

**Dunn City Council**  
**Regular Meeting**  
**Tuesday, January 27, 2026**  
**6:30 p.m. Dunn Municipal Building**

## Minutes

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

**ALSO PRESENT:** *City Manager Justin Hembree, Assistant City Manager Billy R. Godwin, Finance Director, Cary McNallan, Interim Police Chief Nick Simmons, Captain Matt Smith, Administrative Support Specialist Christy Sweeney, City Attorney Tilghman Pope and City Clerk Melissa Matti.*

### CALL TO ORDER

Mayor William P. Elmore, Jr. called the Dunn City Council Regular Meeting to order at 6:30 p.m. on January 27, 2026.

The Mayor noted the passing of Joy Williams last week. He explained that Ms. William had worked tirelessly with Wilkins Cemetery over the years and asked for prayers for her family during this difficult time.

### INVOCATION

Reverend Cameron "Cam" Thomas from First Presbyterian Church gave the invocation.

### PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

Council Member Wesley Sills led the Pledge of Allegiance.

### ADJUSTMENT OF THE AGENDA

**Motion by Council Member Hargis, seconded by Council Member Bradham to adopt the January 27, 2026 regular meeting agenda as presented with the following changes:**

**By reordering items for Discussion and Possible Action #s 7, 8, and 9 as follows:**

7. **Rezoning Request (RZ-25-04) – Dogwood Knoll Street and Fairground Road**
  - a. **Public Hearing**
  - b. **Decision**
8. **Ordinance to Extend the Corporate Limits, Voluntary Annexation Petition (ANX-07-25), Vann Lane (Step #3)**
  - a. **Public Hearing**
  - b. **Decision**
9. **Rezoning Application (RZ-25-03) – Vann Lane**
  - a. **Public Hearing**
  - b. **Decision**

Motion carried unanimously.

### PRESENTATIONS

#### **City of Dunn FY25 Financial Audit Presentation**

Austin Eubanks, Audit Manager at Thompson Price, Scott and Adams from the Wilmington office, presented the audit for the fiscal year ending June 30, 2025. He reported that the audit was conducted in accordance with generally accepted auditing standards, government auditing standards, and the uniform guidance.

Key findings included:

- No deficiencies in Internal Control were found
- The Financial Statements were free of material error
- A new Accounting Policy (GASB 101) was implemented, which now requires sick leave to be included in compensated absences
- No significant audit adjustments or unrecorded differences were noted
- No disagreements with management occurred during the audit
- Financial highlights included:
- General Fund had Revenues of \$14,286,000 and Expenditures of \$15,061,000, resulting in a negative Net Change of \$775,240.
- Unassigned Fund Balance was \$3,400,000, which is 27.97% of Expenditures (above the 25% minimum threshold).
- Tax Collection Rate was 98.98%.
- Top Revenue source was Ad Valorem Taxes at 42% (\$5.9 million).
- Public safety was the largest Expenditure category at 35% (\$5 million).

Mr. Eubanks noted that despite the slight decrease in Fund Balance availability compared to previous years, the City remains in good financial position. He also commended Finance Director McNallan and his team for their outstanding management of the City's finances, particularly given the large number of Capital Projects. *A copy of the slideshow is incorporated into these minutes as Attachment #1.*

Mayor Elmore thanked Mr. Eubanks for the presentation and congratulated Mr. McNallan and his team for their excellent work.

#### **Recognition of Butch Halpin Hometown Hero Award**

Interim Police Chief Simmons introduced Butch Halpin, who works in the Criminal Investigations Division overseeing Property and Evidence, and serves as the Crime Stoppers Coordinator.

John Riley, CFO of Bleecker Automotive, presented the award, explaining that Butch began his public service at age 17 with the Dunn Rescue Squad and later became one of the first EMTs at Harnett County Emergency Services before transitioning to law enforcement. Mr. Riley noted that Mr. Halpin is well-respected in his field and currently serves as President of the North Carolina Association of Property and Evidence.

Mr. Riley presented Halpin with the 2025 North Carolina Hometown Hero Award from the North Carolina Automobile Dealers Association, noting this was the culmination of 10 years of nominations. The award honors first responders who protect and serve North Carolina communities.

Mayor Elmore thanked Mr. Halpin for his service to the community.

**Recognition of Michael Godfrey  
Officer of the Year Award**

Interim Police Chief Simmons recognized Officer Michael Godfrey, who recently received the Police Officer of the Year Award during the inaugural Everyday Heroes Award Ceremony hosted by the Dunn Chamber.

Officer Godfrey was nominated for his response to a traffic accident on September 12, 2025, where he was first on the scene of a serious collision between a cement truck and a passenger vehicle. Officer Godfrey immediately rendered aid to multiple injured individuals, including removing a juvenile from the vehicle, determining the driver was deceased, and performing life-saving measures on an infant who was initially unresponsive.

Interim Chief Simmons commended Officer Godfrey's courageous and selfless actions, noting that despite the tragic outcome (the infant later succumbed to injuries), his immediate response provided the victims with their best chance for survival.

Mayor Elmore thanked Officer Godfrey on behalf of the Council for his service to the City and expressed appreciation to all Police Officers working to make Dunn a better place.

**PROCLAMATIONS**

**2026 Black History Month Proclamation**

Assistant City Manager Godwin read the 2026 Black History Month Proclamation, noting this year's theme is "A Century of Black History Commemorations," recognizing celebrations stretching back to Dr. Carter G. Woodson's inaugural week-long Black History observance in 1925. The proclamation encouraged all residents to participate in educational and celebratory events honoring the contributions of African Americans. *A copy of the 2026 Black History Month Proclamation (P2026-3) is incorporated into these minutes as Attachment #2.*

**PUBLIC COMMENT PERIOD**

**Seth Gunderson**

**Owner of Coffee on Broad at 111 East Broad Street,**

Mr. Gunderson thanked the City for writing a letter to the County regarding issues with the Probation Office. He expressed concerns about people urinating on the side of his building and noted that while Police have responded multiple times, the problem persists. Mr. Gunderson stated he would be attending the County Commissioner Meetings to maintain pressure on them to address the issue, as the County had voted to move the Probation Office in May, but had yet to act.

**CONSENT AGENDA**

The Consent Agenda included two (2) items:

- Approval of January 13, 2026 Work Session Minutes
- Budget Amendments – Various Operating Accounts

**Motion by Council Member Bradham, seconded by Mayor Pro Tem Gaulden to approve the Consent Agenda.** Moved unanimously approved. *A copy of the Budget Amendments (BA-2026-16) is incorporated into these minutes as Attachment #3.*

**ITEMS FOR DISCUSSION AND POSSIBLE ACTION**

**Rezoning Application (RZ-25-04)**

**Dogwood Knoll Street & Fairground Road**

**PINs being 1517-62-6194.000, 1517-62-8128.000,  
1517-61-6938.000, 1517-62-8110.000,  
1517-61-8939.000, and 1517-61-7939.000**

A Public Hearing was opened at 7.02 p.m.

**Interim Planning Director Deaton**

Mr. Deaton presented Rezoning Application RZ-25-04 for six (6) parcels, PINs being 1517-62-6194.000, 1517-62-8128.000, 1517-61-6938.000, 1517-62-8110.000, 1517-61-8939.000, and 1517-61-7939.000 (approximately 2 acres) located at Dogwood Knoll Street and Fairground Road. The applicant requested rezoning from C-2 (commercial) to R-7 (residential) to potentially develop single-family homes.

**Don Bird (Applicant)**

Mr. Bird stated that he believes residential is the logical use for the property rather than commercial development, which would be inconsistent with the surrounding neighborhood. He mentioned he had tried to market it commercially without much interest. When questioned about access, Mr. Bird indicated there would likely be 2-3 driveways on Fairground Road and 2-3 on Dogwood Knoll.

Council Member Hargis expressed concern about the already high volume of traffic on Fairground Road. Council Member Sills asked if DOT had approved three (3) street accesses on Fairground, to which Mr. Bird responded that driveways typically need to be at least 100 feet apart, but that formal approvals had not yet been obtained.

After the Public Hearing was closed at 7:05 p.m., the Council discussed the application.

**Motion by Council Member Sills, seconded by Council Member Bradham to deny Rezoning Application RZ-25-04 as presented in the agenda packet.** Motion unanimously approved to deny application.

***Ordinance to Extend City Limits  
Voluntary Annexation Petition  
(ANX-07-25) – Vann Lane  
PINs 1517-37-0736.000, 1517-37-9653.000,  
and 1517-47-0665.000***

A Public Hearing was held at 7:07 p.m. with no members of the public speaking.

City Manager Hembree presented the Voluntary Annexation Petition for Vann Lane, explaining this was the third and final step in the process. The Council had previously directed the Clerk to investigate the petition at their November 18<sup>th</sup> meeting, and the Clerk certified the petition's sufficiency. A Resolution Fixing the Date of the Public Hearing was adopted at the December 9<sup>th</sup> meeting, and the Public Hearing was properly advertised.

**Motion by Council Member Sills, seconded by: Mayor Pro Tem Gaulden to adopt the Ordinance to Extend the Corporate City Limits of Dunn by the Voluntary Contiguous Annexation of 74+ acres with the PIN numbers listed in the packet as presented and assigned to Ward 1.** Motion unanimously approved to adopt. *A copy of the Ordinance to Extend the Corporate City Limits of Dunn (O2026-01) is incorporated into these minutes as Attachment #4.*

***Rezoning Application (RZ-25-03) –  
Vann Lane  
PINs being 1516-37-0736.000, 1517-37-9653.000,  
and 1517-47-0665.000***

A Public Hearing was held at 7:10 p.m.

***Interim Planning Director Deaton***

Mr. Deaton presented Rezoning Application RZ-25-03 for the recently annexed 73+ acres at Vann Lane. The applicant requested rezoning from Harnett County Residential Agriculture (R-20M) to City of Dunn R-7 zoning for single-family residential development. The Land Use Plan for this area calls for medium density residential, and the request would be consistent with the existing Seasons Subdivision.

***Kelly Latham Green  
2343 Chichapin Lane, Angier***

Mr. Green spoke during the Public Hearing, stating that while he and his family were not opposed to growth, they were concerned about the lack of a specific development plan for the property. He noted that the 73-acre parcel could potentially see up to 173 homes, and there were unanswered questions about road layouts, buffering, traffic impacts, and overall density.

***Seth Thompson,  
RP Wellons Land and Development***

Mr. Thompson explained they had conducted extensive studies including boundary surveys, wetland delineation, and feasibility studies for water and sewer. He stated that the development would be several years away and they did not yet have a specific plan, noting that market conditions would influence what is ultimately built. Mr. Thompson referenced the Wellons family's history of quality development in Dunn and assured the Council they would maintain buffers and follow all regulations when development does occur.

Council Member Sills noted that this was a difficult vote given the concerns of neighbors but acknowledged the Wellons family's track record of quality development in Dunn. Council Member Hargis expressed confidence in the Wellons' reputation for quality development.

**Motion by Council Member Hargis, seconded by Mayor Pro Tem Gaulden to approve Rezoning Request RZ-25-03 to rezone 3 parcels (PIN numbers 1516-37-0736.000, 1517-37-9653.000, and 1517-47-0665.000) totaling 73.32 acres from Harnett County Residential Agriculture (R-20M) district to City of Dunn R-7 district as presented.** Motion unanimously approved.

***Capital Project Ordinance Amendment II (Close Out)  
Tracy Lane Water and Sewer Extension Project***

Finance Director McNallan presented a Capital Project Ordinance Amendment to close out the Tracy Lane project, which was approved in FY24. The project came in under budget, resulting in savings of approximately \$80,000, which would be returned to the General Fund as a prepayment on the loan that funded the project.

Council Member Hargis commented that this was good news, as projects rarely come in under budget.

**Motion by Council Member Tart, seconded by Council Member McNeil to approve the Capital Project Ordinance Amendment and Budget Amendment for Tracy Lane Water and Sewer Extension Project and authorize the partial repayment of funds that were borrowed from the General Fund.** Motion unanimously approved. *Copies of the Capital Project Ordinance Amendment (O2026-02) and Budget Amendment (BA-2026-17) are incorporated into these minutes as Attachment #5.*

***Pearsall Street Project  
NCDEQ Additional Funding***

Finance Director McNallan presented a Request to Approve a Grant Offer of \$1.6 Million from the North Carolina Department of Environmental Quality (NCDEQ) for the Pearsall Street Project. The grant would replace funds previously allocated from the General Fund, Water & Sewer Fund, and Stormwater Fund, allowing those funds to be returned to their respective accounts.

Mr. McNallan noted that approximately \$1 million came from the General Fund, \$230,000 from Water & Sewer Funds, and \$499,000 from Stormwater Funds, totaling about \$1,680,000.

City Manager Hembree confirmed that paving for the street was in progress and would be completed once weather permitted.

**Motion by Council Member Hargis seconded by Mayor Pro Tem Gaulden to adopt the Resolution Accepting \$1,673,969 of the SRP-SW-AARP-0030 Grant Funds from NCDEQ for the Pearsall Street Culvert Project.** Motion unanimously approved. *A copy of the Resolution Accepting \$1,673,969 of the SRP-SW-AARP-0030 Grant Funds from NCDEQ for the Pearsall Street Culvert Project (R2026-03) is incorporated into these minutes as Attachment #6.*

**CITY MANAGER'S REPORT**

City Manager Hembree reminded the Council of the upcoming Budget Retreat scheduled for February 6-7. He explained that the retreat would focus on three (3) main areas: Capital Projects, Spending Priorities, and Revenue Philosophy.

Mr. Hembree announced the selection of Timothy Lynn Gay as the new Chief of Police for the City of Dunn. Chief Gay began his law enforcement career with the North Carolina State Bureau of Investigation in 1996, where he worked his way up to become the Assistant Director of Field Operations. Most recently, he served as Deputy Chief of Police with the City of Rocky Mount, leading uniform patrol operations and criminal investigations. Chief Gay has extensive experience combating drug distribution networks and leading complex investigations and has taught law enforcement and ethical principles internationally.

Mr. Hembree also thanked Interim Chief Nick Simmons and the command staff for their leadership during the transition period.

**FINANCIAL REPORT**

Finance Director McNallan presented the Financial Report as of December 31, 2025:

- Cash and investments totaled \$6.1 million (compared to \$8.4 million the previous year)
- The City received a \$6 million grant reimbursement on January 9
- Property Tax Collections for November were \$1.2 million (compared to \$1.3 million the previous year)
- Year-to-date Property Tax Collections were \$2.5 million
- Sales Tax received for October was \$334,000 (up \$58,000 from the previous year)
- Year-to-date Sales Tax Collections were \$1.3 million (38% of budget)
- Building Permits for December were \$8,876, with year-to-date collections at \$99,000 (54% of budget)

Mr. McNallan recommended renewing the contract with Thompson Price Scott Adams for the FY26 audit, which the Council supported.

**DEPARTMENTAL REPORTS & PROJECT UPDATES**

***Code Enforcement***

Code Enforcement Officer Hodges announced that the City was advertising for contractors to perform grass cutting and debris removal, with applications due around March 1.

Code Enforcement Officer Canady presented updates on two (2) properties:

- 405 Greenwood Street: The owner quickly complied with violation notices and fixed missing siding. The property is now for sale.
- 1007 East Broad Street: The property owner, who lives in Charlotte and is a building inspector, corrected the rotted siding issues and plans to eventually demolish the property.

Mr. Canady also mentioned that Code Enforcement was working with Public Works to address right-of-way issues throughout the City.

Council Member McNeil asked about the timeline for demolishing condemned houses on South Washington Street. Mr. Canady responded that they were working on tracking down the heirs of the deceased property owners and would likely bring the matter back to Council for a decision.

***Probation Office***

City Manager Hembree updated the Council on ongoing issues with the Probation Office, noting significant impacts on Police operations. He explained that officers frequently respond to calls at the Probation Office and are being used as prisoner transport by the Probation Office staff. Interim Chief Simmons reported that in 2024, Police responded 99 times to the Probation Office, 95 times in 2025, and already 3 times in the current year.

Interim Chief Simmons noted that these calls take officers off patrol for extended periods (1.5-2 hours minimum) as they must drive prisoners to the jail in Lillington. With typically only 4-5 officers on duty, this significantly impacts their ability to serve the community.

Mr. Hembree informed the Council that neither the County nor the State had responded to letters requesting action on this issue. Council members expressed frustration with the situation, with some suggesting exploring options to declare the office a public nuisance or seeking media attention to apply pressure.

Local business owner Seth Gunderson raised additional concerns about safety, noting that sex offenders on probation visit the office, creating potential risks for nearby businesses, including those employing young people.

**Right-of-Way Maintenance**

Public Works Director Williams presented updates on right-of-way maintenance activities:

- Crews have been trimming tree limbs up to 16 feet high on City streets, working block by block from west to east
- They've been removing debris and trash from rights-of-way
- Work is progressing on removing the Cotton Gin remnants, with a contractor removing concrete at no charge
- Once completed, the area will be graded and seeded

**ANNOUNCEMENTS**

Mayor Elmore announced:

- There would be no Work Session in February due to the Budget Retreat
- The next Regular Meeting is scheduled for February 24<sup>th</sup>.

Several council members welcomed the new Police Chief and thanked the Police Department for their service.

**ADJOURNMENT**

Motion by Council Member Hargis, seconded by Council Member Sills to adjourn the meeting. Motion unanimously approved.

The meeting adjourned at 8:10 p.m.

*William P. Elmore, Jr.*

William P Elmore, Jr.  
Mayor

Attest

*Melissa R. Matti*

Melissa R. Matti  
City Clerk

