



CITY OF LAVONIA COUNCIL

REGULAR MEETING – MINUTES

DECEMBER 2, 2024

5:30 PM

Present: Mayor Courtney Umbehant
Councilman - Eddie Floyd
Councilman - Michael Schulman
Councilman - Jeremy Madden
Councilman - Andrew Murphy

Media: Charlie Eavenson – Franklin County Citizen
M.J. Kneiser - WLHR

Staff: City Manager - Charles Cawthon
Asst. City Manager – Daniel Carson
City Clerk – Angela V. Greer
Police Lt. – Josh Akins
DDA – Barbara Busby
Mainstreet - Ashley Rose Dodd

Attendance: LaNora Andrews, LaDonna Andrews, Eddie and Helen Bowman, Joe Harden, Gene Williams, Susan Poole, Maggie West, and Greyson Cobb.

Item 1. Call to Order
Mayor Courtney Umbehant called the meeting to order and welcomed everyone.

Item 2. Invocation and Pledge of Alliance to the American flag: led by Michael Schulman.

Item 3. Consent Agenda Items & Approval of Minutes:
Motion by Michael Schulman, seconded by Jeremy Madden to approve the Consent Agenda items as follows. Motion carried.

a) Confirmation of Quorum.

b) Approval of December Agenda as presented.

c) Approval of Minutes: November 4, 2024 - Regular Council Meeting as presented.

d) Approval of the November 2024 Financial Report as presented.

Item 4. Lavonia Housing Authority Board Appointment:

Motion by Eddie Floyd, seconded by Andrew Murphy to approve the appointment of Jim Gothard for a 5-year term from January 1, 2025 – December 31, 2029. Motion carried.

Item 5. WATER/SEWER RATE PROPOSAL - 2025:

Motion by Andrew Murphy, seconded by Michael Schulman to approve the following Water & Sewer Rate Schedule beginning January 1, 2025, as follows: Motion carried.
City Water and Sewer Rate Structure

Water Rates:

- **Tier 1 (0-4,000 gallons):** \$5.72 per 1,000 gallons
- **Tier 2 (4,001-10,000 gallons):** \$6.29 per 1,000 gallons
- **Tier 3 (10,001-20,000 gallons):** \$6.92 per 1,000 gallons
- **Tier 4 (20,001-50,000 gallons):** \$7.61 per 1,000 gallons
- **Tier 5 (50,000+ gallons):** \$8.37 per 1,000 gallons

Sewer Rates:

- **Tier 1 (0-4,000 gallons):** \$8.80 per 1,000 gallons
- **Tier 2 (4,001-10,000 gallons):** \$9.68 per 1,000 gallons
- **Tier 3 (10,001-20,000 gallons):** \$10.65 per 1,000 gallons
- **Tier 4 (20,001-50,000 gallons):** \$11.71 per 1,000 gallons
- **Tier 5 (50,000+ gallons):** \$12.88 per 1,000 gallons

Industrial Water Rates:

- **Tier 1 (0-50,000 gallons):** \$5.72 per 1,000 gallons
- **Tier 2 (50,001-100,000 gallons):** \$6.29 per 1,000 gallons
- **Tier 3 (100,001-150,000 gallons):** \$6.92 per 1,000 gallons
- **Tier 4 (150,001-200,000 gallons):** \$7.61 per 1,000 gallons
- **Tier 5 (200,001+ gallons):** \$8.37 per 1,000 gallons

Industrial Sewer Rates:

- **Tier 1 (0-50,000 gallons):** \$8.80 per 1,000 gallons
- **Tier 2 (50,001-100,000 gallons):** \$9.68 per 1,000 gallons (10% increase)
- **Tier 3 (100,001-150,000 gallons):** \$10.65 per 1,000 gallons (10% increase)
- **Tier 4 (150,001-200,000 gallons):** \$11.71 per 1,000 gallons (10% increase)
- **Tier 5 (200,001+ gallons):** \$12.88 per 1,000 gallons (10% increase)

Additional Fees:

Minimum Fees:

- **Residential (inside city):** \$5
- **Residential (outside city):** \$7.50
- **Commercial (inside city):** \$17.50
- **Commercial (outside city):** \$20

Admin Fee:

- \$2 per account

Debt Service:

- **Water:** \$2.03 per account
- **Sewer:** \$2.04 per account
- **Water & Sewer Tap Fees:**

The fee for water & sewer tap will double after the third in a calendar year.

Item 6. GMRC Contract for Downtown ARC Project:

Motion by Eddie Floyd, seconded by Andrew Murphy to approve entering into a contract agreement with GMRC (Georgia Mountains Regional Commission) to prepare a full grant and administrative services with ARC (Appalachian Regional Commission) Grant Program for Downtown Improvements. Motion carried.

Item 7. Destination Marketing Organization Contract - 2025:

Motion by Andrew Murphy, seconded by Michael Schulman to sign and enter into a Contract Service agreement with Franklin County Chamber of Commerce, Inc. for the purpose of promoting tourism in Lavonia and Franklin County. Motion carried.

Item 8. Resolution for First Responder PTSD Application & Participation:

Motion by Michael Schulman, seconded by Eddie Floyd for the Mayor to sign a Resolution to add membership in a fund of Georgia Interlocal Risk Management Agency (GIRMA). Motion carried.

Item 9:

Legal:

a. 2025 Alcohol License Approvals:

Motion by Eddie Floyd, seconded by Jeremy Madden to approve the following 2025 – Alcohol Licenses as presented, except for Hwy 212 Ventures, LLC. – 4626 Vickery St., Jab-Sa Korean BBQ – 14225 Jones St., Longhorn Steakhouse #5628 – 13640 Jones St., and Rolling Chef Lavonia, LLC; these licenses are contingent upon all paperwork being completed. Motion carried.

b. FY 2025 Budget – Public Hearing and Second Read:

Mr. Cawthon advised Mayor and Council of a few changes since last month's Council Meeting. The Municipal Court Clerk was moved out of the General Fund into the Municipal Court Fund where it should be. Also, we did not account for the General Fund Cops Grant Revenue that will have to be offset with expenditures, so that was the changes from last month.

Mayor Umbehant advised that they talked about the Library last month and that Maggie West and Susan Poole representing the Library were here; he asked Mr. Cawthon to address the Library funding involved. Mr. Cawthon said that the Mayor and Council instructed him to check with Royston to see how they were handling it. He said that he forwarded the information in an email to the Mayor and Council which included the \$9,000.00 extra they were asking for in the 2025 Budget.

Mayor Umbehant called a Public Hearing to order at 5:47 P.M. The purpose of the hearing was to offer comments from the public on the proposed FY2025 Budget as presented.

Maggie West – 6041 Stonebridge Road, Carnesville, Ga. Ms. West thanked the Mayor and Council for their support, she also asked for more lighting at the Library and the Library parking lot.

Mayor Umbehant closed the Public Hearing at 5:48 P.M.

Mr. Cawthon asked them for consideration of the FY2025 Capital Project List for the General and Water Fund as presented to be approved also.

Motion by Andrew Murphy, seconded by Eddie Floyd to approve the second reading and approval of the **FY2025 Budget** and the **FY2025 Capital Project List** for Water and General Fund as presented. Motion carried.

<u>FY 2025 Budget</u>	<u>2025</u>
General Fund	\$4,044,600
Confiscated Assets	\$5,000
Downtown Development	\$75,000
Cemetery	\$17,000
Hotel Motel	\$600,000
2023 SPLOST	\$345,000
Water/Sewer	\$3,902,500
Solid Waste	\$675,000
Municipal Court	\$400,500
	\$10,064,600

2025 Capital Project List

General Fund

1. Street Paving/Sidewalk Rehab and Additions. This is our continuing program to resurface streets and sidewalks in Lavonia that are failing. Approx. cost - \$100,000. Timeframe – 2025 Funding Sources – LMIG & SPLOST.
2. Update of Codes and Ordinances. GMRC would assist with this project. The timeframe would first half of 2025. Approx. cost \$40,000. Split between General & Water. Timeframe – 2025. Funding Source – Reserve Funds.
3. Leaf and Limb Collection Trucks. Both trucks are at the end of their useful life. Approx. cost - \$80,000 each. Timeframe – 2026. Funding Source – Equipment or vehicle lease.
4. Downtown Streetscape. Complete overhaul of the roadways, sidewalks, and landscaping. Approx. cost \$1,000,000. Timeframe – 2025-2026. Funding Sources – ARC, Reserve Funds, and/or grants.
5. Park Expansions & Rehab – This project will be ongoing for the next few years. The designs are being finalized now and until they are done, we will not have an accurate cost estimate. Cost – Unknown. Time Frame 2025-2028. Funding Sources – LWCF, Other Grants and/or Recreation Funds.
6. I-85 Gateway Project. Landscaping, Bridge Railing, Pedestrian Lighting & Signage. We are currently working with GDOT for submittal approvals. Cost - \$1,000,000. Time Frame – 2025 – 2028. Funding Sources –Tourism Product Development and/or Grants.

Water Fund

7. New Water Storage Allocation from the Corp of Engineers. This project should wrap up in 2025/2026. Cost - \$1,000,000. Funding Sources – Corp of Engineers.
8. Hwy 328 Bridge Replacement – This GDOT project will require us to move a 10” water line to facilitate construction. Approx. Cost - \$350,000. Timeframe – 2025-2026. Funding Sources – GEFA and/or Lavonia Water Funds.
Water Plant Upgrade – See Attached List. Replace and upgrade undersized and outdated components to realize the full rated production capacity. Approx. Cost \$5,000,000. Timeframe – 2025-2026. Funding Sources – GEFA, County Partners and/or Lavonia Water Funds.

Item 10: Mayor’s Report:

A Joyful Start to the Christmas Season in Lavonia

The Christmas spirit is alive and well in Lavonia. Yesterday, we kicked off the season with our annual Christmas parade, a spectacle that brought smiles to faces and warmth to hearts. I had the unique pleasure of riding with Santa himself. Our float was certainly full of Christmas cheer!

Upcoming Festivities

Don't hang up your Christmas stockings just yet! Tomorrow, we're lighting up downtown Lavonia with our Christmas tree lighting event. Join us from 5-7 PM for a magical evening featuring the Coca Cola Caravan and all the festive goodies your heart desires, including free cookies, roasted marshmallows, and apple cider. Remember to bundle up because it's going to be a chilly night.

Shop, Jingle, and Mingle

Our Downtown Development and Main Street program is back with the annual Jingle Mingle event. It's a shopaholic's dream come true! Spend \$10 at participating local businesses, and once you hit \$100, you'll have a chance to win a grand prize worth over \$600. That's a lot of holiday cheer for the money you spend in our downtown!

Spreading Kindness and Joy

Our community kindness initiative is in full swing, and this month, we're focusing on bringing joy to children with donations of unwrapped toys. There are three opportunities to spread the cheer: donate at tomorrow's tree lighting with Officer Jeffery Martin for Toys for Tots, then at the Lavonia Police Department's with an angel tree supporting local foster kids until December 14th, or with Mike & Linda Poss at the Depot collecting for North Carolina Hurricane Helene victims until December 21st.

Reflecting on a Year of Kindness

As we look back on 2024, our hearts are full of gratitude for the kindness that has rippled through Lavonia. From food drives to blood donations, and from supporting literacy to loving our senior citizens, our city has truly embraced the spirit of kindness this year. We've supported our farmers market, city parks, and the animal shelter, and we've even made sure our school kids stay warm with coats. Thank you to everyone who made these efforts possible. Together, we've made a difference, and we aim to keep this momentum going into the future.

A Heartfelt Thank You

Lastly, as the year comes to a close, I want to express my deep appreciation to our incredible staff—from public works to the police department and everyone in between. You are the heart of Lavonia, and you make our city a truly special place. Thank you for all you do!

Here's to a holiday season full of joy, kindness, and community spirit. Merry Christmas, Lavonia!

Item 11. City Manager Report:

The bids for our Generators funded by FEMA/GEMA grant are due on Thursday. Hopefully we will be able to have all of these in service for 2025.

He spoke with our engineer, Chris Quigley today and they discussed the possibility of obtaining a GEMA grant to enhance our dam safety. This is an 80 or 90% grant and I would like to spend some time and effort going after these funds. Our dam at Crawford Creek is a Category II, meaning failure would not result in probable loss of life. This is re-evaluated every 5 years. Our dam does need to have some operational and structural repairs/maintenance done. This grant could fund most of the scope of work. He then thanked all the City employees and staff for all they do.

Item 12. Final Comments:

The Mayor asked for any final comments. The council wished everyone a Merry Christmas.

There were no further comments.

Item 13. Adjourn:

Mayor Umbehant adjourned the meeting at 5:57 P.M.

Upcoming Meetings:

January 6, 2025 – City of Lavonia Regular Council Meeting @ 5:30 PM

Courtney Umbehant, Mayor

Angela V. Greer, City Clerk