

**Dunn City Council**  
**Regular Meeting**  
**Tuesday, February 24, 2026**  
**6:30 p.m. Dunn Municipal Building**

## Minutes

**PRESENT:** Mayor William P. Elmore Jr., Mayor Pro Tem April Gauden, Council Members J. Wesley Sills, Raquel McNeil, Alan Hargis, and Dr. David L. Bradham.

**ABSENT:** Council Member Billy N. Tart

**ALSO PRESENT:** *City Manager Justin Hembree, Assistant City Manager Billy R. Godwin, Finance Director, Cary McNallan, Chief of Police Lynn Gay, Major Nick Simmons, Captain Matt Smith, Code Enforcement Officer Stephen Hodges, Enforcement Officer Cindy Rodriguez, Human Resources Director Connie Jernigan, Parks & Recreation Director Brian McNeill, Senior Planner Stephanie Goodrich, Public Works Director Dwayne Williams, Collection & Distribution Manager Billy Cottle, Wastewater Treatment Plant Manager, Donrie Dukes, Water Treatment Plant Manager Ian Stroud, Administrative Support Specialist Christy Sweeney, City Attorney Tilghman Pope and City Clerk Melissa Matti.*

### CALL TO ORDER

Mayor William P. Elmore, Jr. called the Regular Meeting of the City of Dunn City Council to order at 6:30 PM on Tuesday, February 24, 2026.

Mayor Elmore noted that Council Member Billy Tart was absent due to a family commitment. He requested that all attendees silence their cell phones during the meeting.

### INVOCATION

The invocation was delivered by Reverend Jason Williams, Co-Pastor of Hood Memorial Christian Church.

### PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

Mayor Pro Tem April Gauden led the Pledge of Allegiance.

### CONSIDERATION & APPROVAL OF THE AGENDA

The agenda was approved without changes.

**Motion by Council Member Bradham, seconded by Council Member Hargis to adopt the February 24, 2026 Regular Meeting agenda as presented. Motion carried unanimously.**

### PRESENTATIONS

#### ***Retirement Resolution – Patty Rowland***

Finance Director Cary McNallan read aloud a Resolution of Appreciation for Patty Rowland upon her retirement, effective March 1, 2026, after 30 years of service to the City of Dunn.

The resolution detailed her career history, beginning as Accounting Supervisor on June 14, 1996, her promotion to Utility Service Specialist on July 1, 1998, and her subsequent promotion to Revenue Manager on May 11, 2016. The resolution recognized her implementation of the "blue paper" system, her receipt of several letters of commendation for customer service, her attendance at Johnston County Community College and the UNC School of Government, and her receipt of the North Carolina RWA Outstanding Administrative Personnel Award in 2010. The resolution also noted that Patty found her husband, Dunn Police Sergeant Rodney Rolland, during her tenure with the City; they were married on September 19, 2004, and have two sons.

Mayor Elmore offered his personal thanks on behalf of the Board and staff, acknowledging that a great deal of institutional knowledge would be departing with her retirement and wishing her well. *A copy of Resolution of Appreciation (R2026-04) is incorporated into these minutes as Attachment#1.*

#### ***Oath of Office – Chief of Police***

City Manager Justin Hembree introduced the swearing-in ceremony for the new Chief of Police, Thomas Lynn Gay. The City Clerk administered the Oath of Office. *A copy of Oath of Office is incorporated into these minutes as Attachment#2.*

Following the oath, Chief Gay addressed those gathered, acknowledging the honor and humility of the moment. He thanked City Manager Hembree, the Assistant City Manager, Mayor Elmore, and the City Council, and offered particular thanks to his family for their support. He also publicly acknowledged Sheriff Coates, colleagues from Rocky Mount, Raleigh PD, and the SBI, as well as his church family and friends. Chief Gay addressed the members of the Dunn Police Department directly, stating that their commitment was the reason he accepted the role. He pledged to lead with fairness, accountability, and respect, emphasizing that good policing is built on trust, professionalism, training, and relationships earned one interaction at a time, and that he would listen even when it was not comfortable or easy.

Mayor Elmore thanked Chief Gay and expressed anticipation of many years of service under his leadership. A brief recess was called following the ceremony to allow guests who had attended for the swearing-in to depart.

### PUBLIC COMMENT PERIOD

No members of the public came forward to speak.

## CONSENT AGENDA

The Consent Agenda included seven (7) items:

- Minutes of January 27, 2026 Regular Minutes
- Approval of Budget Amendments – Various Operating Accounts
- Acceptance of Animal Shelter Donations
- Consideration of Resolution Declaring Certain Property Surplus & Authorizing the Disposition through GovDeals.com
- Contract Award for FY26 Audit Services
- Alley Encroachment Agreement for 203 Broad Street Fire Escape
- Extension of On-Call Services Agreement with Davis-Martin Powell & Associates, Inc. & WithersRavenel

**Motion by Mayor Pro Tem Gaulden, seconded by Council Member McNeil, to approve Consent Agenda Items 3 through 9. Motion carried unanimously.** *Copies of Budget Amendment-Variou Accounts (BA-2026-18); Budget Amendment (BA-2026-21); Resolution Declaring Certain Property Surplus (R2026-05); Contract Award for FY26 Audit Services (R2026-06), Alley Encroachment Agreement; and Extension of On-Call Services Agreements are incorporated into these minutes as Attachment #3.*

## ITEMS FOR DISCUSSION & POSSIBLE ACTION

### ***Authorize and Approve***

#### ***Water Treatment Plant***

#### ***Land Purchase Financing***

Finance Director McNallan presented this item as the next step following the Council's January 13 authorization of the application to the Local Government Commission (LGC) for financing the land purchase for the water treatment plant, at which time Ty Wellford of Davenport Public Finance had presented the financing structure and process. Mr. McNallan explained that tonight's resolution formally approves the purchase financing itself. He noted that the interest rate had not yet been locked in, and that the resolution authorizes a not-to-exceed rate of 4.5 percent. He indicated that the rate at the time of writing was 3.94 percent and that he anticipated the final rate to settle near 4 percent.

**Motion by Council Member Sills, seconded by Mayor Pro Tem Gaulden to approve the attached resolution authorizing and approving the Water Treatment Plant land purchase financing with a not-to-exceed interest rate of 4.5 percent and authorizing the Mayor and staff to execute all required documents.** *Motion carried unanimously. A copy of Resolution Authorizing & Approving Financing(R2026-07) is incorporated into these minutes as Attachment#4.*

### ***Capital Project Ordinance Amendment II***

#### ***Tart Park Improvement Project***

#### ***(Close-Out)***

Finance Director McNallan presented the close-out of the Tart Park Improvement Project, which was originally approved by the Council in March 2024, with a total budget of \$440,000, of which \$400,000 came from a Parks and Recreation Trust Fund Grant and \$40,000 from the General Fund. Mr. McNallan reported that the total cost at project completion was just under \$420,000, leaving an unexpended balance of approximately \$20,000. The amendment reflects the final project accounting and requests Council approval to transfer the \$20,129.15 balance back to the General Fund reserves.

**Motion by Council Member Hargis, seconded by Council Member Bradham to approve the attached Capital Project Ordinance Amendment and Budget Amendment for the Tart Park Improvement Project.** *Motion carried unanimously. Copies of Capital Project Ordinance Amendment(O2026-03) and Budget Amendment (BA-2026-19) are incorporated into these minutes as Attachment#5.*

### ***Acceptance of NCDEQ OSG Funding***

#### ***Juniper Creek Area Stormwater***

Finance Director McNallan reported that in June 2025, the Council had accepted a \$2,805,150 funding package for the Juniper Creek area stormwater project, consisting of \$500,000 in grant funds and a \$2,300,000 State Revolving Fund loan. Since that time, Mr. McNallan explained that WithersRavenel had been instrumental in identifying an alternative and superior funding source: a Stormwater Reuse Municipal Grant from NCDEQ in the amount of \$3,396,071.00.

Director McNallan emphasized that this is a true grant requiring no repayment, and that accepting it would replace the previous funding package entirely, eliminating the need for the \$2,300,000 loan.

Mayor Elmore characterized the news as straightforwardly positive before calling for a motion.

**Motion by Council Member Sills, seconded by Council Member April Gaulden to adopt the Resolution Accepting \$3,396,071 of OSG-370417-08 Grant Funds from NCDEQ for the Juniper Creek Area Stormwater Project.** *Motion carried unanimously. Copies of Resolution by Governing Body of Recipient (R2026-08) and Capital Project Ordinance Amendment (O2026-04) are incorporated into these minutes as Attachment#6.*

### ***Acceptance of AKC Reunite***

#### ***K-9 Cop Grant***

Chief of Police Lynn Gay presented this item, explaining that the AKC Reunite K-9 Cop Grant provides funding assistance to law enforcement agencies for the purchase of trained police service dogs. The City was awarded \$7,500, representing 75 percent of the total cost of a new police canine. Chief Gay noted that the department

currently has one canine that is nearing retirement, and that this grant would fund an additional canine, with the goal of having one (1) canine on duty at all times, providing 24/7 coverage for the City.

**Motion by Council Member Bradham, seconded by Council Member Hargis to approve the acceptance of the AKC Reunite K-9 Cop Grant and the attached Budget Amendment.** Motion carried unanimously. A copy of Budget Amendment (BA-2026-20) is incorporated into these minutes as Attachment#7.

## **REPORTS & UPDATES**

### ***City Manager's Report***

City Manager Justin Hembree directed the Council's attention to two (2) documents included in the agenda packet: a summary report from the recent Budget Retreat prepared by the facilitator, Chad, and the facilitator's slide deck presented at the retreat. Mr. Hembree stated that these documents were included to serve as a guiding reference as the City moves into the budget development process for the upcoming fiscal year. He noted that staff had already begun acting on the priorities identified at the retreat, including a meeting held that same day focused specifically on improvements to the Water Utility System and Water Plant Projects planned for the next fiscal year. Mr. Hembree expressed appreciation to the Council for their participation and input at the retreat, stating that it provided significant clarity for staff as they develop the budget, and indicated that the Council would see how those priorities are reflected during upcoming Budget Workshops.

### ***Financial Report***

Finance Director McNallan presented the monthly Financial Report as of the end of January 2026, with the City seven months into the fiscal year and a benchmark of 58 percent of budget. He reported Cash and Investments of \$9,400,000, compared to \$10,100,000 at the same point the prior year, with the decrease attributable primarily to grant reimbursements not yet received. An additional \$5,900,000 was held in the East Side Pump Station construction account. Mr. McNallan reported that General Property Taxes collected through December totaled \$2,000,000 for the month, consistent with the prior year, and \$4,500,000 year-to-date, representing approximately 77 percent of the Property Tax Budget. For Sales Tax, November receipts came in at \$346,000, which was \$43,000 more than the same period the prior year, with year-to-date collections of \$1,600,000 or 48 percent of budget. Building Permits and Development Fees for January totaled \$10,510, with year-to-date collections of \$109,000, or 59 percent of budget. Mr. McNallan noted that full Revenue and Expenditure Reports were included in the Council's packet.

## ***Departmental Reports & Project Updates***

### ***Code Enforcement***

City Manager Hembree prefaced the Code Enforcement presentation by noting that the City had received questions from residents regarding garbage carts being left at the curb for extended periods beyond scheduled collection times. He noted that a City ordinance requires residents to return carts from the street after collection. Hembree indicated that rather than immediately enforcing the ordinance through formal action, staff planned to use public information tools—including flyers, mailers, the city website, and Facebook—to educate and encourage residents to comply. He also noted a practical consequence of carts remaining at the curb: street sweepers are unable to clear leaves and debris from those sections of the curb, contributing to stormwater issues.

Code Enforcement Officers Cindy Rodriguez and Stephen Hodges then presented updates on recent enforcement activity. Officer Rodriguez highlighted three properties that had been successfully remediated. The first, at 1000 West Harnett, had accumulated boxes on the porch and was cleaned up in a timely manner. The second, at 1103 East Johnson, had approximately five to six vehicles with flat tires on the property that were removed by the resident in a timely fashion. The third, at 401 North Wilson Avenue, involved junk and debris that required the City to send a contractor, but was ultimately resolved. Officer Rodriguez remarked that residents had generally been cooperative in addressing code violations.

Officer Hodges provided a separate update on 611 West Pierce Valley, a property that had been of concern to multiple residents. He reported that the owners had pulled Building Permits, performed significant interior work, and that the property was looking considerably improved on the inside following his inspection the previous week. He stated that the property would be removed from the City's minimum housing list, as the owners were working toward completion with an apparent intention to list the home for sale.

City Manager Hembree commended the Code Enforcement team, noting that voluntary compliance was becoming increasingly common and was allowing the City to avoid more burdensome formal enforcement proceedings.

### ***Probation Office***

City Manager Hembree provided an update on the Probation Office situation, referencing two (2) documents included in the agenda packet: an email from the County manager dated January 30 forwarded to the Council, and a response received from the Chief Deputy Secretary of the Department of Adult Corrections. Mr. Hembree noted that the County Manager's email indicated that provisions had been made for probation clients to use restroom facilities at the office location, and that the County was still examining other related matters. He also reported that Chief Gay and members of the Police Command staff had met with leadership at the Probation Office to address specifically the issue of City officers being relied upon to transport probation clients. Mr. Hembree indicated that the meeting appeared productive and had opened lines of communication, and that while not all issues were fully resolved, the situation regarding client transport had improved. He noted that the Chief made clear to the Probation Office that the Police Department is willing to assist but cannot serve as the primary means of transportation for every client needing to travel to Lillington.

Council Member Alan Hargis offered pointed remarks on the matter, stating that he found the County's response deeply frustrating given years of prior discussions. He argued that downtown Dunn was not an appropriate location for the Probation Office, particularly given that clients from areas such as Anderson Creek were required to travel to Dunn rather than to a more centrally located facility such as Lillington. Council Member Hargis noted that the third floor of the courthouse in Lillington is entirely vacant and could readily accommodate the office. He stated that the three (3) options outlined in the response—relocating to a newly leased facility in Harnett County, constructing a new facility, or taking no action—were telling, and that taking no action was entirely unacceptable. Mr. Hargis stated that he would be willing to speak before the County Commission directly, asserting that the City's position is that the Probation Office should not remain in downtown Dunn, citing the impact on businesses and their customers.

### ANNOUNCEMENTS

Mayor Elmore announced the following upcoming events and meetings:

- A Work Session is scheduled for Tuesday, March 10, 2026, at 6:30 PM in the City Council Chambers.
- The Regular City Council Meeting will be held on Tuesday, March 24, 2026, at 6:30 PM.
- A Community Input Meeting regarding Codrington Park is scheduled for Monday, March 9, 2026, from 6:00 PM to 8:00 PM. Mayor Elmore noted this would be the second such community input meeting, following a well-attended session at the Senior Center a few weeks prior, and that the marketing group conducting the study would present their findings. He encouraged residents to attend.
- Several board and commission terms are set to expire on June 20, 2026. Mayor Elmore encouraged interested residents to obtain an application online or at City Hall, as the City would be reviewing applications in the coming weeks.

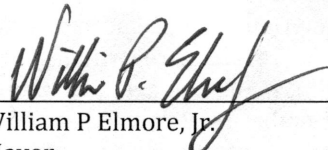
### INFORMATION

No discussion was recorded under this item.

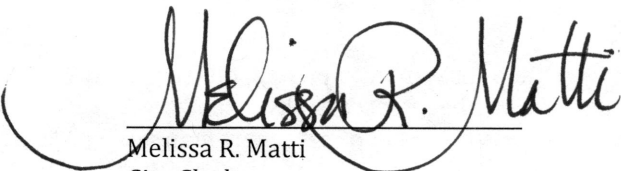
### ADJOURNMENT

**Motion by Council Member Sills, seconded by Mayor Pro Tem Gaulden, to adjourn.** Motion carried unanimously.

The meeting was adjourned at 7:08 p.m.

  
 \_\_\_\_\_  
 William P Elmore, Jr.  
 Mayor

Attest

  
 \_\_\_\_\_  
 Melissa R. Matti  
 City Clerk

