

Kinston City Council



MINUTES June 1, 2021

Minutes
Kinston City Council
City Hall · 207 East King Street
Tuesday, June 1, 2021
Regular Meeting at 5:30 pm

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

REGULAR MEETING

Mayor Don Hardy called the meeting to order at 5:42 pm.

Councilmember Hardy delivered the prayer, followed by the pledge of allegiance

Council Members' Roll Call

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

Present Also: James Cauley, City Attorney

Absent: Tony Sears, City Manager

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. Audry Williams, 1602 Hyman Avenue, Kinston, NC** discussed rezoning 410 Williams Street. Mr. Short will email Mr. Williams an application for that process.
- 2. Mr. Frankie Thomas, 1205 W. Lenoir Avenue, Kinston, NC** seeking directives to initiate a city-wide revival possibly at Pearson Park. Mr. Povar will contact Mr. Thomas regarding park reservations and refer him to the Police Department for assistance regarding a special event permit.

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 Hardy requested to add a Juneteenth Celebration (June 19th) and Black Dollar Festival (June 20th) Special Event Permit to the agenda.

Mayor Pro Tem Solomon stated a decision should be made of the second presentation of the budget recommendation from the City Manager. In consideration of him celebrating his son tonight, consider when we can have our manager make the presentation. She asked if we wanted to recess this meeting and reconvene later in the week, or take it off the agenda and have it presented on June 15th.

James Cauley, City Attorney stated we would have the Public Hearing tonight since it was advertised, and the question was whether to have the presentation before or on the 15th.

There was a consensus to recess the meeting and have the manager make his presentation on June 2, 2021.

Councilmember Suggs added Leon Steele to the presentation section and the Organizational Support report will be on Wednesday.

Councilmember Swinson made the motion, seconded by Councilmember Suggs and upon a unanimous vote [5-0], with the addition of the Juneteenth Celebration (June 19th) and Black Dollar Festival (June 20th) Special Event Permits, and a presentation by Leon Steele, Pride of Kinston the agenda was approved.

MINUTES

Consider approval of the minutes of the City Council meetings held on May 18, 2021 Debra Thompson

Councilmember Hardy made the motion, seconded by Councilmember Suggs and upon a unanimous vote [5-0], the minutes for May 18, 2021, were approved.

PRESENTATIONS AND RECOGNITIONS

- 1. LGBTQ+ Pride Month Proclamation ----- Mayor Hardy
- 2. Pride of Kinston ----- Leon Steele
(THIS ITEM WAS ADDED TO THE AGENDA)

Leon Steele, Director of Pride of Kinston shared that Downtown Kinston Revitalization Organization has received the affiliate certification for membership from the State and National organizations. He stated that he was notified that the building at 107 E. Caswell Street is now considered a historic building and that should aid in the sale and revitalization of that property.

INFORMATION AND UPDATES

- 1. Hurricane Status Update ----- Donna Goodson

Donna Goodson, Finance Director stated that as requested from the last meeting, she would give a summary of each hurricane we have open for FEMA reimbursements. Those hurricanes are Matthew, Florence, Dorian, and Isaias. Ms. Goodson referred to the summary in the agenda packet. Mayor Hardy asked for the remaining balances and Ms. Goodson gave the remaining balances as Matthew-\$558,000, Florence-\$1.7 million, Dorian-\$8,800 (management costs), and Isaias-\$273,000. Mayor Pro Tem Solomon asked where the money would be returned to. Ms. Goodson said they would be returned to each fund that they were transferred from. She explained that transfers were made from the fund we anticipated the expenses would come from and the rest would be returned to the General Fund. Some expenses were not acceptable for

FEMA reimbursement or there was insurance for those. Some smaller expenses we were not able to be reimbursed for because there is a base amount for reimbursement. Mayor Hardy asked what the outstanding amount is from 2016 until now. Ms. Goodson stated that it was about \$2.5 million. The most damage suffered was from Hurricane Florence at \$3.8 million. Councilmember Suggs asked is the anticipation that all of these outstanding funds will be coming in. Ms. Goodson stated all of these projects have been approved by FEMA.

ACTION AGENDA

1. Consider Property Bid – 124 South Adkin Street ----- Adam Short

Adam Short, Director of Planning, Inspections, and Code Enforcement presented a bid from Jasmine Houston and William Wilson for 124 S. Adkin Street for \$500, and the full amount was received. This was to allow the attorney to advertise for the upset bid. He said the appraised value is \$750. Mr. Cauley asked what the buyers intended use was because it appears that most of the property is in the flood plain. Mr. Short stated he believes they own the adjacent property and wanted to add to that.

Councilmember Suggs made the motion, seconded by Councilmember Swinson and upon a unanimous vote [5-0], authorization to advertise for an upset bid on 124 S. Adkin Street was approved.

2. Consider Authorizing Advertisement & Hiring – Public Services ----- Rhonda Barwick

Rhonda Barwick, Public Services Director stated there are several positions she is requesting the Council allows her to recruit for. In Buildings and Grounds, the Crew Supervisor II is retiring, in the Water Fund there is a vacant position for a Crew Supervisor I, and in the Fleet Maintenance Fund, there is a vacant Mechanic position.

Mayor Pro Tem Solomon made the motion, seconded by Councilmember Suggs and upon a unanimous vote [5-0], the authorization to advertise and hire for the vacant positions was approved.

**3. Consider Approval for Juneteenth Celebration Special Event Permit ----- Tim Dilday
(THIS ITEM WAS ADDED TO THE AGENDA)**

Timothy Dilday, Police Chief presented the special event permit for the Juneteenth Celebration that is part of the “Coming Together” series sponsored by Kinston-Lenoir County Public Library. The event will be held on June 19th at the African American Music Trail Park from 10 am-2 pm. There will be dancing, music, crafts, and vendors. For information, please contact the Kinston-Lenoir County Public Library.

**4. Consider Approval for Black Dollar Festival Special Event Permit ----- Tim Dilday
(THIS ITEM WAS ADDED TO THE AGENDA)**

Timothy Dilday, Police Chief presented the special event permit for the Black Dollar Festival at the African American Music Trail Park from 2 pm-7 pm. The event will be held on June

20th celebrating Juneteenth and circulating money to small and black-owned businesses. Included are motivational speakers, food, DJ, and a bounce house.

Councilmember Suggs asked if there were any fees associated with these events and Chief Dilday stated there were not.

(NOTE: ACTION ITEMS 3 AND 4 WERE VOTED ON AS ONE ITEM)

Councilmember Swinson made the motion, seconded by Councilmember Aiken and upon a unanimous vote [5-0], the Special Events Permits for the Juneteenth Celebration and Black Dollar Festival were approved

CITY MANAGER’S REPORT

**Budget Presentation FY22 ----- Tony Sears
(THIS ITEM WILL BE PRESENTED ON JUNE 2, 2021)**

CITY ATTORNEY’S REPORT

There was no City Attorney’s Report.

MAYOR AND COUNCILMEMBER REPORTS

Mayor Hardy thanked everyone for coming out and thanks them for what they continue to do every day. He asked everyone to please be careful, make sure we use the mask because COVID-19 has not gone away. Mayor Hardy shared that the vaccinations are still available and there will be an event on June 8th at Rochelle Middle School. The event is hosted by the City of Kinston in collaboration with Clinical Resources Laboratories. He also thanked Walmart for their gift to the city that consisted of items used for safety regarding COVID-19 (hand sanitizer, anti-bacterial soap, etc.)

Mayor Pro Tem Solomon reminded everyone that today marked the 100th anniversary of the Tulsa Massacre and the events surrounding that event. She encouraged everyone to take an opportunity to do some research. She referred to the work that the library was doing to have conversations on matters of race. Ms. Solomon also explained that Juneteenth was when the last of the slaves found out that they were free. She noted that these events were not shared but they are a part of history.

Mayor Hardy thanked Mr. Pridgen for hosting the Black Dollar Festival and encouraged everyone to come out.

Councilmember Swinson stated he hated to, but he gave kudos to NC A&T (Ms. Solomon’s alma mater) for setting a world record at the Nationals in Track and Field. Ms. Solomon shared the girl’s coach is a native son, William (Bill) Dunn. Kinston Proud!

Mayor Hardy recessed the meeting at 6:39 pm until 7:00 pm.

Mayor Hardy reconvened the meeting at 7:00 pm.

Mayor Hardy opened the Public Hearing and it will remain open until June 15th.

Mayor Hardy recessed the meeting at 7:04 pm until June 2, 2021, in the Council Chambers at 5:00 pm for the presentation of the budget by Tony Sears, City Manager.

Kinston City Council



MINUTES June 2, 2021

Minutes

Kinston City Council
City Hall · 207 East King Street
Wednesday, June 2, 2021
Reconvened Regular Meeting

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

REGULAR MEETING

Mayor Don Hardy reconvened the meeting at 5:05 pm.

Absent: Councilmember Robert Swinson

Councilmember Suggs reminded everyone that we will also have a report from Leon Steele, Pride of Kinston.

Mayor Hardy related that the Public Hearing would remain open until June 15th.

BUDGET PRESENTATION

Tony Sears, City Manager

Mr. Sears thanked the Mayor and Council for allowing him to be absent from last night's meeting. He shared that the budget has been presented to the Mayor and Council, it has been posted at the library for public viewing, it is on our web page, our public hearing has been announced and will remain open until the regularly scheduled meeting on June 15th and on that date, it is the plan to approve the budget. He asked that anyone with any questions or concerns within the next two weeks contact him or the staff and they would be glad to address those.

Mr. Sears revisited that last week we had a six-hour-long budget meeting. The Department Heads made an individual presentation to this body, who were able to ask questions, and we were able to get through a lot of this budget.

This is one of the smaller budgets that he has had to present to this Council. Some of that has to do with our electric purchase. This budget for FY 21/22 is for \$109,797,897. The majority of that is made up of four funds (83%). The biggest fund is the Electric Fund at \$47,877,702 (44%), following are the General Fund at \$25,683,449 (23%), the Water Operations Fund at \$10,422,483 (9%), and the Wastewater Fund as \$7,203,000 (6%). Twenty overall funds make up our budget, but clearly, those four at 83% are the main ones. Mayor Pro Tem Solomon asked about the FEMA reimbursements for the hurricanes, as explained by Ms. Goodson last night, and if the money would go directly to those Funds. Mr. Sears stated they would go directly to the fund that the expenses were paid from. Ms. Goodson added that the organizations are made up so that they are associated with particular funds. Mr. Sears noted that they are called Enterprise Funds, and each one you see is treated as an independent business and it is dictated by the State to operate in that manner. The two principal cornerstones of this budget are 1) we have to have a balanced budget and in the past, we have appropriated Fund Balance to do that. Historically money is saved through additional cost-savings during the year, which is under \$400,000 in the General Fund means you will end up with a positive number at the end of the year. There are no General Fund dollars appropriated in this budget and this happened last in 2012 or 2013. To get the budget to balance

we have proposed a property tax increase from \$.73 (current rate) to \$.77 and those \$.04 will bring roughly \$660,000. Property taxes are the most stable and largest revenue source that we have and are the only fund that we have direct control over. Last year \$1.5 million was appropriated to balance the budget and this year we are using \$800,000. That has to do with COVID Relief Funds that we received (not including ARP) and other things that we did not do. Mayor Pro Tem Solomon stated that the reduction of taxes for Smithfield (loss of \$230,000) will not be counted this year. Councilmember Aiken spoke of the property tax received from Kinston Housing Authority and that we get Payment in-Lieu-of-Taxes. Mr. Sears reiterated the proposed property tax increase (\$.04) and it added that it does not count for all of the \$660,000, but accounts for the majority and the natural increase in property tax. Ms. Solomon asked when the census number would come in and shared that the trend has been a decline in our population. She asked if this would in turn affect property taxes. Mr. Sears said the numbers were set to be out in August, and anticipated a decrease by of at least 6,000. Councilmember Aiken asked if cutting the census count off early could affect our population. Mr. Sears stated he did not think it would. Ms. Solomon said of 21%-25% of the citizens pay property taxes. Councilmember Suggs shared that taxes are paid on the property whether it is occupied by the owner or renters. Mr. Sears added, even if it is empty and dilapidated. Ms. Solomon asked Ms. Goodson what percentage of taxes have been paid. Ms. Goodson stated that we are only allowed to collect at 97%, which is the anticipated taxes. Mayor Hardy stated the housing market looked good and shared that this is a reason to look at more housing. Ms. Suggs asked for a demonstration of the tax amount for a \$150,000 home now and what it would be with the \$.04 increase. Mr. Sears stated the property owner would pay \$1,177 in taxes.

Mr. Sears discussed the next cornerstone. The other historical tradition that we will break from is the transfer made from the Electric Fund to the General Fund. Historically, we have made a transfer of \$800,000, and last year it was increased to \$1 million. This year we have gone to a State allowable limit. It is calculated one of two ways; whichever is greater: 3% of your fixed assets or 5% of your prior year's gross revenue. In this scenario, it is 5% of the prior year's gross revenue and equates to \$2.3 million. If we take away the \$2.3 million, subtract the \$1 million that we historically make the transfer for, that will allow \$1.1 million to go back to the General Fund. The sales tax is used to fully balance the budget, the payment of the revenue (Electric Fund to General Fund) can be put back toward the Fund Balance. This is an allowable and legal way to get the money from the Electric Fund to the General Fund. Mr. Sears explained that in his nine years here, we have not had an Electric increase. In 2017 NCEMP owned \$1.9 billion in generation assets. We sold that for \$1.2 billion, leaving a defeasance debt of \$700 million. That remaining debt will be paid off in 2025, at which time the City of Kinston will have a rate decrease of an unknown percentage. By 2025 the City of Kinston can have a lower electric rate than Duke Energy. We have been able to pay for everything in cash, which means we have been eliminating debt (not paying interest), and not accruing new debt. Right now, our organization is healthy enough to make that transfer and feels that currently, it is necessary to make these two proposals in this FY22 budget to this Body for consideration.

Mayor Pro Tem Solomon asked when the next revaluation was. Mr. Sears stated the process should begin in 2-3 years. It is a process controlled by Lenoir County and it must be done every 7 years, although it can be done as often as you wish. Ms. Solomon asked if there was a possibility that there could be a decrease in property tax if the mentioned forecast of increased revaluation. Mr. Sears stated after the revaluation process has been completed since the housing market is

currently strong (without the revaluation) a property tax decrease was a possibility. Ms. Goodson stated when there is a revaluation, they present a property tax-neutral rate.

Mr. Sears recommended providing the Electric Fund transfer (in the budget) and for the FY23 as well. This should be revisited at the time of the presentation. Councilmember Suggs asked how the transfer affected the Electric Fund. Mr. Sears stated that this is feasible because since selling the assets in 2017 they anticipated in 21 and/or 22 there would be a rate increase. That has not come to fruition. Not receiving the rate increase that does allow us this opportunity to take what was anticipated and transfer that over. He stated from the operational side, they had anticipated from Capital Projects how they would go about moving forward and those factors were already factored into the projection of the budget and the Capital Projects. One thing is in the budget because the rate increase did not happen and that is \$30,000 for a third-party company to come in and analyze the system and see what additional upgrades we can make to continue to save. Referring back to one of the things we left out regarding the ability to pay cash is Smart Grid which came out of the Stabilization Fund. This allows us to see when there is a power outage and gives us a better response time in an overall reduction in power outages. Mr. Sears proposed the transfer for this year and next year as well. These two cornerstones of the budget being where we need to have a healthy financial status for all funds.

Mr. Sears stated that in the General Fund specifically, the requests were cut over \$1.2 million. That includes no equipment and vehicles in this budget. We do know the ARP money is coming and they have put out some information, but have not given us under 50,000 in populations rules and regulations yet. The smaller areas do not have their set of rules. Those funds were proposed after the formulation of this budget and are not included in this budget. Those items were removed from the budget because we are curious as to how many of those requests can be funded through the ARP Funding (\$5.9 million) to be divided equally between two fiscal years. We expect to receive our first payment in the next 30-45 days. That will require a budget amendment that when that time comes, the requests will be vetted and brought back to the Council. It is not included because the formulation of the budget begins in January through March. Mayor Pro Tem Solomon inquired about Chief Locklear using his vehicle and whether it was approved for him to receive a vehicle. Mr. Sears stated it has been approved from additional COVID funds, but the car manufacturers are having a hard time keeping up with production. We believe that some of those items will be available to be purchased with ARP funds. Historically the City borrows money for rolling stock every other year and this is the year for that. Those items not covered by ARP we will be able to finance with the first payment in 2023. Mayor Hardy expressed his interest in being able to come back after the ARP Funds are released to make sure we purchase the vehicles needed. Mr. Sears said that would be done, but only for the General Fund. The Enterprise Funds have their capital purchases and are in this budget. Mayor Hardy asked about the budget amendment and Mr. Sears stated that would be done but would not occur until at least October. He directed everyone to Page 7 of the budget book, to see the requests listed by departments that were there.

Mr. Sears shared that there is \$200,000 toward resurfacing and \$50,000 for demolition. There is an increase on payroll from LGERS (Local Government Retirement System) of 1.3%. There are no increases in employee/employer health insurance. Health insurance had a decrease and will do Target Care which is an additional benefit for employees. We currently do Biometric Screenings, and this will be an enhancement of that process. There is an increase of one employee within Parks and Rec. at the Stadium. We are obligated in our contract with the Texas Rangers (Wood Ducks) that we provide so many individuals. Two part-time positions were combined to make one full-time position to assist with better recruiting of individuals. The total employment numbers have

not changed. There is a transfer of an individual of Community Relations from within the PD over to the Council's budget for the recruitment of a Public Information Officer that will be determined after the fiscal year. Mayor Hardy asked if we would run Target Care for 3 years. Ms. Sears stated that Target Care allows us to use that for 3 years which will allow us to see how effective the program is and see if we would like to continue after 3 years.

Donna Goodson, Finance Director

Ms. Goodson recapped the General Fund revenues and shared that the total revenue for the General Fund is \$25,683,449. The largest percentage of that is 42% that comes from Ad Valorem Taxes that are levied against our property taxes. The next is Other Taxes (State-Shared) revenue of \$7,097,000 or 28%, Interdepartmental Billing for \$2 million or 8%, and Sales Tax at \$1.6 million or 6%. The taxable base increased this year and we added \$27.5 million to the total tax base for the fiscal year and last year we had a decrease of \$32 million. We are proposing a \$.77 tax rate this year to give a total increase of approximately \$746,000 on the current property taxes. We do collect prior year taxes. We can only budget on what we anticipate collecting and we reduced that to less than 98% this year. We are looking at the Ad Valorem Taxes and is a projected amount of \$10.8 million which is up from \$10.1 million from last year, Other Taxes of \$7.1 million which is up from \$6.7 million last year. The Other Taxes (State-Shared) revenues include the Occupancy Tax, Telecom Licenses, Utility Franchise Tax, Natural Gas Tax, and Telecommunication Tax. Overall, we are looking at an increase. The Unrestricted Intergovernmental show a decrease, as well as the Restricted Intergovernmental. Sales and Services are projected to be less this year. The Other Revenues are about the same and the other large difference is the transfers with the increase in the Electric Fund transfer of \$1.3 million. There is a decrease in the revenue that we use from Appropriated Fund Balance; we are anticipating not using Appropriated Fund Balance this year. Mayor Hardy asked what the Occupancy Tax looked like currently. Ms. Goodson stated they are projecting it to decrease about \$25,000 and this is projected off trends.

Jennifer Wilson, Financial and Budget Administrator

Ms. Wilson reviewed the expenditures for the FY21/22 budget. She related that last year we used \$1.5 million from the General Fund to balance the budget. Ms. Wilson stated revenue projections were better than expected and some of that money will be returned to the General Fund. She shared that the total expenditure was \$109,797,897. Ms. Wilson focused on the General Fund of \$25,683,449 (23% of budget). The expenditures for FY22 have increased from FY21 by \$983,000. This is due to an increase in the retirement of at least 1.3% and increases in maintaining the COVID-19 protocols for various departments. The Capital Outlay was removed from the budget request. The total amount requested from all funds for Capital Outlay items is \$7.3 million. The amount proposed by the manager is \$5.7 million and the difference comes from the cuts of the General Funds. The breakdown of the requests from the departments is for building improvements, new recreation equipment, other major equipment, and vehicles. We hope to purchase these through a different route. She showed the breakdown of where the tax dollar is divided with Police, Recreation, and Fire. There is an adjustment with Planning now being \$.02 of the dollar and Ms. Wilson noted that they are a department of two that brings in the most money through grants, utilizes the smallest percentage for your taxes, and leaves the largest footprint for the City of Kinston. The key takeaways for the FY 21/22 budget are the five strategic priorities and objectives the Council sets every year. They are to have an innovative and high-performing

organization, an infrastructure that supports growth, a shared economic prosperity & diversity, an engaged, connected, and an active community, and a safe & friendly community.

Tony Sears, City Manager

Mr. Sears shared that there are no rate increases for the Utility Funds that include water, sewer, electric, stormwater, and sanitation.

Jennifer Wilson, Financial and Budget Administrator

ORGANIZATIONAL SUPPORT

Ms. Wilson shared that the Council would be able to decide at the next Council meeting how to allot the organizational support funds. She presented a list of the organizations and their requests for this year. The Building Group (New Request) was unable to be funded because after several attempts from staff they were considered non-compliant/nonresponsive. The Arts Council was reduced to \$25,000 last year and has requested to return to \$35,000. Staff recommended \$35,000. The Library requested to remain at \$205,000 and staff recommended that as well. The SPCA requested \$76,800 and we are in negotiation with them, and the staff recommended keeping them at the amount. The Pride of Kinston has requested to remain at \$43,000 and staff recommended \$43,000. SAFE in Lenoir County requested \$15,000 and staff recommended \$10,000. Victory Cathedral Worship Center International (New Request) was unable to be funded because they do not meet the statutory requirements. Ms. Wilson stated after the staff recommendations are funded at the levels with the MSD and TDA pass-throughs the balance will be \$2,695. The support grant did not increase from last year and is around the \$660,000 mark. Mayor Pro Tem asked Mr. Sears did he know when the Council for the Arts reopened after closing in March of 2020. Mr. Sears stated it was in the last month or two, but he did not know definitely. Ms. Solomon stated she would like to be able to look at monies allotted last year due to the impact of COVID on the organizations. The Arts Council was the only one that was not able to serve the community. Councilmember Aiken asked if we have the right to ask them to itemize what the money was spent for. Ms. Wilson said we have the statutory right to an audit. Mr. Aiken shared concerns about past expenditures for the roof and parking lot. Mr. Sears explained that the City, County, and Friends of the Library split the roof and then the City and County split the cost of the parking lot. That was over the dollar amount that is here. Mayor Hardy asked about a possible increase for the Council for the Arts. Councilmember Aiken asked about the application process.

Mayor Pro Tem Solomon made the motion, seconded by Councilmember Hardy, and upon a unanimous vote [4-0], the Public Hearing was closed at 6:17 pm.

INFORMATION AND UPDATES

1. Pride of Kinston Update ----- Leon Steele

Leon Steele, Pride of Kinston Director shared that the program is local but it is a part of a national program called Main Street America. They are overseen and managed by the North Carolina Main Street program with certain protocols and formulas to use. Four are design, organization, promotions/events, and economic vitality committees. He gave highlights from the last fiscal year and shared that they are working with lower South Queen Street business

owners. Also, they are continuing a project at Maplewood Cemetery by installing lights and planted trees as well. They are video showcasing the businesses and have a new board member who is a multiple property owner in that district as well. They lost two businesses, but seven new ones opened. Seven buildings were sold, and marketing was increased during COVID. They have rebranded the program and it enables them to promote and they are a more inclusive organization. It reflects the new vibe, energy interest, and life downtown. There was a focus on Black History Month and there are 40 out of 140. Mr. Steele stated they also did some aggressive real estate marketing. Moving forward they will continue to look at Lower South Queen Street. Sarah Arney is launching an MSD survey and it involves a grant from Duke Energy. The street pole banners are about to be ordered for those sold. Mayor Pro Tem Solomon asked who was on the committee to select what banners are going on the poles. Mr. Steele stated the design committee and gave the individual names. He will continue the marketing to showcase the diverse mix of businesses and downtown events. Mr. Steele shared that the Mitchell and North Street children's sensory path would hopefully come about soon. He stated that they retained their status as an Affiliate Main Street Community and will continue to strive to upgrade that. They will continue to promote that the organization is all-inclusive, increase residential and commercial opportunities, and expand the Christmas experience. He is setting up a meeting with LaGrange and Pink Hill to create a weekend trail in Lenoir County for Christmas Parades; they are all that weekend. This will help with more people staying in the county and spending money. The North Street Summer weekend mall is on the back burner for right now. He will continue to market downtown and grow the DK program to have in the future some part-time staff to implement their vision.

Councilmember Aiken asked if we would have the Christmas parade this year and Mr. Steele stated he hoped that we would.

Mr. Sears shared that he received an email from the Chamber that the Wayne County Habitat for Humanity is going to help with a project here in Kinston. He has instructed Adam and Sarah to reach out and see how our organization can assist with that as well. As the project moves forward we will find ways to encourage our employees to participate.

ADJOURNMENT

Mayor Pro Tem Solomon made the motion, seconded by Councilmember Suggs and upon a unanimous vote of [4-0], the City Council meeting was adjourned at 6:29 pm

Respectfully submitted,

Debra Thomspson, City Clerk