

Kinston City Council



MINUTES April 20, 2021

Minutes

Kinston City Council
City Hall · 207 East King Street
Tuesday, April 20, 2021

Work Session at 5:30 pm Regular Meeting at 7:00 pm

This meeting was held electronically in Zoom format and viewed at <https://www.facebook.com/KinstonCityHall>

WORK SESSION

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

Councilmember Roll Call

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

Present Also: Tony Sears, City Manager and James Cauley, City Attorney.

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.

Mayor Pro Tem Solomon made the motion, seconded by Councilmember Swinson and upon a unanimous vote (Councilmembers Aiken, Hardy, Suggs, Swinson, and Mayor Pro Tem Solomon – Yes) of [5-0], the agenda was adopted.

PRESENTATIONS

1. County Transportation Update ----- Tony Sears

Tony Sears, City Manager explained that in the past the City has worked to put a BUILD Grant application together with the cornerstone of the grant being the movement of people in the City of Kinston and Lenoir County. Mr. Sears stated that through conversations it was determined that Lenoir County provided the service for the City of Kinston and Lenoir County through Lenoir County Transit. Tonight, the questions that the Council has regarding how Lenoir County Transit operated will be answered with an update from Lenoir County.

Michael James, County Manager introduced Angela Green, Director of Lenoir County Transit. Ms. Green shared a detailed overview of Lenoir County Transit referencing the department, the operations, the comprehensive transportation service, and the county-wide service area. The department has a fleet of 18 service vehicles and averaged 23 routes per day. They provide more than 70,000 rides, travel more than 650,00 miles, and total in-service time exceeding 30,000 hours annually. Ms. Green noted that no financial support was received from Lenoir County and reviewed the funding sources and explained the following programs used to generate revenue: Rural General Public Transportation (RGPT), Elderly Disabled Transportation Assistance (EDTAP), Employment Transportation Program (EMP), and Job Access (JARC). The Lenoir County Transit is operated as a Demand Response Transit System

which is referred to as Dial-a-Ride. Ms. Green stated that Demand Response is used when there are no funds to maintain a fixed route. This eliminates the need for citizens to walk long distances to bus stops, and grants access to those in rural areas that may be unserved or underserved with a fixed route system. It was explained that the fixed route was started in 2006, serving Kinston, LaGrange, and Pink Hill, and was discontinued in 2014 due to a 73% decrease in ridership. A map was shared of the fixed route stops and included many of the stops proposed with the BUILD Grant. Mr. Sears asked if there was any indication of why the ridership declined. Joey Bryan, Assistant County Manager stated that the price increase probably caused the decline. Councilmember Hardy related that through conversations with the public, he wondered if there were bus stops with seating available at that time. Mr. Bryan stated there were signs, but no covered bus stops; the biggest problem was funding. He explained that this was a deviated fixed route that allowed you to go up to a one-half mile of the fixed-route in any direction. Therefore, the ridership was addressed to determine locations of riders for dialysis and other medical riders that DSS paid. The deviated route was based on the DSS (Medicaid money was cost-sharing) with those payments being used to supplement funding. Ms. Green shared that the cost of operation using FY20 numbers for two (2) fixed-route buses (Kinston route) in the present day, was approximately \$752, 220; the cost for operating two (2) fixed-route shuttle buses for the Industrial Park/GTP was approximately \$153,000 and the combined total with the addition of a dispatch position salary of \$45,000 (including benefits) would be approximately \$950,000 +/- annually to operate. Mr. Sears asked for the number of buses that run daily. Ms. Green said based on pre-COVID (2020) analysis all 18 buses are run daily unless there is one out of service. Mr. Hardy asked with this, how would it affect the regular service moving forward. Ms. Green stated that the revenue generated from Demand Response would be used to help pay for the fixed-route and in her opinion, it would cripple the department. Councilmember Aiken asked if they made trips to Greenville or any other cities. Ms. Green stated that Pitt County is the only other county the travel to and the rides consisted of medical appointments. There was discussion regarding pickup, the hours of operation, the deadline for scheduling, and if all pickups needed to be pre-scheduled. Councilmember Aiken asked when the Transit started, and Mr. Bryan shared that it was approximately 18-19 years ago. Councilmember Swinson asked if the County staff had the opportunity to review the report from Withers Ravenel and if there was anything in it that would assist the County in making improvements to the Transit. Mr. Bryan said they were involved in the meetings with Withers Ravenel, and it boils down to funding; it would take funding from the County and the City for this to work. Councilmember Aiken suggested asking some of the companies in the area for their partnership in providing revenue for transportation. Mr. Aiken asked what companies were contracted with the Transit and Mr. Bryan shared that Lions Industries was one.

Mr. Swinson asked what the status was on the BUILD Grant. Mr. Sears stated that without this piece of the grant, there is not much of a grant to apply for. This is about the movement of people and to apply for the BUILD Grant and get our money's worth there would have to be a joint venture between the City and County. They are not taking tax dollars for funding for the transit system. This is a policy change that would have to be made by the County Commissioners. The majority of the grant was for tangible things that are one-time purchases and not for reoccurring costs. Mayor Hardy asked if there were any recommendations from the County. Mr. James stated that a policy shift was a board decision, but was willing to work with the City to explore some alternative options. It ultimately comes down to the financial capacity to absorb something like this. Mr. Sears suggested the Mayor and one other council

member having a sit-down meeting with County representatives to talk about if they were willing to have a policy conversation. Mayor Hardy thanked the County representatives for their presentation.

Councilmember shared that Greyhound buses have a stop at the Lunch Box and need a shelter if not for a transportation part. Mr. Sears pointed out that that is the Greyhound bus stop and is located on Hwy 11/MLK Boulevard at the Lunch Box and the Amtrak shuttle is at the Visitors Center on Hwy 70.

2. Kinston 101: At Your Own Pace ----- Sarah Arney

Adam Short, Director of Planning, Inspections, and Code Enforcement reminded everyone of the Kinston 101 was started, had to pause due to COVID, and then went virtual. He reported that out of that they (Sarah Arney) were able to create online Kinston 101 at Your Own Pace which is self-guided sessions.

Sarah Arney, Community Development Planner, reviewed Kinston 101 and shared that this was for citizens interested in how the City works and how public decisions are made. The program informs citizens of the city operations and opportunities for engagement, invests in citizens interested in future public services, identifies further opportunities for transparency and communication by city departments, builds relationships, and learns from citizens. Ms. Arney also explained that Kinston 101: at You Own Pace is nine (9) self-guided sessions which are mirrored along the lines of the sessions that the in-person group did in the fall of 2019 done through short videos and session materials. The program is accessible to anyone online at kinstonnc.gov or google "Kinston 101". Ms. Arney noted that she can be reached at 252-939-3271 or sarah.arney@ci.kinston.nc.us.

Mayor Hardy thanked Ms. Arney for creating this space for Kinston 101. Mr. Short thanked Ms. Arney as well and noted that it was very well done. Councilmember Swinson thanked Ms. Arney and shared that a citizen spoke to him about how the information was enlightening to them because they did not know how and what city government consisted of and felt it was a great tool. Councilmember Hardy added his thanks to Ms. Arney. Councilmember Suggs asked if the citizens would get a certificate at the end of the nine (9) modules that would confirm their completion. Ms. Arney stated there was a congratulatory section at the bottom the gave her contact information and upon contact, they would receive a certificate. Ms. Suggs challenged the Council to get the certificate by the summer. Mayor Pro Tem Solomon said this was like a train the trainer and it is a great deal.

CONSENT AGENDA ITEMS FOR DISCUSSION

1. Consider Adopting Capital Project Ordinance for Electric Circuit 540 Upgrade (E9134) ----- Donna Goodson

Donna Goodson, Director of Finance stated this ordinance will be upgrading about 6.2 miles of circuits serving W. Vernon Ave. towards LaGrange on Hwy 70 West. The upgrade will match the needed distribution wire size that has been installed for the new Second POD transmission circuit to enhance the liability and alleviate any future voltage problems in the areas west of

Kinston as loads increase. The project will be funded with a transfer from the Electric Fund for \$2,341,800.

ITEMS FOR DISCUSSION

1. Burn Prohibited ----- Damien Locklear

Damien Locklear, Fire Chief, stated that he had a conversation with Adam and his team regarding the City not having an ordinance specific to burning prohibited in general. The fire department website explains that under the public nuisance piece, smoke and ash causes issues. In this past year, what is considered open burning has been seen to increase. Some are considered illegal burns with material that would not be considered natural vegetation and others are natural vegetation. The Fire Department does have the authority to extinguish if it is something that would cause a fire-saving measure. Chief Locklear asked if the Council would consider a burning permit prohibited ordinance and read a draft excerpt of the ordinance. This ordinance would allow a civil penalty of \$100 to be issued by the Fire Chief or his designee and the Police Chief or his designee. If this is considered, he explained that there were times when burning was conducted for human warmth or cooking purposes (excludes grills). He noted that he would provide more information in the next meeting if this ordinance were considered.

Mayor Hardy thanked Chief Locklear for bringing this to their attention. Mayor Pro Tem Solomon agreed, and asked James Cauley, City Attorney to work with Chief Locklear. Mr. Cauley stated he would, and Mr. Short stated that he would send a draft to Mr. Cauley. Chief Locklear stated he had look at adding language stating providing keep, or human warmth for extreme conditions for sustaining life. They wanted to keep it as simple as possible but yet enough that we are not having people going out doing unauthorized burns that would be a hazard to themselves and others. Councilmember Aiken asked if that would include fireworks in general and Chief Locklear related that that would be prohibited

2. Electric Scooters ----- Adam Short

Adam Short, Director of Planning, Inspections, and Code Enforcement shared that he was presenting this item for informational purposes. They were approached by the company Bird about having their electric scooters here in Kinston. That has prompted discussion about crafting an ordinance to address such uses. In other communities, there are electric scooters which are usually app-based so you can rent them on the phones and the company designates an area for use. They are a clean and cheap mode of transportation in a community that does not have a lot of taxis and Ubers. Mr. Short stated the company would partner with local individuals to manage the scooters. Once the company receives an interest to manage, they contact local officials and then partner with local individuals to manage the program. This is a way for the local individuals to make money. He stated that he had an example ordinance from Gastonia. He wanted to get an estimation of the Council’s interest and if it were something they would like to see or get more information on, they would be able to come back with a draft ordinance for discussion that would allow or permit such a use in a defined area. Mayor Hardy stated it was worth looking into; we are looking at providing a safer area, slow down traffic, and reduce parking. Mr. Short said he thought it was a great opportunity for people that don’t have access to a vehicle. Mayor Pro Tem inquired about if the scooters operated with a breathalyzer; her concern was someone being under the influence and riding. Mr. Short stated

that was not discussed and Chief Dilday said that it was defined as a vehicle or a moped and you can get a DWI on it.

Councilmember Hardy shared that he saw guys riding ATVs on the public streets. Chief Dilday stated that there has been an increase in that activity and today it is/will be a PSA posted on the police department’s web page today stating that it is illegal. Operation of ATV vehicles or dirt bikes (unregistered) is illegal by state statute (20-171.19). They are not designed and intended to be ridden on a public street and cause a danger to the operators, the bystanders, as well as the motoring public. They started with warnings and that is not working, so they have started issuing citations.

Councilmember Swinson asked for a town our size do they recommend how many scooters or stations they would have and the street designations; does that fall on the City or is the company willing to take that expense. Mr. Short said any infrastructure the company set up would be borne by the company themselves. The City would work in partnership with the company to define the areas. This would be a similar concept to the Golf Cart Ordinance that was set up but would be working with a third party. Mr. Sears related that it works with an app and it tells you where you can and cannot go. He also explained that any violation (DWI, vandalism, etc.) of the app terms would cause you to be locked out of the Bird System and the ridership determines the number of scooters.

Councilmember Aiken asked Mr. Cauley if the City would be held responsible for injuries. Mr. Cauley said we would have some type of agreement that would hold the City harmless. Mr. Aiken added that we had invested over \$2 million in a bike trail because we wanted citizens to get out and get fit.

Mayor Pro Tem Solomon asked if there was a cost to the City and Mr. Short said there was no cost and was an income for the individuals that managed the scooters for the company.

Councilmember Suggs shared that we could start pushing information out to the community to start slowing down for the summer; maybe some signage to encourage safety. Mr. Sears reminded everyone that Sarah had sent out information that we have received the Watch for Me NC Grant and part of that money could be used for signage and educational materials.

Mr. Cauley shared that in the package there was a model of the liability language. It provides for the operator to have insurance, hold the City harmless and provides for any damages to public property. It is off to a good start, but he was not saying it is satisfactory yet.

Mayor Hardy moved item 3-Email System(s) Evaluation to the regular meeting under Information and Updates. The meeting was recessed at 7:14 pm.

**3. Email System(s) Evaluation----- Michael Thomas
(THIS ITEM WAS MOVED TO THE MANAGER’S REPORT)**

RECESS UNTIL 7:00 PM REGULAR MEETING

REGULAR MEETING

Mayor Don Hardy called the meeting to order at 7:21 pm.

Mayor Pro Tem Felicia Solomon delivered the prayer followed by the pledge of allegiance

CITIZEN COMMENT

Citizens seeking assistance or asking questions will be contacted by a member of the Governing Body or by appropriate City Staff.

There are no in-person comments permitted.
 Please visit our website to complete and submit a [Citizen Comment Form](#).
 (Link can be found at the bottom of the home page under FAQ's-Frequently Asked Questions)

There were no citizen comments.

MINUTES

Consider approval of the minutes of the City Council meeting held on April 6, 2021 -- Debra Thompson

Councilmember Aiken made the motion, seconded by Mayor Pro Tem Solomon and upon a unanimous roll call vote (Councilmembers Aiken, Hardy, Suggs, Swinson, and Mayor Pro Tem Solomon – Yes) of [5-0], the minutes were approved.

Councilmembers Roll Call

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

Present Also: Tony Sears, City Manager and James Cauley, City Attorney.

INFORMATION AND UPDATES

1. FY2020 Annual Financial Report ----- Diana Hardy, CPA-R H CPA's, PLLC

Ms. Diana Hardy, CPA stated she was here to present the FY June 30, 2020 audit results and was accompanied by Matthew Finney. Ms. Hardy reviewed the information provided in the package and shared that audit was completed and submitted to LGC for review and the final report will be issued after receiving LGC blessings. The auditor's independence is defined as in fact and in appearance and reported that there were no instances that would have impaired their independence to proceed with the audit. Compliance testing was done over the Clean Water State Revolving Fund and the Powell Bill Fund. An unmodified opinion was issued on the financial statements and the major programs. Supplemental information is performed with limited Individual Fund Statements and Schedules and the required information was fine. There were no disagreements with staff and had full cooperation from staff for the 2020 audit. Mayor Hardy asked when the final results were expected from LGC, and Ms. Hardy stated they should have final results within the week depending on their workload.

Next, Ms. Hardy illustrated the trends for some of the financial data. The 2019-2020 General Fund expenditures exceed the revenue, which is typical due to timing differences. The General Fund Balance was tracked from 2017 to 2020 and is trending downward but this is also related to the timing differences in the General Fund. The breakdown of the total Fund Balance includes non-spendable funds (1 percent), Fund Balance assigned (5 percent), State calculated percentage of the Fund Balance (29 percent), and Unassigned Funds (65 percent). Mayor Pro Tem Solomon asked for examples of what falls under the 5 percent. Ms. Hardy stated that was for future expenditures such as a special capital project or special revenue fund project specifically. Ms. Goodson shared that the unassigned is for expenditures that were not finished and were reappropriated for the next year.

Ms. Hardy stated she was still looking at the General Fund but was calculating the adequacy of resources days of cash on hand. This calculates how long would we be able to operate with no funds coming in. That is at approximately four (4) months for 2020 and is consistent with 2019. General Fund Balance was calculated as a percentage of expenditures. This calculates how long we would last throughout the next year if we were to liquidate all assets, we would be able to sustain 30 percent into the next year.

A chart representing the analysis of the property tax revenue was explained and shows that it has remained consistent from 2017 to 2020 as well as other taxes and licenses. Lastly, the expenditure breakdown in the General Fund showed that in 2018 and 2019 about 46 percent of expenditures were spent toward Public Safety, followed by Parks and Rec., and third was between Public Services and General Government. Ms. Hardy moved to business funds (water, electric, wastewater, and others) from 2017 to 2020 and shared that consistent revenues were greater than expenditures with the analysis of the adequacy of cash on hand for 2020 was approximately eight (8) months compared to 2019 of approximately six (6) months. The General Fund Balance decreased in 2020 by about \$150,000, bringing the Year-End 2020 Fund Balance down to about \$7,000,000. The Business Fund has increased by about \$10.6 million, bringing that ending Fund Balance to approximately \$140,000,000.

Mayor Hardy thanked Ms. Hardy as did Councilmember Hardy for the great work and great outcome. Mayor Pro Tem Solomon asked about other taxes and licenses from 2018 compared to the other three years. Mr. Sears said that those are State issued taxes. Ms. Goodson related that she would let the Council know.

2. Current/Spring Recreation Programs ----- Corey Povar

Corey Povar, Director of Parks and Recreation shared that the information was presented to the Parks and Recreation Commission at their last meeting and the list of Spring programming, and the number of participants is as follows:

- Adventure Camp (Nature Center) – 12 participants
- Baseball – 8 T-ball teams, 7 teams of 9-12-year-olds, 6 teams (machine pitch) – 275 participants
- Softball – 3 teams of 5-6-year-olds, and 2 teams of 9-12-year-olds
- Soccer – 22 teams – 250 participants
- Tennis – Middle School, High School, Rec 12 and under league – 50 participants

- Volleyball (County) - 6 teams
- Track and Field – 30-35 participants (Competition)
- Basketball Camp (Fairfield) – 15 participants
- Basketball – 4 Adult Women’s teams (Holloway)
- Basketball 8 teams 16 and under (Holloway)
- Gymnastics – 60 participants

Mr. Povar shared that they are serving just under a total of 1,000 participants. Mayor Hardy stated that was a job well done and thanked Mr. Povar and the staff. Mayor Pro Tem Solomon said that she was excited about the new programs and giving the opportunities created. Councilmember Hardy thanked the Council for allowing them to move forward with these programs. Councilmember Aiken asked about the train at the Nature Center. Mr. Povar said it is ready to go and normally roll it out on Memorial Day.

CONSENT AGENDA

1. Consider Adopting Capital Project Ordinance for Electric Circuit 540 Upgrade (E9134)
 ----- **Donna Goodson**

Councilmember Suggs made the motion, seconded by Councilmember Aiken and upon a unanimous roll call vote (Councilmembers Aiken, Hardy, Suggs, Swinson, and Mayor Pro Tem Solomon – Yes) of [5-0], the Capital Project Ordinance or Electric Circuit 540 Upgrade (E9134) was adopted.

**AN ORDINANCE TO ESTABLISH THE
 ELECTRIC CIRCUIT 540 UPGRADE (E9134)
 CAPITAL PROJECT FUND**

WHEREAS, the City strives to operate and maintain a modern and reliable electric infrastructure to deliver dependable electric service to its customers, and

WHEREAS, it is necessary to appropriate expenditures so the City may improve its electric infrastructure to include an upgrade of approximately 6.2 miles of Circuit 540 serving West Vernon Avenue towards La Grange on Highway 70 West. This circuit originates at the City’s Hull Road Substation and provides service to customers along Highway 70 including WASA. The wire size upgrade will match the new distribution wire size that has been installed for the new second POD transmission circuit and will enhance reliability and alleviate any future voltage problems in the areas west of Kinston as loads increase. The project will be funded with a transfer from the Electric fund.

THEREFORE BE IT ORDAINED by the City Council of the City of Kinston, North Carolina that the following capital project budget ordinance is hereby adopted as follows:

Electric Circuit 540 Upgrade	Current Budget
Revenues:	
Transfer from Electric Fund	2,341,800.00
Total Revenues	\$ 2,341,800.00
Expenditures:	
Construction Work-Electric	\$ 2,217,025.00
Engineering Fees	124,775.00
Total Expenditures	\$ 2,341,800.00

Adopted this 20th day of April, 2021

ACTION AGENDA

1. Consider Authorizing Advertisement and Hiring of Vacant Positions – Public Services -- Rhonda Barwick

Rhonda Barwick, Public Services Director asked the Council to allow recruitment for a Crew Supervisor II (Water Fund), Operations Manager (Public Service Fund), and Mechanic (Fleet Maintenance Fund)

Councilmember Swinson made the motion, seconded by Mayor Pro Tem Solomon and upon a unanimous roll call vote (Councilmembers Aiken, Hardy, Suggs, Swinson, and Mayor Pro Tem Solomon – Yes) of [5-0], authorization to advertise and hire for vacant Public Service positions was approved.

2. Consider Authorizing Recruitment and Hiring of Vacant Positions – Parks and Recreation----- Corey Povar

Corey Povar, Director of Parks and Recreation presented a request for recruitment and hiring of several summer positions. The positions are 1-Tennis Assistant, 10-Lifeguards (Holloway), 2-Pool Assistant Managers (Holloway), 1 Pool Manager (Holloway), 2-Pool Disciplinarys (Holloway), 8-Summer Camp Counselors, 3-Summer Camp Directors, 3-Summer Camp Bus Drivers, and 6-Sprayground Attendants.

Councilmember Aiken asked if taking children from Emma Webb to Holloway was stopped last year. Mr. Povar said it was stopped last year because of the low number of participants (3 per week). Mr. Aiken asked how it was advertised. Mr. Povar stated it was like the recreation programs it is put out as a service. They do banner and social media advertisements as well on the website. He stated if the Council was interested in bringing that back, he would look at additional ways to advertise. Mayor Pro Tem Solomon shared that it was important to restart this since the kids are just getting back to some sense of normalcy. She asked Mr. Povar to track the usage as in the past. She asked if they were able to do Holloway or KCC. Mr. Povar related that he would bring back a proposal. Ms. Solomon asked if the money was in the budget and Mr. Povar stated it was but would require the potential approval of a couple of positions. Mr. Sears stated those questions would be answered when they return to Council with a proposal

Councilmember Swinson made the motion, seconded by Councilmember Suggs and upon a unanimous roll call vote (Councilmembers Aiken, Hardy, Suggs, Swinson, and Mayor Pro Tem Solomon – Yes) of [5-0], authorization to advertise and hire for vacant Parks and Recreation positions was approved.

CITY MANAGER’S REPORT

1. Email System(s) Evaluation----- Michael Thomas (THIS ITEM WAS MOVED FROM THE WORK SESSION UNDER ITEMS FOR DISCUSSION)

Michael Thomas, M.I.S Director started by saying there is no perfect system. He explained that we have 364 licenses and 500gb of storage space. Mr. Thomas shared that the email system was on a three-year automatic purge and reviewed the different levels of protection we have.

Mr. Thomas explained what a “client” was, stated we are currently using the Groupwise Client and if Microsoft (Outlook) is purchased there will be an additional cost for their client. He discussed on-premises (applications on the user’s computer) versus off-premises (needed internet connectivity). Mr. Thomas noted that security is always our top priority and shared that Windows 7 and Microsoft Office 2020 reached their end of life on January 14, 2020, and October 13, 2020, respectively. Both pose possible security holes as no new security updates are being developed. Presently Tricaster for Channel 2, the SCADA System for Public Services, and the Police tablets are the equipment we have running Windows 7. Mr. Thomas gave cost comparisons of Microsoft Exchange: Plan 1 and Plan 2, Exchange Server, Gmail: Plan 1. Plan 2 for licenses and storage capacity. Security concerns with Netflix, Gmail, and Hotmail logins were shared and included the support response time, where our data is stored (cloud-based), and limitations of file size attachments. GroupWise costs and storage were shared, runs on Linux servers and Mr. Thomas highlighted the advantages that it affords.

Mr. Thomas shared his recommendations of staying with GroupWise and upgrading to Office 2021 Standard as opposed to Office 365. He shared that the cost has been a budget request since 2018 and the request was removed from the process due to the amount. Mr. Sears stated it will not be removed this year since the end of life was last year; we no longer receive patches and updates.

Mr. Sears noted that Mr. Thomas stated that no email system is perfect and acknowledged the updates that have been completed. He asked Mr. Thomas to explain how he can solve some of the issues of getting the products on their iMacs for a better user experience with their email. Mr. Thomas stated he can install the email on their iMacs and needed the individuals to bring them in. Mr. Sears asked what the interface change was, and Mr. Thomas said the interface change had expired and is now updated and will be renewed annually. Mr. Sears asked for clarification on why we have difficulty opening attachments on iPhones and Mr. Thomas explained that most devices have limitations (about 5mg) on file size. GroupWise does not have those limitations. Mayor Pro Tem Solomon asked if she heard that even with a PDF reader you may not be able to view an attached file on your phone. Mr. Thomas reiterated that there is a space limitation for phones.

Councilmember Swinson asked what the possibility of getting Office 2021 was and Mr. Thomas stated that it was just a matter of purchasing the software.

Councilmember Suggs noted that it was not just iPhones and Apple products. Mayor Pro Tem Solomon discussed searching for previous emails. Mr. Thomas asked to take a look at their preferred products, and he would make sure the application(s) were loaded on them and recapped his presentation for the Mayor.

Councilmember Suggs said that we do not have to decide tonight and asked that everyone assess their issues and bring them forward. She stated that everyone is aware of our technology issues and mentioned the audio of the last meeting that was a struggle for the minutes, Facebook, and the local government channel. Before we jump in to make a change, we need to bring awareness of our issues to the M.I.S. Department. Mayor Pro Tem Solomon thanked Mr. Thomas and noted that we would like to continue with Facebook Live, Channel 2, and Channel 102. She also suggested saving costs by not bringing anyone back to run the meetings when we return to the Council Chambers. Mr. Thomas stated he was looking at new Tricaster equipment that would allow us to do Zoom meetings, Facebook, and other platforms simultaneously.

MAYOR & COUNCIL REPORT

Councilmember Aiken asked if a date had been discussed for the Department Head Budget Meeting and Mr. Sears said he hopes to get a date to them shortly.

Mayor Hardy announced that he has been elected as Chairman of the Mayors Association for North Carolina. He also thanked the staff for what they do. Councilmember Hardy thanked Mayor Hardy for the work he does for the City as well.

Everyone extended birthday wishes to Ms. Barwick.

CITY ATTORNEY'S REPORT

There was no City Attorney's Report.

ADJOURNMENT

Mayor Pro Tem Solomon shared that she would be remiss if she did not say anything about the George Floyd verdict coming in today. Last year students from LCC and North Lenoir reached out to Chris Suggs and he helped them organize a peaceful protest. At that moment, our city branded what it looks like to use the power of your voice. She said she can only think of them in this moment of know what they may be feeling. As we continue to move in our community with events that occurred last week, Ms. Solomon charged all of us, that the same way we had real and meaningful conversations and dialogue during the situation with the murder of Brother Floyd, that for anything that we face, we are those same people. She charged all of us to remember that we have an opportunity to brand the work. As we navigate waters, of whatever anything looks like; we are those people. We've all had those conversations when we talk about things we have been engaged in already about being willing to have difficult conversations. We are that team; we are that City that we are willing to confront what we need to confront insomuch to make our City better. Councilmember Suggs acknowledged that she totally agreed with those words.

Mayor Pro Tem Solomon made the motion, seconded by Councilmember Suggs and upon a unanimous roll call vote (Councilmembers Aiken, Hardy, Suggs, Swinson, and Mayor Pro Tem Solomon – Yes) of [5-0], the Kinston City Council Meeting was adjourned at 9:00 pm.

Respectfully submitted,

Debra Thompson, City Clerk