://www.facebook.com/KinstonCityHall>**

REGULAR MEETING

Mayor Don Hardy called the meeting to order at 5:30 pm.

Councilmember Felicia Solomon delivered the prayer followed by the recital of the pledge of allegiance.

Council Members' Roll Call

Present: Councilmembers Sammy Aiken, Felicia Solomon, Chris J. Suggs, Robert Swinson, and Mayor Pro Tem Antonio Hardy.

Present Also: Jenee Spencer, Interim Police Chief and Tim Carraway, Attorney.

Absent: Rhonda Barwick, Interim City Manager and James Cauley, City Attorney.

CITIZEN COMMENT

Citizens must sign in prior to the start of the meeting if they wish to address the City Council.
Citizens should state their name and address prior to beginning their comments and may speak up to a maximum of 3 minutes.
Citizens seeking assistance or asking questions will be contacted by a member of the Governing Body or by appropriate City Staff

1. Gwendolyn Woods, 307 W. Blount Street, Kinston, NC spoke on behalf of the Kinston-Lenoir County NAACP, where she serves as the Health and Safety Committee Chairperson and the 619 signatures to say thank you to the Council for the ongoing changes of the lighting on Martin Luther King, Jr. Boulevard. She stated that they were acknowledging the discussion led by the Council concerning safety and stated that the community would like to be a voice and engage in issues that matter. Moving forward they do hope that cameras and some type of speed notification can be installed to help improve safety. Ms. Wooten asked the Council if there is a way that the Police Department can speak with the officers regarding their speed unless it is an emergency; they would like for them to slow down.
2. Geraldyn Barbour, 2749 Forest Drive, Kinston, NC announced on behalf of the African American Heritage of Kinston-Lenoir County, North Carolina, Inc. the 5th Funk Festival which will be presented on Saturday, May 21st from 3 pm to 7 pm in the Kinston Music Trail Park on Queen Street. In case of inclement weather, the program will be in the Community Council for the Arts on Queen Street. Ms. Barbour shared that in 2020 COVID-19 interrupted the annual music festival schedule. AAHC had paid tribute to Mr. Maceo Parker in 2016, Mr. Dick Knight in 2017, Mr. Ira Wiggins in 2018, and Mr. Nat Jones in 2019. Now, in 2022, on May 21st we are happy to honor a Kinston musician once again. A retired teacher of 35 years with the Lenoir County Public School system; Mr. Charles Richberg. Mr. Richberg says his

greatest contribution and accomplishment in music, has been instilling excellence in students from diverse levels and backgrounds, helping them develop a sense of pride and love for themselves and the community through music. The theme of the program this year is "Messages in Music". Other participants are the Soul Movement Band, Mr. Greg Hannibal, Ms. Olene Solomon, Rev. Preston Harris, Stage Lyle, LLC dancers, and Hype Dance Groups. There will also be vendors and prizes. Ms. Barbour invited everyone to join them at the event.

Adoption of the Agenda

If a Councilmember wishes to revise the agenda, the Motion to add or delete an item will be entertained prior to Adoption of the Agenda.

Councilmember Swinson made the motion, seconded by Councilmember Suggs and upon a unanimous vote of [5-0], the agenda was approved.

MINUTES

Consider approval of the minutes of the City Council meetings held on April 12 and April 19, 2022----- Debra Thompson

Councilmember Aiken made the motion, seconded by Councilmember Swinson and upon a unanimous vote of [5-0], the minutes for April 12 and April 9, 2022, were approved.

PRESENTATIONS AND RECOGNITIONS

1. Proclamation for the 53rd Annual Professional Municipal Clerks Week ---- Mayor Hardy

Mayor Hardy proclaimed May 1-7, 2022, as Professional Municipal Clerks Week and extended appreciation to Debra Thompson, City Clerk, and all Municipal Clerks. Mr. Thompson was presented flowers and photos were taken.

Mr. Aiken shared his appreciation for the clerk.

**2. Proclamation for Teachers Appreciation Week ----- Mayor Hardy
(THIS ITEM WAS ADDED TO THE AGENDA)**

Mayor Hardy proclaimed May 2-6, 2022, as Teachers Appreciation Week and thanked every teacher as they continue to put our students in a position to be the greatest they can be.

ACTION AGENDA

1. Consider a Special Event Permit for Fireworks Discharge – BBQ Festival on the Neuse - May 6, 2022 ----- Damien Locklear

Damien Locklear, Fire Chief shared that to go along with the BBQ Festival on the Neuse, they decided they would like to move forward with the fireworks display. He presented a special event permit application with a staff recommendation for approval. The event will be at approximately 9:30 pm on May 6th.

Councilmember Suggs made the motion, seconded by Councilmember Swinson and upon a unanimous vote of [5-0], the Special Event Permit for fireworks on May 6th was approved.

CITY MANAGER'S REPORT

There was no City Manager's Report.

CITY ATTORNEY'S REPORT

There was no City Attorney's Report.

MAYOR AND COUNCILMEMBER REPORTS

Mayor Pro Tem Hardy shared that after Councilmember Suggs presented the idea of having people support the purchase of the scoreboard, he reached out to the TDA. There will be a vote on the TDA's assistance at the next meeting. The consensus of the board (TDA) is the possibility of funding to help support the scoreboard purchase.

Mayor Pro Tem Hardy discussed the City Vision Conference they attended this past week. There was a lot of information from lots of other municipalities. The discussions of how others are using their ARPA funds showed that our staff was on point with the proposal that came before the Council. Mr. Hardy also shared that there were also discussions on vehicle purchasing. He stated that we are in 2022 and at the meeting, it was said that by 2030 all the vehicles would be electric. He asked the Police and Fire Chiefs to look at purchasing some hybrid or electric vehicles with the money allotted for vehicle purchasing. Mr. Hardy stated that the battery life was 10 years, and most of the vehicles we have last about 10 years. He asked each division to compare the cost to see if hybrid or electric could help us in the long run.

Councilmember Solomon shared that today the registration for Summer Bridges went live. For parents who have children K-12 a summer opportunity for their children to prepare for the upcoming school year as the district continues to work on closing learning gaps that occurred during the stay-at-home orders. This is four weeks of highly engaging coursework. Also, students from grades 7-12 have an opportunity to participate in career enrichment. This is for those who may be interested in brick masonry, sewing, and interior design; a buffet of choices for those students who desire to learn more about careers that may be of interest to them. Ms. Solomon asked the parents to take advantage of what is being offered. She stated these will profit some of the students now and in the future. Mayor Hardy added that the kindergarten registration was open and there is still available seating. Ms. Solomon stated for the parents to feel free to come in during the day to register for kindergarten. She said summer screenings take place during the summer as well.

Councilmember Aiken reminded citizens that early voting has started. He asked everyone to check with the Board of Elections for the dates. Mayor Hardy directed everyone to check with

the Board of Elections to see who was on the ballot and learn what we are voting for. He asked everyone to thank a teacher, a clerk, and our military.

Councilmember Suggs gave a special shout-out to the organizations and agencies who held some community beautification and clean-up events over the weekend. Kinston Public Services hosted their annual cleanup event, Kinston Teens held their monthly cleanup event on Saturday, and the local chapter of Alpha Phi Alpha Fraternity, Inc. participated in the Adopt A Street program. The local garden club led by Ms. Teresa Turnage O'Neal led a beautification project on Queen Street and planted over 500 flowers in the downtown corridor ahead of the upcoming BBQ Festival this weekend. Mr. Suggs stated there was a concern from Ms. O'Neal and other community members regarding the bump-outs on Queen Street and the upkeep of those. He stated he sent a follow-up email to the Council and staff asking what could be done as a long-term solution to keep the bump-outs up to date and properly landscaped and maintained. Mr. Suggs encouraged that as a Council and a City to continue supporting those efforts and do what we can to keep Kinston beautiful.

Councilmember Swinson shared that April 14th-28th is for early voting. Mr. Swinson announced that on May 21st the Jumping Run Church is having a 3-on-3 basketball tournament at Fairfield Park. He asked the community to stop by or complete an application and participate. He asked everyone to remember that "Papa Richberg" will be honored on May 21st as well, and to stop by.

Councilmember Aiken asked when a date would be set for strategic planning for the budget. Mayor Hardy stated that a previous email shared that at the next meeting there would be presentations from the department heads and after that, the City Manager will look at the budget and present the budget to the Council.

Chief Spencer stated Ms. Barwick advised that at the next Council meeting there would be several but not all department heads presenting. Then schedule a supplemental date for the rest to make their presentations. Ms. Goodson stated that is the plan at the next meeting, with a recess and scheduling of another date for the remaining department heads' presentation (possible half-day).

Councilmember Aiken asked what the festivities for the weekend at the BBQ Festival were. Mayor Hardy shared that there were cook teams, vendors, helicopter rides, and good food. There will also be some recognitions there as well. Chief Spencer shared the website kinstonbbq.com for a list of the festival events. Mayor Hardy asked any Mayors and elected officials to come down and join us at the festival.

Mayor Hardy shared that he would like to add a proposal for a Juneteenth parade here in collaboration with the public library. He has spoken with other organizations that are interested in participating in the parade. He will return at the next Council meeting with further information. Mayor Hardy asked for any ideas and noted that it will start on Queen Street at the

public library and end at the African American Music Park to enjoy the festivities there. The parade is proposed for June 18th at 2 pm.

Councilmember Swinson made the motion, seconded by Mayor Pro Tem Hardy and upon a unanimous vote of [5-0], the Council entered closed session at 6:07 pm.

CLOSED SESSION

Closed Session for North Carolina General Statute 143-318.11(a)(3) – Attorney/Client Privilege.

Councilmember Swinson made the motion, seconded by Mayor Pro Tem Hardy and upon a unanimous vote of [5-0], the Council returned to open session at 6:20 pm.

ADJOURNMENT

Councilmember Swinson made the motion, seconded by Councilmember Suggs and upon a unanimous vote of [5-0], the Council meeting was adjourned at 6:22 pm.

Respectfully submitted,

Debra Thompson, City Clerk